Panasonic Develops 8-bit Microcomputers With Built-in Universal VBI-Data Slicer

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Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., best known for its Panasonic brand products, announced today it has developed two types of 8-bit microcomputers each including a built-in Vertical Blanking Interval (VBI) data slicer that supports all VBI-data service standards currently employed around the world. The new microcomputers, MN101C86G (mask ROM version) and MN101CF86G (flash memory version), are ideal for digital recording equipment such as DVD recorders.

Television signals include an interval called VBI between successive picture frames. The interval is used to carry various types of data broadcasting services such as Teletext, closed caption, electronic program guide (EPG) among others. With the built-in slicing capabilities of different formats of VBI-data, the new microcomputers enable standardization of system boards for receiving those services, which can be incorporated in DVD recorders, cable TV decoders and Teletext receivers.

The new chips not only offer cost advantages through standardization but also product design benefits. With a variety of serial interfaces, the chips can be connected easily to other LSIs in all-in-one combination products as well as high-end units, enabling flexible design of systems architecture. Another feature is that the chip has the highest level of stable data slicing capabilities currently available even in a poor signal reception environment.

The new microcomputers incorporate the following critical technologies:

1) a slicing technology compatible with all the VBI-data standards currently used in Europe, North America and Japan, 2) a built-in circuit that can cope with low electric fields keeping the slicing capability at an optimal level, and 3) built-in synchronous/UART and I2C serial interfaces.

Including current applications, Panasonic owns three Japanese and another three overseas patents on the new microcomputers. Sample shipments are planned for August 2004 at a unit price of 2,000 yen (MN101CF86G), and mass production is scheduled for December 2004.

The original press release can be found here.