Press Releases

Silicon Line Announces Availability of Active Optical Cable Modules for USB 3.2 Gen 2 Specification

Delivers 10Gb Bandwidth Over Thin, Flexible Cables Suited to VR, Medical and Robotics Applications at Mass Market Prices

MUNICH and COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo., March 16, 2020 – Silicon Line GmbH (www.silicon-line.com), the global leader in developing and providing innovative optical link technology for consumer and commercial applications, has introduced the world's first module enabling the high volume manufacture of USB 3.2 Gen 2 active optical cables (AOCs) at mass market prices.

The company said performance of the new modules, rated at 10 gigabits per second bandwidth in either direction, had been fully validated and that the modules would go into mass production later this month in both Type A and Type C (micro USB) configurations. Production samples are available immediately and are being provided to trade customers in Asia, Europe and North America.

"We are the unchallenged world leader in the development of ultra-low-power integrated circuits and modules for AOCs across the most common connectivity standards, including USB, DisplayPort and HDMI," said Ruud van der Linden, CEO. "Our new USB 3.2 gen 2 modules have performed flawlessly in real-world testing with VR headsets, solid state drives and other demanding interactive applications. We also have significant interest in these products among robotics and medical technology companies, since USB connectivity readily facilitates integration with computer-based systems."

Van der Linden said the ICs for the new modules were developed specifically for the USB 3.x protocol and also support power delivery up to 5A (PD 3.0 specification). He said that for cable lengths greater than one and half meters, or about five feet, copper cables supporting this bandwidth would be too thick, heavy and inflexible for many entertainment and commercial applications. "Our products can be used in one-meter, five-meter or 10-meter cables that are so thin, lightweight and flexible, they can easily fit in your pocket."

Silicon Line, which is a member of the USB Implementers Forum and VESA, is also currently developing 20Gbps product for the recently announced USB4 and DisplayPort 2.0 standards.

Silicon Line has achieved two pivotal breakthroughs that make optical cables cost-competitive with copper. The first is in the development of tiny, ultra-low-power ICs, which require no external power source for optical signal transmission, and the second is in new manufacturing technology of optical cable modules – the electronics inside cable-end connectors – permitting precise, high volume production at far less than half the cost of previous methods. The key component for the modules, the optical subassembly, or OSA, is manufactured exclusively by Silicon Line at its factory in Hasselt, Belgium.

"We are exceptionally well-positioned to provide OEM partners with unrivaled products for active optical cables to be used with consumer and commercial products," said Van der Linden. "Our technology brings the price of optical cables for USB, HDMI and DisplayPort down to affordable consumer prices, and it is enabling innovative product development in wide-ranging fields."

For more information on Silicon Line's USB 3.2 Gen 2 compliant active optical cable modules, or to place orders, visit (insert URL if there is a page with content) or contact Jerome Py, CMO and Optical Modules Business Unit Head, at jerome.py@silicon-line.com or +49 89 54 63 118.

About Silicon Line

Silicon Line GmbH is the global leader in ultra-low-power optical link technology enabling thin, lightweight and long high-speed cables for consumer electronics, commercial and industrial applications. The company develops and manufactures integrated circuits and modules which allow a simple, low-cost, high volume assembly of active optical cables. Founded in 2005, Silicon Line is based in Munich, Germany with offices in Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China and the United States.

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