



NANAIMO COMPUTER CLUB NEWS

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Samsung's Big Flash!

Dan Nystedt, IDG News Service

Samsung unveils chip that can be used to create 64GB flash memory cards.

Samsung Electronics showed off its first 40-nanometer chip, a 32-gigabit NAND flash memory module that can be used in memory cards able to store up to 64 gigabytes of data, or 40 movies.

The latest step into smaller chip manufacturing methods brings Samsung to the forefront of chip production, putting it ahead of other manufacturers, including Intel, which has only announced chips built at 45nm. The chips are also the seventh generation of NAND flash memory to follow in a Moore's law-type theory posited by Samsung, that the company will double the capacity of NAND flash every 12 months (read "Samsung Readies 32GB Memory Cards" for background).

Smaller Chips Needed

Such advances are vital to the consumer



electronics industry. Users are demanding ever smaller devices that can do more, such as handsets with built-in mobile phone, computing, camera, and digital music playing functions. Demand for more storage to keep photos, videos, songs and other data has expanded rapidly over the past few years, and analysts expect the trend to continue.

The 40nm chip production technique is key to making chips smaller, faster, more powerful, and cheaper to produce. A nanometer is a billionth of a meter, and the measurement is a guide to the size of the transistors and other parts that are etched onto the chips. Typically, the more transistors, and the closer they are together, the faster the chip can perform tasks.

New Design Technique

The company also revealed a new design technique, Charge Trap Flash (CTF), that will allow it to eventually shrink NAND chip features to 20nm, and produce 256-gigabit

(Continued on page 2)



Little Tommy had been to a birthday party at a friend's house. Knowing his sweet tooth, Tommy's mother looked straight into his eyes and said, "I hope you didn't ask for a second piece of cake." "No, but I asked Mrs. Smith for the recipe so you could make some like it, and she gave me two more pieces without asking."



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chips. In the 32-gigabit chips, the control gate in the CTF is only a fifth as big as conventional control gates on chips in a typical floating gate structure. With CTF, there is no floating gate. Instead, data is temporarily placed in a holding chamber made of silicon nitride.

Chip for Hybrid Drives

Samsung also released a new chip for its hybrid drives, a kind of hard drive aimed at laptops that uses NAND flash as a disk cache, to speed boot-up times and reduce power consumption

The new chip, dubbed an SoC (system-on-

chip) because it does the work of several chips, incorporates up to 4-gigabytes of NAND flash as a data buffer and helps further speeds boot-up times while lengthening battery life, the company said.

The chips will be in mass production in November.

Samsung is one of several companies working on hybrid drives. Seagate Technology and Intel are also developing the technology for notebook computers.

Submitted by: G. Bulger



Michael Dell accepts share of blame

*Jeremy Peter – The New York Times-
Sep. 12, 2006*

Dell, the founder and chairman of the company, the world's largest computer maker, spoke one day after the company said that the Justice Department had joined an investigation of its financial reporting procedures.

That followed a disclosure last month that the Securities and Exchange Commission

had been investigating the company for more than a year over the way it recorded its revenue.

Dell and Rollins both spoke Tuesday in Manhattan while promoting a business plan for the company called Dell 2.0, which focuses on enhanced customer service. In addition to discussing the plan, much of which had already been announced, Rollins said that "every element" of the company's business model in the United States and Europe was under review.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



Aspire to inspire before you expire.



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Google, Microsoft vie for Earth domination

David Meyer - CNET News Published: September 12, 2006

A new version of Google Earth is imminent, but Microsoft has plans to beef up its rival application Virtual Earth.

An updated version of Google Earth is to be released on Tuesday night, adding a timescale to the basic version of the Web-based geospatial application.

The feature--in which a slider is used to scroll through time--was previously available only to users of the premium version, Google Earth Pro, and now features a simplified interface.

Michael Jones, the chief technology officer for Google Earth, demonstrated the feature at the Association for Geographic Information event, AGI2006, in London, on Tuesday. Jones showed how scientists, who had tracked the movements of a whale shark using GPS, had then mapped the creature's path using the application.

Business uses include fleet tracking, or mapping the movements of transport infrastructure, according to Google. Jones also described how the new version would enable people to track all of the geostationary satellites orbiting the earth.

More than 30,000 developers around the world are using the Google Earth application programming interface, and there have been 100 million downloads of

Google Earth, Google claims.

Google Earth's tendency to use photographs that are often out of date would not diminish the usefulness of the time-tracking functionality, as the basic application was primarily a tool to provide context, Jones explained.

"(The function) allows you to scroll through data layered on top of that," he said on Tuesday. "We're just trying to provide context to understand it."

Google Earth received a major database update at the end of last week, introducing 15-centimeter resolution for the first time to areas such as the Netherlands and Japan.

Microsoft was also represented at the event by Vincent Tao, director of MSN Virtual Earth--the software giant's rival application to Google Earth. Tao highlighted recent improvements made to Virtual Earth, in particular the ability to view certain areas from an oblique "birds-eye view." This addition was made to certain U.K. areas this week, he added.

An angled perspective could provide a more detailed and recognizable view of buildings and monuments than a straight overhead angle. Google's application provides angled views, mainly through users' models of buildings and geographical features.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



I dialed a number and got the following recording:

"I am not available right now, but thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep. If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes."



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Humour



My wife and I had words, but I didn't get to use mine.



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\$\$Vista News\$\$

Microsoft briefly posted pricing for Windows Vista on its Canadian Web site, giving an eye into what the company will charge for the new operating system.

The posting indicates that the Home Basic edition of Windows Vista will be priced the same as Windows XP Home, at \$233 (\$259 Canadian). The Home Premium version, which includes support for Media Center and tablet PC abilities will sell for 13 percent higher rate, a price that translates to about \$269 in American dollars.

Microsoft quickly removed the price information, but blogger Ed Bott, who spotted the price list, included the price list in a ZDNet posting. Bott cautioned that those trying to figure out U.S. pricing would be better off comparing the Canadian Vista prices to their XP counterparts than to try and just convert to U.S. dollars.

A Microsoft representative said the company "inadvertently posted Windows Vista Canadian retail prices" on its Web site but said it has removed the posting and is not ready to share U.S. pricing information. The company said it would announce those prices when it ships the "Release Candidate 1" test version, due out by September.

On the business side, Microsoft listed Windows Vista Business at a price that equates to \$341 in U.S. currency, 7 percent less than what Microsoft charges in Canada for Windows XP Professional.

The company is still wrapping up development work on the oft-delayed Windows update, which will come more than five years after its predecessor, Windows XP. After issuing the near-final release candidate next month, the company hopes to finalize the code in November in time for a mainstream launch in January.

Microsoft has yet to announce publicly its pricing plans, but has said that they will be generally similar to Windows XP prices, with a higher tag planned for Windows Vista Ultimate, a new high-end version that combines advanced media features with business-oriented features.

"We don't expect significant changes in our pricing strategy," Windows unit head Kevin Johnson said at a July meeting with financial analysts. "However, Vista Ultimate is a new (product) and we will sell that at a modest premium to today's offerings."

The information that was posted on Microsoft's Canadian Web site suggests that premium will be hefty indeed, with that version priced at \$449, again translated into U.S. dollars.

On the upgrade front, a Vista Ultimate upgrade is priced somewhat above today's cost for upgrading to XP Professional. The software maker announced in February that it plans to sell six versions of Windows Vista, including Vista Starter, which will only be sold on new PCs in emerging markets.

Submitted by: Greg Wilson



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Why should I get a good Power Supply?

There are currently a large variety of power supply manufacturers and the cheaper ones should be avoided.

Cheap power supplies not only provide poor output and stability, but generate much more heat than higher end models. Increased heat in your power supply will reduce its lifespan and cause erratic power fluctuations causing all sorts of computer problems.

Of course, that is if it didn't blow up first taking out some of your hardware. Just recently, I was called out to a clients place because their computer wouldn't turn on. I suspected it would be a blown power supply caused by a surge and all I would have to do was swap out the power supply.

I went to run some tests and put a new power supply into it however when I unplugged the ATX connector on the motherboard I noticed



some peculiar damage.

It turns out that one of the pins has completely melted into the motherboards power socket and 3 others were seriously scorched.

This was caused either by:

- The pins were making poor contact with the motherboard and the computer was using a lot of power which generated a lot of heat which eventually melted the pins.
- The system was using more power than the power supply could supply In both cases this is caused by cheap power supplies which resulted in the motherboard and power supply needing to be replaced.

Scared now? Good. We all should give the power supply the respect it deserves.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



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Firefox beta 2 out

Eric Bangeman – ARS Technica

Although not as widely anticipated as some of the other products currently inching towards release, many web surfers are looking forward to version 2.0 of Firefox. The popular open-source browser has seen its release date pushed to late October, but those of you who are dying to get hold of the latest from Mozilla can download Firefox 2.0 Beta 2, which was made available earlier today.

Firefox 2.0 is a modest step in the browser's development, as some of the more widely anticipated (and cooler) features having fallen by the wayside during the development cycle. Not making the cut for 2.0 were a new bookmark and history system that originally appeared in an alpha build, which were axed due to developer concerns that their inclusion would further delay the release of 2.0.

There are some new features to be excited about, though. Version 2 has a nice, integrated spell checker so you can proof your

well-thought-out comments in the OpenForum. Also featured is a new antiphishing tool like that in Opera 9 and the upcoming Internet Explorer 7 that warns users when they are entering a potentially malicious website.

Firefox 2.0 also sports some modest improvements to its search engine management feature and tweaks to its tabbed interface.

I gave Beta 2 a quick test drive this morning, and I was rather impressed. The first thing I noticed was that only one of my extensions (PDF Download) is compatible with Beta 2; that should change quickly once the final product is out. Aside from that, my browsing experience was fast and smooth. Although I'm not planning to drop Camino any time soon on Mac OS X, Firefox 2.0b2 is now my default Windows browser.

Firefox 2.0 is currently scheduled for release on October 24.

*Submitted by:
Y. Bulger*



The End



"There are better ways to log off."