Intel reported to have a new 5GHz chip that’s literally priceless

Enlarge / This is a 10-core Skylake-X processor. It uses the low core count (LCC) version of the Skylake-SP die.

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If the $1,979 Core i9-9980XE isn’t enough processor for you, Anandtech reports that Intel will soon have an even more expensive Core i9 processor: the i9-9990XE. But you won’t be able to buy it, and Intel won’t even have a price for the thing.

The current i9-9980XE has 18 cores/36 threads and clock speeds between 3.0 and 4.5GHz, and it draws 165W. The new i9-9990XE has fewer cores—14 cores/28 thread, same as a 9940X—but it boasts clock speeds between 4.0 and 5.0GHz, with a monstrous power draw of 255W. It will use the existing LGA2066 socket and X299 chipset. This configuration is still a long way off the one that Intel teased in the middle of last year, when the company demonstrated an overclocked machine with 28 cores running 5GHz across all cores.

The price of this new chip is likely to sit above that of the 9980XE, but where exactly isn’t clear. According to Anandtech, Intel won’t be selling this chip through regular retail channels, and it won’t have a regular list price. Instead, the chip company is asking system builders to bid for the chips in

an online auction. The auctions will be held quarterly, with apparently only three system integrators bidding in the first.

This decidedly unusual approach to selling the chip is likely indicative that the company won’t be able to make very many of the things, perhaps a few hundred per quarter.

Aside from the strange way it is acquired, the chip is also described as coming with no Intel warranty at all, leaving the entire support burden on the system builders. So we imagine this one will only be for the brave few that really must hit 5GHz on a bunch of threads, whatever the cost—or reliability.

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