

New Consumer Electronic Interface On Future Hard Drives

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Hitachi Global Storage Technologies today announced its intention to support the new CE-ATA interface on future small form factor hard drives for consumer electronics, including one-inch and 1.8-inch products.

In a related announcement alongside Intel and other companies, Hitachi announced its participation in a new initiative to define the CE-ATA interface, which will be tailored to the needs of handheld and portable consumer electronic devices such as mobile phones, personal digital assistants and MP3 players. The new interface is intended to address CE-specific requirements such as low pin-count, low voltage, power efficiency, cost effectiveness and integration efficiency

Hitachi has already recognized the importance of creating hard drives that are designed to meet the needs of CE customers. The company took a step in this direction last week with the announcement of the Hitachi Travelstar C4K60, a 1.8-inch drive that uses a ZIF connector common to the CE industry, rather than a standard notebook hard drive-based connector. With the ZIF connector, Hitachi has created the industry's smallest 1.8-inch footprint and provided an easier integration process for consumer device manufacturers.

"We look forward to being part of industry efforts, like this one to define the CE-ATA interface, that help to quicken and ease the adoption of hard drives in consumer devices," said Bill Healy, senior vice president, Consumer & Commercial Hard Disk Drives, Hitachi Global Storage Technologies. "Hitachi will bring much to the development of

this new interface with our long-standing expertise in hard drive miniaturization and knowledge in working with CE customers."

Hitachi led the industry in forging the adoption of hard disk drives in consumer electronic devices with the Microdrive one-inch product in 1999 - first with digital camera manufacturers. Hitachi grew the one-inch hard drive category exponentially with the adoption of the Microdrive as the high-capacity storage medium for manufacturers of digital music players. The Microdrive and Travelstar 1.8-inch product lines represent Hitachi's near-term opportunities to adopt the new interface once it is defined.

"Along with ongoing efforts to improve cost, performance, battery life and shock specifications, we believe the CE-ATA interface has the potential to encourage the broadening of the number and types of applications that can be enjoyed on small consumer devices due to the affordability of high-capacity hard drives," Healy noted. Hitachi's work on the CE-ATA interface is one more step in the company's overall consumer hard drive initiative.

The Consumer Drive

Hitachi launched the industry's broadest hard drive portfolio for consumer electronics in early 2003, ranging from one-inch to 3.5-inch form factors.

With its consumer initiative, Hitachi recognized that the highest-growth hard drive segments are moving from traditional commercial applications to consumer devices. According to IDC, worldwide portable jukebox unit shipments will reach more than 25 million units in 2008. Additionally, more than 25 million digital video recorders and 40 million video game hardwares will be shipped the same year.

In developing hard drives for mass-market CE customers, Hitachi is

striking the balance between small device and high-capacity from the end-user perspective and improved cost and ease of integration from the manufacturer viewpoint. With these attributes, manufacturers of consumer electronics are enabling a host of rich and more powerful applications than ever before. These include mobile phones, digital video cameras, smaller yet more capacious digital video and audio players, affordable set-top boxes and PVRs, among others. Hitachi's comprehensive approach to the consumer segment will also address high-end hard drives for top-of-the-line consumer devices.

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