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Dialog Continues IoT Push, Acquires Creative Chips for \$80m

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Qorvo Buys Cavendish Kinetics Outright

RF specialist Qorvo has acquired Cavendish Kinetics, Inc. (CK), a provider of high-performance RF MEMS technology for antenna tuning applications, most notably 5G handsets. The move not only expands Qorvo's market potential, it also serves to buffer the company from the perception that it is over-reliant on one particular customer: Apple.

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TALK TO US



NXP Unveils GHz MCU, Hints at FinFET MCU

PARIS — Gigahertz is where no microcontroller vendor has gone before, but FinFET is even deeper in outer space for the MCU sector. MCU powerhouse NXP, determined to outpace its peers, has crashed through the GHz barrier and might be on its way to a FinFET MCU.

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Internet Giants Smart Devices to Boost MEMS Demand

Built-into millions of smart speakers, smart devices and smartphones across the globe, MEMS are securely ensclosed in the smart home, and Internet giants such as Alibaba, Google and Amazon will continue to drive demand as they invest in smart cities, smart medicine, smart buildings — smart everything.

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Future Horizons Ltd, • 44 Bethel Road • Sevenoaks • Kent TN13 3UE • England

Tel: +44 1732 740440 • Fax: +44 1732 740442

e-mail: mail@futurehorizons.com • <http://www.futurehorizons.com/>

Affiliates in Europe, India, Israel, Japan, Russian, San Jose California, USA

Samsung Improve KV Spec With SSD Prototype

TORONTO — Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd., is one of the first companies out of the gate with an SSD prototype based on a new open standard for a key value application programming interface (KV API).

The API was recently approved by the Storage Networking Industry Association (SNIA) and selected as a Best of Show Industry Standards winner in the Most Innovative Flash Memory Technology Awards at the 2019 Flash Memory Summit. The KV specification offers many potential benefits, but most significantly, a KV SSD moves resource-draining storage operations from the host CPU to the SSD itself rather than operating as a block device.

SNIA's KV API standard was developed in response to growing concern that as the speed of SSDs further increases, system-level performance was reaching the point of saturation, allowing relatively few SSDs to be optimally interlinked

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Dialog Semiconductor continues its acquisition strategy to strengthen its internet of things (IoT) portfolio, today announcing it intends to acquire mixed signal IC developer Creative Chips GmbH for a cash payment of \$80m, with an additional \$23 million contingent on revenue targets in 2020 and 2021.

Headquartered in Bingen close to Frankfurt, Germany, with an additional design center in Dresden, Creative Chips is a fabless semiconductor company that supplies a broad portfolio of industrial Ethernet and other mixed-signal products to manufacturers of industrial and building automation systems.

Its technology is optimized to connect large numbers of industrial IoT (IIoT) sensors to industrial networks. Based on its custom IC business, Creative Chips is also developing a range of complementary standard IO-Link IC products, to address broader connectivity for Industry 4.0 applications.

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CK is a privately-held company in which Qorvo already had a significant investment. Recall that Qorvo was formed when RFMD merged with TriQuint in 2015. Later that year, TriQuint (operating as a subsidiary of Qorvo) provided \$25 million of a total \$36 million in financing to CK (see Qorvo Takes Strategic Stake in MEMS Vendor Cavendish). Qualcomm and a handful of venture capital companies were also investors in CK. Neither Qorvo nor CK disclosed the value of the deal.

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It was exactly a year ago when Geoff Lees, senior vice president of microcontrollers, NXP Semiconductors, tipped NXP's plan to launch a GHz MCU in 2019. Keeping his word, Lees this week unveiled i.MX RT1170. NXP claims that the new family of "crossover MCUs that breaks the gigahertz barrier" will accelerate advanced machine learning (ML) applications at the edge.

Instead of the growing number custom AI accelerators — often tailored for specific AI applications — populating the market today, Lees is confident that NXP now has what OEMs want.

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The MEMS market, which follows the semiconductor market, is holding up. It amounted to \$11.6 billion in 2018 and is expected to exhibit an 8.2% growth in value and an 11.9% growth in units up to 2024, according to Yole Développement (Lyon, France).