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Wibree forum merges with Bluetooth SIG

Bluetooth technology expands for ultra low power PAN applications with Nokia's Wibree

Bellevue, WA, USA and Espoo, Finland – The Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG), the more than 8,000-company strong trade association responsible for advancing Bluetooth wireless technology, joined Nokia today in announcing that the Wibree forum, the group specifying the Nokia developed ultra low power wireless technology, will be merged with the Bluetooth SIG.

With this announcement, the Wibree specification will become part of the Bluetooth specification as an ultra low power Bluetooth technology. Because Wibree addresses devices with very low battery capacity and can be easily integrated with Bluetooth technology, it will round out Bluetooth technology's wireless Personal Area Networking (PAN) offering and strengthen the technology's ability to provide wireless connectivity for smaller devices.

"By including or referencing other wireless technologies like ultra wideband for high speed applications, near field communication (NFC) for association and now Wibree for ultra low power applications under the well-established Bluetooth profiles, we are opening up a host of new applications and functionality while keeping the user experience consistent," said Michael Foley, Ph. D. executive director, Bluetooth SIG. "Our members have been asking for an ultra low power Bluetooth solution. With Nokia's innovative development and contribution to the Bluetooth specification with Wibree, we will be able to deliver this in approximately one year."

Wibree's development started at the Nokia Research Center in 2001. Wibree was announced to a broader audience in October of 2006 and Nokia stated its intention to incorporate the technology and its current forum into an open, preferably existing industry forum to ensure Wibree's wide adoption.

"The development work for Wibree began when we discovered a series of interesting new use scenarios that no current local connectivity solution was addressing. Now we are happy to see Wibree become part of the open Bluetooth standard, opening new market opportunities and space to innovate for the industry," said Jarkko Sairanen, Vice President of Corporate Strategy for Nokia. "Including Wibree within an existing forum will ensure interoperability and its wide and fast adoption. The Bluetooth SIG is the optimal new home for Wibree."

To this day Broadcom, Casio, CSR, Epson, ItoM, Logitech, Nordic Semiconductor, ST Microelectronics, Suunto, Taiyo Yuden Co., Ltd. and Texas Instruments have contributed to the interoperability specification, profiles and use case definition of Wibree in their respective areas of expertise and will continue this work in the Bluetooth SIG working groups. Several new companies, including device, watch and access systems manufacturers will join the finalization of the specification. Once the specification is finalized, the technology will be made broadly available to the industry via the Bluetooth SIG.

"Nokia's contribution of its Wibree technology into the Bluetooth SIG as the basis for ultra low power *Bluetooth* specifications will continue to enhance the consumer experience of connecting to anything and anyone from anywhere with *Bluetooth* wireless technology," said John R. Barr, Ph.D., chairman of the Bluetooth SIG board of directors. "This new technology, as the basis of a wide range of ultra low power devices, is a commendable advancement in *Bluetooth* technology."

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From the start, Wibree was designed to work with two implementation options – as an easily implemented extension to a classic Bluetooth radio, and as a stand-alone implementation

The Bluetooth SIG recognized the potential of Wibree to enhance current Bluetooth use cases around the mobile phone and PC by bringing very low power, sensor type devices into the fold. The ultra low power extension will allow watches and toys, as well as sports & wellness, healthcare and entertainment devices to be easily added to one's personal area network. This opens a new range of mobile possibilities for end users.

By leveraging Bluetooth technology's high consumer awareness (86 percent globally), the Bluetooth SIG's large membership and proven development and qualification programs, the ultra low power solution will be integrated faster and at a lower cost to the industry and consumers. Thanks to its innovative design, Wibree consumes only a fraction of the power of classic Bluetooth radios. In many cases it makes it possible to operate these devices for more than a year without recharging.

As stated in his March 2007 ABI Research Short Range Wireless Service, research Director Stuart Carlaw predicted a \$432 million, 809 million device industry for Wibree by 2012. Carlaw said, "We believe [Wibree] is a unique technology that can leverage the very positive market position of Bluetooth technology in segments such as medical, sports equipment and well-being, where the total available market is extremely large and still relatively untouched."

The work of integrating the low power technology within the existing Bluetooth specification has begun and the first version of the specification is anticipated during first half of 2008.

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