

“Persona-Based Design”: Tailoring our Flows to Your Needs

The Xilinx Solutions Development group is developing next-generation tool flows with customer guidance.



by Vin Ratford
Sr. Vice President,
Xilinx Solutions Development Group
Xilinx, Inc.
vin.ratford@xilinx.com

It’s absolutely amazing how far programmable logic has come over the last couple of years. With gate counts rivaling advanced ASICs and with hard-wired processors, DSPs, and high-speed I/O blocks, today’s FPGAs are a far cry from the glue logic PALs and ASIC prototyping vehicles of yesteryear.

A few years ago FPGAs were in embedded systems; now they *are* embedded systems.

As our customers, you have put Xilinx® FPGAs at the heart of a dazzling array of applications: from network cards, to 4G wireless base stations, to medical and broadcast devices, to the world’s most advanced supercomputers. We’re in the depths of the ocean and on board the Mars rover.

And as the applications have grown, so too have the types of engineers using our FPGA platforms. A few years ago, our user base was primarily hardware designers; today systems integrators, DSP developers, and even embedded software engineers are creating innovations with our FPGA platforms.

Persona-Based Design

The broadening of our customer base wasn’t a fluke. Indeed, over the last few years, our tools group, now called the Solutions Development Group, has been busy developing and acquiring tools and



IP to expand the value of FPGAs to a wider audience beyond the hardware designers at your company.

We are now stepping up efforts to streamline our flows and work with development partners such as Synopsys-Synplicity, Mentor Graphics, and Cadence to better integrate their tools and IP into our flows so that we can better serve different types of users with the tools, IP, and flows they need to get jobs out the door. One of our employees, Tom Feist, put a name to this directive: “persona-based design.”

In the past, you may have felt that Xilinx was throwing a breadth of tools at you and saying, “Here, you go figure out your flow.” But no longer. Our applications and development teams will – with your guidance – put together recommended methodologies suited for your design needs.

We’ve established methodology groups dedicated to creating recommended flows for four types of Xilinx users:

- The software designer
- The DSP designer

- The hardware designer (with subgroups for power and push-button users)
- The system integrator

I’ve also asked each of these methodology groups to organize their own customer advisory board. Each board will include key customers and partners so that we can understand your concerns and best address your needs and wants.

Of course, I’ve established an overriding mandate that all of these methodologies must be complementary. They must be able to work together – and work together very well. We’re not going to dictate your flow, but we are going to help you automate and converge on a flow that is ideally suited to each of your designer’s needs, and ultimately your group’s needs.

As FPGAs and applications become more complex, communicating with our customers and our partners is imperative. We look forward to continued success and your exciting innovations with Xilinx on board. ●●●