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Logic Analyzer Controller: Gould Solution for the Macintosh II

This article last reviewed: 22 June 1989

TOPIC -----

This article describes Gould uses a Macintosh II as a controller for a multi-module logic analyzer.

DISCUSSION -----

In the January issue of Electronic Design, a new product from Gould Electronics was reviewed. Gould manufactures high-performance superminis often found in defense, electronic-development environments.

The new product is a very sophisticated, multi-unit "mainframe" logic analyzer controlled via SCSI by a Macintosh II. The Gould unit is a device that houses up to four independent logic analyzer modules (hence, "mainframe"). Each unit contains an instrument that can monitor and record up to 384 inputs from a system under test. The mainframe houses up to four of these. Each unit can be used separately or in conjunction with one or more of the other, optional units, allowing simultaneous analysis of up to four separate computer systems.

Analyzers connect to the system under test with two types of probes: the 96-channel Pyramid, which can run up to 10-nanosecond resolution (100 MHz), or the 16-channel Magnifying Glass, which does 1-nanosecond resolution (1 GigaHertz). These probes are intelligent devices that can be reconfigured graphically by the host Macintosh.

The article suggests that Gould Electronics viewed the Macintosh as the solution to a massive problem: normal logic analyzers are very complex to set up, control, and interpret and require quite an investment in time and patience. The user is prompted with dialog boxes as he selects functions he wants to enable. Individual inputs on the probes can be reconfigured in this manner as needed. Many other features make it an useful analytical tool.

Although not cheap, this may be the instrument of choice for the high-tech defense electronics lab, or the graduate electronics/computer science department that prefers to spend more time teaching the concepts and less time teaching an instrument.

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Keywords: <None>

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19960215 11:05:19.00

Tech Info Library Article Number: 4130