

New Hitachi Design Studios to incubate hard-drive-based consumer devices

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Hitachi Global Storage Technologies is announcing the opening of five new centers around the globe that will specialize in helping customers integrate hard drives into consumer electronic (CE) devices. By April, the new centers -- called the Hitachi Design Studios -- will be open for business in Fujisawa, Japan; Havant, UK; Rochester, Minnesota; Shenzhen, China and Taipei, Taiwan.

This strategic move will enable Hitachi to accelerate the adoption of hard drives in CE devices and lead the fastest-growing segment of the hard disk drive industry. Hitachi is one of the top two providers of hard drives for CE devices, according to IDC. The analyst firm also predicts that the HDD industry will ship more than 200 million hard drives for consumer electronics (including home networking and storage) in 2008*, accounting for about 40% of all HDDs.

“We’re focusing on consumer electronics in big way with the worldwide opening of the Hitachi Design Studios,” said Bill Healy, senior vice president, product strategy and marketing, Hitachi Global Storage Technologies. “Hitachi’s expertise in miniature hard drives and background in developing consumer electronics gives us an unmatched skill set to offer credible and critical guidance to our customers. We also believe that the Hitachi Design Studios will help to stimulate and incubate fresh ideas for usage of hard drives in consumer devices that lie beyond the immediate stretch of the imagination.”

To support Hitachi’s overall 2005 CE strategy, the Hitachi Design

Studios will focus on three key CE segments, which are the highest-growth segments – MP3/personal media players (PMP), digital video recorders (DVR) and mobile phones. The Hitachi Design Studios will provide support to small- and medium-sized customers, where some of the most innovative applications are born and, often, where hard-drive integration support is most needed. The Design Studios will also provide support to select large customers with newly emerging applications such as hard drive-enabled mobile phones.

Integrating hard drives into CE devices requires a level of understanding and approach different from IT devices. For example, consumer usage patterns require longer battery life, more rugged designs, higher capacities, smaller footprint, less focus on performance and greater emphasis on value. These are the factors that Hitachi CE engineers keep in mind as they advise customers on selecting the right hard drive, software compatibility with various operating systems, reliability and mounting considerations, and design integration. In working with CE customers, Hitachi will also be able to identify the direction in which consumer trends are heading and can work with its Research and Development departments to tailor new hard drives for this segment.

“Design centers such as Hitachi’s reaffirm the growing importance of the consumer electronics segment of the disk drive business. This latest effort further illustrates the company’s commitment in small-form-factor HDDs,” said Dave Reinsel, IDC Storage Program Director.

Vision Technology Corporate Limited, a leading distributor of computer peripherals and consumer electronics products, was the first company selected by Hitachi GST in 2003 to develop consumer electronics business in the China market.

“With nearly 80 percent of the integration work for consumer devices being done in Asia Pacific, we are clearly in need of this type of

support,” said Lewis Lo, CEO, Vision. “Hitachi has long been at the forefront of small-form-factor hard drives and is in the best position to advise manufacturers on how to incorporate them into devices across a variety of consumer applications.”

The new Hitachi Design Studios will initially provide support on eight application areas, with special emphasis on MP3/PMP, DVR and mobile phone applications:

Recording – digital video recorder, personal video recorders, set-top box, digital audio recorder, iVDR, CCTV

- Photography – digital still & video cameras
- Entertainment – personal video player, video viewer, personal media player, MP3, flat panel TVs
- Industrial – external storage, USB applications, industrial applications (printer, copiers, switches, routers, PBX, robotics, test & measurement)
- Handhelds – smart phones, PDA, wearable PC, GPS, converged devices
- Automotive – automotive systems, navigation systems, telematics
- Gaming – game consoles (information appliances)
- Reference designs – provide help for developing prototype designs with hard drives

Customers working through the Hitachi Design Studios can also

qualify for the “Hard Drive by Hitachi” ingredient branding program. This red-and-white sticker, affixed to the outside of the end-user device, signifies the high quality and integral role that the Hitachi’s hard drive plays within the device.

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