

PENTIUM III CHIP ID

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DESCRIPTION

The Intel processor has a special location that saves a 64-bit unique ID on the chip. That ID can be found by executing a simple program on your computer. When you visit the Web, a website can determine your unique chip ID as well, but only by downloading and running an application on your PC.

Intel also put a special instruction on the chip that disables the ability for the chip to give up its unique ID. That instruction can be activated in a few different ways. Once you disable the CPU ID inside the Pentium III, the machine has to be reset for it to be available again.

Every time you turn your computer on, the CPU ID is once again made available. But it can quickly be disabled in two ways: Through either specific instructions in the systems BIOS (a set of programs that run when the computer is turned on, before Windows or any other operating system is loaded); or by running a program after your operating system has loaded, that turns the CPU ID off.

There are currently three options to keep yourself safe, and to disable the ID. First, set up your browser so that no programs can execute on your system. These include ActiveX controls and Java. At the very least, make sure that you specifically approve of any application that tries to download itself over the Internet and run itself on your PC.

Second, download a utility from Intel called the Intel Processor Serial Number Utility. This utility lets you control whether your ID is on or off, and if you want, sets it to off whenever your system reboots and Windows loads.

Finally, check your BIOS. This loads when your system turns on, and typically you access it with a function key. Most Pentium III systems have the ability to turn the CPU ID on and off here. Disabling the CPU ID here makes it almost impossible to turn back on-- even if you do download rogue code from the Internet. That's because it's very difficult to write a program that reset your BIOS. Every computer has a different BIOS, and the program would have to understand, and reset, each one of them to be widely effective.

Your best bet, though, is to do all three. Set your browser security settings so you are warned when a website is trying to run an application on your computer. Set your BIOS to disable the CPU ID if you can. And finally, install Intel's utility, so you can monitor your ID status, and set it to disable your CPU ID as well when Windows loads. That will give you as much protection as you're ever likely to need.

FROM INTEL

Pentium® III processor Processor Serial Number Control Utility Overview

With the introduction of the Pentium® III processor, Intel has also introduced a utility that allows users to control their processor serial number. This utility can be downloaded from this website and from PC manufacturers' websites. It will also be available on CD-ROM directly from Intel, as well being shipped with some Pentium III processor-based systems.

In keeping with its focus on user privacy, Intel will be working with other operating system vendors, such as Linux, to try and develop similar capabilities for controlling their processor's serial number.

Utility Overview

The Intel® processor serial number control utility is a Windows* program that enables or disables the reading of the Pentium III processor serial number by software. This allows users to control which software programs or websites have permission to read the processor's serial number and ensures that their preference for the processor serial number setting is enforced. The default setting of the utility is to disable the reading of the processor serial number.

This utility places an icon in the Windows* system tray to provide the user with a visual indication of the state of the processor serial number feature. The user has the option of hiding the system tray icon. Disabling the processor serial number can be done at anytime, but enabling the serial number requires the system to be restarted.

System Requirements

The Intel processor serial number control utility requires:

- A Pentium III processor-based system
- Windows* 95, Windows* 98, Windows* NT 4.0
- 2 megabytes of hard disk space