Wireless Coexistence On a Single IC

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The wireless communications industry continues to converge and â€œwireless coexistenceâ€• is now vital to the future success of the majority of companies in this industry.

In the near future, there will be little merit in considering a single wireless technology when analyzing any one application; whereas once the argument was about which technology might win in which applications, recent announcements, from companies now combining multiple radios on a single IC, suggest the industry has progressed beyond this.

Reduction of space, of power consumption, reducing interference and increasing performance are driving the combination of multiple technologies onto a single IC. However, reduction in cost is the biggest factor driving manufacturers down this route. Taking Bluetooth/WLAN as example, the price of these technologies implemented separately would currently be around $10, best case. Such a price would not be viable, the cost of adding separate IC prices together being far more than manufacturers would ever be willing to pay. However, most IC vendors have said they are able to combine multiple technologies at a fraction of the price that it would cost manufacturers to purchase the ICs separately. According to a recent report from IMS Research, which considers 12 combination ICs, the market for these ICs is expected to exceed $2 billion by 2010.

To date, Bluetooth has been the single most successful short range wireless technology (shipment volumes speak for themselves); therefore Bluetooth is central to this research report. IMS Research predicts that Bluetooth/FM will be first combination to market; with competition between Broadcom, CSR and TI, the cost of a Bluetooth/FM IC compared with a Bluetooth IC is likely to be negligible soon enough. Therefore, this combination IC is predicted to account for the majority of combination shipments into handsets, accounting for 100% of the market in 2007 and just over 30% in 2011.

Fiona Thomson, Senior Market Research Analyst with IMS Research commented, â€œIt was interesting to consider Bluetooth ICs (single technology solution) versus Bluetooth combined ICs in handsets. In 2006, Bluetooth (as a single technology IC) penetration into handsets was at around 40%, as a worldwide average.â€• She added, â€œIMS Research predicts that Bluetooth as a standalone solution will decrease in importance through-out the next five years as Bluetooth combination ICs such as Bluetooth/FM, Bluetooth/WLAN and Bluetooth/UWB (Bluetooth 3.0) make an impact on the market.â€•

IMS Research is currently organizing a â€œWireless Coexistence Summitâ€• which focuses on the issues detailed here and more. For more information regarding either this report or the Summit please contact Fiona Thomson; FionaThomson@IMSresearch.com

About IMS Research
IMS Research is a supplier of market research and consultancy services on a wide range of global electronics markets. The company is supported by headquarters in Wellingborough, UK and offices in Austin, Texas and Shanghai, China. IMS Researchâ€™s Short Range Wireless Group focuses on market information on a number of short range wireless technologies used to connect Local and Personal Area Networks. These technologies include Bluetooth, UWB, Wireless LAN, Zigbee and NFC. For more information, please visit our website: www.imsresearch.com.
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