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MaxCaps Research Project launched

The research project aims at developing methods to integrate capacitors on silicon chips

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MUNICH, GERMANY: MaxCaps Research Project has been launched as a project within the European Medea+ research programme.

The research project aims at developing methods to integrate capacitors on silicon chips, thereby cutting the number of discrete capacitors at present mounted on printed circuit boards (PCB) by nearly 30 per cent.

Designers can, by integrating capacitors on to the silicon die, omit discrete capacitors, thus cutting the number of components and soldered connections. This helps them shrink PCB sizes and also improve the reliability.

It is a generally known fact that soldered connections are one of the most common causes of defects.

To integrate the capacitors, the research group will search for alternatives to the silicon-dioxide and silicon-nitride materials used at present as dielectrics in the production of semiconductors.

The MaxCaps Research Project aims at developing new isolating materials with a dielectric constant of 50 and above. The production processes needed to handle these materials are also being researched.

Most major semiconductor manufacturers of Europe are participating in the project. They include: Chipmakers NXP and STMicroelectronics and Analog Devices, equipment vendors ASMI and Aixtron, in addition to research institutes CEA-LETI and IMEC as well as many universities.

Infineon is coordinating the activities of the research project. The European Union (EU) is partially funding the MaxCaps Research Project, with €2.75 million (around \$ 4 million). The results of the project are expected in 2011.

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