Qualcomm’s next round of PC chips will fight Apple under the name Snapdragon X

Qualcomm says it has a new name for the next generation of its ARM PC platform: Snapdragon X. The platform is based on the Oryon CPU tech from its 2021 acquisition of Nuvia, a company founded by former Apple engineers who had previously worked on Apple’s A-series iPhone and iPad chips. Arm has filed a lawsuit against both companies over the deal that is set to go to trial in September 2024.

Snapdragon X is a direct salvo aimed at Apple’s M-series chips, which Apple debuted in its MacBook Air in 2020. And if Qualcomm’s platform offers anything close to the performance and battery life of those chips, it could mean a big shift for Windows users, particularly in the lightweight laptop space. Performance and battery life are a delicate balance for thin and light PC laptops that always involve some tradeoffs. You can see this at play in our review of the Microsoft Surface Pro 9 last year.

The other thing the Snapdragon X chips will have in common with M1-and-up SOCs is a neural processing unit (Apple calls its own version the Neural Engine) designed for on-device AI processing in small form factor devices. Senior VP Don McGuire calls it “a quantum leap forward in performance and power efficiency” that will enable on-device experiences “for the new era of generative AI.”

Like the Snapdragon 8cx platform before it, the new platform will continue to feature 5G connectivity — something Apple has yet to do with any M-series device outside of the iPads that

use its laptop- and- desktop-class chips and as it reportedly has struggled to develop its own modem technology.

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