



AUDIO ENGINEERING SOCIETY, INC. SAN FRANCISCO SECTION

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RealNetworks Enters MP3 Fray

RealNetworks made a bid for a place on the off-line PC desktop Monday, releasing a new way to play music using MP3 audio compression technology.

RealJukebox lets users play files in the most popular format for digital music downloads. The company also released RealSystemMP, a companion product that lets users record and manage MP3 files. Beta versions of both products are now available for free on RealNetworks' website.

The release answers the technical challenge posed by Microsoft's release of its latest multimedia client, called Window Media Technology 4.0, three weeks ago at Spring Internet World in Los Angeles. The format plays both MP3 files and allows for downloads in its own format — in addition to streaming audio and video directly off the Web.

The industry has always had to deal with a certain amount of piracy, such as people making tapes of their favorite albums for friends, said Paul Bandrowski, CEO of Reciprocal, a company that makes software to protect music and other media digitally. With the largest free MP3 distribution sites shut down, companies are now looking toward the future of on-line music.

RealSystemMP also lets users record MP3s directly off CDs and onto their PCs. These music files can then be redistributed on the Internet or burned onto other CDs. "People aren't just looking at protection but at creating new business models," Bandrowski said.

It is this capability that has led the

Recording Industry Association of American (RIAA) to lead an ongoing campaign against the MP3 format. Three years ago, it began aggressive legal action against sites that illegally distributed pirated MP3 files, causing most to shut down.

It has also pursued legal action against seemingly legal uses of MP3 technology. It failed to get an injunction against the sale of the Rio portable MP3 player. But its suit did lead to Rio maker Diamond Multimedia to announce last week that it would offer copyright protection in the player. The RIAA has also sued Lycos for introducing an MP3 search engine.

Eventually, Bandrowski added, the problem of consumers using CD rippers will become moot, when CD manufacturers switch from the current read-only RedBook format to a digital format that is compatible with PCs. The problem, he said, is this will involve a complete change over, because people will have to buy new CDs players and replace their CD collections in the new format. "Frankly, that's a long time off," Bandrowski said.

Although MP3 technology has traditionally been limited to an audience of perhaps 15 million technically savvy users, RealNetworks has a consumer-oriented user base numbering about 60 million. Its new software is designed to let users manage a music collection on their PCs.

It will also be pushing the system as a platform on which other companies can launch products and services. More than 50 companies expresses support for the system, including Intel, MP3 creator Fraunhofer, Rio player maker Diamond, music download format competitor a2b music, and on-line books and music seller Amazon.com.

MEETING NOTICE!

AUDIO ENGINEERING SOCIETY, INC.

SAN FRANCISCO SECTION

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



JUNE MEETING



Subject: A digital television receiver constructed using a media processor

Speaker: Chuck Peplinski, Torsten Fink, Philips Semiconductor

Place: Cogswell College, Sunnyvale, CA

Time and Date: May 25th, 7:30 PM (refreshments at 7:00 PM)

The recent start of high definition digital television broadcast has been a topic of interest amongst many in the audio community. In this month's meeting, the design of the audio system for an HDTV receiver is presented. The audio system is part of an HDTV that is built using a media processor programmed in the C language. The presentation is an expanded version of a paper given at the recent Munich AES convention. Topics to be covered include the product requirements, the expected and achieved benefits of using a media processor, and just how this audio system is constructed using an expandable software architecture.

Chuck Peplinski was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin. In 1987, he received a B.A. in Physics from Pomona College, Claremont CA. Mr. Peplinski has been involved in the audio industry since his time as chief engineer at Pomona College's FM radio station. Mr. Peplinski has worked in software and hardware design for digital audio workstations, and wavetable audio engines for use in coin operated video games. Since 1996, he has been employed as audio section manager in Philips Semiconductors TriMedia project. There he has promoted the use of modular software libraries written in high level languages to support audio functions in consumer electronic products. Mr. Peplinski is a member of the AES, SMPTE, and IEEE.

Torsten Fink was born in Hamburg, Germany. He received an M.S. (Diploma) degree in electrical engineering in 1995 from the Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg. Employed at Philips Semiconductors in Hamburg, he worked on the implementation of several video and audio compression/decompression algorithms on a very long instruction word processor. The work included an MPEG-1 video encoder, a Dolby Digital decoder, a Dolby Surround Prologic Decoder, and an MPEG-1 audio encoder. New techniques of software speed optimization for VLIW processors were explored during that time. Mr. Fink was also involved in the development of a hierarchical streaming software architecture. Since the beginning of 1999 he is working for the TriMedia Product Group of Philips Semiconductors in Sunnyvale, California.

Directions

From 101 take the Fair Oaks exit south. About 1 mile from 101, Wolfe splits off to the left, bear left to follow Wolfe. The first stoplight is Stewart, turn left. The Philips Learning Center is on the right after the first parking lot.

From 280 take the Wolfe Road Exit. Follow Wolfe north across El Camino and under Central Expressway. The second light north of Central is Stewart, turn right. The Philips Learning Center is on the right after the first parking lot.

COMING EVENTS

MAY 8 - 11
AES Convention
Munich, Germany

May 11 - 16
HI-FI 99
Chicago, IL

May 15 - 16
SPARS Conference
Chicago, IL

June 8 - 12
Infocomm
Orlando, FL

JOB BOARD

The following positions are open at Digidesign. See their web page at <http://www.digidesign.com/about/jobs.html> for more details

Senior Engineering Test Manager
Senior Systems Level Software Engineer
Application Software Engineer
Application Software Engineer
Audio/Post Test Engineer
Technical Writer
Sr. Technical Writer

Our total compensation package includes comprehensive benefits, 401K, and a profit sharing plan. Please send us your resume, indicating position of interest to: e-mail jobs@digidesign.com, fax: (650)842-7999, or mail: Digidesign, 3401-A Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304, Attn: Professional Staffing. EOE.

Additional job openings are posted on the AES web page.

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