



Future Technology Devices International Ltd.

Company Profile

FTDI was set up in the early 1990's by CEO Fred Dart, an experienced ASIC designer - FTDI's 10th anniversary was on 13th March, 2002. The company is privately owned by the Dart family. Prior to setting up FTDI, Fred ran another start-up, Computer Design Concepts Ltd. (CDCL) for 5 years which undertook sub-contract ASIC design work. Deciding to branch out and design some novel original ic's, FTDI was organized as a product company selling own-designed integrated circuits rather than as a design consultancy. CDCL was subsequently merged into FTDI.

FTDI's initial products were chipsets for PC motherboards - their main customer at the time being IBM who used FTDI's chipset devices in their Ambra and PS/1 PC's. By 1996 Intel had captured a large share of the PC chipset market, so the company moved direction from this market to focus on the PC peripheral sector. With the peripheral market in mind, the company designed its own 8-bit embedded CPU (EMCU) core for use in forthcoming peripheral device designs. The EMCU core can be found in FTDI's innovative FT8U100AX USB hub controller – the first USB hub controller to feature in-built legacy serial and PS/2 keyboard / mouse support as well as supporting seven downstream USB hub ports.

When the Universal Serial Bus (USB) specification was released, FTDI foresaw that the interconnection technology for many PC peripherals would change to this forthcoming standard and focussed its efforts on developing new devices / solutions for USB. Through a combination of combining competitively priced silicon together with off-the-shelf USB drivers, the company developed its own market niche focussing on solutions for upgrading legacy RS232 peripheral designs to USB and providing a “ready to go” solution for new designs that minimized the design effort and time-to-market. Though market acceptance of USB as the dominant PC interconnection standard took much longer than originally anticipated, the companies vision has now been realized.

FTDI's latest products, the FT8U232AM USB UART and the FT8U245AM USB FIFO were released to the market towards the end of 1990. These devices have proved very popular in the market – at the time of writing (March 2002) the demand is currently around 200k parts per month and growing rapidly as more customers move from the design-in phase to mass production. As world-wide demand increased, the company has expanded it's range of distribution channels to suit, now covering 33 different countries world-wide at the time of writing.



As an engineering focussed company, FTDI realizes that quality technical support is a major factor in winning new design-in's. The company has spent a lot of effort to re-organize its web site to make technical information and on-line downloadable software updates readily accessible to its customer base. These not only include Data Sheets and Schematics but an extensive range of Application Notes by our own staff and 3rd party designs. The monthly “FTDI NewsLetter” has proven very popular amongst design engineers and end-users alike. FTDI also actively participates in the USB Developers Web Board – the prime source of technical information for the USB developer community. The company is building further on what it has achieved to date by an aggressive policy of continuously improving its technical support information and developer resources.

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FTDI's devices are sub-contract manufactured using quality foundry and assembly / test manufacturers in the Asia Pacific region. By having warehousing facilities in the Far East, the company can ship large volume orders to its customers outside Europe directly from these facilities without having to import them into Europe and re-export them again.

DLP-USB1 Evaluation Kit



The company offers not only devices and drivers but a range of evaluation kits developed by FTDI and 3rd parties which make their solutions easy to verify before design-in. See the Evaluation Kits section of the company web site (<http://www.ftdichip.com>) for further details. Several magazine articles have been published to date featuring these devices in Circuit Cellar, Nuts and Volts and Electronics World as well as some on-line articles and reviews.

In line with its commitment to ensure a long term supply of these devices and technology, the company will shortly announce its 2nd generation of the FT8U232AM and FT8U245AM devices. For those customers who are concerned with the longevity of their designs, an End-of-Life policy document is available on request. These second generation devices not only require less external support components but introduce a raft of new features / enhancements including USB 2.0 (full speed device) compliance. Both generations of devices will be in production for the foreseeable future.

In summary, Future Technology Devices International is a 10 year old, well-respected, UK based designer and supplier of silicon and driver solutions for USB peripherals using quality sub-contact facilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Our mission is to offer by far the easiest route to USB migration by combining USB Serial and USB FIFO silicon solutions with ready-to-go robust royalty-free USB drivers, thus offering reduced development / debug costs and a fast time to market to our customers. Our team of highly qualified and experienced hardware and software engineers also offer full custom i.c design services and a turnkey product design and manufacturing service for those who customers who are looking for additional services.

Useful links and references –

<http://www.ftdichip.com> (The company web site and center for it's resources and design information)

<http://www.ftdichip.com/FTCompany.htm> (A short Macromedia Flash presentation on the company)

<http://www.beyondlogic.org/usb/ftdi.htm> (a 3rd party on-line review of our products)

Fred Dart (CEO FTDI Ltd.) - March 2002