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News Release

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PCMCIA Launches First Release of ExpressCard Standard for the PC Card Industry

Industry Coalition Develops New Technology that Offers Improved Performance in a Smaller Footprint for Next-Generation Mobile and Desktop PCs

INTEL DEVELOPERS FORUM--SAN JOSE , SEPT. 16, 2003 – PCMCIA, a leading technology trade association, today announced the release of Version 1.0 of its ExpressCard™ standard for modular expansion for mobile and desktop systems. Formerly codenamed NEWCARD, ExpressCard technology brings the proven reliability and convenience of the PC Card in a smaller form factor while offering faster performance and improved ease of use.

The ExpressCard standard was created by a broad coalition of system OEMs, card manufacturers and connector and component manufacturers including Dell, HP, IBM, Intel, Lexar Media, Microsoft, SCM Microsystems and Texas Instruments.

ExpressCard technology reduces the complexity of system and card implementations by providing a hot-pluggable card expansion capability that supports sealed desktop chassis' and thinner laptop designs. By building the standard on PCI Express* architecture and Universal Serial Bus (USB)* 2.0 interfaces natively provided in chipsets, manufacturers no longer have the cost burden of a bridge component. Similarly, card manufacturers are able to use the broad range of standard silicon in building their products.

“The official ExpressCard technology launch is a major milestone in the evolution of modular system expansion,” said Brad Saunders of Intel Corporation and chairman of the PCMCIA. “Companies from all sectors of the card development industry have contributed their expertise over the past 18 months to ensure this standard addresses the expansion needs of both desktop and mobile systems.”

“We view this as a major leap forward in delivering ‘thinner, lighter, faster’ systems to consumers. By drawing upon the PCI Express and USB standards, we hope to make it easier for desktop and notebook users to add hardware capabilities to their systems than ever before,” said Saunders. (more)

Press and analysts are invited to learn more about ExpressCard technology by stopping by the PCMCIA booth, #110, or attending the following IDF sessions:

- ExpressCard 101: Specifications and Concepts. Wednesday, Sept.17, 2:30 pm.
- ExpressCard: Next Generation PC Card: Design Considerations for Mobile Platforms. Thursday, Sept. 18, 3:00 pm.

Central to the success of the standard is the strong collaboration between PCMCIA, the USB Implementers Forum (USB IF) and the Peripheral Component Interconnect-Special Interest Group (PCI-SIG) to ensure ExpressCard technology supports the advanced serial I/O technologies: USB 2.0 and PCI-Express.

The three are working together on a compliance program. Companies that develop ExpressCard-compliant products will be able to use the ExpressCard name and logo on their products to indicate plug and play interoperability and ease of use to end users. The first products will be tested in a ‘Plugfest’ setting to be scheduled in early 2004. System and card manufacturers are expected to bring first products to market in the second half of 2004.

The ExpressCard module will be available in two sizes: One is 34mm wide and the other is 54mm. Both modules are 75mm long and 5mm high. Host systems can provide any combination of slots for either width of the module. “Two widths provide flexibility for the system vendors,” said Saunders. “Smaller modules take up less space in the system but there are also some applications which have a physical requirement for the wider module, such as Compact Flash card readers, security card readers and 1.8 inch rotating media. This standard is designed to address the wide range of applications that are still emerging for ExpressCard technology.”

Version 1.0 of the standard is available to PCMCIA members. For more information, visit www.expresscard.org.

PC Card technology allows users to connect media and new hardware capabilities to computers and other communications and consumer electronics devices. Examples are: memory cards, wired and wireless communications hardware, security devices, and emerging applications that were not available when the system was purchased. More than 95% of all notebook computers use PC card technology for expansion. Over time ExpressCard technology is expected to replace CardBus as the I/O card expansion solution for both mobile and desktop systems.

About PCMCIA

PCMCIA is a non-profit trade association founded in 1989 to establish technical standards for PC Card technology and to promote interchangeability among computer systems. Already a feature in almost every notebook and palmtop computer, PC Card technology empowers users to configure systems and create unique, integrated solutions to meet their computing needs. Based in San Jose, California, the association has approximately 100 member companies worldwide. The PCMCIA also has a specification development and co-publishing relationship with the Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association (JEITA) covering PC Card and Smart Media technologies.

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ExpressCard is a trademark of PCMCIA. *All product and company names herein may be trademarks of their registered owners.

Editor's Note: Photo available at www.expresscard.org.

(more)

Member Supporting Quotes

Randy Groves, vice president and chief technology officer, Dell:

“We are enthused by the prospects of offering our customers the ease and flexibility of ExpressCard on Dell system architectures. By supporting both PCI Express for higher performance applications and USB 2.0 for a wide range of peripherals, ExpressCard is a significant evolution of PC card standards.”

Dan Forlenza, vice president, Notebook Engineering, Hewlett Packard:

“HP views the release of the ExpressCard specification as a significant milestone. ExpressCard will play a significant role in our future products.”

Jan Janick, vice president, development, IBM Personal Computing Division:

“IBM ThinkVantage Design is about purposefully evolving the design of personal computers to improve both their performance and usability. The ExpressCard standard is consistent with that strategy. It will enable even lighter laptops and create additional flexibility and compatibility among IBM ThinkPad notebooks, ThinkCentre desktops, and other devices. IBM is proud to play a role in the development of this new industry standard.”

Anand Chandrasekher, vice president and general manager, Intel's Mobile Platforms Group:

“The announcement of the ExpressCard standard is very exciting for us. We expect to see a rapid transition from CardBus to ExpressCard. System manufacturers will appreciate the simplified architecture that no longer requires a controller chip, card manufacturers will benefit from being able to use ‘off-the-shelf’ PCI-Express or USB 2.0 silicon and users will benefit from its support across mobile and desktop platforms.”

Petro Estakhri, chief technology officer, Lexar Media:

“Lexar Media sees ExpressCard as a technology with a long and exciting future. The developers have deliberately made it as simple as possible for both card and PC manufacturers to implement. We therefore look forward to seeing ExpressCard slots become commonplace on desktop as well as notebook systems. We are actively working to help establish this standard and have already manufactured a number of sample memory cards in the ExpressCard form factor which will be demonstrated at IDF.”

Tom Phillips, general manager, Windows Hardware, Microsoft Corporation:

“At Microsoft, we’re focused on making it easier for customers to interact with their PCs, and PCMCIA’s ExpressCard will help further that goal. ExpressCard gives users a simple and consistent way to add advanced hardware capabilities into both notebook and desktop systems without the cable clutter usually found with external expansion devices. By building the standard on PCI-Express and USB 2.0, PCMCIA has also made it easier for card and system manufacturers to bring compelling products to market that benefit our customers.”

(more)

Tony Pierce, Microsoft Corporation and chairman of the PCI SIG:

“The release of the ExpressCard specification marks a major milestone in the close collaboration between the PCI-SIG and the PCMCIA and is a proof of the broad industry appeal and relevance of the PCI Express architecture. The PCI-SIG will lend its expertise and support to the PCMCIA to enable the smooth adoption of the ExpressCard technology as the industry gears up to launch PCI Express products beginning in 2004.”

Robert Schneider, CEO, SCM Microsystems Inc.:

“ExpressCard is the logical progression in system bus technology to provide high-speed processing for new and emerging applications. The availability of both a high-speed /34 and a /54 card enables development of a range of new security applications based on smart cards and biometric sensors, which are at the core of many digital security initiatives. Faster co-processing will yield higher system performance and support the implementation of stronger security measures in transportation, banking and commerce. PCMCIA has achieved a new standards milestone with this release of ExpressCard.”

David Peterman, manager of Texas Instruments Computer Connectivity Solutions:

“ExpressCard will provide a small, low cost, high performance expansion module that will allow for the evolution of notebook and desktop computer form factor design. Texas Instruments is committed to delivering first to market, high performance solutions that allow PC manufacturers to easily transition and support this new standard.”

Jeff Ravencraft, Intel Corporation and chairman of the USB Implementers Forum:

“ExpressCard is another proof point of the success of USB. USB is in broad deployment across the globe with a huge installed base of applications and devices. This will serve well to accelerate the adoption of ExpressCard solutions throughout the industry. Certified USB-based silicon and the well-established USB-IF compliance program will help to ensure high quality ExpressCard products are delivered to consumers.”