



£705/GAMING PC

## 3XS i3 OC

Price vs performance vs future proofing

### VITAL STATISTICS

**Price** £705 **Manufacturer** Scan  
**Web** [www.scan.co.uk](http://www.scan.co.uk) **CPU** Intel Core i3 530 2.93GHz @ 4GHz  
**Motherboard** Gigabyte H55M-UD2H **GPU** XFX 1GB HD 5770 **RAM** 4GB Corsair DDR3  
**Storage** Samsung 500GB HDD **OS** Win7 Home Premium 64  
**Price check** [www.techradar.com/reviews](http://www.techradar.com/reviews)

On the previous page, I said that Intel's latest dual-core CPUs had made the value segment of PCs rather more crowded. What I didn't mention was that as well as being far more crowded now, what with Intel offering a proper value competitor to AMD's budget range, it's also become a rather confusing segment too. This is ably demonstrated here by Scan Computer's 3XS i3 OC.

All conventional logic says that this machine, only £100 more expensive than the Palicomp rig on the previous page, should be far superior. The Athlon II

chip of the Excalibur is based on rather elderly tech now, while this Core i3 CPU is based on the latest Nehalem architecture that powers the top-end PCs of today. It may only be a dual-core chip, but with Intel's HyperThreading technology, it should better the four cores of the AMD chip. It's also overclocked to a huge 4GHz, over 1GHz faster than the stock speed of the chip. That, paired

**"THIS GPU CAN COPE WITH THE MOST RECENT TITLES AT CRAZY RESOLUTIONS"**

with the DDR3 memory installed in this rig, should put it head and shoulders above that AMD rig.

However, for all the technological improvements, new generations of hardware and overclocking prowess that Scan has bestowed on the 3XS i3 OC doesn't actually translate into superior performance. Much of this has to be laid at the feet of the HD 5770 that's taking care of

the graphical responsibilities of both machines. It demonstrates the current state of PC gaming – devs coding for the five-year-old hardware of the Xbox 360 rather than for the exponential advances PC tech has made – where this £100 GPU can cope with even the most recent titles on their highest settings at crazy resolutions like 2,560 x 1,600. Granted, you'd rather be playing

at the more realistic 1,680 x 1,050 resolution for smoothness' sake, but still, these machines are playable at the higher resolution.

The big surprise, though, is that the processor doesn't win outright against the Athlon II X4 from the Excalibur. Looking at the Cinebench figure, it's four seconds faster at rendering the full scene, but then the AMD chip pulls ahead in the X264 video

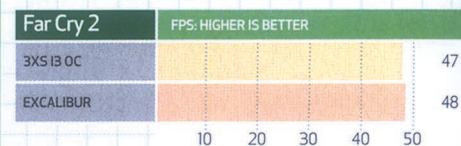
encoding test. Given the Athlon II X4 is based on far older tech, it's definitely a surprise.

That said, I'd be far more comfortable with the Scan system from a purely future-looking standpoint. With the H55 motherboard, you've got the option to drop in anything up to a socket 1156 Core i7 and have the vast realms of DDR3 memory at your disposal. The Excalibur, then, is far more limited, but it depends on whether you'd be happy to spend the extra £100 between them just for the less tangible idea of future-proofing rather than for a performance advantage now. **Dave James**

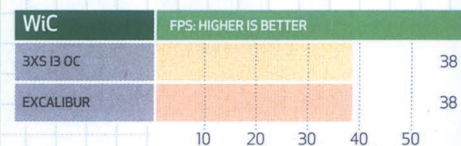
### Technical analysis

There's very little to choose between Scan's 3XS i3 OC and Palicomp's Excalibur. The Intel chip wins out in Cinebench but AMD wins in video encoding, likewise Palicomp wins in *Far Cry 2* but Scan takes the *DiRT2* honours. Ultimately, it's whether this is a rig for now or for the future.

#### High-end gaming performance



#### DX 10 gaming performance



#### CPU performance



### PCFormat Verdict

- ✔ Decent price
- ✔ Well specced
- ✔ Future proofed
- ✘ Half the storage of the Excalibur

The new spec doesn't mean it's better than the Palicomp, but it has more possibilities.

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