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US Media Contact:

Emily Taylor
Weber Shandwick Worldwide
519 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 600
Portland, OR 97204
United States
www.webershandwick.com
Telephone: 503-552-3733
Email: etaylor@webershandwick.com

Altium Media Contact:

Elisa Davies
Altium Limited
Level 3, 12a Rodborough Road
Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086
Australia
www.altium.com
Telephone: +61 2 9975 7710
Email: elisa.davies@altium.com.au

Altium Designer demystifies high-speed design

Strengthens system support for high-speed, high-density designs and sophisticated programmable device technology

SYDNEY, Australia – March 19, 2007 – Altium Limited (ASX: ALU) today announced the addition of a raft of new productivity-enhancing features for its Altium Designer unified electronics development system to assist engineers with handling high-speed design issues resulting from the fast changing nature of today's mainstream board-level design and its convergence with the wider electronics development process. Dispelling the mystique that typically surrounds high-speed design issues that is often used to justify the inflated cost of high-speed, high-density board design features, Altium is making these capabilities accessible and useable by all designers working at the physical level today.

With the latest electronic components offering a wide range of fast-switching I/O and dense packaging options, particularly in the latest generation programmable devices, Altium has focused recent developments for the latest version of its Altium Designer system – Altium Designer 6 – to include a wide range of high-level interactive and automated tools designed to allow all engineers to easily assess, manage and troubleshoot signal integrity issues. Altium Designer now adds interactive net length tuning, enhanced board layer navigation and more powerful polygon area fill placement modes to its arsenal of high-speed, high-density capabilities that already includes interactive differential pair routing, impedance-controlled routing, built-in signal integrity analysis and termination matching, automatic BGA escape routing, automatic FPGA board-level pin optimization and full PCB-FPGA bi-directional design synchronization.

These new and enhanced features form part of Altium Designer's advanced yet easy-to-use suite of capabilities aimed to reduce overall design time for high-speed, high-density PCBs, to increase the ease and efficiency for working with high-speed digital signals and to harness the full power of the latest electronic devices and technologies, such as high-capacity programmable logic, that have made their way onto everyday board designs.

"Mainstream engineers today face a completely new set of problems that cannot be solved with design methodologies that were developed to deal with discrete devices and separate design flows. And while the challenges associated with high-end programmable device integration and high-speed PCB design are well-acknowledged, most EDA vendors have treated the technology solutions as a premium area," commented Nick Martin, Founder and CEO, Altium Limited. "However, with sophisticated electronics device technology finding its way into everyday design projects, all designers now need access to tools that tackle the proliferation of challenges these converging forces present. More importantly they need access to intelligent solutions that are easy to use without the need to re-skill or purchase additional high-cost tools. These are the barriers we're committed to breaking down with our ongoing development of Altium Designer."

Altium Designer's intelligent interactive routing system has been enhanced with the addition of a new interactive length tuning tool specifically for high-speed designs. This new feature allows designers to quickly optimize and control net lengths by dynamically inserting 'accordion' segments into a track. Tuning can be manual or rules-driven, and designers can select from a number of amplitude styles available in the system. This feature combines seamlessly with impedance-controlled, differential pair and multi-trace routing capabilities to give Altium Designer users a comprehensive interactive solution tuned for the high-speed, high-density board design projects that are being significantly impacted by modern day programmable devices.

Board navigation has been made more efficient with enhanced control and display over PCB layers, and will deliver significantly enhanced productivity when moving around large complex designs. The placement and editing of polygons has been streamlined to make the creation of large copper-filled areas fast and intuitive. Significant improvements have also been made to the way components and libraries are identified and used within the system to deliver greater levels of user control and flexibility. Creating and delivering output for designs that contain embedded board arrays has been improved with added intelligence for identifying layer stackup violations. In addition, enhanced output dialogs for Gerber and ODB++ now make it even easier for users to make decisions about whether to proceed with output or resolve compatibility violations.

Pricing and availability
These board-level system enhancements, and more, are now available with the latest software update for Altium Designer 6 – Altium Designer 6.7. All Altium Designer 6 license holders can download this update for free at http://www.altium.com/Community/Support/SoftwareUpdates/. Altium Designer 6 is available for purchase through Altium's sales and support centers worldwide. For information on pricing and flexible product licensing options, customers should contact their local Altium sales and support center. Details can be found at www.altium.com/contacts.

About Altium Designer

Altium Designer is the industry's only electronics product development system that removes the barriers imposed by disparate design flows and unifies the different design disciplines involved in electronics product development – the design of the hardware, the programmable hardware and the embedded software. Altium Designer's unified design environment means users can harness the potential of the latest electronics technologies, and move to a 'soft' design methodology without the need to acquire specialist programmable device expertise. This provides companies with increased design flexibility, reduced production costs and speeds time-to-market. Altium Designer also delivers the freedom to move between any device, from any vendor, at any time and lowers total cost of ownership by eliminating the need to integrate extra-cost add-ons to increase functionality, or make up a complete solution. For more information, please visit http://www.altium.com/Products/AltiumDesigner/.

About Altium

Altium Limited (ASX:ALU) is the industry's leading developer of electronic product development solutions dedicated to unifying the different design disciplines involved in electronics product development. Altium products ensure all electronic engineers, designers, developers, and their organizations, take maximum advantage of emerging design technologies to bring smarter products to market faster and easier. Founded in 1985, Altium is headquartered in Sydney, Australia with sales offices in the United States, Europe, Japan, China, and resellers in all other major markets. For more information, please visit www.altium.com.