

Intel Presents 7th Generation Kaby Lake CPUs

Written by Marco Attard
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Intel announces the first CPUs in what it describes as the "7th generation Core" family-- Kaby Lake, a mid-generation 14nm Skylake refresh bridging the gap until the 10nm Cannonlake CPUs finally hit the market.



As Chipzilla tends to, Kaby Lake will arrive in waves, the first being a selection of six Y- and U-series chips designed for laptops and other compact form factor machines. As such, the draw of such CPUs is less raw power (in that respect little has changed since Skylake) and more the addition of new capabilities to laptops.

Videos is of particular interest, since all Kaby Lake integrated GPUs support hardware-accelerated decoding and encoding of 10-bit HEVC/H.265 video streams and the decoding of 8-bit VP9 streams complete with Dolby Vision and HDR10 HDR standard support. HDMI 2.0 and HDCP 2.2 support are also included, enabling the output of 4K video at 60Hz over an HDMI cable.

Obviously also handled are virtual and augmented reality applications, as well as 360-degree video.

On the gaming side, Intel promises Kaby Lake-powered laptops provide a threefold increase in frame rates on modern games, allowing customers to play the likes of Overwatch smoothly "anytime and anywhere on a thin, light laptop." How thin and light? Chipzilla promises laptops "thinner than 10mm."

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The improvements seen in such CPUs come through an improved process dubbed "14nm+" featuring an "improved fin profile" and "improved transistor channel strain" to boost transistor performance by 12%.

The first Kaby Lake-powered systems should ship in September 2016, and Intel says 100 laptops featuring the processors are already in the works (meaning many should make an IFA 2016 appearance). Readers curious about desktop and enterprise offerings will have to wait though, as such launches will only take place on January 2017 by around CES time.

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