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SMBus Driver FAQ:

1. Is there currently an SMBus driver shipping with Windows*?

No, currently only the Windows 2000* beta OS ships with an SMBus driver that offers basic functionality (supports access to SMBus through the ACPI EC).

2. Why is Smart Battery System Implementers' Forum (SBS-IF) developing an SMBus driver?

SBS-IF is committed to the promotion of SMBus and the Smart Battery System specification. In order to promote the timely adoption of SMBus and SBS in existing platforms the SBS-IF decided to develop an SMBus driver that will work with Windows 98* and Windows 2000* and at the same time extend the functionality of the SMBus driver that enable broader utilization of SMBus for critical system management functions.

3. What are the main differences between the Microsoft* SMBus driver and the one SBS-IF is creating?

The first difference is that the SBS-IF driver will work with both Windows 98* and Windows 2000* platforms, while the present Microsoft* driver is targeted only to the Windows 2000* platform. The second difference is that the SBS-IF driver supports access to multiple SMBus branches connected either to the chipsets or the ACPI EC, while the Microsoft* SMBus driver supports only one SMBus branch connected to the ACPI EC.

4. Can the SBS-IF driver be used in a desktop or server platform or is it limited only to a notebook platform?

The SBS-IF driver can be used in any PC platform and it is not limited to support of the Smart Battery System. In fact, because it supports SMBus branches residing on a chipset, it can be used in platforms that do not even use an ACPI EC or a Smart Battery System.

5. Since both Microsoft* and SBS-IF will be providing an SMBus driver, is SBS-IF competing with Microsoft*?

Absolutely not. SBS-IF is not a commercial organization. SBS-IF is allocating its resources to enhance Microsoft* OS support of hardware platforms that implement full SMBus functionality. Support of the SBS-IF SMBus driver will cease as soon as Microsoft* integrates the required SMBus functionality into its shipping OSs.

* All Third-party brands and names are the property of their respective owners.

6. Our company has been developing SMBus applications based on the existing SMBus driver specifications provided by Microsoft*. Is the SBS-IF SMBus driver compatible with the Microsoft* published specifications?

Yes. The SBS-IF SMBus driver is designed to be compatible with the existing Microsoft Windows 2000* DDK SMBus driver IOCTL interface.

7. How can I get the SMBus driver spec?

Members of the SBS-IF that have signed the adopter or contributor's agreement are expected to have the proposed spec for internal review and comments by August 1999 (v0.8). Target release for Public review is September 1999 (v0.9) and final release is scheduled for November 1999 (v1.0).

8. Who is creating the SMBus driver?

A group of four SBS-IF member companies (Fujitsu, Ltd.; Intel Corporation; O2Micro and USAR Systems, Inc.) is financing the development of the driver. The driver, after its release, is intended to become property of the SBS-IF.

9. When will the SMBus driver be available?

The final driver is expected in November 1999. This will coincide with the final release of specifications. Early versions may be available to companies signing the adopters and license agreements.

10. I am an OEM. When the driver gets released would I have to pay royalties for the driver?

OEM needs to sub-license the driver from the product supplier or license it directly from the SBS-IF. The SBS-IF license carries a one-time licensing fee with no royalties.

11. Can I contribute to the SMBus driver specification or functionality?

Only members that have signed the Adopter or Contributor agreement of the SBS-IF, can review and provide feedback on the proposed spec, when it's circulated (please see the above listed target release dates). This is necessary in order to avoid potential Intellectual Property issues that may arise by contributions not covered by these agreements.

12. I am currently developing a system that uses SMBus and I need to use the SMBus driver in order to develop my applications. What can I do to get a head start on the development of my software?

Since the SBS-IF driver provides the same interface as the Microsoft Windows 2000* SMBus driver, you can use the Microsoft Windows 2000* SMBus driver specification as a guideline for your application development.

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13. How can I learn more?

For an overview of the driver features, please download the relevant presentation from our web site at <http://www.sbs-forum.org/>.

14. What if I still have questions or would like to become an Adopter or Contributor?

Please send email to questions@sbs-forum.org.