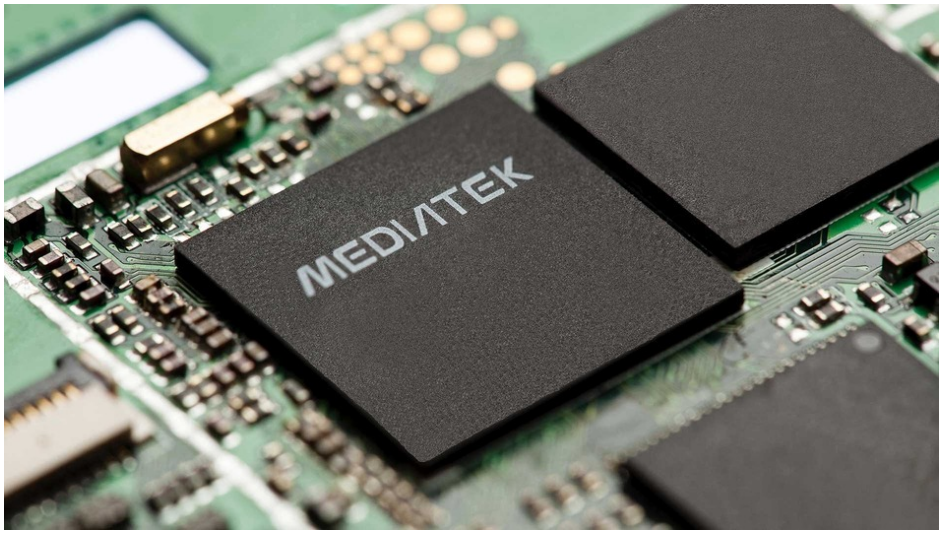
MediaTek Launches Its First Quad-Core Processor



Taiwanese chipmaker MediaTek announced its first quad-core SoC (System on chip) processor Tuesday, the first of its kind to hit the market.

“Its not the first one announced, it’s the first one shipping, ” MediaTek spokesperson Finbarr Moynihan told *Mashable* during a demo of the new mobile processor earlier this week.

Already being tested by some of MediaTek’s mobile partners, the company expects the processor to ship in devices starting the first quarter of 2013. Qualcomm announced a similar chip last week, which is not expected to hit the market until the second half of 2013.

MediaTek is a company traditionally focused on the low-end smartphone market. But this processor, called the MT6589, will allow MediaTek to break into the mid and high-end Android smartphone and tablet market.

MediaTek doesn’t make smartphones, only the processors that run in them. Its solutions, however, allow cell phone makers to create smartphones around those processors.

The power-efficient MT6589 runs cooler than much of its competition, and offers a number of multimedia features that can allow manufacturers to make stand-out devices (or entry-level), focusing themselves on making the hardware for those device rather than on building or enhancing the processor.

The MT6589 for instance has native support for 3D cameras and displays, and built-in high-end camera features such as face beautifier, a panoramic mode, best shot, and a smile shot feature. The processor can support up to a 13-megapixel camera,

and supports 1080p video playback and recording.

Moynihan says that those features are particularly important in emerging markets where someone's cell phone might be not only their only internet-connected device, but also serve as their only camera.

"In emerging markets people will spend that little bit of extra money to get a really good camera," he says. "It's not all about the lowest cost smartphone."

The MT6589 is also the world's first HSPA+ smartphone supporting dual-SIM, a feature particularly important in emerging markets with customers who might want to use two SIM cards in the same handset simultaneously.

	MediaTek MT6589	Solution A	Solution B
Process	28nm	28nm	28nm
Apps CPU	4-core 1.2GHz CA7	2-core 1.5GHz Krait	4-core 1.2GHz CA7
Video	1080p30	1080p30	1080p30
Camera	13 MP	21 MP	13 MP
GPU	SGX 5T ~1600 MP/s	Adreno 225 ~800 MP/s	Adreno 305 ~800 MP/s
Modem	Rel. 8, 42 Mbps TD-SCDMA	Rel. 8, 42 Mbps TD-SCDMA	Rel. 8, 21Mbps TD-SCDMA
Availability	CS: Q4'12 MP: Q1'13	NOW	CS: Q2'13 MP: 2H'13

MediaTek started shipping its processors in 2011, and has already risen to be the third largest semiconductor platform, behind only Qualcomm and Samsung.

The company has a strong market share in China, and is growing in emerging markets. It has yet to make a tremendous splash in the United States.

"The premium market in the US is a hard market to crack, and it will take us some time, "says Moynihan. "The platform doesn't support LTE today, and that's one thing that's missing." LTE plans are in the works.

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