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Service groups start to turn internal tools into products

 By [Chris Edwards](#)
[EETimes, UK](#)

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Design automation tools companies are beginning to use their design services arms as testbeds for their tools and, in some cases, to provide new tools where they have built up expertise in areas missed by the commercial players. The move into tools is seen as an alternative to the intellectual property businesses built up by some services companies, such as Tality.

Recently, Synopsys launched a tool for testing 3G basestation designs and their subsystems that was developed by its design services arm. The Design Conformance Lab tool resulted from work on checking conformance to the TDS-CDMA wireless standard being used in China.

Now, Simplex Solutions has said it plans to start selling a tool to uncover problems in chip designs based on technology used to tape out 19 projects by the company's services group.

Jan Willis, vice-president of business development for Simplex, said the development process used to create SignalStorm is not one that the company plans to expand further. But Simplex will use the services group to field-test more of its software, particularly the software aimed at work on the X architecture, a diagonal routing technique intended to cut chip size.

"The exact way this happened [with SignalStorm] is somewhat unique. But what we want to achieve long term is that, with technology developed by the product team, the design foundry team has an extensive period of use on it. This is how we are doing the X architecture work."

Gerd Ascheid, senior director of the wireless group at Synopsys Professional Services, said the Design Conformance Lab tool will be sold like any other tool from the product group and the group will pull in support for other 3G wireless standards.

"It is leveraging the domain expertise that we have," said Ascheid.

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