

INTEL RECALLS 1.13GHz PENTIUM III

By Kevin Krewell {9/18/00-03}

Less than a month after introducing the 1.13GHz Pentium III and the week after the Intel Developer Conference, Intel was forced to recall the part after testing showed a significant number of the parts would fail specific benchmark and system tests. Intel withdrew the

1.13GHz parts and ordered a recall of all devices shipped, but it appears that the number of units shipped was extremely small. News of the recall also came the day after AMD introduced its 1.1GHz Athlon, giving AMD sole bragging rights to a processor actually shipping in speeds beyond 1GHz. This embarrassing episode provided further evidence that the P6 microarchitecture has run out of gas in the 0.18-micron process and that any additional performance from Intel IA-32 microprocessors will have to be provided by the forthcoming P7 microarchitecture (Pentium 4).

The 1.13GHz chip failures were first reported by a number of PC-enthusiast Web sites prior to the recall. Specifically, they reported that both a Sysmark2000 test and

a Linux kernel compilation test failed to complete on the new Intel processor the Web sites had received for evaluation. Intel plans to reintroduce the 1.13GHz parts after a delay of about two months for further testing and after instituting an improved production screen. We also expect Intel to make a die-stepping change to the Pentium III to improve any problematic speed paths. In the short term, Intel can downgrade the 1.13GHz parts to 1.0GHz to help meet the continued strong demand for high-performance microprocessors and to minimize any financial impact (which should be negligible). Intel strongly stated that testing has shown that the 1GHz Pentium III does not exhibit this problem. ♦

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