

Altera Marks Its 1,000th U.S. Patent

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Major Milestone Represents Altera's Strong Patent Portfolio and Industry- Leading Innovations in Programmable Logic and Structured ASICs

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SAN JOSE, Calif., July 26 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Altera Corporation (Nasdaq: ALTR - News) today announced that it has received its 1,000th U.S. patent. The new patent, a "Programmable Logic Device With Soft Multiplier," adds to a broad portfolio of patents built up over Altera's 22-year history of innovation. This portfolio underscores Altera's technology leadership position at a time when the electronics industry is putting greater emphasis on its use of programmable logic as an alternative to ASICs and ASSPs.

Altera invented the first reprogrammable logic device, the EP300, in 1983. Starting with its first patent, "Programmable Logic Array Device Using EPROM Technology" by founder Bob Hartman et al., Altera's patent portfolio covers all aspects of programmable logic, including devices, on-chip transceivers, memory and digital signal processing (DSP) blocks, IP cores, I/O circuits, development software and design flows. In addition, Altera holds a number of important structured ASIC patents issued over the years as part of its development of the HardCopy® structured ASIC family.

"Since its founding, Altera has been active in filing patents to protect the innovations of our employees, to stay competitive and to aggressively preserve our position as an industry leader," said John Daane, Altera's president, CEO and chairman of the board. "In spite of the cyclical nature of the semiconductor industry, we've always continued to invest in the development and protection of our innovations. In addition to the one thousand patents already issued to Altera, we have hundreds more in the pipeline, which we have filed in recent years."

Many of the technologies patented by Altera are the keys to its success in the programmable logic business. For example, the Altera® patented redundancy technology, which dramatically increases yields and lowers device costs, was a major contributing factor to the company's successful product rollouts at the 130-nm and 90-nm process nodes.

"The growing importance of programmable logic to the electronics industry at large is being aggressively met by the incumbent programmable logic vendors," said senior analyst Richard Wawrzyniak of Semico Research. "It's because of these innovations that programmable logic is finding its way into new markets, such as consumer and DSP applications."

Altera's implementation of soft multipliers, which is partially covered by the "Programmable Logic Device With Soft Multiplier" patent, further supports the penetration of programmable logic into the DSP market. The implementation by Altera uses the TriMatrix(TM) memory blocks in the Stratix® family of devices for applications that require a very large number of multipliers, such as third-generation (3G) base stations and image-processing applications. With these soft multipliers, in addition to the hard-wired DSP blocks in the Stratix series of devices, designers can customize their designs to match the requirements of almost any DSP application.

About Altera

Altera Corporation is the world's pioneer in system-on-a-programmable-chip (SOPC) solutions. Combining programmable logic technology with software tools, intellectual property and technical services, Altera provides high-value programmable solutions to approximately 14,000 customers worldwide. More information is available at www.altera.com.

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