

ISI – UltraSOC

UltraSoc Technologies (UST) was founded in 2006 as a spin-out from the University of Kent and became a joint spin-out with the University of Essex to exploit the research carried out by Professor Klaus McDonald-Maier with Dr Andrew Hopkins and their team.

The development of the technology platform builds upon EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) funded research work undertaken by Dr McDonald-Maier and his group at the University of Kent as well as funding from the South East Proof of Concept Fund. UltraDebug™ is being designed to offer advanced source-level debugging with superior trace and trigger facilities. It is detailed operation and interactions at the most critical points in time and for extended profiling durations. Finally, the development of the technology platform to a licensable product is assisted by an investment of £2million provided by Octopus Ventures. Afterwards, the company tried to make its business plan and technology known to the market by participating into various competitions which resulted in attracting private investors. Though still in early development, the first industrial Multiprocessor SOCs have been already used in embedded systems for advanced entertainment and communication platforms and can be found in a set of devices, such as cell phones or portable multimedia players. The company claims that when completing UltraDebug will provide superior, application-level, debugging facilities, enabling the embedded systems industry to create more advanced and reliable products in markets such as automotive and consumer devices. The company tried to publicize its technology and business plan by participating into several competitions. This attracted private investors and finally, UST raised £400,000 of equity investment from the South East Seed Fund, managed by Finance South East, and the Icení Seedcorn Fund.

<http://ultrasoc.com>

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- High flexibility of the product;
- Product classified as a cutting edge technology;
- Product has large universal applicability;
- Well-defined and structured business plan in terms of funding and innovation promotion;
- Stable business and university interaction in the process of innovation;
- The funding mechanism is much diversified. The project was initially funded by a public body and, after that, has gained various funds deriving from prizes and awards of the competitions in which it took part and that allowed to attract private investors. In this way the company managed successfully to shift its funding source from government to private sector;
- 3 large investors.

Weaknesses:

- Limited Internalization capacities;
- No information provided for the system integration with another tools for embedded systems design;
- Company still seems more oriented to development of the product and cooperation with University experts then to the market;
- Insufficient information provided by the web site.

Opportunities:

- The absence of efficient alternative solutions in the area of debugging multicore SoCs, let the expectations remain high;
- Emerging markets of SEE Region;
- Increasing level of automation and implementation of embedded systems in economies of SEE.

Threats:

- Semiconductor vendors are conservative;
- The project must keep in step with the SoC developments;
- Final buyers are oriented to established producers offering complete solution.