

AT A GLANCE

MediaGX Targets Low-Cost PCs 1
 Cyrix's new MediaGX processor offers performance comparable to that of a Pentium-133 but sells for just \$99. The chip, based on the company's scalar 5x86 core, also includes an integrated graphics accelerator, memory controller, and PCI interface. This integration aids performance while reducing system costs. These cost savings helped Compaq introduce a MediaGX system priced at just \$995 (without monitor). With backing from Compaq and others, the MediaGX is likely to become a significant part of Cyrix's sales.

Editorial: Intel Converting From Chips to Modules 3
 Within two years, most of Intel's processors will be sold on modules, not as standalone chips. This transition will impact Intel, its suppliers, its customers, its competitors, and PC buyers.

Most Significant Bits 4
 PA-8500 sports 1.5M on-chip cache; Klamath becomes Pentium II; Intel offers P55C-based upgrade chip; IBM boosts speed of PowerPC 403 chips; StrongArm gets core-logic support chip; SDX: another new disk interface.

MDR Analysis: Design Concepts for Merced 9
 We boldly predict the 0.25-micron Merced chip will use an eight-way VLIW core to deliver in excess of 40 SPECint95 and 80 SPECfp95 while running at 600 MHz. We estimate the 300-mm² die will contain roughly 35 million transistors, including about 512K of on-chip cache. The chip is likely to offer industry-leading performance in both native and x86 modes when it debuts in 1H99.

Klamath Freezes, Direct RDRAM Cooks 12
 As usual, the International Solid State Circuits Conference served up a potpourri of impending products and innovative research devices. The most interesting included Intel's trumped-up 400-MHz P6 demonstration, an enormous 4-Gbit DRAM from NEC, and a debate on future DRAM technology that featured praise and sharp criticism of the Direct RDRAM device proposed by Intel and Rambus.

The Slater Perspective: The End of Film 15
 Although current consumer digital cameras fail to meet the standards of traditional film-based photography, they show promise. Given the normal trends in semiconductor improvement, digital cameras should satisfy the needs of many photographers in 5-10 years, providing an important new application for microprocessors and PCs.

Literature Watch 16

Recent IC Announcements 17

Patent Watch 18

Chart Watch 19

Resources 20

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Microprocessor Report (ISSN 0899-9341) is published every three weeks, 17 issues per year. Rates are: N. America: \$595 per year, \$1,095 for two years. Europe: £450 per year, £795 for two years. Elsewhere: \$695 per year, \$1,295 for two years. Additional copies in the same envelope: \$195 per year in North America, \$250 elsewhere. Back issues are available.

Published by

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Winner, Computer Press Award, 1993, 1994

 Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.