

# The Xbox 360 and the PS3: late bloomers or complete failures?

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Anandtech is running a slightly sensationalist article (which has since been pulled, see entry #11) that claims to report extreme developer disappointment in the next-generation consoles from Microsoft and Sony. The gist of the article is that Anand talked to some developers who've had their hands on the hardware, and these guys claim that the designs are so exotic and cache-crippled that it's essentially impossible to wring the kind of performance out of them that IBM is claiming. The following selection is typical:

We of course asked the obvious question: would game developers rather have 3 slow general purpose cores, or one of those cores paired with an array of specialized SPEs? The response was unanimous, everyone we have spoken to would rather take the general purpose core approach.

Citing everything from ease of programming to the limitations of the SPEs we mentioned previously, the Xbox 360 appears to be the more developer-friendly of the two platforms according to the cross-platform developers we've spoken to. Despite being more developer-friendly, the Xenon CPU is still not what developers wanted.

**The most ironic bit of it all is that according to developers, if either manufacturer had decided to use an Athlon 64 or a Pentium D in their next-gen console, they would be significantly ahead of the competition in terms of CPU performance.**

While the developers we've spoken to agree that heavily multithreaded game engines are the future, that future won't really take form for another 3 - 5 years. Even Microsoft admitted to us that all developers are focusing on having, at most, one or two threads of execution for the game engine itself - not the four or six threads that the Xbox 360 was designed for... In the end, the more multithreaded nature of these new console CPUs doesn't help paint much of a brighter performance picture - multithreaded or not, game developers are not pleased with the performance of these CPUs.

At another point in the article, Anand claims that the Xbox 360's CPU will deliver only about twice the performance of the original Xbox's 733MHz Intel CPU. Can things really be this bad?

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