

Accellera Announces Open Kit Committee

FAQ

Revised: November 6, 2003

1) What is custom design?

Custom design is handbuilt design, and while custom design can take place at any level of design, it is generally taken to mean transistor level design, i.e. circuit design. Custom designed circuits can be for digital, analog, RF or mixed signal functions.

2) What is a design kit?

Simply put, a design kit is the collection of data necessary to represent a silicon process within a collection of design tools that make up a complete flow. It is all of the information that the tools, manipulated by the designer, use to create, simulate, layout, and verify circuits.

3) What is the Open Kit (OK) Initiative?

OK is a group of EDA, foundry, and Library/IP companies that are proposing an industry initiative to standardize, as much as possible, the design kits that link design processes to silicon processes.

4) Why was OK formed?

Throughout the evolution of the IC and EDA industries, IC design processes have been notoriously inefficient due in large part to the bottom-up nature of the process data integration that is necessary for the design tools to do their job. Companies that purchase tools from commercial EDA tool providers must install the data elements that represent the IC process targeted by the intended design. Over the years, that data has become known as “design kits”. Today we find ourselves with a multiplicity of these kits with little coherence in the organization of data management, supported tools, definition of terms, expectation of content, and any objective comparison capability. In our industry, standards are working where applied; but in the area of design data they are largely non-existent. This committee is the first step in a campaign to change that picture.

5) How has OK structured the standardization effort?

The Board of Directors of Accellera has agreed to sanction the OpenKit Initiative and apply their bylaws and processes to the standardization process. We invite you to join Accellera and OK as we develop the first set of standards by the Accellera procedures and policies. Ultimately, the goal is to become an IEEE standard.

6) What does OK plan to propose to standardize?

The area of design kits is vast. We will focus on an achievable set first, bringing to bear industry talents, through the well recognized Accellera standards organization. As we deliver success in these areas, we will expand to other areas in need of standardization.

7) Cadence builds design kits for foundries and companies, what is wrong with just endorsing their design kits?

Cadence is an active participant in the working group and we would be happy to use several of the Cadence formats as the basis for OKs.

8) I work for a high tech company. How is this going to make my life easier?

As a foundry, you won't have to develop design kits for each individual EDA tool and you will have more complete kits earlier in the technology node release process.

As an EDA vendor, you will receive higher quality design kits sooner to support your tools. As a circuit designer, you will receive higher quality design kits sooner that will support the EDA tools that YOU choose to use.

9) A lot of the standards activities have produced paper but no results, how is this different?

OK has a strong representation of key committed companies, and reasonable, achievable plans and goals. OK member companies have the experience of developing several successful standards.

10) Is this going to make it easier for companies to go from foundry to foundry?

In the sense that OKs will allow more foundries to more easily support the EDA tools that YOU are using, you will be able to redesign into more foundries. This initiative is not trying to make foundries identical

11) Do the foundries feel threatened by this?

We should let the foundries speak for themselves. But, we believe that as they learn more about the initiative they will view this effort as an opportunity to reduce their work in developing disparate data sets for each of the EDA tools, and instead will allow them to develop one OK that will apply across all EDA tools and have more complete kits earlier in their technology release process.

12) Aren't other groups working in this area? What about the Compact Modeling Group?

Yes, there are a few standards efforts in this area, such as the Compact Modeling Group and the FSA. We will not duplicate efforts and will endorse and adopt standards where they are already set.

11) Why Accellera, why not VSIA or SI2 or IEEE?

Accellera has proven to be a very effective and efficient standards body. Working within Accellera, we believe that we can deliver high quality OK standards faster. The ultimate destination for these standards will be IEEE and they will apply the ultimate stamp of approval. We will also work cooperatively with FSA, VSIA and other standards activities that are complementary.

12) Are you going to build a reference OK?

At this point we are concentrating on documenting recommendations for what an OK is and there is no decision on whether we will ever distribute a reference kit. Perhaps a commercial company will do that in the future or perhaps we will entertain doing that in the future. Right now though, we are concentrating on defining an OK.

13) How can I get more information on the OK Initiative

Details on the OK Initiative can be found on the web at:

<http://www.accelera.org/subcom.html>