

Thoughts About Bulldozer

I must confess I am a long-time die hard AMD fan. In fact, I haven't bought an Intel CPU since Dinosaurs ruled the earth (It was really 1998 to be exact), but to this day I still remember fondly my ABIT BH6, Celeron @ 504 Mhz Motherboard / CPU combo. Now I don't think I need my head examined and I certainly don't think AMD chips are superior to Intel CPU the way they used to be years back. I guess it's just my nature to pull for the [Underdog](#) and I hate to see AMD run out of business. Not only would that be a tragedy for AMD and all the people who work there, but because of the impact that would have for the consumer in the CPU market. Intel would probably return to trying to sell their mainstream performance CPU for 1000+ usd. Don't get me wrong. With notebooks, tablets, and smart phones, the market has probably changed enough today so they wouldn't be able to pull it off. At the very least, though, it would mean the end of CPUs like the Core i5 2500K which probably wins the most bang for your buck award right now in the CPU market.

But even after everything I wrote above you might be shocked to learn I can't bring myself to buy a Bulldozer, and this time it wasn't for lack of funds, either, since I have been saving my pennies for its release for some time now. But as things stand right now, it is just too big, too hot, uses too much power especially when overclocked (AMD FX [8150 @ 4.6Ghz](#) = 450W+), and is too expensive (currently [sells for 279 usd](#) at Newegg). Worst of all it performs worse in lightly threaded benchmarks than the AMD Phenom II X6 1100T it is supposed to replace. This last complaint is simply unforgivable. If you can't build a CPU faster than the one you already have on the market then you should keep with until you can. I am really hard pressed to know why AMD chose to release Bulldozer right now, as is, at all. I mean, AMD and its customers would almost certainly be better served by a simple Phenom II process shrink: It would be smaller, faster, easier to cool, and be cheaper to make. So AMD could sell it cheaper if they wanted or they could sell it for the same price as the Phenom II and just pocket the extra profit. Either way everybody wins. Release that right now instead of Bulldozer, which they should leave in the oven until it is through baking, because this is obviously an unfinished product.

Now, for all the doom and gloom I see brandished about Bulldozer, and all the venom I (a self-professed long-time AMD customer) have just spilled above, I don't see this necessarily as the beginning of the end for AMD as some others have suggested. History shows that firms in this industry can recover from a bad product launch. Just look at the GeForce 5800 Dustbuster and/or the GeForce 480 space heater fiasco: both times Nvidia learned from their mistakes, got up, brushed themselves off and went on to make and release a much better product their next time at bat. I for one am optimistic that, given enough time, money, a few re-spins, and perhaps most importantly a more mature 32 nm manufacturing process that AMD can do the same and fix most of the problems with Bulldozer. In the meantime, though, as a customer I resent being asked to buy Bulldozer as it is essentially half baked at best. The only way I can see AMD selling a ton of these CPUs is if they drastically lower the price of the six and eight core CPU in the AMD FX line, or stop selling the AMD Phenom II entirely, which I hope they don't do. IMO for all but the hardcore overclocker, it is still the star of their lineup. In fact unless something drastic changes I will soon be buying a Phenom II X6 1100T CPU for my second computer as well.

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