Intel Unleashes Thunderbolt 3 Protocol

Written by Alice Marshall
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Intel releases the Thunderbolt 3 protocol specification to the USB Promoter Group, allowing other chip makers to make Thunderbolt-compatible silicon without need to pay royalties to Chipzilla.

"Releasing the Thunderbolt protocol specification is a significant milestone for making today's simplest and most versatile port available to everyone," Intel says. "This, in combination with the integration of Thunderbolt 3 into upcoming Intel processors is a win-win for the industry and consumers."

The first Intel processors to carry Thunderbolt 3 is Ice Lake, the 10nm processor previewed back at CES 2019. According to Chipzilla, shipments of Windows 10, macOS and Linux PCs carrying Thunderbolt 3 ports are doubling every year into "the tens of millions," and over 400 Thunderbolt 3-enabled PC designs are currently available.

In addition, the USB Promoter Group announces the next generation of USB architecture--USB4, an update based on the Thunderbolt protocol promising to increase the compatibility among USB-C connector-based products. USB4 includes the two-lane operation of existing USB-C cables, allowing up to 40Gbps operation over certified cables, and is backward-compatible with USB 3.2, USB 2.0 and Thunderbolt 3.

The USB Promoter Group will detail the USB4 specification at the upcoming USB Developer Days, before publishing the branding and marketing guidelines once the specification is finalised.

Go [Intel Takes Steps to Enable Thunderbolt 3 Everywhere, Releases Protocol](#)

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