VLSI design centers thrive

By 1990 regional VLSI IC design centers will help over 60 percent of all system designers in developing application-specific integrated circuits, representing 75 percent of the $7.2 billion in ASIC sales, predicts an Electronic Trend Publications report.

Electronic system designers are being driven by several factors into VLSI design centers. Some of these factors include R&D efforts to reduce product costs, increase performance, and create market niches by tailoring systems to specific user needs; an insufficient pool of IC design talent; and an unprecedented structural shift in the worldwide electronic industry toward emphasis on service, design assistance, and regional support.

Customizing VLSI Integrated Circuits Update—A User's Guide to the IC Design Center and ASICS examines the market and technology trends influencing the electronic systems OEM. The report attempts to help OEMs use the IC design expertise available at more than 150 North American design centers by exploring the various types of centers and their roles within the OEM community. The report compares and analyzes gate arrays, standard cells, electrically programmable logic, and full-custom ICs. It also describes custom and semicustom options available to the ASIC user and ways these chips can be tailored to meet specific price and performance criteria.

Interested system OEMs and silicon services suppliers can purchase the 275-page report for $985 from Electronic Trend Publications, 10080 North Wolfe Road, Suite 372, Cupertino, CA 95014.

US, European computer laws compared for vendors

Protecting computer products from piracy, patent infringement, and imitation entails complex legal issues of increasing concern to hardware and software vendors. This is especially true in the European market where legal approaches to product protection differ significantly from those in the United States and elsewhere.

A recently published report provides information about ways European law may be used to protect proprietary rights to computer products and compares computer law in the United States to that in Europe. The basis for legal protection in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and France is covered in terms of software, contract law and liability, computer data and privacy protection, and computer crime.

The 220-page report points out that protection should be a factor in the planning of a product, in its production and promotion, and even in its naming and pricing.

Legal Protection of Computer Hardware and Software Marketed in Europe: Patents, Copyrights, Contracts, Trade Secrets is available from Technology & Business Communications, Inc., PO Box 915, Sudbury, MA 01776; (617) 443-4671.

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