

Your next computer will be AI capable, and that's fine

By  [Lindsey Schutters](#)

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The Windows key, a staple of laptop keyboards since 1995, is getting a makeover. In 2024 you'll begin to see it change to the Copilot logo, beginning with the updated Asus VivoBook S OLED which will also be one of the first to be marketed as an AI PC and include dedicated AI accelerated hardware.



Intel's new Core Ultra processors are at the heart of the AI PC revolution.

AI PC hardware starts with the processor from the AMD Ryzen Zen 2 family of devices, or the Intel Core Ultra. The latter is built on Intel's Meteor Lake chiplet architecture where different components can be added to the package.

One of the components Intel is baking into its Core Ultra processors is a neural processing unit (NPU), which is a first for the chipmaker and will significantly improve on-device AI tasks and take the processing load away from the high-performance CPU cores.



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Lindsey Schutters 21 Sep 2023



"Intel Core Ultra processors are meticulously engineered to meet the demands of modern lifestyles by equipping South African consumers with the latest Intel Technologies," explains Nitesh Doolabh Africa consumer sales manager for Intel.

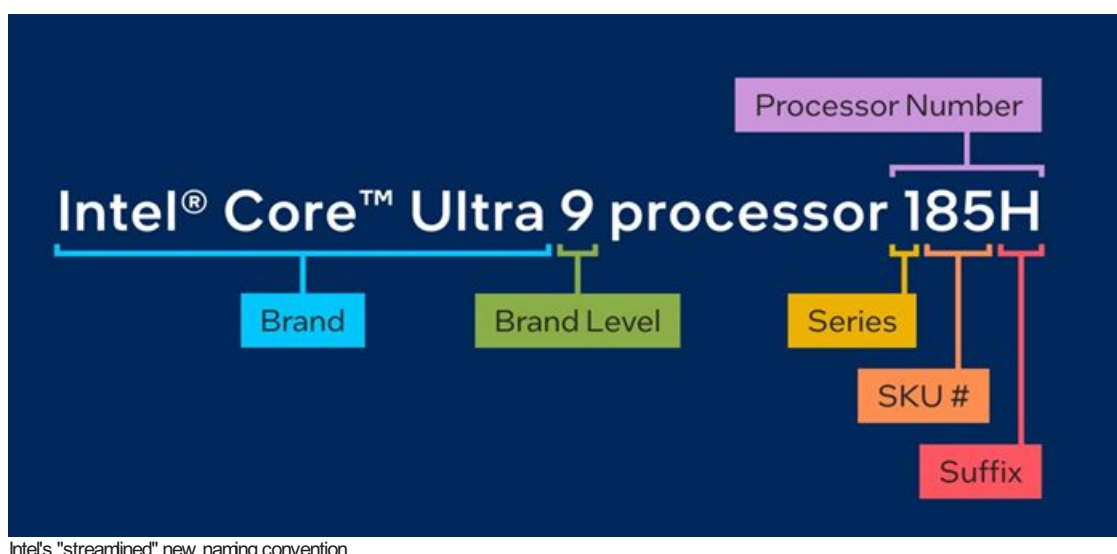
"In an AI PC, CPU, GPU, and NPU accelerators have new features to handle AI workloads faster and more efficiently. Without those accelerators, PCs will run AI programs very slowly, or not at all."

Chasing the Mac

Intel has been doing its best to chase the success Apple has had since switching to its ARM-based M-series processors that showed massive generational power and battery efficiency improvements over the Intel Core CPUs it used in the past.

The first effort was with the thin and light category of laptops called Intel Evo – which was a brand granted to notebooks that met a defined list of criteria and using the Core i7 mobile processor. It failed to catch the Macbooks for battery endurance.

AI PC is a similar brand exercise, this time backed by the Core Ultra series.



“This is ultimately Intel's biggest brand update in 15 years. Intel will no longer be using generation messaging in front of the processor brand and will be moving to a series designation,” says Doolabh.

“This decision was made because generations overtime can become confusing for customers. The main point should be technologies and performance.”

Graphics boost

Intel Core Ultra also swaps out the Iris Xe integrated graphics for the new Intel Arc GPU architecture and further increases performance.

“As Intel Arc is part of Intel's AI Ready solution, our advantage is in Generative AI Creation unlocking new and enhanced AI experiences with Intel Arc GPUs locally without relying on cloud services,” he says.

“With advanced AI accelerators embedded across Intel Arc GPUs, users can experience breakthrough innovations and explore new horizons of creation.”

Doolabh says that the Raptor Lake architecture – used in the 13th generation Core processors in 2023 PCs – will also get a refresh later this year, although these won't feature the AI branding.

It's still unclear what on-device processing will happen with Microsoft Copilot, but the individual subscription cost of R430 for the Pro version is additional to a Microsoft 365 subscription.

Sidenote: Google One AI Premium costs around the same price for the family account and, at least in South Africa, bundles in YouTube Premium which works out to a slightly better deal. It will remain 100% cloud based, though.

ABOUT LINDSEY SCHUTTERS

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