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Contact: Ken Gracey | CEO | Parallax Inc. | kgracey@parallax.com | Direct: (916) 625-3010

Parallax Propeller Multicore Microcontroller Released as Open Source Design

Rocklin, CA – Parallax Inc. has released their source code design files for the Propeller 1 (P8X32A) multicore microcontroller among the 13,000+ attendees of the DEF CON 22 Conference in Las Vegas where their chip is also featured on the conference's electronic badge. Parallax has long-believed in openly sharing product designs for the benefit of its users and the development community. CEO Ken Gracey anticipates this release will inspire developers the same way Parallax founder Chip Gracey was motivated when he taught himself to program computer systems in the early 1980s.

Hobbyists, engineers, and students may now view and modify the Propeller Verilog design files by loading them into low-cost field programmable gate array (FPGA) development boards. The design was released under the GNU General Public License v3.0.

With the chip's source code being available, any developer may discover what they need to know about the design. The open release provides a way for developers who have requested more pins, memory or other architectural improvements to make their own version to run on an FPGA. Universities who have requested access to the design files for their engineering programs will now have them.

The Propeller multicore microcontroller is used in developing technologies where multiple sensors, user interface systems, and output devices such as motors must be managed simultaneously. Some primary applications for Parallax's chip include flight controllers in unmanned aerial vehicles, 3D printing, solar monitoring systems, environmental data collection, theatrical lighting and sound control, and medical devices.

The decision to go open-source has positive implications for Parallax's next design: the Propeller 2. In recent years the community contributed the compilers, multi-platform programming tools and languages for the Propeller 1. Several of the Propeller 2 features were contributed and designed by community members running binary images of the chip in an FPGA. Though a small supplier in the semiconductor industry, the high quality of Parallax's products can be attributed, in part, to their close relationship with the development community.

For more information on Parallax's open source release of the Propeller P8X32A, visit www.parallax.com.

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About Parallax Inc.:

Parallax Inc. designs custom multicore microcontrollers and a vast array of educational programs in robotics, sensors, and electronics. Parallax is dedicated to providing the electronics industry with products that are technically innovative, unique, and economical while staying committed to thoughtful, creative design and quality workmanship. Parallax Inc. is a privately-held company located in Rocklin, California.