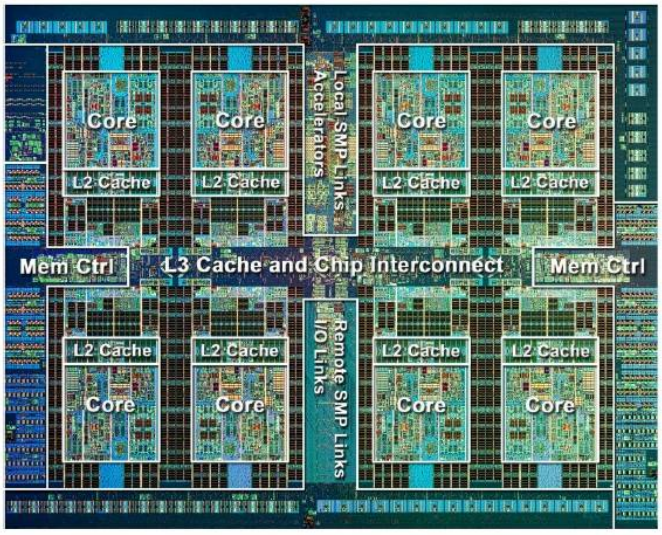
IBM and Oracle fight it out at the Hot Chips 24 symposium, presenting rival RISC chips for so-called "big iron" machines-- the IBM Power7+ and the Oracle T5.



Clearly vendors still invest in non-x86 servers, even as the market migrates away from the RISC/Unix platforms. According to Gartner, during Q2 2012 alone the category sees a -25.1% Y-o-Y decline in EMEA.

IBM makes the 8-core Power7+ with a 32nm process (compared to 45nm for the Power7), allowing for several new features within a chip of around the same size. Level 3 cache memory is up to 80Mb through the use of embedded DRAM (eDRAM), while a "dual chip module" allows customers to put x2 processors in 1 socket.

Security gets an improvement with a "true" random number generator and clock speeds get a 10-20% boost over the 4.14GHz of Power7.

Oracle also shows off at Hot Chips with the T5-- a 28nm version of the T4. It carries 16 cores, with each core running at 3.6GHz (up from 3GHz on the T4).

The T5 has a number of features accelerating clustering, such as the Sparc SuperCluster and accelerator units for "unprecedented" 16 encryption algorithms.

IBM should ship Power7+ chips by end 2012, while Oracle gives no release date for the T5.

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