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Four is Intel's Number

By [Andy Patrizio](#)

If it's September, then it's time for Intel's ([Quote](#)) fall Developer Forum, and this year, the company has more spring in its step.

OK, so it just had to [let go](#) of 10,000 loyal staffers recently, on top of selling off its [communications](#) and [signaling](#) units.

"They're still working through some issues, but they certainly feel like they've got very competitive products now and I wouldn't argue that for a minute. It's much more competitive than it was six months ago," said Nathan Brookwood, a veteran chip market analyst, said of Intel.

"I think they have revamped their product lineup quite a bit, they've come out with that dual core at a pretty accelerate pace compared to how they've brought out other products in the past, and they are on an aggressive manufacturing cycle," said Tony Massimini, chief of technology for Semico Research.

With the [Core 2](#) Duo chips out, the quad core chip is expected to take the center stage this week when CEO Paul Otellini kicks off the event with a keynote address today.

There will also be more discussion on plans to introduce a new microarchitecture every two years, with a ramp up of production coming in the off year. Core 2 came out this year, which means a new architecture would come out in 2008 and a new 45nm manufacturing process planned for next year.

With the move to 45nm, we can expect to see lots of discussion on Kentsfield, the desktop version of the quad core chip, and Clovertown, the server edition of the new chips, according to an Intel spokesperson.

"Intel's main forte is manufacturing, in high volume and high yield, so I'm sure we'll see something on a manufacturing roadmap," said Massimini. "When you get to 45nm, the next logical choice is to extend to four cores because then you can get it onto the same size silicon."

If Microsoft ([Quote](#)) can stick to its roadmap, then this will be the last IDF before Vista ships. How much of a shadow Vista, with its new architecture and security systems, casts over the show is up in the air.

"Product that has come from Intel and AMD for the last 18 months are all Vista-compliant. Technically, those machines are fully capable of running Vista," said Massimini.

"A lot of aspects of Vista will put more pressure on the hardware guys than they've had in several years," added Brookwood.