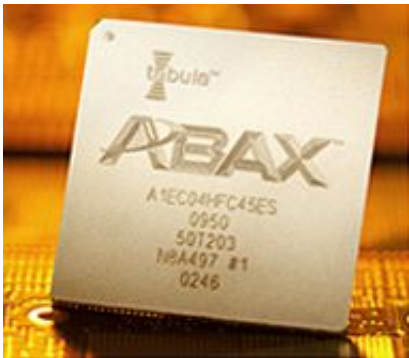


Tabula garners \$108 million in support of its virtual 3-D reprogrammable chips

April 18 2011, by Bob Yirka



(PhysOrg.com) -- In what many are describing as a game-changer, Tabula Inc. has closed on \$108 million in investment funds from Greylock, NEA, Benchmark Capital and others, to bring to market its 3PLD ABAX programmable chips that have thus far proven to be both faster and less costly than competitors, Xilinx and Altera, makers of the larger, more cumbersome, field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs).

Tabula has achieved a new milestone in the development of reprogrammable chips by creating a [chip](#) that is not only reprogrammable, but is able to mimic how a 3-D chip might operate if one were available for use in real world conditions. Currently, FPGAs are somewhat sluggish compared to pre-programmable chips due to the larger footprint required for the reprogrammable components. Tabula

has figured out a way around this problem by creating chips that are able to behave as a 3-D, or layered chip, by using a virtual swapping technique. In the announcement, Steve Teig, CTO of the company, likens it to a person stepping into an elevator, then instead of the elevator moving between floors (layers) someone moves all the furniture around on the current floor before the doors can open once again, giving the appearance of having traveled to another floor. The chip is capable of addressing up to eight different virtual layers, or folds, as the company calls them, at up to 1.6 Gigahertz.

FPGAs have traditionally been used in high-end equipment, such as MRI scanners, due to their high cost; but with this announcement comes the promise of reprogrammable chip sets being installed in everyday appliances, such as HDTVs and computers; an idea worth noting mainly for the fact that it should result in reducing consumer prices of these devices. This is because one of the major costs of electronic equipment is the huge over-head development outlays currently required for designing dedicated chip-sets.

Devices with reprogrammable chip-sets could conceivably be updated over the internet, much as software updates are now done, thus giving new life to an aging product, and delaying its inevitable obsolescence, saving consumers even more money.

The \$108 million is the largest round in a decade for a chip maker, and is perhaps a signal that investors are not just bullish on Tabula, but on the future of tech companies in general after a slight decline during the past few years of economic turbulence.

More information: www.tabula.com/

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