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Nvidia's power-efficient chips picked for supercomputer

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In the latest challenge to Intel's dominance of the PC and server industry, smaller chipmaker Nvidia is teaming up with the Barcelona Supercomputing Center to develop a supercomputer that will run on energy efficient ARM processors.

With the massive data centers that power the Internet consuming an ever increasing amount of electricity, energy efficiency is becoming a priority, and many companies are looking toward the technology behind our smartphones and tablets to do the job.

ARM Holdings' chip architecture has come to dominate the mobile industry because its energy efficiency allows smartphone batteries to remain charged longer than Intel's mobile processors, which are based on designs originally meant for powerful PCs.

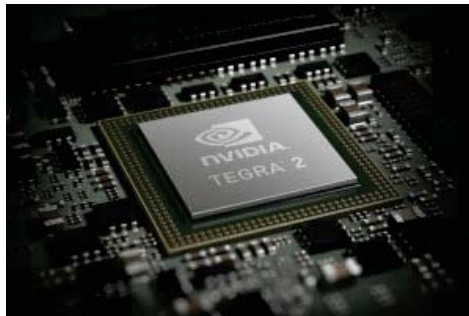
The BSC hopes the supercomputer it is building with Nvidia's new Tegra 3 chips, which are due to appear in upcoming tablets and phones over the next few months, will use two to five times less electricity than current systems.

The BSC's supercomputer will also pack Nvidia's high-performance CUDA graphics processors, which are being adopted in other supercomputers.

While traditional central processors found in computers are designed to make huge calculations very quickly one after another, graphics processors or GPUs, can carry out several small calculations at the same time, which makes them handy for specific kinds of tasks.

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