Cyclone Microsystems

Telecommunications experts embed Mylex RAID for new product line

Cyclone Microsystems, Inc. of New Haven, CT develops high-performance intelligent IO controllers across three or four different bus structures, including VME, PCI, compact PCI and also some embedded motherboards. Their company focus is on embedded and real-time programs where customers are trying to put together very complex, real-time or embedded systems to run telecommunications, robotics, and inspection gear.

Cyclone's marketing research showed a merging between what has been PC or server space and the embedded space. For example, PCI now translates to compact PCI, and Windows NT is very quickly becoming the cornerstone operating or host operating system of choice in the embedded world. This trend is largely due to the availability of the software to support Windows NT and the skills available for programming in this environment. So within that product strategy Cyclone decided that an embedded RAID product would make sense for their customers.

ROME Provides a Head Start
"Because of Mylex's experience in the RAID area, instead of developing our own we basically tapped into their ROME (RAID On the Motherboard Embedded) program to get a head start on this program," says Peter Zackin of Cyclone. "Essentially what we've done is taken the DAC960 design and re-deployed it in the compact PCI space. The line of products is called the CPCI 944 and the CPCI 974. The functionality of the two are identical but the 944 is a six-U or double high Eurocard and the 974 is a three-U or single high Eurocard. Our customers have widely varying requirements for mechanical formats."

Cyclone’s customers include original equipment manufacturers building very complex industrial and communications equipment, computer telephony equipment, applied intelligent networks, standard communications, satellite uplinks, and video servers.

"We have a wide range of very different types of products," says Zackin, "which is what keeps the whole cycle interesting for me because boards are boards, chips are chips, but applications are different each and every time. My joke about the real-time flash embedded market is that it isn’t a market at all, it’s just a category of ‘other’, things that don’t fall into the common mainstream categories."

Sole RAID Solution
What's unique about Cyclone's product solution is that it is the sole RAID solution for compact PCI. Is it used in a mission-critical way? Zackin says, "I think
mission-critical is in the eye of the beholder. Everyone's program is mission-critical to their well-being. It may not endanger lives immediately, but it's certainly going to endanger their jobs. And that's critical to them."

Building Blocks
"Our company sells off-the-shelf building blocks," says Zackin. "The customer benefits by being able to find these building pieces available now so that they can integrate or stabilize their very complex computer systems. They can literally 'roll their own' and start working on their unique applications, which enhances their time to market. I'd say our key market area, or what we do best for our customers, is fulfill their needs when they have very critical time-to-market issues. The immediate availability of the product and the advanced functionality are really the benefit."

Cyclone Microsystems
25 Science Park
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone 203-786-5536
Fax: 203-786-5025
www.cyclone.com