

# Re: FPGA recommendations

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.electronics.design/2005-12/msg00944.html>

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- *From:* Spehro Pefhany <[speffSNIP@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:speffSNIP@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 06 Dec 2005 11:30:44 -0500
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On 6 Dec 2005 16:08:58 +0200, the renowned David Brown  
<[david@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:david@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

<much snippage>

>All major FPGA/CPLD players use node-locking on their tools, and all  
>(that I know of) have some sort of time limitation on their free  
>versions. Altera paid-for licenses are permanent – I'd guess the same  
>applies to Xilinx.

The Xilinx free Webpack software is not node locked, only Modelsim,  
and it doesn't 'call home'. I think it's permanent, but I've not  
verified this. The stuff I downloaded a couple of years ago still  
worked a few weeks ago, even Modelsim.

>Altera and Xilinx are by far the biggest players in the fpga market –  
>there are others in the CPLD line (Lattice has some nice parts). But  
>for fpgas, you are best with A or X unless you want a more specialist part.

That was my conclusion.

<more snippage>

>Of course, opinions vary wildly, and depend on many factors (your target  
>applications, the quality of your distributors, personal experience).  
>But either way, drop the old Flex devices and go for Cyclone II /  
>Spartan 3 (or Stratix II / Virtex for the high end) and the latest  
>version of the tools.

My FAE said that the best Xilinx deal was typically with the latest  
silicon.

They seem to be following certain aspects of Microchip's business  
model— leaving higher prices on old silicon, inexpensive development  
tools widely distributed, etc. Of course FPGAs use close to  
state-of-the art silicon processes so they can't go with surplus  
memory fabs for production— they are fabless. Don't know much about  
Altera. Similar?

Best regards,  
Spehro Pefhany

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"it's the network..." "The Journey is the reward"

speff@xxxxxxxxxxxx Info for manufacturers: <http://www.trexon.com>

Embedded software/hardware/analog Info for designers: <http://www.speff.com>

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• ***Follow-Ups:***

◆ ***Re: FPGA recommendations***

◇ *From:* David Brown

• ***References:***

◆ ***FPGA recommendations***

◇ *From:* stickyfox@xxxxxxxx

◆ ***Re: FPGA recommendations***

◇ *From:* Spehro Pefhany

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◇ *From:* David Brown

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