This document lists the release notes for the Nios® II Embedded Design Suite (EDS) version 6.1.

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New Features & Enhancements

The Nios II EDS version 6.1 addresses issues found in previous releases, and adds the following primary features:

- NicheStack TCP/IP Stack - Nios II Edition
- Interrupt vector custom instruction
- Nios II IDE based on the latest version of the Eclipse platform
- Memory footprint reduction options

The sections below provide a detailed list of all product updates, including known issues fixed in this release.

Device & Host Support

This release supports the following Altera® FPGA families:

- Stratix® III
- Stratix II and Stratix II GX
- Stratix and Stratix GX
- Cyclone™ II
- Cyclone

The host system requirements for the Nios II EDS are based on the requirements for the Altera Complete Design Suite. Refer to *Quartus II Installation & Licensing for PCs* or *Quartus II Installation & Licensing for UNIX and Linux Workstations* manual.

Installation and Licensing Instructions

For installation instructions, refer to *Quartus II Installation & Licensing for PCs* or *Quartus II Installation & Licensing for UNIX & Linux Workstations* on the Altera website at [www.altera.com/literature/lit-qts.jsp](http://www.altera.com/literature/lit-qts.jsp).

Nios II Processor Cores

This section describes changes to the Nios II processor cores.

**Interrupt vector custom instruction**

This new custom instruction introduced in Nios II version 6.1 provides lower latency when dispatching interrupts. When enabled, it is automatically supported by the hardware abstraction layer (HAL).
SOPC Builder

This section describes changes to SOPC Builder which affect Nios II designers. For complete revision history of SOPC Builder and the Quartus II software, refer to the release notes for the Quartus II software version 6.1. The Quartus II Handbook, Volume 4: SOPC Builder contains complete documentation for SOPC Builder.

There are no major changes to SOPC Builder that affect the Nios II processor this release.

Nios II IDE

This section describes changes to the Nios II integrated development environment (IDE).

Updated to latest version of Eclipse and CDT

The Nios II IDE was updated to use Eclipse version 3.2 and CDT version 3.1. This update provides faster startup time, improved debugger responsiveness, and faster memory view scrolling.

New location for projects

By default, in version 6.1 the Nios II IDE starts in a clean workspace and does not prompt for a workspace at startup. To convert your existing projects to 6.1 projects, you can either individually import your projects into the new workspace, or point the IDE at your previous workspace to convert all your projects at one time. Refer to the Upgrading Projects for the Nios II IDE v6.1 cheat sheet available in the IDE. You can also enable the Prompt for workspace on startup option. To find this option, click Preferences on the Window menu, then expand the General group and click the Startup and Shutdown page.

Nios II C-to-Hardware Acceleration (C2H) Compiler

The Nios II C-to-Hardware Acceleration (C2H) Compiler was introduced in the Nios II EDS version 6.0. The C2H Compiler is a tool that allows you to create custom hardware accelerators directly from ANSI C source code, which can often improve the execution performance by an order of magnitude. Documentation on the C2H Compiler is available on the Nios II literature page, http://www.altera.com/literature/lit-nio2.jsp.

This section describes changes to the C2H Compiler.

Pipelined function calls

A function being accelerated by the C2H Compiler can contain sub-function calls. For each sub-function called within a C2H-accelerated function, the C2H Compiler generates an additional hardware accelerator which is then invoked by the original C2H accelerator generated for the top-level function. In version 6.1, a sub-function call from within a C2H-accelerated function can be pipelined with the calling function, based on normal data dependencies, and therefore may not stall the calling function's pipeline.

Multiplier sharing

The C2H Compiler will try to conserve FPGA multiplier resources by sharing hardware multipliers whenever possible. When a loop or function in the accelerated C code contains more than one multiply operation, those...
multiply operations may be scheduled sequentially, using the same multiplier resource. This serialization of multiply operations occurs when, and only when, the extra multiply operations can be scheduled during cycles when the shared multiplier resource is otherwise idle. Stated another way, separate multiply operations will be scheduled sequentially using the same multiplier resource until it increases the CPLI of the loop or function. At that point, additional multiplier resources will be instantiated to perform the additional multiplies in parallel.

Flash Programmer

This section describes changes to the flash programmer in the Nios II IDE.

Flash programmer user interface updates

The flash programmer in the Nios II IDE was updated to allow you to customize the location to program FPGA configuration data and other data files into flash memory.

Target Software

This section describes changes to Altera-provided target software which runs on the Nios II processor, such as the hardware abstraction layer (HAL) system library.

NicheStack TCP/IP Stack - Nios II Edition

The NicheStack TCP/IP Stack - Nios II Edition is introduced in the Nios II EDS version 6.1. This TCP/IP stack supersedes the Lightweight IP (lwIP) stack that is also shipped with the Nios II EDS. The lwIP stack will be deprecated, and is not recommended for new designs.

Memory footprint reduction options

Several options are included in the Nios II IDE version 6.1 to allow you to reduce your memory footprint. These options include reducing stdio services, removing C++ support, and indicating that `main()` does not exist. Details on these options are available in the Nios II IDE on-line help.

MicroC/OS-II updated to version 2.83

The update to version 2.83 of MicroC/OS-II provides new configuration options in the IDE.

Avalon slave ports not mastered by CPU are not in system.h

In pre-6.1 versions of the Nios II EDS, all slave ports on a module that was mastered by the CPU appeared in the `system.h` file. In version 6.1, `system.h` will only contain definitions for slave ports that are mastered by the CPU in the system. For example, if a Nios II processor masters one port, S1, of a dual-port memory, only the S1 port will be defined in `system.h`; the S2 port will not be defined.
Example Designs

**Hardware Example Designs**

*Stratix III Fast Design*

A Nios II fast design targeting a Stratix III device is available in version 6.1, in the `<Nios II EDS install path>/examples/` directory.

*Stratix II EP2S60 RoHS Fast Design*

The start of on-chip memory was moved from 0x10000 to 0x0, and all the other addresses were shifted accordingly. Also, the on-chip memory latency was changed from 1 cycle to 2 cycles.

*Cyclone II EP2C35 Designs*

All the EP2C35 designs were updated to set all SSRAM pins to have drive strengths of 12mA (originally 24mA). This was done to reduce the noise which affected stable PLL operation.

*Cyclone EP1C12 Evaluation Kit Designs*

The hardware designs for the Cyclone EP1C12 evaluation board have been removed from the Nios II EDS.

**Software Example Designs**

*Simple Socket Server*

The Simple Socket Server software example now uses the NicheStack TCP/IP Stack in place of the lwIP stack.

*Web Server*

The Web Server software example now uses the NicheStack TCP/IP Stack in place of the lwIP stack. Web page control of various components on the board is also available.

*Hello World Small*

The Hello World Small example was updated to use the memory footprint reduction options. The current memory footprint is approximately 330 bytes.

**Errata Fixed in this Release**

This section lists errata items from previous releases which are fixed in version 6.1.

*Nios II IDE does not prompt for workspace*

The Nios II IDE might not prompt for the workspace at startup.
Resource(s) out of sync with the file system when searching for files in the workspace

When searching through files in the IDE workspace, you might get an error message saying that one or more resources are out of sync with the file system.

Nios II IDE stops responding after you double-click a .o file.

Double-clicking a .o file in the Nios II IDE on Windows might cause the IDE to stop responding. This issue occurs only on systems with a separate installation of Cygwin in addition to Cygwin installed with the Nios II development tools.

Cannot connect Nios II tightly-coupled instruction and data masters to the same dual-port memory

SOPC Builder does not generate an error if you connect Nios II tightly-coupled instruction and data masters to both ports on a dual-port on-chip memory. However, this configuration is not supported in hardware.

Nios II IDE help system fails to display content

To display the help content, your computer must able to recognize itself on the network. Incorrect proxy settings can cause the help content to fail to display.

Linux: Out of memory error in IDE

On Linux, you might receive an out of memory error in the Nios II IDE when it is launched from SOPC Builder.

Linux: F1 Help in the Nios II IDE does not function on Linux

Selecting F1 in the IDE on Linux does not display help contents.
Errata Fixed in this Release