



News Release

Small Form Factor Trade Group Formed to Address Emerging Technologies

Octagon, Samtec, Tri-M, VIA and WinSystems join forces to develop new SFF standards

Boston, MA, September 19, 2007 – Today at the Embedded Systems Conference, five industry leaders announced the formation of a new standards group focused on small form factors. The group, named the Small Form Factor Special Interest Group (SFF SIG), has charted a course to develop, adopt, and promote circuit board specifications and related technologies that will help electronics equipment manufacturers and integrators reduce the overall size of their next-generation systems.

This worldwide organization is accepting additional members who are interested in contributing, and currently consists of the following companies: VIA Technologies, Inc. WinSystems, Inc., Samtec, Inc., Octagon Systems, Inc., and Tri-M Systems and Engineering Inc. The group does not compete with existing trade organizations. The purpose is to address new market needs as well as specifications that are not yet managed by a trade group.

The group's philosophy is to embrace the latest technologies, as well as maintain legacy compatibility and enable transition solutions to next-generation interfaces. New technologies available to long-lifecycle system and device manufacturers include lower-power and highly integrated processors, chipsets, and memory based on 90nm and 65nm processes, higher density connectors with improvements for ruggedness, and high-speed serial interfaces such as PCI Express™, Serial ATA (SATA), and USB 2.0 which replace slower and space-consuming parallel interfaces. Some of these components were announced and displayed this week at ESC.

There are many reasons why companies should join the SFF SIG. Board suppliers with existing specifications can shepherd them through the SIG's adoption and standardization process. Companies who want to participate in the development of important new standards that shape the evolution of electronics systems, or who are planning to develop their own small form factor boards should join. OEMs and integrators who simply need to stay abreast of off-the-shelf boards technologies or who

want to have more control of their own future regarding boards can certainly join. Discussing trends with some of the sharpest minds in the industry can spark ideas that benefit individual members, too.

“VDC has been researching and tracking the market for Merchant Embedded Computer Boards for many years. It has become quite evident that the market for smaller form factor boards is increasing dramatically. This increase has been fueled by the demand for systems and devices both with a smaller footprint and with improved portability, and enabled by advances in semiconductor technology. We applaud the formation of the SFF SIG to help address standardization issues in this high-growth area,” said Eric Gulliksen, Embedded Hardware Senior Analyst.

“Due to great strides in chip-level design, VIA continues to reduce processor, chipset, and SBC size and power dissipation in order to meet emerging requirements for new SFF systems such as battery powered devices and industrial systems,” said Daniel Wu, assistant vice president, VIA Technologies, Inc.

“SFF SIG is yet more proof of the growing strength and viability of the embedded market. It gives other form factors a standards-based organization in which to develop, promote and standardize new technologies for applications requiring embedded solutions,” said Bob Burckle, vice president, WinSystems, Inc.

“We are excited to join this new dynamic group. It is forward-looking and ambitious, something that is lacking with many legacy organizations. We believe that we can contribute our expertise in rugged PCs and boards to the SFF SIG,” said John McKown, president of Octagon Systems, Inc. “New small form factor specifications must take into account system-level considerations including thermal dissipation, I/O expansion, and reliable interconnects.”

“Samtec is already developing several new high density products to address the SFF market, including the SBS (Silicon Blade Socket) series announced here at ESC,” said David Givens, development manager, Samtec, Inc.

The SFF SIG has formed three working groups to address different product categories. The SBC Working Group is discussing new small form factor single board computers. The Modules Working Group is developing a specification for a new small computer-on-module (COM) form factor. The Stackables Working Group is examining approaches to embracing new high-speed serial technologies into legacy systems in a smooth manner that preserves investments in I/O, cabling, and enclosure designs. The initial members would like to solicit input from system manufacturers and integrators in order to ensure that specifications serve the end-user community as fully as possible.

There are two membership categories for the SFF SIG. Voting members are involved in promoting, supporting, and developing specifications for small form factor boards, components, and systems. In addition, voting members review specifications that are submitted to the SFF SIG for adoption. Non-voting members provide inputs directly to internal specification development, and can view these specifications prior to publication, but do not cast approval votes.

For more information about the SFF SIG, visit www.sff-sig.org, e-mail info@sff-sig.org, or call Colin McCracken at 408-480-7900.

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