

Summary: Intel's CapEx Tops \$20B on Server Demand While PC Volume Shrinks: ITAD Firms Should Plan for Two Separate Asset Cycles

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Intel's latest earnings call added hardware detail to a year dominated by AI headlines. The company is lifting 2026 capital spending to more than \$20 billion and signaling an even steeper step-up in 2027, with most of that going into tools for Intel 3, 18A, and 18A-P, plus clean rooms, substrates, and memory. Those choices describe a multi-year build-out of server and packaging capacity under some of the tightest wafer, memory, and substrate conditions Intel says it has seen, which means more infrastructure entering service now and more eventual end-of-life volume for ITAD and recycling operators. In this report, Compliance Standards looks at what that build-out implies for downstream hardware flows and planning.

The data center and packaging details give that future stream some shape while the PC side moves the other way. Data Center and AI revenue grew 59% year over year, AI-related sales rose more than 70%, and Intel expects double-digit server CPU unit growth through at least 2028, even as PC consumption drops in the low double digits this year under memory-driven cost pressure. That split points to two different asset cycles: servers ramping on a multi-year track tied to new capacity, and PCs whose replacements are being deferred, not canceled. For downstream handlers, the immediate question is how to prepare intake and testing processes for mixed fleets that blend Intel-built, foundry-customer, and externally sourced hardware, ahead of the larger volume still a year or more out.

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