

Toshiba, ARC collaborate on configurable processor

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Toshiba Corp. and ARC International have entered into a strategic collaboration intended to grow the worldwide semiconductor industry's adoption of configurable technology, the companies announce early this week.

Under the terms of the agreement, Toshiba has taken a multiyear license for ARC's ARChitect processor configurator, which offers a set of design tools and resources using a drag-and-drop GUI. The companies will also collaborate on development of a next generation version of ARChitect that is more closely suited to Toshiba's proprietary media embedded processor (MEP), they said.

MEP offers a 32bit configurable, asymmetric multiprocessor design that can be customized to support diverse media applications, Toshiba said. In addition, it would use a version of the ARChitect processor configurator that has been customized to MEP, which the companies said would advance the development of Toshiba's next-generation SoC based on MEP.

In a statement released jointly both companies, Jim Feldhan, founder and president of market analyst Semico Research Corp., said the agreement is the latest indicator that configurable processor technology is becoming more attractive to the semiconductor industry.

"We project that, by 2010, annual shipments of SoCs incorporating a configurable core will reach 1 billion units," Feldhan said. "The work of companies such as Toshiba and ARC is one of the catalysts driving this trend, as is the ability of configurable cores to enable a very high degree of differentiation in the end device. This is critical to keeping down the overall development cost of consumer products, which is an important success factor in today's price-sensitive markets."

- Dylan McGrath
EE Times

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