

Monday, June 9, 2008

Success by accident

x86 got 30 years old now. This is interesting as Mom and Dad tried to kill this baby several times. The kudos for keeping this architecture afloat must be credited to a completely different company: AMD. Imagine the market, if AMD didn't introduced 64 bit to the x86 world? Okay, SPARC would have it much easier. But this is a different story. Enterprise computing by Intel would be Itanium. Not a desktop processor kept afloat by heavy wizardry. And they tried to kill off x86 as early 1982 with iAPX 432 (does anybody remember this proc?)

Albeit it's a cash cow for Intel, they are not really responsible for the success. I really thing x86 is the predominant architecture by pure accident. How would the market look, if Linus bought a Amiga with 68040 or an early Mac with PowerPC instead of the 386? What would have happened to x86 without AMD decision do develop the Sledgehammer architecture? Back in 1992 nobody thought of x86 as the dominant gaming platform. Today it's normal to use an x86 compatible processes as a data feeding device for graphic cards.

Sometimes the accident is the most powerful tool to shape the market.

Posted by Joerg Moellenkamp in English, The IT Business at 10:37

>back in 1992 nobody thought of x86 as the dominant gaming platform

No? The Amiga was dead in the water already because of mismanagement and Apple was almost dead too until the arrival of Jobs. What else? Next? Dead too and Motorola? I only mention the 68060 and the hasty migration toward the PowerPC 601. Ah SunOS with 68000 support back in the early 80s and later? Sparc. So show me the alternatives at that time?

Anonymous on Jun 9 2008, 14:14

From my view, the market was was absolutly open in 1992 ... the x86 didn't won the match out of technical merits, it was more a "last man standing" thing

Anonymous on Jun 9 2008, 14:23

Open in which direction?

Anonymous on Jun 9 2008, 15:54

In my opinion this was the time a decent console had the possibility of wining the gaming market. But the market divided somehow ... in the classic arcade market and the "simulation" market. And the later one generated the ever elastic demand in x86 computing power, thus fueling its dominance.

Anonymous on Jun 9 2008, 19:09