



## Western Digital Accelerates Storage Innovation for AI Era

February 3, 2026

*Now Rebranded as WD, the Company Unveils 100TB+ HDD Roadmap, Performance- and Power-Optimized Hard Drive Breakthroughs, and an Intelligent Platform Solution Redefining Storage Economics and Time-to-Value for Customers*

### Key Highlights:

- **Accelerated high-capacity roadmap:** *New world's highest capacity 40TB<sup>1</sup> UltraSMR ePMR HDD is in customer qualifications now; HAMR HDD capacities scaling to 100TB+ and continued HAMR qualification momentum with hyperscale customers; overlapping technology paths (ePMR and HAMR) give customers choice and flexibility for smooth transitions without disruption*
- **New performance drive technology:** *High Bandwidth Drive and Dual Pivot design technologies deliver 2x bandwidth and up to 8x future bandwidth, and up to 2x IO performance gains supporting AI workloads at HDD economics, reducing reliance on flash*
- **Power-optimized innovation:** *New power-optimized HDD uses 20% less power, shrinking the gap between warm and cold storage, enabling customers to reduce TCO, build lower cost tiers, and improve sustainability for AI-scale data*
- **Platform Expansion:** *New intelligent solution will bring hyperscale storage economics to rapidly scaling AI customers through open API software that will accelerate deployment without architectural disruption*
- **New era for WD:** *Company repositioned as a storage infrastructure partner for the AI-driven data economy with 90% of revenue driven by AI and cloud; Strong execution and financial performance as a stand-alone HDD company, with a new brand and financial model reflecting this transformation*

SAN JOSE, Calif. & NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 3, 2026-- At its Innovation Day 2026, Western Digital (Nasdaq: WDC) today unveiled a new customer-centric storage roadmap that reinvents the hard drive for AI needs, reinforcing its position as a strategic storage infrastructure partner for the AI-driven data economy. The announcements reflect how WD's fundamental business transformation has enabled a new generation of storage technologies spanning scalable capacity, breakthrough performance optimizations, power efficiency innovations and an intelligent platform API with cost-effective economics.

As AI generates massive amounts of data, it has spurred intense demand for data storage. To meet the moment, WD has focused deeply on customer needs, particularly capacity with proven reliability and economics, performance, power efficiency, and faster qualifications without customer business disruptions. During its Innovation Day, WD showcased technologies that address these essential customer requirements and will deliver them at scale.

Today's announcements represent a new era for WD, building on the strategic moves the company completed over the past year: shifting to long-term customer partnerships based on multi-year commitments; achieving operational excellence through disciplined execution that more than doubled gross profit year-over-year; and cultural transformation through leadership renewal that accelerated decision-making. All of this drove WD's success and inclusion in the Nasdaq 100 and ranking among top S&P 500 performers in 2025. In addition, a new financial model was shared to reflect the company's refreshed view for the next 3 to 5 years. The new model is available at [investor.wdc.com](https://investor.wdc.com).

As a capstone to this momentum, the company, now known as WD, also unveiled updated branding that visually references the data center and reflects its transformation into a company that provides essential storage infrastructure for the AI-driven data economy.

### Capacity Innovation: Clear Path to 100TB+

Reinforcing its dual ePMR and HAMR technology leadership approach, WD announced that the world's highest capacity 40TB UltraSMR ePMR HDD is in qualification with two hyperscale customers with volume production planned for the second half of 2026. WD HAMR HDD qualifications are also underway with two hyperscale customers with ramp production in 2027.

WD will extend ePMR to 60TB by leveraging HAMR innovations without increasing power consumption, while HAMR will scale to 100TB by 2029. This dual-path approach is a critical advantage as both ePMR and HAMR are built on a common architecture, enabling greater manufacturing efficiencies, yields, and a smoother customer product transition.

The result is unprecedented flexibility. Hyperscalers and enterprises can adopt either technology on their own timelines with predictable capacity planning and seamless scaling – no forced technology transitions, no infrastructure disruptions, just continuous and accelerating capacity growth built on architecture they already trust.

### HDD Performance Architecture: Closing the QLC Flash Gap

Addressing the performance demands of AI workloads, WD introduced two industry-first innovations that fundamentally reset HDD performance. These innovations address workloads previously considered flash-only, creating a new performance tier that balances speed and capacity without compromising economics, which is critical as flash faces persistent cost premiums (6-10x vs. HDD) and endurance limitations:

- **High Bandwidth Drive Technology** enables simultaneous reading and writing from multiple heads on multiple tracks delivering up to 2x the bandwidth of conventional HDDs without power penalties. The technology has a clear path to scale up to 8x bandwidth gains and is already in customer hands for validation.
- **Dual Pivot Technology** adds a second set of independently operating actuators on a separate pivot and will deliver up to 2x sequential IO gain within a 3.5-inch drive. This differs from previous dual actuator designs that sacrificed capacity and required extensive customer software changes. Dual Pivot enables reduced spacing between disks, allowing for more platters per drive and higher overall capacity.

When combined, these technologies will enable WD to increase sequential IO to 4x overall, delivering 100TB HDDs while maintaining the relative IO per TB rate customers enjoy today. This reduces the need for customers to increase SSD deployment or rearchitect services as capacity scales.

High Bandwidth Drive Technology is already with customers today. HDDs with Dual Pivot Technology are currently in the lab and will become available in 2028.

### **Power-Optimized HDDs: Bridging the Gap Between Warm and Cold AI Data Tiers**

AI training and inference is creating massive amounts of valuable cold data that still needs to be accessed in seconds, not hours, rendering this data too active for tape but also too expensive for traditional capacity drives. WD's power-optimized HDDs address this challenge with a purpose-built solution that reduces power consumption, and therefore customer operating costs, while maintaining a sub-second access storage tier with the same 3.5-inch form factor customers use today.

These drives will trade minimal random IO for higher capacity and substantially lower power – an optimal design for cold data – shrinking the gap between warm and cold storage tiers and enabling economically sustainable AI data storage at scale.

Power-optimized drives are expected to be in customer qualification in 2027.

### **Platforms Expansion: Reducing Complexity to Improve Customer Time-to-Value**

Understanding that mid-scale customers face hyperscale challenges without hyperscale resources, WD announced the expansion of its Platforms business to extend hyperscale storage economics to a broader set of customers. This expansion includes the development of an intelligent software layer, through an open API, expected to launch in 2027, that will enable companies at 200+ petabyte scale to achieve the same storage efficiency and economics that hyperscalers enjoy today.

This intelligent software layer will accelerate storage innovation adoption across WD's UltraSMR, ePMR and HAMR HDD, and flash platforms while dramatically reducing time-to-production and lowering qualification risk across storage tiers. By simplifying the deployment of storage infrastructure for AI-scale workloads, WD will transform time-to-value without requiring architectural disruption – giving up-and-coming cloud and enterprise WD customers a clear path to hyperscale economics.

"For the past year, WD has remained continuously focused on execution and accelerating innovation, which has enabled us to truly reimagine the hard drive to meet the requirements of AI," said Irving Tan, Chief Executive Officer at WD. "Today, we are showcasing innovation that reflects our deep connection to our customers and how we are meeting demand for capacity, scale, quality, enhanced performance, and ease of technology adoption."

"WD Innovation Day is where our customer-centric business transformation meets our breakthrough technology for the AI era," said Ahmed Shihab, Chief Product Officer at WD. "We've organized around how customers build and scale AI infrastructure. WD is challenging conventional storage assumptions and removing the complexity and cost barriers that limit their AI-driven growth. Our capacity, performance, power efficiency, and platform innovations solidify our position as the innovation partner for the AI-driven data economy."

"WD's Innovation Day revealed a company that has genuinely transformed its strategy around customer infrastructure needs," said Ed Burns, HDD Research Director at IDC. "The market validation is already evident – customers are deploying these solutions because WD is solving what matters most for AI infrastructure: reliable capacity at scale, performance that meets demanding workloads, and economics that enable profitability. This customer-centric approach, combined with operational discipline positions WD well in the market going forward."

For the full WD Innovation Day 2026 replay and presentation, visit: <https://investor.wdc.com/>

### **About WD**

WD builds the storage infrastructure that powers the AI-driven data economy. For more than 55 years, WD has been at the forefront of innovation, delivering the scale, reliability, and economics required to turn data into intelligence. Today, WD partners with the world's leading hyperscalers, cloud providers, and enterprises to provide durable, innovative storage platforms that are

proven and trusted at scale. All of this is driven by its people, whose engineering discipline and customer focus help organizations store, protect, and use the world's data with confidence. Follow WD on [LinkedIn](#) and learn more at [www.wd.com](http://www.wd.com).

<sup>1</sup> One terabyte (TB) is equal to one trillion bytes and one petabyte (PB) is equal to one quadrillion bytes. Actual user capacity may be less due to operating environment.

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### **Forward-Looking Statements**

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of federal securities laws, including statements regarding expectations for: the company's product development plans, including the performance, value, capabilities, availability and market position of the company's products; the company's business outlook, strategy and financial model; industry, technology, and storage trends, including the impact of artificial intelligence; and the company's market position, demand trends, and growth opportunities for the company's products. These forward-looking statements are based on management's current expectations and are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. Key risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements include: adverse global or regional conditions, including new or additional tariffs or trade restrictions; the company's dependence on a limited number of qualified suppliers; volatility in demand for the company's products; the impact of business and market conditions, including inflation, increases in interest rates and an economic recession; the outcome and impact of the company's completed separation of its HDD and Flash businesses; the impact of competitive products and pricing; the company's development and introduction of products based on new technologies and expansion into new data storage markets; risks associated with cost saving initiatives, restructurings, acquisitions, divestitures, mergers, joint ventures and the company's strategic relationships; difficulties or delays in manufacturing or other supply chain disruptions; hiring and retention of key employees; the company's level of debt and other financial obligations; changes to the company's relationships with key customers; compromise, damage or interruption from cybersecurity incidents or other data system security risks; actions by competitors; any decisions to reduce or discontinue paying cash dividends or repurchasing shares of the company's common stock; the company's ability to achieve its greenhouse gas emissions reduction and other sustainability goals; the impact of international conflicts; risks associated with compliance with changing legal and regulatory requirements and the outcome of legal proceedings; and other risks and uncertainties listed in the company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), including the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the SEC on August 14, 2025 to which your attention is directed. You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof, and the company undertakes no obligation to update or revise these forward-looking statements to reflect new information or events, except as required by law.

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