Ethernet Alliance® Successfully Completes Industry's First SFP+ Direct Attach Copper Interoperability Event
Participating Members Work Together Towards Market Readiness

November 16, 2009, Mountain View, CA – The Ethernet Alliance today announced the results of the SFP+ subcommittee plug fest of 10G SFP+ Direct Attach Copper products based on the SFF-8431 industry specification. Member participants included AppliedMicro, Amphenol, Broadcom, ClariPhy, Cortina Systems, FCI, Intel, Molex, Panduit, Tyco Electronics, Vitesse and Volex.

The plug fest was held Oct. 19-23 at the University of New Hampshire Interoperability Lab (UNH-IOL) in Durham, NH. The event focused on interoperability testing of SFF-8431 Specifications for Enhanced Small Form Factor Pluggable Module (SFP+), Annex E.   The SFP+ form factor with its low power, low latency, and high density (up to 48 ports in 1U) was developed to provide the market with a low-cost, easy-to-use 10 Gigabit interconnect. As such, it is ideal for implementing converged and consolidated networks in today's data centers.

The participants successfully conducted multi-vendor interoperability testing of SFP+ copper cable assemblies with each host port physical layer (PHY) or network interface card (NIC). Standalone PHYs were mated with a SFP+ high speed electrical interface (SFI) worst case channel, per SFF-8431, in order to create SFP+ host ports. Testing was completed in three phases. The first phase tested the compliance of each PHY or NIC transmitter against the SFI host transmitter specifications and each cable assembly to the SFP+ cable specifications.   The second phase tested the compliance of the receiver input signal after each combination of host transmitter and cable.   The third phase consisted of 10 Gigabit Ethernet traffic tests where each cable was connected between all combinations of PHYs or NICs.   The cables used in the interoperability testing ranged in length from 1 to 8.5 meters. In the third phase, all combinations successfully met the bit error requirements of 10 Gigabit Ethernet.

"This Ethernet Alliance interoperability event was an important milestone in proving market readiness for 10G SFP+ direct attach copper cabling," said Jag Bolaria, senior analyst at The Linley Group. "SFP+ is a key enabler for higher density, low cost 10 Gigabit Ethernet adapters and switches and helps support volume adoption of this technology."

Full matrix interoperability to the limits of the specification impressively demonstrates that the specification was adequately developed.   These results provide a high degree of confidence to IT managers that using equipment with SFP+ host ports and SFP+ cable assemblies that are compliant to SFF-8431 from multiple vendors will result in reliable and highly available 10 Gigabit Ethernet network operation.

Results for all phases and additional information on the interoperability test event will be available in a white paper to be published later this month on the Ethernet Alliance web site at: www.ethernetalliance.org.

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