



May 17, 2004

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For immediate release

Universities quick to adopt Altium's Nexar software

Interactive design methodology enables universities to focus on concepts rather than software

SYDNEY, Australia – May 17, 2004 – Altium Limited (ASX: ALU), a leading developer of Windows-based electronics design software, is pleased to announce that three universities – The University of Tasmania, Australia, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia and Fachhochschule Amberg-Weiden, Germany – have chosen Altium's Nexar software as a platform to teach undergraduate and graduate engineering courses at their campuses. Nexar makes it possible for engineering students to quickly and interactively explore and implement complex designs, enabling educational institutions to spend more time teaching system design concepts and less time demonstrating how to use design software. Altium is currently in talks with other Australian and European universities and also plans to expand this program to other universities and educational institutions in the US and Asia so that engineering students worldwide can take advantage of the latest technology in engineering design.

Nexar enables a unique "LiveDesign" methodology for embedded system-level design on an FPGA platform enabling engineers to capture their design using familiar board-level methodologies, then download the design directly from their PC to a target FPGA housed on a nano-level breadboard (NanoBoard) for immediate implementation and testing. Due to the combination of the libraries of FPGA-based "soft" components, including microprocessor cores, and the NanoBoard provided with the software, there is no need to wire physical components together, making Nexar an ideal design space for teaching situations. Universities can also reduce their spending on instrumentation and test equipment such as logic analyzers, as Nexar includes a set of FPGA-based virtual instruments that can be included in a design for testing and debugging purposes. Once downloaded to the NanoBoard as part of the design, these instruments can be accessed via soft front panels on the PC that mimic the operation of real bench test instruments.

Since Nexar includes all the capabilities needed to design a complete microprocessor-based embedded system, it can be utilized in a wide range of engineering subjects including systems design, hardware design, embedded software design, HDL, and hardware/software co-design classes.

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The University of Tasmania began using Nexar in March as the development environment for a fourth year computer systems design subject and an honors project subject. *“Nexar brings many concepts off the blackboard and enables them to be illustrated practically due to its circuit-like capture environment and the real-time feedback provided by the NanoBoard,”* said Martin Ringrose, Research Engineer, School of Engineering, University of Tasmania. *“Students using Nexar rather than traditional digital design software are capable of constructing, testing, and understanding more complex designs. And, the interactive design and test environment enables students to learn faster, which means that we can assign them more ambitious design tasks.”*

Swinburne University of Technology will introduce Nexar at its Australian and Malaysian campuses in August to teach an embedded systems subject. *“Swinburne looked closely at the Nexar product and we were extremely impressed,”* said Professor David Booth, Dean of Engineering, Swinburne University of Technology. *“Swinburne is committed to keeping its labs at the forefront of new developments in electronics design, so we are pleased to be one of the first universities in the world to provide Nexar’s unique flexible design environment to our undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as our research staff.”*

Pricing and availability

To ensure that students have access to the latest software available, Altium offers a flexible pricing structure for educational institutions that is substantially discounted from commercial pricing.

To find out more visit www.altium.com/nexar/ or contact your local Altium sales & support center.

About Altium Limited

Altium Limited (ASX: ALU) is a global developer and supplier of electronics design software for the Microsoft Windows environment. Founded in 1985, Altium released the world's first Microsoft Windows–based printed circuit board design tool in 1991 and continues to provide advanced, easy-to-use and affordable software design tools to electronics engineers, designers, and developers worldwide. Altium's products offer tailored solutions covering a range of hardware and software design processes including the well-known Protel, P-CAD and TASKING brands. Altium is headquartered in Sydney, Australia and has sales and support offices in Australia, the United States, Japan and Europe. More information is available at www.altium.com.

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