

Intel previews tablets powered by its new chip

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Intel previewed a wave of tablet computers powered by a microprocessor that the company redesigned to make a bigger dent in the rapidly growing mobile market.

An assortment of major computer vendors made the tablets that were shown Thursday in San Francisco. All the devices depend on Intel Corp.'s new processor and Windows 8, a dramatic overhaul of the widely used operating system made by Microsoft Corp.

The tablets won't go on sale until Oct. 26 when Windows 8 is released. The prices for the various machines will be revealed during the next few weeks.

Intel held the event in an attempt to prove it's adapting to the market upheaval caused by the increasing popularity of smartphones and tablets such as Apple Inc.'s iPad.

The shift to mobile devices poses a threat to Intel because its previous chip designs weren't well suited for the needs of smartphones and mobile devices. As a result, Intel's sales are now falling as demand for its personal-computer microprocessors tapers off.

Intel's new tablet chip, code named "Clover Trail" while it was in development, is called the Atom Z2760. It boasts a dual-processing feature that makes tablets run faster and with low power consumption so the battery life of a device should last 10 hours while it's showing video or performing other tasks.

The chips that Intel makes for PCs devour more power, making them ill-equipped for tablets that are often used for long stretches without a recharge. That's one of the main reasons Apple and other tablet makers have shunned Intel's chips.

Like Intel, PC makers are counting on Windows 8 to give them a slice of a market that so far has been dominated by the iPad. Most of the other tablets that are siphoning sales from the iPad are running on Android, a free operating system made by Google Inc.

Windows 8 presents applications in a mosaic of tiles to allow for touch-screen navigation and highlight real-time information from the Internet. The revamped operating system also can be adjusted to work on traditional laptop and desktop computers with keyboards. That versatility is meant to appeal to office workers and others who want to use their machines to create content, as well as consume it.

To cater to that market, some tablet makers are designing hybrid machines that include a keyboard that can be untethered from the display screen.

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Erik Reid, an executive in Intel's mobile and communications group who orchestrated Thursday's showcase, described Windows 8 as a breakthrough that "offers an incredible and exciting opportunity to drive new innovation in the marketplace."

The flattery came after Bloomberg News reported Intel CEO Paul Otellini's apparent misgivings about the new operating system. In a meeting earlier this week with Intel employees in Taiwan, Otellini said he believes Microsoft is releasing Windows 8 before all the bugs are fixed, according to Bloomberg, which quoted an unnamed person who heard the remarks.

The manufacturers who have built tablets and hybrid machines running on Intel's new chip include Hewlett-Packard Co., Dell Inc., Lenovo Group, Asustek Computer Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co.

Intel shares gained 44 cents Thursday to close at \$23.09.

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