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More freedom of choice: Altium expands programmable device options for next generation electronics design

New Xilinx Virtex-4 daughter board opens up greater possibilities for high-performance applications

SYDNEY, Australia – February 17, 2009 – Altium continues to expand programmable device options for its desktop NanoBoard reconfigurable hardware development platform. It's released a new daughter board aimed at high performance signal processing, FPGA-based applications.

The new daughter board hosts a member of the Xilinx Virtex-4 device family, the XC4VSX35-10FFG668C device. It's housed in a 668-ball grid Array and comes complete with on-board memories for application use, and a 1-Wire memory device used to store board identification data.

This new daughter board complements other Xilinx device daughter boards already available from Altium. These include the Virtex-4 (LX), Spartan-3, Spartan-3A and Spartan-3AN devices.

Together, these FPGA daughter boards in turn complement devices from other programmable device manufacturers also available from Altium. This vendor independent development environment and expanding range of daughter boards give designers real options to tap the affordable, flexible power of programmable devices in both mainstream and high performance design applications.

As Altium continues to release more daughter boards that plug straight into the desktop NanoBoard, designers have more freedom to test and compare the performance of various high-performance logic applications without being tied to a particular device. And this new approach to soft design opens up more opportunities for next generation electronics design, in which the designer is not tied to loosely coupled tools, struggling to integrate them across the design process. Designers can work within Altium's unified environment to rapidly and interactively develop, implement, test and debug both the hardware and software of their applications.

When the desktop NanoBoard is combined with Altium's unified electronics design solution, Altium Designer, engineers have an Innovation Station at their fingertips that lets them create prototypes in a matter of days rather than weeks.

They can optimize product performance and overall cost in their designs, to create sustainable competitive advantage embedded within the design. Engineers can use blocks of reusable IP and the standard set of peripherals that also come as part of the desktop NanoBoard. They can interchange any of the FPGA devices available on daughter boards from Altium, and any of the peripheral boards. And by combining this hardware development platform with Altium Designer, they can quickly and easily develop the functional intelligence unique to the design they are creating. They can then move to custom board design and manufacture, still within Altium Designer's single design application, using the design data already created.

"We have been using Altium's solution for five years, and we're very happy with how Altium Designer helps us create next generation electronic designs," says Jhury Abuabara, CEO of Readix Inc, a custom hardware design company. "Over the past five years we have created over 500 products and solutions for customers in various industries. The modularity of Altium's desktop NanoBoard, coupled with Altium Designer's OpenBus feature [which represents the processor, peripherals and related interconnections within an FPGA in an easily managed, abstract way], lets us test new concepts very quickly. We can reconfigure in minutes rather than days. It is such an easy way to compare designs and make quick design decisions."

“This new Xilinx Virtex-4 high performance daughter board helps engineers seeking to tap the potential of FPGAs at the high performance end of the design spectrum,” said Nick Martin, CEO and founder of Altium. “Designers working on high performance applications can focus on developing their next generation electronics designs without the need to commit too early to a device or hardware configuration. Using the desktop NanoBoard, they can rapidly create the prototypes they need to test the integrity of their designs. And the NanoBoard lets them do this in the actual design, and then make changes as they need to on the fly.

“What we're seeking to do is to give as many engineers as we can the best possible access to the benefits of using programmable devices in their electronics designs. This means expanding in the directions of both mainstream and high end applications.”

Altium Designer and Altium's desktop NanoBoard, which comes standard with a choice of one FPGA daughter board, are available from Altium's Sales & Support centers at www.altium.com/contacts, or as the Innovation Station from Digi-Key at www.digikey.com.

For more information on the new Xilinx Virtex-4 plug-in daughter board and Altium's extended range of daughter boards, please visit <http://www.altium.com/Products/TheNanoBoard/> or watch the Innovation Station video at Altium's INFOcenter at www.altium.com.

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About Altium

Altium Limited (ASX:ALU) provides next generation electronics design solutions that break down the barriers to innovation. Altium's solutions are unique because they unify the separate processes of electronics design, all within a single electronics design environment, working off a single data model, linking all aspects of electronics product design into one process. This unified design environment helps electronics designers easily harness the latest devices and technologies, manage their projects across broad design 'ecosystems', and create connected, intelligent designs.

Founded in 1985, Altium has headquarters in Sydney, sales offices in the United States, Europe, Japan, China, and resellers in all other major markets. For more information, visit www.altium.com.

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