

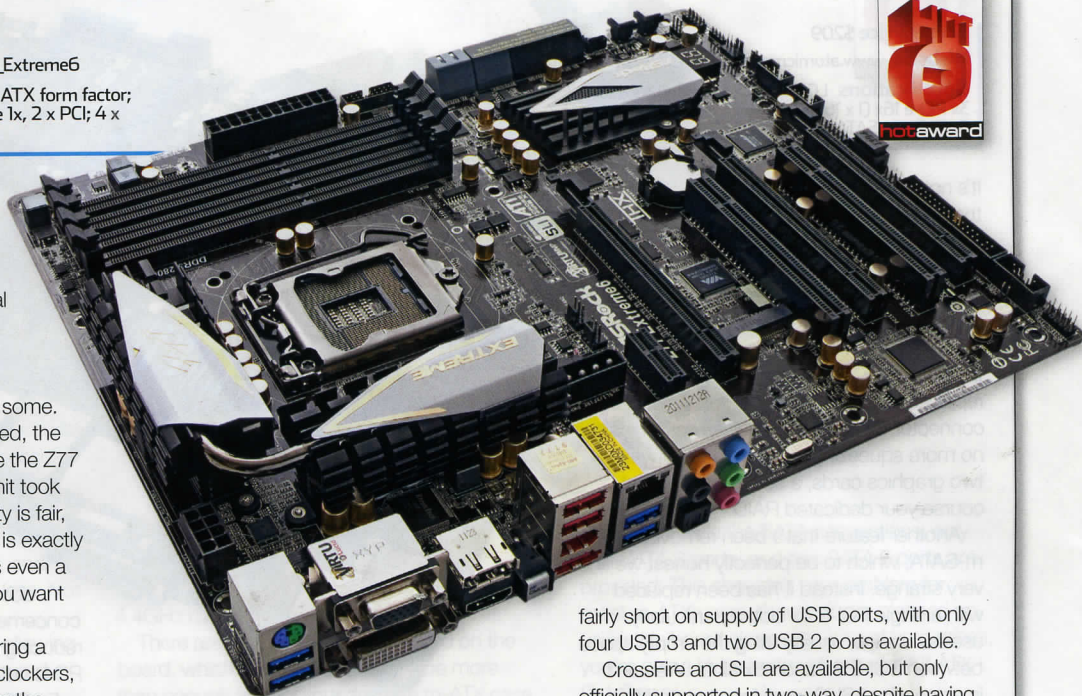
ASRock Z77 Extreme 6

Price and performance meet.

Street Price \$209

Website www.atomicmpc.com.au/137_Extreme6

Specifications LGA1155; Z77 chipset; ATX form factor; 3x PCI-e 16x (1 x 16x; 1 x 8x 1x4); 1 x PCI-e 1x; 2 x PCI; 4 x SATA2, 4 x SATA3; DDR3-2800



The ASRock Z77 Extreme 6 board is an attractive board, the gold-on-grey heatsinks work, and the gold finish on the solid capacitors is a nice touch, but what about the actual board? Does it perform as well as the offerings from ASRock parent company ASUS?

The short answer is yes, and then some. In many of the benchmarks conducted, the ASRock board actually stands above the Z77 Pro from ASUS, which we must admit took us a little by surprise. The connectivity is fair, the spacing between PCI-E sockets is exactly how we would lay it out, and there is even a space for m-SATA storage should you want to install it.

The EFI BIOS is fairly intuitive, offering a bunch of advanced options for overclockers, while keeping a fairly simple layout for the newbies. We must admit, we didn't like the change from Analogue to Digital BIOS screens, though now we see that there really is a lot more information to be displayed, and it can make life easier when working with an unfamiliar system. In this case ASRock has made a nice BIOS screen, with plenty of controllability and information.

If you're not an overclocker by hobby, but still like the idea of extra performance for nothing, ASRock has pre-set overclocking profiles for you to enable. You can set anywhere from 4GHz to 4.8GHz with an i7 3770K installed, giving you a healthy 500-1300MHz boost depending on which you choose.

On-board we find plenty of fan headers (six in total), a USB3 internal connector, reset

and power buttons plus an extra molex power connector for PCI-E graphics stability. This will allow open-bench users to overclock on this board easily while connecting enough fans to keep it all cool.

Unfortunately, the heatsink covering the top VRMs is rather tall on this motherboard; it's the only real problem we can find. Some coolers may have issues fitting correctly, and for this reason we would suggest water cooling if you plan on using this board, either custom or a compact loop from one of the many manufacturers now producing them.

DisplayPort, HDMI, DVI and VGA ports are included on the rear IO panel, along with a clear CMOS button. Due to these, and the inclusion of 7.1 surround sound, the board is

fairly short on supply of USB ports, with only four USB 3 and two USB 2 ports available.

CrossFire and SLI are available, but only officially supported in two-way, despite having three PCI-E slots. Not that this is an issue for the vast majority of users, as three-way cards are almost exclusively reserved for the independently wealthy or the completely insane.

Overall the Extreme 6 offered by ASRock is a solid choice, and one that is very hard to fault. The only question left is warranty and cost, something that can be more important than the performance of the product itself. In Australia the price is currently \$209 from reputable online retailers, which is actually more than reasonable considering the performance offered. As for warranty, it sits at three years offered, and that is above the industry average. A very good choice.

i7 3770K	Stock 35 x 100; DDR3-1333 @ 9-9-9-24 1T	Automatic Overclock 42 x 100.5; DDR3-1340 @ 9-9-9-24 1T
PiFast (seconds)	18.71	17.86
wPrime 32M - Single-thread (seconds)	35.552	32.968
wPrime 32M - Multi-thread (seconds)	8.392	7.130
CineBench R11.5 x64 - Single-thread	1.61	1.76
CineBench R11.5 x64 - Multi-thread	7.12	7.28
AIDA Read (MB/s)	17488	19399
AIDA Write (MB/s)	23413	23215
AIDA Latency (nanoseconds)	32.2	30.0

Performance 91
Fast, but not the fastest.

Bundle 95
All essentials included.

Value 97
Hard to get more for less.

Build 95
If the heatsinks were shorter, would be perfect.

Overall
Very close to perfect for the price.

95%