

CAST Releases H.264 IP Core for Highest Quality HD Video Compression

Woodcliff Lake, NJ, July 14, 2009 — Silicon Intellectual Property (IP) provider CAST, Inc. today announced the immediate availability of a new H.264 encoder core that delivers some of the best looking compressed video available.

The CAST H264-E Encoder Core (<http://www.cast-inc.com/cores/h264-e>) is intended for applications that require the transmission of the highest quality video over low bit-rate channels, including remote medical diagnostics, military targeting, satellite reconnaissance, and advanced surveillance systems. It offers this quality for screen sizes from handheld (CIF, 352 x 240 pixels) to full HD (1080p30, 1920 x 1080 at 30 frames per second).

The core fully supports the Baseline Profile, Level 4.1, of the H.264 specification (MPEG-4 Part 10, also known as MPEG-4 AVC, Advanced Video Coding). That specification, however, defines a format, not a means for achieving it, and the quality of output can vary across implementations. Every design decision in the CAST H264-E development process was made in favor of improving video quality. This uncompromising approach led to excellent output and nearly constant-quality video for even the most demanding compression challenges: high-motion scenes, quick camera panning, rapid scene changes, artificial motion, and frequent zooming.

Achieving this video quality with just Baseline Profile support means the CAST H264-E generally requires fewer resources—processing time, chip area, and power consumption—than competing cores that support higher-level profiles. In fact, the H264-E readily fits and performs well in popular FPGA devices as well as ASICs, including Altera Corporation's low cost Cyclone® III devices and the rest of the company's FPGA and HardCopy ASIC families, and the Xilinx® high-performance Virtex®-4 and Virtex®-5 device families.

"Altera and CAST have been partners for many years providing video codec cores for Altera customers," said James Smith, director of product marketing, IP partnerships at Altera Corporation. "CAST offers impressive video image processing, and its new H.264 encoder core will complement Altera's own extensive video processing IP."

“As Xilinx continues to expand its range of technology specific products and platforms targeting market specific customers, our ecosystem plays a key role in the whole product offering. CAST, a Xilinx Alliance member, offers top quality IP for Image Processing and is an integral part of the ecosystem assuring customer successes,” said Mark Jensen, Director of Industrial, Scientific, and Medical Segment Marketing at Xilinx.

The H264-E Encoder Core was developed by long-time CAST partner Alma Technologies S.A., in Greece. The core is available now, in RTL source code for ASICs or optimized netlists for programmable devices. A full description of its features, technical details, end examples of objective quality measures are available on the CAST website, <http://www.cast-inc.com>.

About CAST, Inc.

CAST provides a broad range of popular IP cores and system IP for ASICs and FPGAs. Privately owned and operating since 1993, CAST has a reputation for high-quality IP products and industry-leading technical support. The company is headquartered near New York City, partners with IP developers around the world, and works with select sales consultants and distributors throughout Europe and Asia. Learn more at www.cast-inc.com.

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