

Slow Processor? To Upgrade or Not?

To upgrade or not? That is the question. At least, since the release of the new Athlon 64 FX-57, that is the question I have been pondering. Even though the FX-55, (which I am currently running), was everything I had hoped it would be, is the new FX-57 that much better? Well let's take a look.

The Athlon 64 FX-57 has an increased clock speed of 200 MHz bringing it to 2.8 GHz, up from the 2.6 GHz found in the FX-55. AMD didn't stop there though, they added a few extras to improve performance.

The chip's core is actually based on a revised K8 core code named San Diego (1 MB L2 cache), which brings the size of the chip's die down to 90 nm from 130 nm. This is made possible by building the chip on AMD's latest SOI (Silicon and Insulator) technology.

The FX-57 has an improved memory controller, making it more flexible in terms of allowing you to use different size DIMM's on the same channel.

So is the FX-57 fast? It's screaming fast, but is it an enough of an improvement to warrant an upgrade? Well that depends a little on you. If you have to have the latest and greatest then this is the processor for you.

With a \$1000+ price tag, I would be willing to say that the Athlon 64 FX-57 is a little too pricey for most mainstream users or enthusiasts (myself included). Especially if you just dropped \$800-\$900 on an FX-55 just six months ago like I did.

One other factor to consider is the future direction of processors. With an industry shift to dual-core processors, such as the Athlon 64 X2, the Athlon 64 FX-57 may be AMD's last installment in the single core processor market.

Now having said that, the FX-57 still out-performs (in terms of gaming) even the fastest dual-core processor such as the Athlon 64 X2 4800+. This is largely due to the fact that most games are not built to take advantage of a dual-core processor, not yet anyway.

So for the time being, the FX-57 will remain the fastest gaming processor on the market.

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