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## Improv team forms video processor company

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LONDON — Vivace Semiconductor Inc. was founded in December 2005 to develop secure video processor chips. It has been formed by executives from Improv Systems Inc. (Beverly, Mass.), which was described in the early years of this decade as a configurable DSP company.

Vivace (Beverly, Mass.) already refers to the Vivid processor core as its media engine and the VSP200 and VSP300 as the first two integrated circuit implementations on its [website](#). However, no timetabling information could be found as to when the VSP200 and VSP300 would ship to customers, or if they already were shipping.

The VSP200 secure video processing chip is aimed at portable video players while the VSP300 is aimed at high-definition integrated digital televisions and both run the Linux operating system, according to the company's website.

Despite the company's relative youth its processor core has been implemented in six different manufacturing process technologies by more than 12 customers, the company claimed on the site. The architecture and media compression software have been productized for over two years, the site also stated.

Vivace seems to have a similar mission to Improv and be a development of that company that has homed in on application-specific implementations of digital processing. Vivace was cofounded by a number of Improv executives including Cary Ussery, who serves as president and chief executive officer, Mark Indovina, vice president of engineering and chief technology officer, and Richard Wanzenried, director of hardware engineering.

The [Improv website](#) continued to operate and listed Ussery as the company's president and chief executive officer and Indovina as its vice president of engineering, when this story was first posted. The most recent press release on the Improv website was dated Jan. 27, 2003.

The newly-created Vivace has attracted David French, president and chief executive officer of Cirrus Logic Inc. (Austin, Texas) to serve as chairman of the board of directors.

Vivace's chips are set to provide support for multiple standards, including AVC, MPEG4, MPEG2, Windows Media, Real Media, Shockwave/Flash and VC-1, and consume only 100-mW when delivering full-rate video, according to the firm's website. Vivace's chips are programmable and, with the exception of security features, Vivace has offered to provide customers with source code.

Vivace is targeting the security and digital rights management (DRM) aspects of video in particular and offers to support multiple DRM schemes including those outlined in the SVP standard, Microsoft DRM, iTunes' FairPlay, Sun Microsystems' DReAM and others.

Vivace's Ussery is unusual in having degrees in Math and Music, which may explain the naming of Improv and

Vivace. Improv is short for improvisation while Vivace is a musical term borrowed from the Italian meaning “lively” or “quick”.

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