

# FutureHorizons



The Global Semiconductor Industry Analysts

## FH MONDAY

9 April 2018

### Spark Microsystems: LP On-Chip Radios

Spark Microsystems is taking aim at on-chip radios that continue to be the primary source of battery drain, even in power-conserving designs like Bluetooth Low Energy.

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### Industrial Bots to Get Smarter, More Talented

BOULDER CREEK, Calif. — Robots that vacuum our floors, talk to us in malls, or disable IEDs may be more interesting to think about, but the industrial robots that put together cars and do pick-and-place on assembly lines are worth far more in total dollar value.

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### Wireless Power Charging for EVs

The main requirement for a smoother overall transition to EVs is infrastructure and the availability of suitable and fast charging systems.

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### TALK TO US



### SiFive Preps RISC-V Cloud Service

SiFive will try to build an easier, cheaper, faster way to design chips with a new \$50.6 million funding round that included Huami, the venture arm of China's Xiaomi. The series C aims to bring the startup to profitability and establish a broad market for its RISC-V cores.

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### EVENTS

#### [Silicon Chip Industry Seminar](#)

– 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 – London UK

#### [Industry Forecast Briefing](#)

– 16 January 2018 – London UK

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### IBM Adds Startups to Q Network

ORONTO — IBM is expanding its quantum computing community with the addition of several startups from around the world to its IBM Q Network.

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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](mailto:mail@futurehorizons.com) • <http://www.futurehorizons.com/>

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

## **Spark Microsystems: LP On-Chip Radios**

Spark Microsystems is taking aim at on-chip radios that continue to be the primary source of battery drain, even in power-conserving designs like Bluetooth Low Energy.

"If you wear AirPods, something like 80% of the power is going to power the radio, not the sound. That's not the most efficient approach," according to Frederic Nabki, co-founder of Spark Microsystems, and a former professor of electrical engineering and the University of Montreal's École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS).

The company is developing an ultra-low-power transceiver and microcontroller called the SR1000, a proprietary, ultra-low power, ultra-short latency radio system whose overall with net power use is 20 times lower than the most efficient BLE units on the market, 35 times better than the BLE average, and 600 times more efficient than Zigbee,

## **Industrial Bots To Get Smarter, More Talented**

BOULDER CREEK, Calif. — Robots that vacuum our floors, talk to us in malls, or disable IEDs may be more interesting to think about, but the industrial robots that put together cars and do pick-and-place on assembly lines are worth far more in total dollar value.

They're also making more and more of the industrial, commercial and consumer goods we use. Some recent research reports on trends in industrial robots say demand is growing especially in Asia and especially in electronics manufacturing, and technology will give these robots a lot more abilities in the next few years.

The key study is from the International Federation of Robotics (IFR), based in Germany. According to the IFR's World Robotics: Industrial Robots 2017 report, global unit sales of industrial robots increased at an average of 12 percent per year between 2011 and 2016, with a 16 percent increase in 2016 over 2015.

## **Wireless Power Charging For EVs**

The main requirement for a smoother overall transition to EVs is infrastructure and the availability of suitable and fast charging systems.

As we switch to using wireless products more in our day-to-day lives, Power Electronics research is simultaneously evolving new trends in wireless charging for things like Electric Vehicles (EV). Many countries are now implementing fuel economy regulations and driving initiatives to replace gasoline vehicles with EVs; consequently, automotive manufacturers are now heavily focused on EV development. While technology advancements such as lithium-ion batteries and ultracapacitors hold great promise, the main requirement for a smoother overall transition to EVs is infrastructure and the availability of suitable and fast charging systems.

## **SiFive Preps RISC-V Cloud Service**

SAN JOSE, Calif. — SiFive will try to build an easier, cheaper, faster way to design chips with a new \$50.6 million funding round that included Huami, the venture arm of China's Xiaomi. The series C aims to bring the startup to profitability and establish a broad market for its RISC-V cores.

SiFive will release a cloud service for designing RISC-V cores this year. It will expand it into an SoC design platform next year with silicon blocks from partners, said Naveed Sherwani, an industry veteran named chief executive of SiFive last July after 10 years at Open Silicon.

At an event announcing the funding, Sherwani made several ambitious promises he said would amount to a revolution in SoC design.

## **IBM Adds Startups To Q Network**

TORONTO — IBM is expanding its quantum computing community with the addition of several startups from around the world to its IBM Q Network.

The new members include two companies from Canada, Quantum Benchmark and 1Qbit, as well as Zapata Computing, Strangeworks, QC Ware, Q-CTRL, QxBranch, and Cambridge Quantum Computing. IBM Research made the announcement this week at its IBM Q Summit Silicon Valley event in Palo Alto, Calif.

The network was launched late last year and builds on the interest IBM has received for its IBM Q Experience website, in place since May 2016, which has garnered a great deal of interest, said Bob Sutor, vice president for IBM Q strategy and ecosystem at IBM Research. "People can go and really use the quantum computer," he said. "That's very significant because quantum computing has been theory for a long time."