

INCISOR™

NEWS FROM THE BLUETOOTH™ AND SHORT RANGE RF ENVIRONMENT

ISSUE 91

IN INCISOR THIS MONTH

Welcome to the February 2006 issue of Incisor magazine.

It seems barely any time since Incisor announced that it would stage a brand new wireless event alongside the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. Now we can say that Pure Wireless is a current, rather than a new event programme. Pure Wireless saw the meeting of some very significant minds, and we have ambitious plans for the expansion of the Pure Wireless brand. Read about this first event inside.

Whilst we were managing Pure Wireless, wireless technology featured big at CES 2006. In the UWB space the heat is on to put the first products into the hands of real consumers. Its just like the early days of Bluetooth. Except that Bluetooth had a clear(-ish) playing field. UWB has a mountain to climb – read across for details of the how the IEEE has disbanded its UWB working group, and how both the WiMedia Alliance and the UWB Forum joined forces to minimize the impact of this announcement.

And its not just in the very high data rate sector that significant things have been happening. The status quo in that 'sleeper' technology – ZigBee – was shaken up as Texas Instruments - one of the biggest semiconductor companies – bought the most active ZigBee company – Chipcon.

A new year dawns and the rush to go wireless continues.

Vince Holton • Publisher/Editor-in-chief
Email: vholton@click.co.uk • Tel: +44 (0)1730 895614

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IEEE pulls out of UWB standard development

Both IEEE and UWB Forum/WiMedia Alliance say 'Aloha'

Many people know that Hawaiians use the same word for 'hello' and 'goodbye'. That word is 'aloha'. Current events make it impossible for Incisor to resist the temptation to draw a topical parallel, so we won't.

ABC/Touchstone's hit television series "Lost," which is spending about \$45 million in Hawaii in its first season on ABC, is losing about \$500,000 an episode, or \$11 million for the first season's 22 episodes. Filming on location in Hawaii is seen as one of the main problems. "Nobody wants to move, but this is a business and we must consider options to cut expenses," said producer Jean Higgins. That will be aloha in a goodbye sort of way, then.

They are not the only ones in Hawaii looking to cut losses, take tough business decisions and say the farewell version of aloha. For it seems the fragrant Polynesian air has had a laxative effect on the debate that has hamstrung the UWB industry. In Waikoloa, Hawaii on January 19, at the Interim Meeting of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the IEEE 802.15.3a task group (TG3a) members met and announced its decision to withdraw the January 2003 project authorization request (PAR) that initiated the development of high data rate UWB standards. This is a move that was

predicted in last month's issue of Incisor (see issue 90 – p18).

Those that believe that certification by the IEEE is vital for any technology's success could see this as a body blow for UWB, but the reality is somewhat different. Both the UWB Forum and the WiMedia Alliance released a statement on the same day in response to the IEEE's vote. Combining forces in an unusually co-ordinated manner, the two associations, up until now at loggerheads, said that the industry will continue to grow the Ultra-Wideband (UWB) market. That's aloha as hello then.

Specifically, the joint alliance statement said, "As the industry organizations dedicated to productization, we thank all contributing TG3a members and voters for their respective efforts during the past three years. However, we concur that, at this stage in UWB market development, a more prudent course of action is necessary to allow the market to move forward with the commercialization of multiple UWB technologies." The statement went on to commend the TG3a's achievement of the consolidation of 23 UWB PHY specifications into two proposals: MultiBand Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing (MB-OFDM) UWB, supported by the WiMedia Alliance, and direct



A technology does not need IEEE approval says Foley

hurdles and ultimately speed deployment. The Bluetooth SIG and users of the technology demand that there be one high-rate standard to

ensure interoperability and consumer satisfaction. The SIG is evaluating both flavours of UWB to help the market determine the most advantageous solution. Some of the factors being evaluated include power consumption, co-existence with other technologies and devices and the ability to integrate into mobile devices.”

So, despite appearances, and taking all of the above into account, the IEEE's decision to withdraw from UWB standardization hasn't really changed much. The UWB Forum is still head to head with the WiMedia Alliance. The WiMedia version of UWB is shooting for standard realisation by Ecma. UWB products are hitting the market, mostly based on Freescale silicon at

this point. Wireless USB is the first product area for UWB, and there is a lot of confusion over what a Wireless USB product is – Wireless USB? Certified Wireless USB? – that's a story for another issue.

What will all of this mean to the consumer? We know that UWB products are coming, but will they all interoperate? All of this remains to be seen, but one thing is certain.

2006 is the year that we say aloha to UWB.

Bluetooth & wireless industry news

Bluetooth SIG announces Best of CES contest winners

The Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) ran a 'Best of CES' competition at the Consumer Electronics Show this month. This was the first such contest hosted by the organization and the aim was to highlight the most innovative and consumer-friendly new Bluetooth enabled products. Manufacturers of Bluetooth products competed in seven categories representing consumer-facing industries in which Bluetooth technology is used.

Prior to the show, member companies of the Bluetooth SIG were invited to submit Bluetooth enabled products in the categories of mobile phone, headset, automotive hands-free, stereo audio, printing and imaging, PC environment and unique application. The Bluetooth SIG tested each product and judged them on a variety of criterion, including ease of use, look and feel, implementation and originality. The products were also judged on their Best of Breed status, a program administered by the Bluetooth SIG that explains how classes of devices should implement specific profiles to provide exceptional user experience. After determining finalists for each category, the devices were displayed at Pepcom's Digital Experience! press event on the eve of CES, as well as in the Bluetooth SIG booth in the Bluetooth Tech Zone at CES. Press and analysts who attended either

the Pepcom event or stopped by the booth on Thursday were able to cast the final vote for the winner of each category.

“Our first annual Best of CES contest gave us the opportunity to highlight some truly excellent Bluetooth products which consumers will find easy and convenient to use,” said Mike Foley, executive director of the Bluetooth SIG. “As I looked around CES 2006, I saw an amazing array of Bluetooth products. Companies and consumers alike are embracing the technology and we look forward to a year of even more exciting product introductions and technology advancements.”

The following products were chosen as winners of each respective category (finalists indicated in parentheses). The winning products are to be included in an in-studio broadcast tour where the devices will be shown in top markets across the country. The overall winner, also voted on by press and analysts, won a trip for two people to the Bluetooth SIG All Hands Meeting the week of March 26 in Seattle, Washington.

- Mobile phone – Samsung SGH-D600 [finalist: HP iPAQ hw6500 Series Mobile Messenger]
- Headset – Jabra BT500 [finalist: Plantronics Explorer 320]
- Automotive hands-free – Parrot 3400 LS-GPS

[finalist: Sony Ericsson Bluetooth Car Hands-free HCB-700]

- Stereo audio – **Bluetake Technology i-PHONO mini Bluetooth Stereo Headphone** [finalist: Plantronics Pulsar 590]
- Printing and imaging – HP Photosmart 385 [finalist: Sony Ericsson Bluetooth Media Center MMV-200]
- PC environment – Logitech diNovo Media Desktop Laser [finalist: Broadcom BLINK Software]
- Unique application – Motorola Audex Protective Gear: Helmet and Padded Hat [finalists: Baracoda RoadRunners Barcode Scanner BRR-L and SunCorp. Slide Bluetooth Cordless Phone]

And who was the overall Bluetooth SIG Best of CES winner? That would be Bluetake with its i-PHONO mini Bluetooth Stereo Headphone.

Enjoy Seattle, Bluetake, and we will be contacting you to see about reviewing this prize-winning product!



Bluetake mini stereo headset gets the nod from the Bluetooth SIG