

NEC DEBUTS 16-WAY ITANIUM CHIP SET

By Peter N. Glaskowsky {4/3/00-07}

NEC has announced development of a 16-way Itanium server chip set, code-named AzusA. The company has not released details of the new chip set but says AzusA is based on a four-node cc:NUMA architecture. Each node includes four Itanium processors, local memory,

and an I/O subsystem. The nodes are interconnected through an address bus and a four-port data crossbar. These internode interfaces connect directly to AzusA's two-chip north bridge, which has three ports: one for the CPU bus and one port each for the I/O and memory subsystems. Fully configured AzusA systems will support up to 64G of DRAM and 128 PCI slots.

NEC expects AzusA to deliver about three times the performance of today's best eight-way machines on transaction-processing tasks. The company says AzusA-based systems have been running since last fall and have been used

for public demonstrations at trade shows since December. Four different operating systems, including HP-UX and Microsoft's 64-bit version of Windows, have been ported to the AzusA architecture so far, along with server applications such as Microsoft's SQL Server. NEC expects to release more details about AzusA's design and performance this summer, in conjunction with the Itanium launch. NEC has no plans to offer the AzusA chip set on the open market; instead, it plans to sell AzusA-based systems directly and through OEM partners. ♦

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