

Intel Offers vPro for Laptops

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Just a few weeks after Intel announced the new features of its vPro technology for desktops, the chip maker announces that it will offer the platform for business notebooks.

Intel's vPro technology is about to go mobile.

The Santa Clare, Calif., chip maker is announcing April 4 that it will start offering the management and security features found in its vPro platform with the company's new Centrino Pro microprocessor technology.

In a statement, Intel said the vPro platform will be part of its next-generation Centrino technology, which is now called "Santa Rosa." This new mobile technology will include a combination of the 64-bit Core 2 Duo processor, a new graphics chip, an 800MHz front-side bus and 4MB

of L2 cache.

Intel has not set a firm date for the Santa Rosa release. The company has only said that it will release the technology sometime in the second quarter of this year.

As the work force goes mobile and more IT dollars are invested in laptops, Intel executives felt the time was right to offer vPro - which the company promises will boost security and make PCs easier to manage - for notebooks.

"This is an ideal time for this product as we continue to see notebook penetration rates increasing in business," Mooly Eden, vice president of Intel Mobile Products Group, said in a statement.

Intel first introduced vPro technology in April 2006.

The company's intent was to offer a series of management and security features in a single platform that will help IT administrators remotely manage an enterprise's fleet of desktop PCs, while offering a way to cut down on costs. It was also seen as a way for Intel to distinguish itself from Advanced Micro Devices, which has gained ground in the desktop space.

Many of the features in the original platform revolved around Intel's AMT (Active Management Technology) and its use of virtualization.

On March 16, Intel announced its second-generation vPro platform, which the company calls "Weybridge."

The updated Weybridge platform will include Intel's latest chip set, the Q35 Express, along with the company's 82566DM gigabit network interface connector. Intel also plans to include the third generation of

AMT. This latest version of AMT will embed basic filtering technology into the firmware of the silicon itself. Although vPro technology allows for third-party software, this layer of security will now be included within the platform itself.

With the new Intel Centrino Pro technology and vPro platform, IT managers will have the same sort of features found with the desktop version of vPro, but it will allow them to manage and control a company's laptops through a Wi-Fi connection.

Centrino Pro will also introduce 802.11n wireless networking capabilities to Intel's mobile platform. Intel said the new Centrino technology will increase a notebook's battery life and allow users to take advantage of the graphics and other features found in Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system.

Several OEMs, including Hewlett-Packard, Gateway, Acer and Lenovo, all offer vPro technology in some of their desktop models. While Dell does not yet offer vPro in its desktops, the Round Rock, Texas, company announced March 27 that it will offer Intel's AMT in future business PC models.

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