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Asset building open embedded test tools

[Nicolas Mokhoff](#)[EE Times](#)

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MANHASSET, N.Y. Asset Intertech is developing open embedded instrumentation tools based on the preliminary P1687 Internal JTAG (IJTAG) specifications.



According to Asset president and CEO Glenn Woppman, the [P1687 IEEE standard](#) is close enough to ratification to begin developing tools for it.

"Electronics manufacturers are realizing that the external design validation, test and debug technologies that they have now are simply running out of gas. As a result, [chip](#) vendors, as well as the system manufacturers themselves, are embedding instruments into silicon," said Woppman.

Both camps need open tools to work with those embedded instruments Woppman added. "For the sake of efficiency and agility, these tools must be able to manage embedded instruments from any chip vendor. This is where the IJTAG standard comes in."

[Asset](#) is applying its experience from its ScanWorks platform of boundary-scan test tools, which utilize JTAG access. The boundary-scan infrastructure embedded into chips and circuit boards is one of several technologies that can form the basis for an embedded instrumentation tool set.

In recent years, Asset has enhanced its ScanWorks platform with embedded instrumentation capabilities such as CPU-emulation functional test and signal-integrity analysis using embedded Intel IBIST (Interconnect Built In Self Test) technology. According to Asset, ScanWorks has become the boundary-scan system of choice for major communication and defense/avionics suppliers, including Cisco, Ericsson, Motorola, Alcatel-Lucent, Tellabs, Huawei, Raytheon, Rockwell, Lockheed Martin, BAE, ITT, Northrop Grumman and Smiths. In addition, ScanWorks has been adopted by Microsoft for the Xbox 360 and Delphi for automotive electronics.

It is fairly common to develop silicon or tools conforming to [a preliminary standard](#) because such support lets manufacturers become acquainted with the standard before its final ratification. "We went through this same process with the original boundary-scan standard [IEEE 1149.1 JTAG] when, as part of Texas Instruments at the time, we committed to developing tools before the standard was actually ratified," said Woppman. "In the long run, we believe we accelerated the adoption rate of boundary scan. As a tool supplier, we think it is critical at this time to send a message to the industry that we will support IJTAG."

To back up that message, Asset has hired two test experts from ATE company [Verigy](#), which acquired test vendor Inovys in the latest round of test industry consolidation.

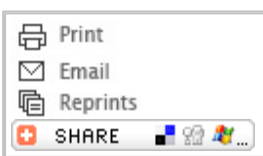
Al Crouch, formerly chief scientist and director of DfX research and development at Inovys, has joined Asset as chief technologist for core instrumentation. Crouch has served for the past three years as vice chairman of the P1687 IJTAG working group and has contributed to the hardware [architecture](#) definition.

John Potter, formerly the principal automation architect at Inovys, has joined Asset's IJTAG tool development effort as senior principal technologist for core instrumentation. Potter is also a member of the P1687 IJTAG working group and is focusing on the language portion of the spec.

"A great deal of validation and test instrumentation technology is being embedded into silicon these days," said Crouch. "What's needed now is an open environment that can access this volume of embedded instrumentation technology to organize it, schedule its execution, access data collected by the instruments, analyze the data, display results and exert overall control over the embedded technologies. The IJTAG standard, once it is ratified, will provide the foundation for doing this."

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