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USB 3.0 War Gains Proportions, SIS Joins Team



SIS joined AMD, NVIDIA and VIA in their pursuit of getting hands on USB 3.0 specification developed by Intel

The war between Intel, AMD and NVIDIA on the USB 3.0 specification has a new player on the field, SIS, which joined the last two in their pursuit of getting Intel to unveil the specification. Also, another round kicks off as NVIDIA strikes back at Intel's latest statements on the issue. Intel has now four companies against it on this, namely NVIDIA, Advanced Micro Devices, VIA Technologies, and the newly joined SIS. The group of companies at odds with Intel has announced that things are moving fast on their side, as they are in the process of developing their own "host-controller" specification. "We're moving fast. We've already staffed it internally. We have resources submitted from all of the companies (Nvidia, AMD, Via, and SiS)," said an NVIDIA source. In a previous blog post, an Intel spokesman said that Intel had not yet reached that state in the development of the USB 3.0 that would allow the company to publicly release the specification. Intel also stated that the company had invested a great amount of money and work hours in the development of the specification, but that it would offer it for free to other manufacturers. According to official position, other companies should be grateful for getting it free of charge instead of whining about Intel's approach of the situation. Fearing that Intel would gain a significant time advantage by developing the USB 3.0 by itself - that would take somewhere between six to nine months -, NVIDIA and others say they will be forced to come up with their own specification if Intel does not agree to release its own in due time, which would mean right about now. "Effectively, what will end up happening as this plays out (is) the rest of us launch later. But even though we've developed to the Intel host controller spec, we may not interpret it exactly the same way as Intel has implemented it." Intel says that the specification is not mature enough to be released, but promises it will make it public at the right moment. However, there might be another side to Intel's actions as well. As the company develops the specification all by itself, the USB 3.0 will be exactly what Intel wants it to be. Thus, in order to avoid any compatibility issues, other manufactures will have to comply exactly with its specifications. According to NVIDIA, the delays created by this situation would be inevitable. "By then, they have become the de facto standard and we have no choice but to go back and respin (redesign) the chip, which then adds another nine months," NVIDIA says. "Effectively, Intel is building in two years of green field - of a market where they're the sole provider and they can charge whatever they want for their chipsets." "Intel is investing heavily (think gazillions of dollars and bazillions of engineering man-hours) in resources to create an Intel host controller spec in order to speed time to market of the USB 3.0 technology. I think they're overstating the resources and time required to get to a mature spec," the NVIDIA source concluded by saying.