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Micron joins with its biggest competitor to develop a new technology

- Statesman staff

Micron Technology Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. say they've created a consortium to collaborate on a product Micron says represents a dramatic advance in dynamic random-access memory.

As reported in the Sept. 21-27 edition of the Idaho Statesman's Business Insider magazine, Micron and Intel Corp., which own a joint venture that develops certain memory technologies, have given presentations in recent months with prototypes of the product, called the hybrid memory cube. Micron says the cube can deliver perhaps 20 times the performance of current-generation synchronous double-data-rate DRAM, using one-tenth as much energy per bit and saving space.

Now the Boise memory-chip maker is joining with Samsung, its biggest competitor, as founding members of the consortium to speed a set of technologies that would help the industry keep up with the increasing bandwidth required by high-performance computers and networking equipment. Breaking this so-called "memory wall" will require new architecture, Micron and Samsung said.

"Guidance by the industry consortium will help drive the fastest possible adoption of the technology, resulting in what we believe will be radical improvements to computing systems," said Robert Feurle, Micron's vice president for DRAM marketing.

The result could be new applications in networking, medical, wireless communications and other markets and could help create more-secure smart-grid infrastructure that includes renewable energy, the companies said.

Other consortium members are Altera Corp., Open Silicon Inc., and Xilinx Inc., with additional companies discussing joining. The consortium has set up a website: www.hybridmemorycube.org.