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IEEE moves to form council on electronic design automation

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The IEEE Technical Activities Board has endorsed the formation of a new IEEE Council for Electronic Design Automation (C-EDA), with final approval expected in June. The council will become the focal point for IEEE's multiple EDA disciplines, bringing increased value to its members by coordinating EDA activities and offering a way to enable new initiatives. It also will pursue an aggressive policy to recruit young talent to EDA.

"The council is a major step toward realizing that EDA is a key technology for the semiconductor and systems sector," says Giovanni (Nanni) De Micheli, former IEEE Circuits and Systems Society president and director of the Integrated Systems Centre at EPF Lausanne in Switzerland. "This technology needs to be nurtured by fostering interdisciplinary research and by exposing its results to young engineers whose presence in this field is necessary for the overall growth of the electronics industry."

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Five IEEE societies have agreed to join the council: Antennas and Propagation Society; Circuits and Systems Society; Computer Society; Electron Devices Society; and Solid State Circuits Society. C-EDA's charter spans theory, implementation and use of computer aided design (CAD) tools to design integrated electronic circuits and systems. This includes tools that automate all levels of the design, analysis and verification of hardware and embedded software up to complete working systems.

C-EDA will further increase visibility for IEEE-sponsored EDA events such as the Design Automation Conference (DAC) and International Conference on Computer Aided Design (ICCAD) and its technical publications that feature EDA.

Previously, EDA-related activities were spread among various IEEE societies with little coordination.

A committee of technical leaders from industry and academia initially will manage C-EDA's activities. It will be led by Al Dunlop, a design consultant and a member of the Board of Governors for the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society that unanimously endorsed the committee formation in May 2004. The IEEE Circuits and Systems Society is home of the CAD journal and the Design Automation Conference within IEEE, and many of its members are involved in CAD and are strong supporters of the C-EDA Council initiative.


"The expectation is that the Circuit and Systems Society through these CAD members continues to support the EDA activities, a field that is now getting a more focused attention within IEEE through this council," remarks Georges Gielen, president of IEEE Circuits and Systems Society, and full professor of electrical engineering at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

Final approval by the IEEE Technical Advisory Board and its Board of Directors is expected in June. Adds Dunlop: "A council on EDA is an imperative as a broader set of disciplines becomes necessary to design future circuits. It used to be possible to design logic circuits without much attention to issues such as power or crosstalk. Now device and substrate issues must be an integral part of the design tools, while software and embedded systems play a major role in SoC."

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