Analog and Mixed Signal ICs for use in Future Space Missions

AMICSA 2012

26–28 August 2012

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ABSTRACT

Generating the needs and requirements for analog and mixed signal ICs for use in future space missions is a multi-faceted issue. Very simply, the part must be properly specified, and there needs to be a process to ensure that the intent of the specification is being met. This paper summarizes how the space community in the United States is addressing this issue.

INTRODUCTION

Before addressing the use of analog and mixed signal devices in future space missions, this paper examines the status of standards and specifications being used today. Are the requirements therein clearly stated and followed correctly? (Not really, especially when it comes to burn-in screening of parts used to remove infant mortality.)

In 2000, the space parts users formed the NASA EEE Parts Assurance Group, NEPAG, to connect and to communicate. There are currently 27 organizations that are part of it including our international partners, the European Space Agency (ESA), Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and Canadian Space Agency (CSA). Some of the key NEPAG activities are: weekly telecons (monthly with international partners) participation in supplier audits worldwide, review of pre-released specifications, working with JEDEC community on parts issues (week-long meetings held three times a year). Fig. 1 shows the NEPAG member organizations. Fig. 2 details a number of NEPAG activities. Fig. 3 illustrates how the space parts world is a small and shrinking percentage of the commercial parts world.

Fig. 1. NEPAG emblem showing member organizations

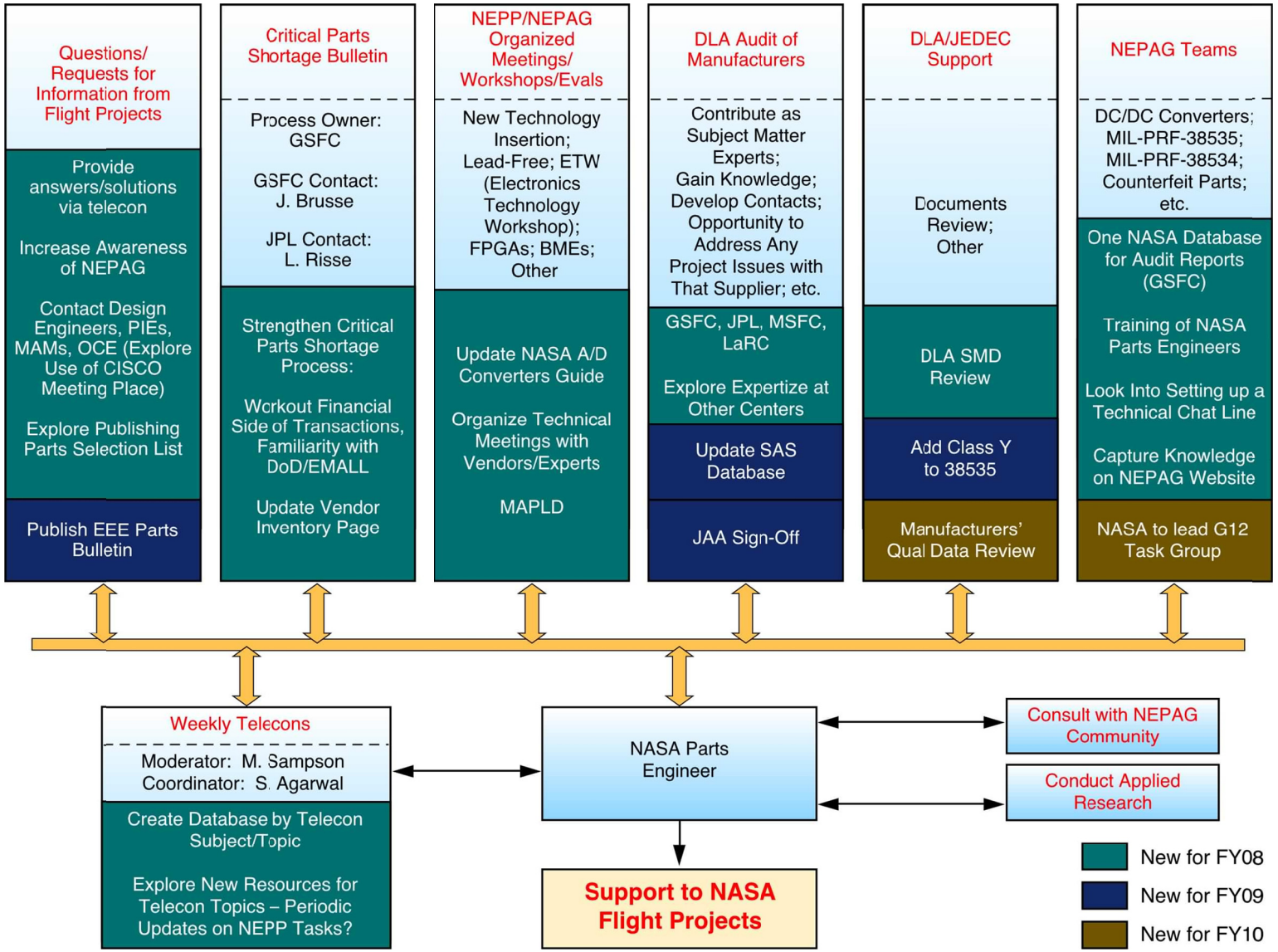

Fig. 2. NEPAG activities

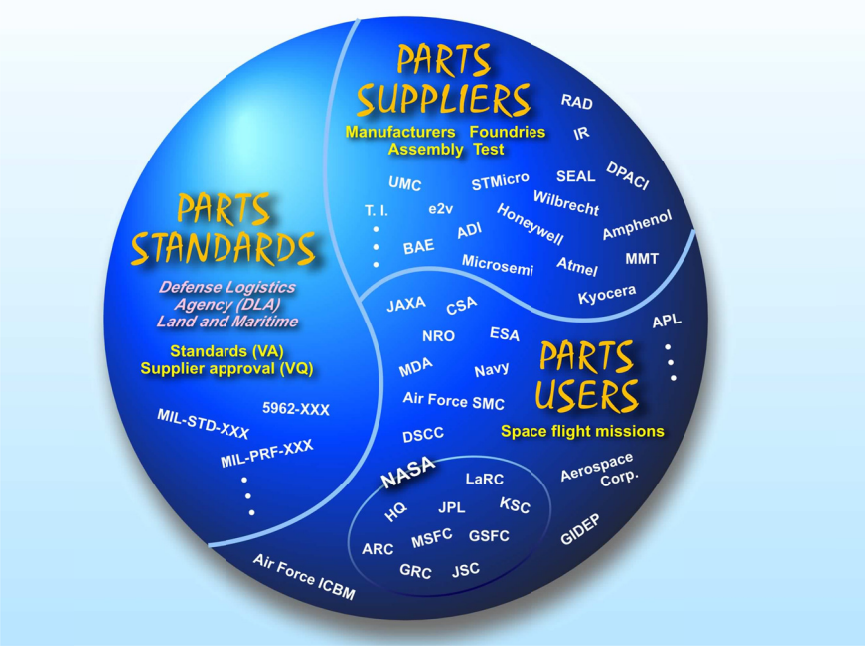

Fig. 3. The space parts area of a much larger parts world

The Challenges of New Technologies

There are new challenges of dual use technology, supply chain management, changing business models – the changing landscape. For instance, many newer analog-to-digital (A/D) converters are being offered as column grid arrays (CGA). However, the military standards are silent on proper testing, inspection, application requirements and guidelines for CGAs. There are issues related to the infusion of new state-of-the-art devices into the military system. Advancements in packaging technology and increasing functional density and operating frequency have resulted in single-die system-on-a-chip (SoCs) with non-hermetic flip-chip construction, in high-pin-count packages. Such devices did not fit existing QML classifications. We'll touch upon the efforts for bringing them into the Qualified Manufacturer Listing (QML) standardization system.

DETAILS OF SOME MAJOR NEPAG ACTIVITIES

Standard Microcircuit Drawing (SMD) Reviews

NASA reviews pre-released SMDs for space products. NASA in-house experts (parts specialists, radiation specialists, packaging specialists, reliability engineering, and others) are called upon to support this effort. The result is considered essential by DLA Land and Maritime.

New technology data reviews provide early NASA and space community involvement in new product definition, SMD development. For new technology evaluation, suppliers use MIL-PRF-38535, Appendix H. Conversely, under the dual-use technology effort, commercial parts may be developed for space customers.

DLA Audits Support

DLA Land and Maritime-VQ (formerly DSCC) is the designated Department of Defense entity that has authority to approve or disapprove suppliers. There are two parts to an audit: certification (capability demonstration) and qualification (successfully building product).

Scheduling of space community support for audits is decided during the NEPAG telecons. We support audits as subject matter experts, gain personal knowledge, make contacts, and resolve flight project issues. Audit team spends most of audit time on production floor, test floor, etc. to talk to operators, engineers, and witness operation or tests being performed. Review supplier chain management, counterfeit parts mitigation, and other items. Audit findings are reported during NEPAG telecons. High-level summary of audits supported by NASA entered into NASA SAS (supplier assessment system) database.

Recent Findings Regarding Microcircuits from Audits and Technology Data Reviews

Disabled Chip Burn-ins. Recent audit for QML device discovered chip was disabled during static burn-in; thus, it was not drawing any current.
Recommendation: For new SMDs, add statement within burn-in paragraphs stating that parts shall be kept in their enabled state during burn-in.

Class Q 160-hr/125ºC. Burn-in. Interpreted as static burn-in (even for CMOS technology).
Recommendation: Provide clarification in MIL-STD-883, Test Method 5004.

At Frequency (Dynamic) Burn-ins. Test equipment limitation cited for not doing burn-ins at application frequency.
Recommendation: Burn-in task group to discuss and provide guidance. When SMD says that part can be used at 200 MHz, doing burn-in at 6 MHz (cited as burn-in equipment limitation frequency) is not going to be meaningful!

Two Static Burn-ins. Some manufacturers do electrical testing between two static burn-ins, whereas others do electricals after completing both static burn-ins.
Recommendation: Provide clarification in MIL-STD-883, Test Method 5004.

Thermal Imaging. For a device with hot spots, thermal resistance, junction-to-case would be much higher than guidelines in MIL-STD-1835. One supplier used thermal imaging to find hot spots on the die.
Recommendation: Assign a task group to evaluate effectiveness of thermal imaging at product development stage

SMD Electrical and Burn-in Guidelines

The Burn-in (B.I.) Task Group was chartered to develop a JEDEC document for guidance to suppliers and users, including recommendations on deltas, SMD electrical parameters, and burn-in, as well as providing recommendations for any needed changes to MIL-STD-883. The recommendations to date are as follows.

1. Burn-in: types required - dynamic and static/high-temperature reverse-bias burn-in (HTRB); burn-in specified by technology or product type; Junction temperatures to be achieved; burn-in conditions: voltages, frequency.
2. Delta requirements: definition - critical parameters selected to provide a measure of product and process stability; selection of delta parameters.
3. Electrical measurements: parameters; functionality; selection of limits based on data; parameters guaranteed (but not tested, by design, by characterization data, data required to validate guaranteed position)

NASA Inputs to B.I Task Group

1. **Clarify burn-in requirements for space products in Table I of Method 5004: specifically, screening steps 3.1.10, 3.1.12, footnote 9/ and footnote 10/.** As written, it implies that dynamic burn-in is a requirement. However, it is not always done. Moreover, for certain functions, such as a precision voltage reference, how would you design a dynamic burn-in? Requirements need to be reviewed and updated.
2. **HTRB vs. Static Burn-in.** There is no mention of static burn-in in Table I of Method 5004. We all know that digital products are subjected to Static burn-ins, often two: one for low condition (Static I) and the other for high condition (Static II). Add reference to static burn-in(s) as appropriate.
3. **How are burn-in voltage, frequency, etc. supposed to be determined?**

4. **Are any manufacturers using low temperature burn-in?** If yes, low-temp burn-in option should be included in the screening spec.
5. **What Ea should be used for new technology?** Some manufacturers are using a fixed activation energy (Ea) of 0.7 eV.
6. **Time–temperature regression tables, e.g. Table I in Method 1015, should be reviewed.** What Ea are they based on? Is that still valid?
7. **Restricted temperature parts:** What and how are burn-in temperatures determined?
8. **Dynamic burn-in for high-speed devices.** What frequency should be used?

CHANGING LANDSCAPE: A NEW TREND—SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Example 1: A New Trend in Supply Train Management

• Die design	Manufacturer
• Fabrication	Operation A (could be performed by the mfr or Company A)
• Package design & package manufacturing	Operation B
• Wafer lap and dice	Operation C
• Assembly	Operation D
• CGA column attach solderability	Operation E
• Screening/electrical/package tests	Operation F
• Complete electricals per SMD	Operation G
• Internal water vapor content	Operation H
• Radiation testing	Operation I

Example 2: Many Newer Parts Are No Longer Guaranteed over the MIL Temperature Range

A parts designer must use caution in selecting the operating temperature range. Many newer parts no longer guaranteed over the MIL temperature range. Table 1 illustrates an example from DLA SMD 5962-99607.

Table 1. Example showing issues in selecting operating temperature range

Device type	Generic number	Circuit function	Access time
01	8Q512	512K X 8-bit rad-hard low voltage SRAM (MIL Temp)	25 ns
02	8Q512	512K X 8-bit rad-hard low voltage SRAM (Extended Temp)	25 ns
03	8Q512	512K X 8-bit rad-hard low voltage SRAM (MIL Temp)	20 ns
04	8Q512	512K X 8-bit rad-hard low voltage SRAM (Extended Temp)	20 ns
05	8Q512E	512K X 8-bit rad-hard low voltage SRAM (MIL Temp)	20 ns
06	8Q512E	512K X 8-bit rad-hard low voltage SRAM (Extended Temp)	20 ns
Operating case temperature			
Operating case temperature (TC), (Device 01, 03, and 05) ..... -55 ºC to +125 ºC			
Operating case temperature (TC), (Device 02, 04, and 06) ..... -40 ºC to +125 ºC			

This SMD is implying that there may be a performance issue at low temperatures. Use caution for operation at low temperatures. Work with the manufacturer to get product test/characterization data. Some other Memories (e.g., 5962-01533 and 5962-01511) are specified as follows: Device type 01, -40 ºC to +125 ºC; Device types 02 and 03, -40 ºC to +105 ºC. These may have performance problems at both the low and high ends.

INFUSION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY DEVICES INTO QML, CLASS Y

Status: DLA-VA's Engineering Practice (EP) Study for Class Y is complete.

Background

In 2009, there was a major effort to bring the Xilinx Virtex-4 (a non-hermetic part) into the QML system as a Class V device. NASA and others were not in favor because it would have created massive confusion. Mike Sampson conceived the idea of new Class Y for non-hermetic space parts to provide QML coverage for complex state-of-the-art devices.

A new G-12 Task Group, TG 2010-01, was formed in early 2010 to address non-hermetic devices for space. Shri Agarwal was asked to lead. It was a challenging task because it

- Was far more involved than typical G12 tasks
- Required development of a new concept
- Used system-on-a-chip (SoC) — one of the most complicated devices
- Needed to be simple and easily understood
- Possessed sketchy testing and board assembly boundaries
- Was needed to procure standard QML product as quickly as possible.

New QML Class "Y"

The new QML Class Y is an attempt to bring advancements in packaging technology into QML system. Advancements in packaging technology and increasing functional density and operating frequency have resulted in single-die SoCs with non-hermetic flip-chip construction, in high-pin-count ceramic column grid array packages

The "Poster Child" example is the Virtex-4 (V-4) FPGAs from Xilinx. Such products were evaluated for radiation and reliability, and they have drawn attention of the space user community.

Question: How do we bring V-4 and similar microcircuits into QML system as space products?

No, they cannot be Class V; those are hermetic devices. It was intended that V-4 like products for space users be put into a new category: "Class Y". G-12 opened Task Group to develop Class Y

What if we dropped Class Y effort? There would be major loss for space community and QML program at large because industry would be limited to ordering via Source Control Drawings (SCDs). This would be counterproductive to Mission Assurance, would prevent standardization, and would be expensive.

Fig. 4 summarizes the infusion of Class Y into the QML system.

FUTURE SPACE MISSIONS USING ANALOG AND MIXED SIGNAL DEVICES

There are a number of challenges to using analog and mixed signal devices for space missions.

Dual Use Technology. Infusion of selected commercial device functions into QML system. Parts might not operate over full military temperature range. Moreover, there may be hot spots on the die.
Recommendation: Review SMDs. Use techniques such as thermal imaging to look for hot spots and make necessary adjustments to thermal resistance values.

Testing high-speed and high-resolution A/D converters. Would be challenging for users to perform reliability and radiation-testing.
Recommendation: Consider forming consortia with manufacturer and other users. Request new JEDEC task group be started to address this challenge – what can be tested, how, and what is good enough?

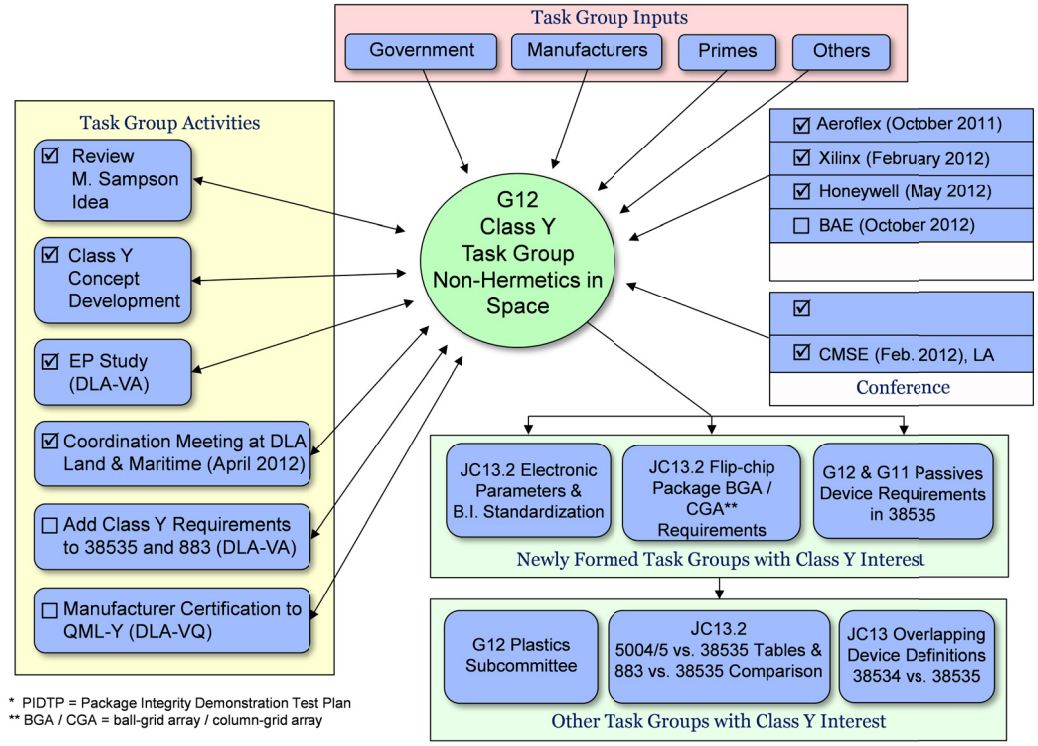

Fig. 4. Infusion of New Technology into the QML System G12 Class Y Effort at a Glance

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Upscreening of plastic encapsulated microcircuits (PEMs), lower grade hermetic analog and mixed signal parts. Many challenges: electrical testing, type of burn-in, glass transition temperature (for PEMs), 3rd-party management, etc.
Recommendation: Ask manufacturer if they would consider doing it (sufficiently high quantities might justify it). Form consortia. Consider application-specific testing.

Counterfeit Parts. World-wide problem.
Recommendation: Buy parts from franchised/authorized distributors.

Supply Chain Management. Self audits are an issue.
Recommendation: Work with (in case of the United States) DLA Land and Maritime. Handling and electrostatic discharge (ESD) issues take on increasingly important role.

New technology evaluation. How to evaluate?
Recommendation: Use MIL-PRF-38535, Appendix H. Some suppliers perform wafer-level reliability (WLR) assessment as well.

New package configurations; e.g., CGAs (Column Grid Arrays). Parts standardization effort has severely lagged behind advancements in packaging technology. A/D suppliers have announced products in CGA configuration but no mil standards are in place to establish requirements after columns have been installed. Are CGA parts an assembly, rather than a part? Often, users buy LGAs (Land Grid Arrays) and then get the columns attached.
Status/Recommendation: JEDEC task group is addressing CGA issues. DLA audit team is discussing CGA issues with suppliers. Use caution when buying LGAs and getting columns installed – original manufacturer's warranty may become void.

Signal-integrity capacitors for high-speed A/D converters. For signal-integrity considerations, tiny low-voltage capacitors are used inside IC packages. Usually commercial capacitors of BME (base metal electrode) construction.
Status: JEDEC task group addressing screening and qualification requirements for BME capacitors.

New materials. Materials such as underfills used in new packages would need to be evaluated.
Status: JEDEC task working on updating requirements in MIL-STD-883, Test Method 5011.

Budgetary Pressures. Will continue particularly challenging for high-reliability, non-repairable missions.
Recommendation: Form consortia. Discuss on NEPAG telecons.

Implementation of requirements. Do the tests/screens done meet the intent of specification?
Recommendation: Perform audits as necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

- There are challenging times ahead for mission assurance.
- Budget constraints (do more with less, especially for non-repairable missions).
- Communication is vital using AMICSA, NEPAG, JEDEC. And other means.
- Flexibility is needed, especially for adopting new technologies.

Note: For updated A/D tables, refer to NSREC 2012, poster paper W14.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research described in this publication was carried out, in part, at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Help is gratefully acknowledged from Dr. Charles Barnes, Roger Carlson, Joon Park, Michael Sampson, and Edward Sewall.