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VIA Strikes Gold on the UMPC Market

Hewlett-Packard issued an order for 100,000 C7-M ULV processors

System builder Hewlett-Packard has reportedly placed an order for 100,000 C7-M ultra-low voltage processors to power its 2133 Mini-Note low-cost PC. The computer manufacturer plans to sell about 500,000 units of its sub-notebook during this year, and early estimations claim that the company will not make the switch to Intel's Atom when it finally gets available.Moreover, VIA is getting a lot of attention from Gigabyte, that is also ready to release its new M700 series UMPC. The Taiwanese vendor plans to sell enough units of its low-cost M700 notebooks to recover from its long series of losses. Despite the fact that Intel is touting its Atom PC as an all-in-one-wonder chip on the UMPC market, more and more low-cost notebook manufacturers are shifting their attention to VIA's offerings. This is mostly the result of the fact that Intel is extremely rough with system integrators when it comes to the features they can implement in their UMPC models.For instance, all the Atom-based designs feature limited single-channel memory support and plenty of restrictions related to the form factors below Mini-ATX. VIA's offerings are extremely flexible, and the chips' performance is also satisfactory for this kind of products.Recent benchmarks unveiled that VIA's upcoming Isaiah/CN processors **are dramatically faster and better** than Intel's Atom processors, and score higher in the FPU and ALU processor benchmarks. While VIA's C7-M series of chips cannot deliver the same performance, the pin-to-pin compatibility between the C7-M and the upcoming Isaiah/CN products would allow system integrators to easily upgrade their products without having to re-design their platforms. More than that, **the blooming alliance** between VIA and Nvidia is likely to result in a state-of-the-art chipset with high-end integrated graphics paired with a powerful low-voltage processor. Platforms powered by VIA's processors and Nvidia's high-end integrated graphics cores could run modern graphics interfaces, including the Aero feature in Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system.