

Qualcomm continues push to bring fast 5G connectivity to affordable phones

September 4 2020, by Mike Freeman



Qualcomm said this week it will roll out processors to bring fast, reliable 5G connectivity to smartphones that cost as little as \$125, doubling down on its bid to rapidly expand the popularity of this latest generation of mobile broadband.

The company announced that 5G-equipped Snapdragon 4 series processors will show up in phones early next year. Handset makers

Motorola, Xiaomi and Oppo are rolling out devices powered by the chips.

"When we get to the [first quarter](#) of 2021, with that price range of \$125 to \$250, I think we are going to drive a very fast transition of the entire base to 5G," said Qualcomm President Cristiano Amon. "If you go to buy a phone, why not buy a 5G [phone](#)?"

It is unclear whether any of these low-cost smartphones will be available in the U.S. They are likely to target buyers in China and other countries.

Meanwhile, San Diego-based Qualcomm also announced an upgrade to its line of processors for laptops. The latest chip includes 5G, faster Wi-Fi, all-day battery life and specific capabilities tailored to enhance remote work and online school.

Qualcomm is a leader in 5G and has been pushing for fast adoption of the technology. Mobile network operators around the globe have begun deploying 5G in 35 countries. For now, coverage remains spotty, especially for the fastest version of 5G known as ultra-wideband or millimeter wave.

When new mobile technology comes out, it typically shows up initially in high-cost devices. Indeed, today's top-tier 5G Android phones—many of which are powered by Qualcomm's Snapdragon 8 series processors—cost \$1,300 or more.

But 5G also is available in some smartphones in the \$500 to \$800 range. Qualcomm's Snapdragon 7 series and Snapdragon 6 series processors target this market.

And now with the Snapdragon 4 series, the company aims to bring the 5G capability to even more affordable phones.

"In China, 5G price points can already address 60% of the market," said Amon. "With the new Snapdragon 4 series, the transition from 4G to 5G will significantly accelerate globally."

For laptops, Qualcomm launched its 8CX Gen 2 processors for Windows machines. The ARM chip enables workplace-level security, improved camera and audio for virtual meetings, 5G connectivity and enhanced artificial intelligence capabilities, such as automatic eye contact adjustment during conferencing.

Acer said it would be among the companies launching a 5G Windows laptop powered by the 8CX Gen 2 chip.

Analysts predict almost half of office workers are likely to work remotely, at least part-time, after the pandemic, Amon said.

"People want different kinds of PCs for the work-from-home environment," he said. "It's about having an outstanding camera so you can stream yourself. It's about connectivity. It's about having great multi-media capability."

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