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FH MONDAY

5 February 2018

Apple Overtakes Samsung in Smartphone Shipments

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Nvidia Partners with Continental on Robocars

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Renesas SoC to Double EveQ5 Efficiency

TOKYO — Renesas Electronics is pumped up. After lying low for a long time, the Japanese chip company is now brimming with confidence, claiming that it's "ready to intersect" with the demand to produce highly automated vehicles in volume.

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Memory Chips Continue to Lift Samsung's Results

SAN FRANCISCO — South Korea's Samsung Electronics, which last year became the No. 1 supplier of semiconductors worldwide, posted strong fourth quarter revenue and profit, boosted once again by sales of memory chips.

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Micron Puts 64-Layer 3D in Enterprise SSDs

TORONTO — Micron Technology's first enterprise SATA SSD using its 64-layer 3D NAND isn't a whole lot different than its predecessor, and that's the point.

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Future Horizons Ltd, • 44 Bethel Road • Sevenoaks • Kent TN13 3UE • England

Tel: +44 1732 740440 • Fax: +44 1732 740442

e-mail: mail@futurehorizons.com • <http://www.futurehorizons.com/>

Affiliates in Europe, India, Israel, Japan, Russian, San Jose California, USA

Apple Overtakes Samsung In Smartphone Shipments

TAIPEI — Apple took the lead from Samsung in smartphone shipments during the fourth quarter of 2017, mainly on the strength of a wide range of handsets including its latest iPhone X, according to market research firm IDC.

Apple iPhone volumes reached 77.3 million units compared with 74.1 million for Samsung during the quarter, according to the Feb. 1 IDC report.

"Apple continues to prove that having numerous models at various price points bodes well for bringing smartphone owners to iOS," the IDC report said. "Although demand for the new higher priced iPhone X may not have been as strong as many expected, the overall iPhone lineup appealed to a wider range of consumers in both emerging and developed markets."

Nvidia Partners With Continental On Robocars

MADISON, Wisc. — Nvidia is teaming up with German tier one automotive supplier Continental to develop "top-to-bottom AI self-driving vehicle systems" built on the Nvidia Drive platform. They are planning on a market introduction starting in 2021.

For Continental, the partnership with Nvidia is neither the first nor an exclusive deal in the automated vehicle platform segment. The company last June made a similar announcement with the BMW/Intel/Mobileye group, Nvidia's rival, as a member of their self-driving platform alliance.

In contrast, for Nvidia, "This is one of the first end-to-end production (using all Nvidia stacks) partnerships it made with a tier one," Danny Kim, director and senior advisor at VSI Labs, told EE Times.

Renesas SoC to Double EyeQ5 Efficiency

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In store for Renesas' roadmap is a yet-to-be-announced next-generation R-CAR SoC, designed for deep learning. Ready to go into advanced city driving autonomous vehicles in 2020, the new SoC will start sampling in 2019. It will deliver "more than 5 trillion operations per second (TOPS) at one watt," Ryuji Omura, executive vice president at Renesas, revealed in an exclusive interview with EE Times in Tokyo last week. Omura is general manager responsible for the Japanese company's automotive solution business unit.

Memory Chips Continue to Lift Samsung's Results

SAN FRANCISCO — South Korea's Samsung Electronics, which last year became the No. 1 supplier of semiconductors worldwide, posted strong fourth quarter revenue and profit, boosted once again by sales of memory chips.

Samsung said its fourth quarter sales of about \$61.4 billion and profit of about \$14 billion were driven primarily by its components business, with the bulk of the contribution coming from DRAM and NAND flash memory. Sales of memory chips rose industry-wide throughout 2017 due to pricing gains amid a general shortage.

Samsung said orders for high-performance memory products for servers and mobile storage were particularly strong. This strength offset weakness in the company's logic chips and foundry businesses, Samsung said.

Micron Puts 64-Layer 3D in Enterprise SSDs

TORONTO — Micron Technology's first enterprise SATA SSD using its 64-layer 3D NAND isn't a whole lot different than its predecessor, and that's the point.

The company just introduced its 5200 series SSDs designed for virtualized workloads that rotating media can't handle, such as online transaction processing, virtual desktop infrastructure and media streaming. In a telephone interview with EE Times, Matt Shaine, a Micron product manager, said the new SATA SSDs draw great deal from the 5100-series launched in 2016. "It's been a tremendous success," Shaine said.

However, the company believes it's the first 64-layer 3D NAND SSD for the enterprise market, he said.

The 5200 SSD has the same architecture as its predecessor, including the same controller. The main changes are the use of Micron's TLC 64-layer NAND, said Shaine, while using the same design. "It's a taller sky scraper," he said.