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Old Bluetooth Is Dead, Long Live Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR!

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The Bluetooth Special Interest Group adopts Core Specification Version 2.1+EDR

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Over the past few years, Bluetooth has become the wireless data transfer technology of choice for most manufacturers of handheld devices because, among other reasons, it provides relatively fast transfer speeds, a relatively large range (around 10 meters) as well as a very high level of versatility, since Bluetooth chipsets can be installed in a wide variety of portable devices. And now, the Bluetooth Special Interest Group, the organization in charge of advancing Bluetooth technology, has the unanimous decision of adopting the Core specification, namely Version 2.1+EDR, which will bring about some very important changes in both device manufacturing technologies and the level of performance provided by Bluetooth wireless connections.

The new Core Specification Version 2.1+EDR provides several important developments over the past versions. Thus, first of all, it offers improved pairing capabilities, namely a consistent and intuitive pairing solution that includes finding devices, securing the link and authenticating the devices. Moreover, for those pairing scenarios that require user interaction, eavesdropper protection makes a simple six digit passkey stronger than a 16 digit alphanumeric character random PIN code. The improved pairing feature also offers "Man in the Middle" protection that eliminates the possibility for an undetected middle man intercepting information.
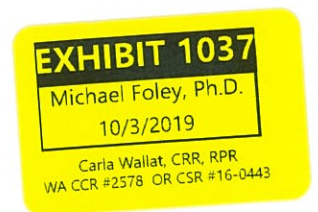
The new Bluetooth version also optimizes the level of power consumption through a feature called Sniff Subrating, which increases current battery life by up to five times in many devices like mice, keyboards, watches, home sensor networks and medical devices. Moreover, the 2.1 + EDR provides the required support for NFC technology (Near Field Communication), which allows a user to hold two devices together at a very short range in order to start the quick pairing process.

"The simplified pairing process enabled by Version 2.1+EDR has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from media, analysts and member companies. This leap forward in usability further improves the Bluetooth experience and makes the technology easy for anyone to enjoy," said Michael Foley, Ph.D., executive director of the Bluetooth SIG. "Also, in our effort to unite wireless technologies, Version 2.1 + EDR enables the ultra short range technology called Near Field Communication (NFC) for a pairing scenario that is as simple as touching the products together."

Since version 2.1 + EDR has been in the works for quite some time now, most chipset manufacturers have already implemented its features in their future products. Thus, according to the Bluetooth SIG, the first devices complying with the new core version will hit the market towards the end of 2007, thus marking a whole new evolutionary for this

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