Intel Launches New Quad-core Processor for High-End PCs

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Intel is targeting high-end PC users and gamers with a new quad-core processor. The latest chip is aimed at gamers, design professionals and enthusiasts looking for high-performance hardware.

The Santa Clara, Calif., company is launching its Core 2 Extreme QX6800 processor April 9, and Intel is promising that its latest quad-core offering is 65 percent faster than the older-generation dual-core X6800 processor.

With the release of the QX6800 processor, Intel now has 12 quad-core models for servers, high-end PCs and mainstream desktops. In addition, the company recently announced that it would include two of these chips in its embedded portfolio.

In a statement, Intel said the QX6800, with a clock speed of 2.93GHz, runs faster than any other quad-core desktop processors. However, when Apple began offering two quad-core processors with its Mac Pro desktop on April 4, Intel revealed that Apple had started using a 3.0GHz model that had been in limited production.

The QX6800, which is built using the company's 65-nanometer manufacturing process, also offers 8MB of Level 2 cache and a 1066MHz FSB (front side bus). This processor will join Intel's other Core 2 Extreme chip, the QX6700, which is clocked at 2.66GHz.

Both the QX6800 and the QX6700 processors are designed for gamers, users of high-end PCs and design professionals.

The quad-core QX6800 processors cost $1,199 each.

Since launching its first quad-core models in November, Intel has worked hard to press its advantage, while Advanced Micro Devices will wait to unveil its quad-core Opteron processor, called "Barcelona," later in 2007.

Since announcing that it would bring a quad-core model to market first, AMD has criticized Intel's approach of pairing two dual-core Core 2 chips on a special package. AMD has said its quad-core processor will incorporate four cores on the same piece of silicon.

Intel has hoped that its quad-core design will help gain back some of the market share it has lost to AMD in the past few years. A Jan. 31 report by Mercury Research showed that Intel had gained back some of its losses in the server space, but AMD gained ground in notebook and desktops sales and also managed to gain additional market share in the overall x86 space.

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