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Vivace Semiconductor Unveils Strategy to Deliver Next-Gen Video Processing Chips

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Contributed by: [Tommy](#)

BEVERLY, Mass. – Vivace Semiconductor has unveiled its strategy and roadmap for delivering programmable, low-power solutions to developers of integrated displays/digital televisions (DTV) and portable media player products. Based on the company's patented and production-proven ViViD Media™ engine technology, Vivace's feature-rich solutions are optimized for fast-moving market segments — providing a range of integrated capabilities, supporting multiple video and audio standards, and consuming very low power when delivering full-rate video.



Vivace was founded by Cary Ussery in 2005, and leverages his experience in multi-processor core development, as well as customized media processing solutions. Joining Ussery are Bryan Greear as VP of Sales, former president of NS8 Corp., a digital rights management company; Mark Indovina, VP of Engineering; and Rick Wanzenried, Director of Hardware. David French, president & CEO of Cirrus Logic (Austin, TX) is part of the founding team and serves as Chairman of the board of directors. The company has licensed the JazzDSP™, high-performance configurable processor technology, from Improv Systems, which Ussery also founded in the late 1990s and whose cores have been implemented in a variety of processes with multiple customers.

"The Portable Media Player market is forecasted to grow at a CAGR of 61.9% from 2005 to 2010, while the networked Digital TV market is expected to grow at 262.8% over the same time period," said Jason Blackwell, CEO, of S2 Data Corporation. "There will be a high demand for semiconductor products that meet the very specific market requirements and functionality needs for these platforms. A strategy that combines feature-rich support with low power capabilities and competitive price points is required to be successful in these spaces."

Vivace detailed its technology and product strategy at the Semiconductor Venture Fair in San Francisco this week, unveiling plans for its initial family of ViViD Media engine-based secure processor chips. The company's VSP200 device is targeted at portable video player devices. The low power solution enables the highest quality video on mobile devices at very low silicon cost. The VSP300 is aimed at high-definition integrated DTV devices. The high performance solution enables the

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highest quality video integrated into a platform that supports wireless access to high definition streams.

"The features and capabilities of video-enabled consumer devices are expanding beyond traditional display products, with multiple devices converging into single multi-function products. We have developed a platform that can support a complete range of integrated functionality, and ultimately lower the overall bill of materials for products in these markets. Our approach enables maximum flexibility to adapt to changes in standards and market requirements, and delivers on the cost, performance and operating characteristics necessary for a new level of competitive product differentiation," said Cary Ussery, president and CEO of Vivace. "The Vivace solution has been designed to address the specific and unique needs of portable media players and integrated displays such as DTVs, through the combination of our custom multi-processor technology, Linux-based software architecture, wide range of available software modules and robust tool suite to customize our devices."

Vivace will enable consumer electronics equipment to support high quality video display, personal video recorder (PVR) functionality, extended audio support and integration into both wired and wireless broadband networks. The chips support multiple video compression standards including H264/MPEG4 AVC, MPEG4 ASP, Windows Media 9, MPEG2 and VC-1, audio compression standards including AAC+, MP3 and Dolby Digital™ and multiple encryption standards including AES, DES, 3-DES and DVB CSA. By integrating a broad range of media modules with multiple interfaces supporting different sources of media data, Vivace's chips can help lower the overall system cost of producing feature-rich consumer products.

"The future proliferation of video content available from a wide variety of sources in numerous formats and supported by a multitude of standards requires a flexible and feature-rich silicon platform now," said Paul O'Donovan, Principal Research Analyst, Consumer Electronics Semiconductor Group, Gartner Dataquest. "Product developers in these very dynamic markets must be able to incorporate new features and functionality, at competitive price points, so the more programmable and the more integrated a chip solution, the better."

Application-Optimized Product Line

The Vivace chips are based on Vivace's ViViD Media engine, a highly optimized multi-processor core for video, image and audio processing. The ViViD engine provides high performance processing for video decompression, compression and decryption through a combination of parallel processing and customized instructions and accelerators. It supports a wide range of video, audio and image standards and includes custom accelerators for both the video processing and decompression tasks required for the chips. Vivace's video processor cores allows multiple media functions to be executed on a single silicon block rather than on different co-processors.

Other key elements of Vivace's strategy include:

- The use of Linux 2.6 as the 'host' operating system for the [Open Source RISC CPU](#), which provides native support for real-time functionality, multi-processing and multi-threaded execution along with an extensive list of bundled software components including rich networking and graphics.

- Advanced development systems including reference designs, boards and an advanced software development tool suite integrating development for all on-board processors.
- Vivace's chips are fully programmable and, with the exception of security features, the company provides its customers with full source code.

Vivace is implementing chips in a foundry 0.13um process and will have samples available this summer. It will detail additional information on its initial two product lines at the In-Stat Spring Processor Forum, May 15-18 in San Jose, California.

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