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## **Phenom-Ready Certified Motherboards Fail the Compatibility Test**

*Asus and Gigabyte, the only alternatives for upgrading to Phenom*

The Phenom-Ready certification offered to motherboard manufacturers by AMD is meant to spare the users the headache of picking an incompatible model for their newly-purchased Phenom processor. This was a minor aspect until now, as Phenoms could not make it to the market, so it would have been impossible for the customers to buy a wrong motherboard for an inexistent processor. Things are about to change with the advent of the B3 revision of the AMD quad-cores, slated to arrive in the first quarter of 2008. The AMD Phenom recommendation is a thorough procedure that involves both hardware and software aspects regarding the motherboard functionality. The hardware aspect refers to testing the electrical signal margin of CPU and memory to ensure that the voltage is stable and does not exceed the producer's safety limitation threshold. The software testing involves the full system stress and function tests in order to confirm optimal operation with Windows XP and Windows Vista operating systems. The chip manufacturer's website lists all the AMD-approved motherboards, and, currently, there are only 16 certified AM2 models, produced by 5 companies. At the time of writing, ECS has five approved models, while major producers, such as Asustek and Gigabyte only provide four and three, respectively. Recent tests have unveiled that the AMD quad-cores can work on two out of the 16 motherboards listed on the producer's website. This is quite a disappointment, since AMD boasted that the new processor will be compatible with any AM2 motherboard that is already on the market. This news should discourage the Athlon 64 X2 owners dreaming of replacing it with a quad core Phenom. At the moment, only Asus and Gigabyte managed to issue a BIOS update that allows Phenom processor run smoothly on their motherboards, while other manufacturers, such as Biostar or Epox haven't issued a new BIOS in months. In fact, Asus is the only producer that can boast all its AM2 motherboards fully support the Phenoms, as Gigabyte has only been concerned with fixing its mainstream motherboards. The results are more than disappointing, since only Asus motherboards can run Phenoms, while the Biostar, Foxconn, Epox, MSI and Gigabyte products were not able to "accommodate" them. We can but hope that the B3 revision would revive the motherboard producers' interest in having Phenoms on their gear.