Wear OS smartwatches to get new Qualcomm chip boosts

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As Android watchers know, the nomenclature Android Wear for a smartwatch platform was changed. Now it is Wear OS. More platform-agnostic. Less static from those who flinch at the very sound of the word "Android."

The Verge offered its analysis. One out of three Android Wear watches is paired to an iPhone, so taking Android out of the name could help

broaden the audience.

Thanks now to Qualcomm, a shot in the arm in the form of a new Qualcomm chips, can help in pushing Wear OS closer to the frontlines. ("It's no secret that Google's smartwatch platform hasn't had a lot of recent success," remarked *XDA Developers*.)

The word is out about Qualcomm coming out with new chipsets later this year for Wear OS devices, and sites are saying this promises benefits.

Adnan Farooqui in *Ubergizmo*: "Qualcomm has confirmed that it will be releasing a new processor for Wear OS smartwatches this year." *XDA Developers* said, "finally, it seems that Qualcomm is gearing up for a refresh of its smartwatch chipset."

Which brands of smartwatch to watch for? Wait and see. "The new platform will be announced this autumn alongside a lead smartwatch," said *Wareable*, and "by the holidays several partners will have Wear OS smartwatches with the new chipset on the market."

The big deal is that the platform to come "does sound like the most radical leap yet in Google's wearable platform," said Hugh Langley in *Wareable*.

JC Torres in *SlashGear* called Qualcomm's offering "a third gen wearable system-on-chip that could give Wear OS smartwatches an edge over their rivals, particularly the Apple Watch."

Pankaj Kedia, Qualcomm's senior director of wearables, referred to the new chips in *Wareable* as "dedicated" to use cases.

One unsurprising bet would be use cases for the fitness crowd. Fitness-centric ones will have GPS, said *SlashGear*. Langley said there will be

"the capacity to do more with health and fitness, as smartwatches will be able to power more sensors like heart rate for longer periods of time."

But Langley also reported that "One of the big use cases Kedia sees as not being met with the current technology is the needs of fashion brands, which are less about intensive features like fitness, and more about just looking good."

Another perk to anticipate is battery life over Wear OS' "current day-and-some-change," said Langley.

It is no secret that battery life plays an important role in smartwatch vendor competition. *XDA Developers* pointed out how "Samsung's Gear series offers significantly better battery life than most of its Wear OS competition, and that's thanks to its superior SoC. Thus, to stay competitive in the smartwatch space, Qualcomm is teasing the release of another smartwatch chipset."

Langley quoted Kedia as saying, "You'll see improved battery life when interacting with the watch, but also more importantly, when you're not."

How do the new chipsets affect size? The new SoCs will be built using modern processes, said *XDA Developers*, and the result will be smaller chipsets. That allows smartwatch makers to make better use of space. JC Torres noted that the "28 nm Snapdragon Wear 2100 is gigantic by today's standards, forcing smartwatches to be a certain size that has unsuccessfully appealed to many users."

Comments were hardly in the "So what, yawn" camp. They were rather in the "It's about time" and even "It's about damn time" arena."

"A decent system-on-chip could put Wear OS smartwatches back on the map if everything goes according to plan," said *XDA Developers*.