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One less custom PCB to design for prototypes

Altium releases smart prototyping peripheral board for its NanoBoard FPGA-based development platforms

SYDNEY, **Australia – November 30, 2009** – Altium has released a new prototyping peripheral add-on board for its NanoBoard FPGA-based development boards.

The new board works with both the fixed-FPGA NanoBoard 3000 and the fully-configurable NanoBoard NB2. It will be available from December from Altium's on-line distribution partners, in packs of either three or 20.

The board does away with having to create special, custom PCBs for circuit prototyping. A single on-board connector plugs into the NanoBoard to give direct access to the I/O on the host NanoBoard FPGA and common NanoBoard resources, including power and JTAG lines. Designers can then easily integrate custom circuitry with standard NanoBoard peripherals and services, using the wide range of land patterns and plated hole connections on the prototyping boards to quickly construct custom hardware.

Altium's new smart prototyping boards support a variety of surface mount packages in varying pitches, as well as thru-hole components on 0.1" or 0.05" grids. Pre-defined land patterns for surface mount devices (SMD) accommodate pitches of 0.5mm, 0.65mm, 0.8mm and 1.27mm, and each SMD pad is connected to a 0.5mm hole to allow simple connections using prototyping wire.

Board identification is achieved using a 1-Wire compatible unique ID device. The Altium Designer software license that comes with each NanoBoard recognizes that a prototype board is plugged into the NanoBoard and provides plug-and-play access to the 50 I/O lines on the prototyping board from the design environment. Designers can

easily incorporate the custom hardware on the prototyping board into their overall soft system design.

The new prototyping board complements the instant deployment enclosures recently released by Altium for the NanoBoard 3000, which let designers take their FPGA-based designs from concept right through to deployment without the need to create a custom PCB or custom device enclosure.

The addition of the smart prototyping board means that systems developed on the NanoBoard 3000 can be deployed in the field complete with custom hardware functionality without having to go through any manufacturing process. This is a boon when developing ‘proof-of-concept’ or short-run commercial devices.

"What this all means is that the electronics designer can focus on creating the intelligence and differentiation in a design, and much less on connecting the components together to create and test the prototype," said Nick Martin, CEO of Altium. "Altium Designer lets them drive the design process in a unified design environment. They can capture their schematic, create the prototype on a NanoBoard, they can easily add their specialist peripherals, and then tap the IP and development infrastructure provided by Altium Designer and the NanoBoard, all without having to create even one custom PCB.

"Once they know the design is good, they can deploy in minutes using the modular enclosures we announced just last week. And the option to go to custom PCB for final product design and manufacture is an easy one to take: they simply take their software design to a full license of Altium Designer and move straight to customer PCB layout.

"It's all about removing as many barriers as we can to allowing designers to focus on being innovative."

Pricing and availability

The new prototype peripheral boards cost US$99 for a pack of three, or US$395 for a pack of 20, and are available from mid-December.

The new modular enclosures for the NanoBoard 3000 are available now for a recommended retail price of US$129.

The NanoBoard 3000 is available for a recommended retail price of US$395 and includes a 12-month subscription to an Altium Designer Soft Design License that covers all software updates released by Altium during the 12-month subscription period. The NanoBoard NB2 costs US$1,995.

Designers can purchase either NanoBoard, the enclosures for use with the NanoBoard 3000, and the smart prototyping boards by selecting the most appropriate on-line distributor from Altium's web site.

Information on Altium Designer is on Altium's web site. More detailed information on Altium Designer and the new NanoBoard 3000 is at the Altium Wiki.

ENDS

About Altium
Altium Limited (ASX:ALU) provides next generation electronics design software. Altium's unified electronics design environment links all aspects of electronics product design into one process, in a single application. This helps electronics designers harness the latest devices and technologies, manage their projects across broad design 'ecosystems', and create connected, intelligent designs. For more information, visit www.altium.com.