WD and NEC Collaborate to Promote USB 3.0

LAKE FOREST, Calif. and KAWASAKI, Japan – December 17, 2009 – WD, a leader in external storage solutions, and NEC Electronics, a leading provider of semiconductor solutions, today announced that the companies have collaborated to promote the new SuperSpeed Universal Serial Bus (USB) 3.0 standard, a next-generation interface to be used in a wide range of electronic devices including PCs, PC peripherals, and digital appliances.

USB 3.0 is capable of supporting data transfer rates of up to 5 gigabits per second (Gbps), which is 10 times faster than the previous high-speed USB 2.0 transfer speeds. With its higher speeds and enhanced power efficiency, external hard disk drives are the first SuperSpeed USB 3.0 devices to appear on the market.

As the first step toward WD's and NEC Electronics' goal to promote the SuperSpeed USB 3.0 standard, the companies plan to develop a USB Attached SCSI Protocol (UASP) driver to deliver hard drives with very high performance, mass-storage capacity. UASP is a new industry-standard, high-performance mass-storage protocol being developed for SuperSpeed USB 3.0 to overcome the performance boundaries of the Bulk Only Transfer (BOT) protocol, which has been used for traditional USB 2.0 speeds. The new UASP driver will be used with NEC Electronics' USB 3.0 xHCI (eXtensible Host Controller Interface) host controller (part number µPD720200), which appeared on the market as the world's first USB 3.0 host controller in June 2009.

Key features of the new UASP driver

(1) Support for the UASP mass-storage protocol

(2) Data transfer rate is enhanced by 30 percent, with optimized power efficiency and smooth interoperability, compared to the existing BOT protocol

(3) NEC Electronics' license program is available for any LSI (large scale integration) vendors who develop UASP-based LSI devices

"The wide adoption of external storage, for both expanding and backing up internal computer storage, highlights the need for faster interface transfer rates. The USB 3.0 interface offers a significant advance in data transfer speed," said Robert Caddy, Jr., vice president of engineering for WD's Branded Products Group. "We are pleased to collaborate with NEC Electronics as a leading supplier of USB host devices in the introduction of USB 3.0 technology to the storage market."

"Partnering with WD enables us to combine our USB transfer technology with WD's data storage technology and provide added value to our customers," said Masao Hirasawa, deputy general manager, Home Multimedia Division, NEC Electronics

Corporation. “Starting with the new HDDs, WD and NEC Electronics are working together as the industrial leaders to expand USB 3.0 marketplace offerings with the highest quality and performance solutions while speeding time to market.”

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