Ross hopeful for hyperSPARC

Ross Technology (Austin, TX) has upgraded its hyperSPARC CPU user business to 66 MHz and promised a 110-MHz OEM-only version for later in the year.

The new 66-MHz hyperSPARC will be offered immediately in Ross' MBus upgrade package for Sun's multiprocessor SPARCstation 10/30 and SPARCserver 600MP lines. Prices start at $3,490 for one CPU, rising to $1,960 for four chips. The 55-MHz version, introduced last fall, will be discounted 20 percent, making a four-CPU module $7,960. As before, the upgrades come with user documentation, a 30-day money-back guarantee, and a one-year limited warranty.

The upgrade business, offering lower prices than Sun's own Texas Instruments' manufactured SuperSPARC-based MBus upgrades, gives Ross an outlet for its new SPARC line. Ross had once done the majority of its foundry business for Sun's earlier product lines, but its hyperSPARC design was passed over by Sun in favor of TI's products. With the abrupt drop in business, Ross was sold by Cypress Semiconductor to Fujitsu, a longtime Sun business partner and manufacturer of the microSPARC CPUs used in Sun's current SPARCclassic and SPARCstation 5 workstations.

Ross announced it will begin sampling 100-MHz hyperSPARCs to the OEM market in July, with volume production in the fourth quarter of 1994. Ross sells to Sun, Fujitsu, ICL, Tadpole, Axil, and others. The faster CPUs use a 3.3V CMOS technology from parent Fujitsu Ltd., and operate at a low 3½-watts power dissipation at 100 MHz, under typical operating conditions, Ross said. Another highlight: Ross managed to pack a 6-million transistor multidie package chipset into a 131-pin PGA (pin-grid-array, a chip package that looks like a mini bed of nails), so it takes up less motherboard space than before.

Director of Marketing Steve Goldstein said the hyperSPARC is "totally compatible" with SPARC and runs Solaris 2.3. He said the faster CPU will find its way onto the user upgrade board.

Ross also hopes eventually to sell the 110-MHz hyperSPARC chip to SMCC, Sun's hardware division, for use in the SPARCstation 20. Ross could also realistically target the installed base of SPARCstation 10 that run TI's 33-MHz chip. Although Sun's SPARC Technology Business (STB) unit said they will not be reselling hyperSPARC, a spokesperson for SMCC told *Advanced Systems* they haven't made up their mind, and probably won't decide which chipmaker to go with "until summer." In late April, Sun and Fujitsu (which owns Ross) announced a re-dedication of their partnership to work together on a SPARC "roadmap," but this alliance will not impact SMCC's decision to buy hyperSPARC, an SMCC spokesperson said.

Still, Goldstein at Ross remains hopeful SMCC will pick up hyperSPARC. "We are prepared to go from 0 to 40,000 [units]. We're a subsidiary of Fujitsu — this isn't even a drop in the bucket compared with Fujitsu's fabrication capabilities. We have high expectations that we will earn the design [contract from SMCC]." —*Shalini Chatterjee*

Tabular text for Motif applications

GUI utility developer KL Group (Toronto, ONT) has begun shipping a new Motif widget that lets programmers add graphical tabular text display and editing capabilities to their applications. XRT/table is the latest addition to KL Group's suite of X Window System software objects for adding data-analysis functions to Motif applications.
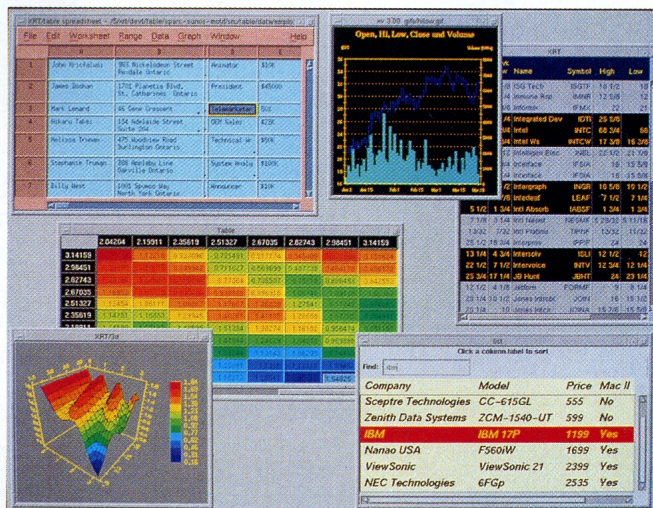
XRT/table is designed to enhance developer productivity by reducing the amount of programming needed to create data-entry forms and editable scrolled lists. KL Group officials said the product gives X Window applications a dramatically enhanced visual interface for display and manipulation of tabular information. The company also produces XRT/graph for adding 2-D charts and graphs and XRT/3d for adding 3-D surface, contour, and bar graphs to Motif applications.

"The standard OSF/Motif widgets break down when you try to use them to manage large tables of data," said KL Group President Greg Kiessling. "We developed XRT/table because of a huge demand by X application developers for a solid, well-built table widget."

XRT/table can be used as a stand-alone tool or integrated with XRT/3d and XRT/graph. The products extend the basic OSF/Motif objectset using object-oriented modules that follow the same architecture used by Xt Intrinsics and OSF/Motif. According to KL Group, all of XRT/table's features can be programmed through C, C++, UIL, and resources files, allowing developers to prototype and model the table's appearance and behavior without recompiling.

The XRT/table widget provides more than 70 resources that control how data
continues

KL Group first broke into the Unix market with XRT/graph. The company claims this product, released in 1990, was the first commercially available X toolkit extension. Their latest product is XRT/table, sold for $995 through June 30.