

congatec AG Expand Product strategy with ARM Architecture

congatec AG, a leading manufacturer of embedded computer modules, is set to expand its product portfolio with the addition of ARM technology. This will allow the company to offer products with extremely low power requirements in the future. As a first step in that direction, congatec is expanding its Qseven product family with Freescale processors.

Up until now, congatec has focused exclusively on x86-based COMs (Computer-on Modules). As part of its new product strategy, the company now plans to increasingly use ARM technology. Processor technology, which in the past only offered a choice between Intel and AMD, will now be extended to include Freescale and its ARM-based i.MX portfolio of products.

The COM concept integrates all generally available interfaces onto the computer module itself while any special interfaces are implemented on individually-tailored carrier boards. In complete contrast, the majority of existing ARM processors come with specialized interfaces designed to suit dedicated applications. These cannot be used by COMs in a standard format and are therefore neither interchangeable nor scalable. However, the new generation of ARM processors focuses on standard PC interfaces such as USB and PCI Express and will therefore be ideally suited to COMs.

The Qseven standard was designed from the very beginning around modern interfaces. Its specification was updated in September 2010 (Revision 1.20) to enable the development of 100% compatible ARM-based modules. The features offered by modern ARM processors and the interface definitions of the Qseven are a perfect match and require no additional I/Os. This allows the development of price/performance-optimized modules and also makes the modules suitable for a range of completely new applications – many of them related to mobile operation and deployment.

“In Freescale, we have found a reliable partner with whom we will be able to meet the requirements of our customers with regard to operating system support and long-term availability. Thanks to our close cooperation with Freescale, we are now in a position to begin the development of Qseven modules with extremely low levels of power consumption,” said Gerhard Edi, CEO of congatec AG. “In order to also give our customers a massive time-to-market advantage with this platform, we are investing heavily in software support for the ARM processors.”

Henri Richard, senior vice president of Sales and Marketing for Freescale said, “Our ecosystem of partners is an integral part of our go-to-market strategy. congatec is an ideal partner in every aspect of our collaboration, and our next generation i.MX products will be introduced into applications more quickly and easily thanks to congatec’s Qseven modules.”

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The first products resulting from the Freescale collaboration are expected to be available by the middle of 2012.

For more information email info@congatec.com [1] or visit www.congatec.com [2]

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