Network media module provides cost-effective AirPlay solution

Microchip Technology announced its latest-generation SMSC JukeBlox Wi-Fi connectivity platform [1], featuring the JukeBlox 3.1-AAP (part # JB3.1-AAP) Software Development Kit (SDK) in combination with the new CX875 Wi-Fi Network Media Module. This platform expansion delivers highly integrated and specialized connectivity software along with a cost-optimized and fully certified CX875 Wi-Fi module, featuring the new, low-cost DM875 Network Media Processor and 8 MB of SDRAM to reduce BOM costs by up to 20%. Through these cost reductions and ease of use, this latest-generation JukeBlox platform enables a new category of AirPlay compatible wireless audio streaming systems with retail pricing down to $149.

Enhancements to Microchip's JB Connect simplified Wi-Fi network setup technology, along with the easy network setup features in Apple's iOS, make this JukeBlox technology expansion the easiest and most user-friendly solution for designing AirPlay products to date. This easy setup, in conjunction with improvements to Wi-Fi performance and system boot-up times, makes Wi-Fi streaming even more robust and improves the overall user experience. Microchip's latest-generation JukeBlox platform also provides seamless support for the new iOS 6 and iPhone 5, with their related AirPlay music streaming and control features.

Microchip's new CX875 Wi-Fi Network Media Module is based on its new, low-cost SMSC DM875 Wi-Fi Network Media Processor. This triple-core processor includes an integrated DSP and, with the new JB DSP 2.0 software, can provide added digital-

signal-processing performance for enhanced audio capabilities. Examples include bass enhancements and acoustic optimizations done on-chip, further lowering BOM costs by reducing or eliminating the need for a separate DSP. Refinements to the JB Fast Boot feature typically reduce boot-up times from a full power-down state to “ready and connected” within 5-10 seconds—leading the industry for Wi-Fi connected CE products. The complete Wi-Fi certified module solution enables lower-risk development, easier manufacturing and faster time to market, via the combination of a fully integrated Wi-Fi and RF subsystem, and many industry-standard pre-certifications.

“The market for networked audio is quickly moving from early adopters to mainstream users, and both cost and ease of use are the key ingredients to get there,” said Gene Sheridan, senior vice president and general manager of SMSC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Microchip Technology Inc. “Our new ‘JB3.1-AAP plus CX875’ Wi-Fi connectivity platform answers these needs and sets up the market for the next wave of significant growth and adoption.”

The JB3.1-AAP SDK software will also run on the current CX870 series modules, as well as on the previously announced Manufacturing Kit 2 (MK2), which is a fully integrated, low-cost Wi-Fi speaker dock reference-design platform. The comprehensive JB3.1-AAP SDK offers improved application programming interfaces (APIs), along with tools to simplify product development and customization efforts. Many of the new JB3.1 features can be leveraged via software changes, further extending customer investments in existing product platforms. The SDK offers core libraries that address higher software layers, middleware for media streaming, content access, navigation and system control, configuration files for remote-control functions and more

The JukeBlox platform [1] continues to offer a complete range of audio codecs, Internet radio protocols, popular music apps, a variety of connectivity options and all of the major interoperability standards. JukeBlox also features fail-safe firmware updates that allow for new features to be deployed to end consumers, over time, without hardware changes.

Pricing & availability

Samples of the CX875 with JB3.1-AAP are available immediately, with production orders accepted in December 2012. Production pricing for the CX875 with JB3.1-AAP is $15.50 each, in quantities of 25,000 units per year. For more information on Microchip’s SMSC JukeBlox technology, contact any Microchip sales representative or authorized worldwide distributor, or visit http://www.microchip.com/get/EHSJ [1].

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[1] http://www.microchip.com/get/EHSJ