

INTEL to launch dual-core Pentium 'next week'

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Created 11/04/2005 - 12:03pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 11th of April 2005 12:03:15 PM Filed under [Hardware](#) [1]

That's rather sooner than the late Q2 date that the chip giant was previously expected to have scheduled for the debut of the Pentium Extreme Edition and the 955X chipset.

That Intel has done so was suggested today by Taiwanese motherboard maker sources cited by DigiTimes. It's not hard to see the motivation: AMD is expected to launch its own dual-core Opteron processors on 21 April, the second birthday of the AMD64-based server processor family.

Intel's dual-core Xeon are some way off, so the high-end PEE will have to do as a stand-in. The PEE 840 is clocked at 3.2GHz and is likely to cost \$999 as per all previous Extreme Edition processors. The Taiwanese mobo maker sources claim the 955X, which supports dual-channel ECC DDR 2 SDRAM clocked at 667MHz, and four Serial ATA drives with Intel Matrix Storage Technology, will cost \$50 and be pitched at \$200 motherboards.

How readily available the dual-core CPUs and chipsets will be remains to be seen. Certainly, the dual-core Pentium D and 945 chipsets are not expected to ship until Q3. However, the sources suggest the 840 processor and 955X will go on sale at launch.

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