

in brief

DVD for the masses
Cirrus Logic has introduced low cost single board platforms for recordable DVD players. The CS98200 is an integrated a/v decoder featuring two 32bit risc cores and a 32bit audio dsp. The company believes it can cut the overall semiconductor bill of materials by 30% for recordable DVD players by 2003.

Bash for cash
Among 22 companies presenting funding proposals to potential investors at Connect Scotland are Scotland Electronics and I-Dare Innovation. Scotland Electronics is looking for £1.8m to pursue electronic solutions for hazardous environments, whilst I-Dare, involved in lcds for the advertising industry, is looking for £500,000.

Switching tactics
Japanese switch manufacturer NKK has struck a distribution agreement with Quiller Electronics, which will make the Bournemouth based company the master distributor in the UK. Quiller has design in capability from its 20 sub distributors and relationships with RS, Farnell and Arrow. Targets markets include cctv, specialist vehicles, industrial control, military and aerospace.

OCP for SoCs
Nokia, TI, Sonics and Synopsys have developed a SystemC modelling methodology for open core protocol (OCP) based SoC design. The methodology is said to ease the design flow between system specification and SoC implementation. More information can be found at www.ocpip.org.

Core arrives on time

ARM11 implementations are full steam ahead, despite first signs that ARM isn't indestructible. **Vanessa Knivett** reports.

On the schedule announced earlier this year at the Embedded Processor Forum, ARM has released the first two cpu products to implement the ARM11 architecture, in parallel with its ARM11 PrimeXsys Platform.

The ARM1136J-S and ARM1136JF-S run at more than 533MHz and operate on a range of operating systems. The cpus are synthesisable cores which can be licensed for customers' target manufacturing process.

John Goodacre, platform architecture manager, commented: "For the first time, software designers have the ability to

work with the cores, straight out of the box, instead of having to wait for hardware design to be validated. Fast design to market and ease of implementation are the primary advantages of the ARM11 PrimeXsys - with developers being able to implement standard asic design flows and take multiple product designs from the same base point."

The eight stage pipeline and fast interrupt mode characteristics of the cores are claimed to suit such applications as set top boxes, digital cameras, dashboard entertainment and powertrain electronics. Other characteristics

of the cores include vectored interrupt support and configurable 4 to 64k instruction and data caches.

Licenses have already been sold to Texas Instruments and Qualcomm.

• Meanwhile, ARM's third quarter 2002 results reported plans for 10% job losses, contrasting with previous statements that this sort of cost cutting would not be necessary. Chairman Sir Robin Saxby, commented: "We are determined that ARM will not be diverted from its objective to become the significant global standard architecture in embedded microprocessors."

Searching by the multimillions

In a move to maximise LA1 (lookaside) bus bandwidth and to simplify search system management, Cypress has unveiled the Vichara 81000 search supervisory coprocessor. When the part is used in conjunction with its Ayama NSE10000 network search engine, up to 266million searches per second are said to be possible.

The device offloads such functions as routing look ups and policy resolution from network processors and asics, increasing their ability to perform other linecard functions. It also takes on some control function management, all of which mean the host processor can handle more packets per second at the same data rate.

• Cypress plans to use Tensilica's Xtensa processor as the base for USB and wireless products. Cathal Phelan, vice president of the personal communications division, said: "We've been looking for a processor that is easy to configure; we intend to add custom instructions for maximum performance."



US regulations require vehicles to feature tyre pressure monitoring systems from 2004. Responding, Philips has produced a wireless link between tyres and dashboard.

The P2SC signal conditioning chip gives drivers feedback on tyre pressure when the ignition is turned on. Regular updates are given and drivers are warned of sudden drop in pressure.

Top engineer of 2002

Adam Maloyd won the title of Best Electronic Engineer 2002 at last week's STEP awards.

Maloyd, a student at the University of Newcastle, worked with Northumberland based eConnect to develop a distributed intelligent load controller testing system. The company says the system will contribute significantly to product quality and could save up to £15 per device in terms of testing.

STEP (www.step.org.uk) provides undergraduates with the opportunity to undertake placements of up to 12 weeks, normally with small to medium sized companies.