

Slander Sander? A reply to ATI.

Introduction

Andrzej,

Thanks for taking this issue to a global stage, I'm happy to provide a rebuttal here as obviously the people reading this thread have a right to hear the other side of the story as well and then make up their own minds. I'll address the points raised by you individually below, so as to not further complicate things.

Let me first start with saying that I will no longer protect you or ATI by withholding personal emails from the people reading this thread as you obviously feel the need to twist facts, flat-out lie or conveniently leave out bits of important information. I'm sorry it has to come to this as it goes against what I believe is proper conduct but you leave me no other choice.

Before I get to address the points raised let me post a crude timeline of events and a brief summary so that someone that hasn't been following this discussion knows what happened. I encourage everyone interested in learning about my side of the story to read the full post, including the emails, and not just skim the headlines, as the crux of the matter is in the details, not in the headlines.

Timeline:

- May 10th : received invite to ATI CrossFire press briefing
- May 11th : declined invite to ATI CrossFire press briefing
- May 25th : CrossFire press briefing
- June 4th : received invite to CrossFire Challenge
- August 15th : email discussion about ATI interview
- September 8th : email discussion press invite R520 launch
- September 8th : publication ATI column
- September 14th : email discussion press invite R520 launch
- September 15th : email discussion press invite R520 launch
- September 16th : publication R520 article
- September 17th : ATI discloses private emails
- September 18th : ATI posts a full reply
- September 19th : this reply is posted

Summary:

I've been working with ATI since the summer of '00, and throughout these years have had a pleasant experience working with them. There've been the occasional complaints left and right, but nothing substantial. Growing pains both on my part and theirs were usually to blame for any delays in getting information or samples as we developed into a mutually beneficial relationship.

Initially my primary contact was Rubeena Hussein with whom I've worked for several years. Recently, approx. two years ago, Rubeena has been replaced by Chris Hook, head of public relations EMEA, and Andrzej Bania, regional public relations manager. I've established a relationship with both that has had its up and downs but was based on mutual respect and understanding.

On the 10th of May I received an invite to an ATI press briefing for the CrossFire platform on May 25th in London. I declined that invite on the next day, May 11th, for personal, family reasons, and outlined why to ATI. I asked for press materials to be sent and a NDA to be served so I could still get the info. ATI neglected to send the info or serve an NDA.

On June 4th I was invited to the CrossFire challenge by Andrzej Bania, a challenge where six highly skilled professionals would be pushing the limits of the CrossFire platform.

On August 15th I received an email from Andrzej Bania asking whether I was interested in an interview with a mainboard ASIC engineer. I declined the offer due to lack of interest amongst our readers for such an interview and asked for more information about R520 instead. Jokes were made back and forth.

In August I contacted a number of AIBs regarding information or benchmarks of the R520 architecture. Some information is given, but the AIBs are not willing to disclose much due to non finalized specifications.

On September 8th I emailed Andrzej Bania asking if I was invited to the upcoming R520 launch. He replied with the answer that I did not make the cut. Discussion started regarding this. Andrzej Bania made it clear that ATI only works with press that wants to work with ATI and doesn't refuse offers, in this case the offer was the ASIC engineer interview I didn't find interesting and the CrossFire briefing I didn't attend. I publish a column on ATI's driver image quality, which links to a story from a reputable 3rd party source.

On September 14th Chris Hook calls, we discuss the situation, I outline how I feel and that I feel cut off. He makes me an offer, stating that he'll do his best to help me. Andrzej emails back, stating the reverse and that he's cut me off for at least the next 6-months. The reason given is for not accepting

the offer on August 15 and joking about ATI as well as writing, in their view, inaccurate articles.

On September 15th I email Andrzej Bania, making an apology for not accepting the offer and making, in his views, inappropriate jokes. He emails back that nothing has changed that I'm still cut off for at least the next 6-months but he also states that I can write what I like. I email back indicating that I have other sources outside of ATI that can supply me with information.

In September I again talk with the AIBs, one of them offers to give me some preliminary scores of a preproduction R520 board running at XT and Pro clocks, as they don't like ATI's attitude towards me. I propose to them to use our timedemo scripts. On September 16th I receive the benchmark scores. I start preparing an article about the R520 architecture.

On September 16th I post the article, with a disclaimer as the scores cannot be verified. I also add a comment about ATI's way of dealing with the press, and myself in particular. The article gets massive exposure, ATI states it is a hoax, that the scores are false. ATI sends part of a private email thread to a publication which then posts it fully out of context in an attempt to discredit me. The discussion starts to become personal, ATI attacks me instead of the problem.

On September 18th Andrzej Bania posts a reply in Beyond3D forums, outlining their stance, line of reasoning and how they view the whole situation. I welcome their public posting as that will provide a public stage to post my story as well and let the reader decide. The document you're reading now is my rebuttal, detailing my side of the story.

In the following pages I'll address the points raised in Andrzej Bania's in the Beyond3D forums, also available as PDF at the below link.

<http://www.beyond3d.com/forum/showpost.php?p=570235&postcount=152>
<http://hardwareanalysis.com/images/articles/large/11601.pdf>

Briefings

Andrzej Bania wrote: Briefings

...

CONCLUSION: When it comes to R520 results, you should only believe journalists who have established a reputation for being trustworthy

On June 4th of 2005 Andrzej Bania sent out an email to Chris Hook and bcc-ed six specially selected journalists about a CrossFire challenge to be held to show what the world's best could do with this platform. The email can be viewed below in full, I apparently was one of the six journalists selected.

Email June 4th:

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "Chris Hook" <chook@ati.com>

Sent: Saturday, June 04, 2005 10:25 AM

Subject: CrossFire Challenge

Hi Chris,

'BCC-ed' on this message is a group of 6 hardcore overclockers who seriously rate their skills

They are on 'BCC' for now until we have established the ground rules and they have confirmed that they are happy with this

i.e. if you want to back out gracefully – then now is the time J

I have checked, and each of them claim to have: -

- Overclocking skills
- Some time available for the challenge
- Confidence that the the other guys on the list are gonna get smoked !

I think that it is important that we set some ground rules first

These are my 'first draft' suggestions

If all of you on the 'BCC' – then you are the experts – so please email me back and let me know your feelings regarding: -

1. No mater how the kit is supplied – you can change any of the cooling - anywhere
2. ATI will supply the mainboard and graphic card
3. We get AMD to supply CPUs and memory (I would suggest FX57 with 2GB of 'something quick')
4. You should supply your own chassis and power supply

5. Hard drives etc are down to you
6. You can have liquid cooling – but I'd suggest that we all agree on 'no liquid nitrogen or other hazchem' substances
7. Ambient temperature in the room cannot be lower than a normal (Nordic !) working environment – so let's try and keep it at 16 degrees or above
8. Can we also agree a budget for components used ?
Maybe the whole system (excluding monitor) must cost less than €3,000 excluding tax
9. We will provide you all with the very latest driver for the mainboard
10. The benchmark result we are going for is the highest possible score in 3DMark05 (default)
If you think we should 'have a laugh' with other benches like Half Life 2 and Doom 3 – then please suggest this !
11. The result needs to happen without a crash or artefacts
12. Scores should be uploaded to the 3DMark05 WEB site
13. If you seems that you are likely to win this inter-publication challenge – then we will 'come and visit' with a video recorder and 'see the numbers live'
14. Only guys who regularly create editorial copy for your publication should be involved – no 'borrowing Macci' for a few days !
15. We want to keep it 'fun' – so everyone will get some kind of prize for trying

16. We are pretty certain that the prize we give the winner will be something they will never forget J

Thoughts ?

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com

"Crossfire defeats SLI in Doom 3"
The Inquirer

June 05

Apparantly Andrzej Bania had no second thoughts back then when he invited me to participate in a major PR stunt with CrossFire. Considering that a lot is riding on the proper positioning of this product you'd need reliable people that will assure you the best scores this platform can provide.

It is therefore strange to see that he now seems to have changed his mind or rather decided it is more convenient to simply state that I have not established a reputation for being trustworthy, that is a total reversal of how he previously seemed to accredit my journalistic integrity. In the end, for reasons undisclosed, ATI however never followed through with this event.

ATI also asked me to give a speech during a private board partners event in Prague on October 7th of 2004. They flew me in to talk about product sampling, PR, differences between on- and offline press, etc. Besides Lars Weinand from Tom's Hardware Guide I was the only journalist invited and allowed to express his views. The reaction I've gotten from them and the assorted board partners that were present was overwhelmingly positive.

Conclusion: ATI apparantly cannot decide for itself whether I am trustworthy or not, and makes it up on the spot when it's in a tight corner.

Not Invited

Andrzej Bania wrote : Not Invited

...

However, he has conveniently left off the actual reason - which he and I have discussed at length in various emails. I am not talkning about a snatched comment - these were full blown conversations - going back and forth - that

clearly detail the logic behind the decision.

Not inviting him to this Tech Day is a direct result of his response to the last invitation that I sent him

I am not going in to detail here - but it was that categorical refusal to engage that led to his being left off of this list. He knows exactly what I am talking about.

Remember, he would still have been briefed before the NDA lifted - just not at our Tech Day.

CONCLUSION: If you choose NOT to work with a vendor - don't cry 'foul' when they decide NOT to work with you

I've been invited to a CrossFire briefing in London on the 25th of May of this year, see below email dated May 10th. Unfortunately on that date me and my girlfriend celebrated our 10th anniversary. I however suggested and went to great lengths to convince her to come along with me as the briefing wouldn't take all day and we could certainly celebrate in London.

Unfortunately she had a more private setting in mind, hence I was not able to attend that briefing. However I asked for all the details to be forwarded and said I'd be happy to sign the NDA. I never got those details, nor was offered an NDA. Apparently my understandable inability to attend didn't go down too well as I was not served an NDA or provided with more information about the platform.

Email May 10th:

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "'Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis'"

<ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>; other addressees removed for privacy purposes

Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2005 3:34 PM

Subject: Briefing in London on 25th May

Hi Dutch Guys !!!

As you may know, we have a briefing on new technology in London on 25th May

We would love to bring you over for this

I have checked and it is possible to bring you over from Amsterdam at 8:35am...

...and you can go back at 7:20pm

We will be presenting at the Hilton Paddington in Central London

We plan to start with a buffet lunch at 12:00pm

Main presentations start at 1:00pm

We break for coffee around 2:00pm

Before and after the presentation, we will be able to get you 1-on-1 with our experts

On the day we are planning to have Raja Koduri, Vijay Sharma and Rene Froeleke

It looks like being a very interesting day

Please let me know ASAP if you are interested in attending so I can book flights J

Look forward to seeing you there !

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania

PR and Marketing Manager

Northern Europe & South Africa

ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH

Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx

SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx

Email: abania@ati.com

"... wij houden werkelijk van die Nederlandse kerels ..."

Andrzej Bania

May 05

Going forward, on August 15 Andrzej Bania wrote me an email (see below) asking whether I'd be interested in an interview with one of ATI's ASIC engineers for mainboard technology. I replied with the below quoted replies, which clearly states that an interview with an ASIC engineer isn't exactly what our readers like to read, they'd rather have information about the R520 instead.

We then started fooling around a bit, as we normally did. This is the incident he refers to in his post and I quote *'He knows exactly what I am talking about'*. I frankly don't see the harm in this, as he's also more than happy to joke around, even about the competition, as Adam & co he refers to in his

reply is none other than NVIDIA corporation. But apparently my landfill joke was not appreciated and would be used as a leverage later on.

Clearly this is not a categorical refusal as he categorized it, but rather a question of whether an interview would result in an interesting article for our readers, and I decided it wouldn't. Honestly this is not a refusal to work with ATI, but a decision on my part to not accept this particular offer, instead I suggested I would like to be informed about the R520 architecture.

Some journalists will happily accept anything you throw at them whilst others will only be interested in specific products. Does that make the latter lesser journalists? I think not, they're just more selective on what topics that they write about. Clearly ATI has no say in what topics I chose to write about, but apparently there are repercussions if I don't.

Afterall it is Andrzej Bania offering me something that doesn't interest me and when I don't want to accept his offer he decided to cut me off. He phrased it as, and I'll quote *'Press who have a willingness to work with us across every roadmap will get priority when sampling the 'fastest product in the world'* or rather, write about everything we have on offer or there'll be repercussions, of which the email sent on August 15th, combined with his motivation in his post is clear proof.

Email August 15th:

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis" <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>

Sent: Monday, August 15, 2005 8:04 PM

Subject: "...landfill..."

Or maybe Adam & co were upgrading ;~)

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis
[<mailto:ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>]

Sent: 15 August 2005 19:04

To: Andrzej Bania

Subject: Re: "...chipsets that never materialize..."

I've never, ever seen it anywhere, nor did my peers, hence it did no materialize. I'm guessing Dave Orton bought the lot of them to use for landfill around his new house.

Sander Sassen

<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com>

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis" <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>

Sent: Monday, August 15, 2005 7:59 PM

Subject: "...chipsets that never materialize..."

Oh Dear !!

Did you not see ATI taking 27% of the AMD chipset business in the last Mercury Research report ?

That was Xpress 200 in action my friend : ~P

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania

PR and Marketing Manager

Northern Europe & South Africa

ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH

Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx

SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx

Email: abania@ati.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis

[<mailto:ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>]

Sent: 15 August 2005 18:06

To: Andrzej Bania

Subject: Re: "...oh dear.."

That's a chipset, let me spell it out for you b-o-r-i-n-g, people want ATI to make video cards, not chipsets that never materialize (Xpress 200 anyone?).

Sander Sassen

<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com>

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis" <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>

Sent: Monday, August 15, 2005 4:26 PM
Subject: "...oh dear.."

<http://www.anandtech.com/mb/showdoc.aspx?i=2481&p=11>

Seems that Sander is not keeping his finger on the pulse ; ~)

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis
[mailto:ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com]
Sent: 15 August 2005 14:32
To: Andrzej Bania
Subject: Re: ATI Interview Opportunity

Andrzej,

That's the best ATI currently can muster to prevent them from being totally out of the picture? I'm sorry, unless you have a R520 on offering I'm not really interested.

Cheers,

Sander Sassen
<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com>

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>
To: <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2005 3:12 PM
Subject: ATI Interview Opportunity

Hi Sander,

We have the possibility of getting you an interview with one of ATI's top ASIC engineers for mainboard technology

Please let me know if you would be interested in working with us on this

: -)

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com [/aug15th]

But there's more, Andrzej Bania stated I would still be briefed before the NDA lifted, this is a blatant lie, as he writes something completely different in two separate emails, dated the 14th and 15th of September, and I'll quote form both these emails below. Basically from that point on I will not be given access to information or products for at least the next six months. So his post here dated a month later claiming I would be briefed is simply a lie. This obviously all predates the disclosure of the R520 benchmarks still.

Email September 14th :

----- Original Message -----
From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>
To: <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
Cc: "Chris Hook" <chook@ati.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 4:51 PM
Subject: Response...

Hi Sander,

OK - now I understand your question - I was focusing on the 'Shit listed ?' part and was not sure how to respond

I am not going to go into this any further, but I am happy to email you with my reasoning because I do not want there to be any misunderstandings

Around 15th August I gave you the opportunity to work with us on CrossFire - specifically through a interview with John Bruno who is one of our top ASIC engineers

You came back to me that (a) you were not at all interested, (b) that the subject was 'b-o-r-i-n-g', (c) that Xpress 200 does not exist in the real world and that (d) if it does then it must be in 'a landfill site around Dave Orton's home'

You also stated that we should only come back to you when we had R520

As I am sure you are aware, this is a 2 -way street

The press have an audience and we have products

Press who have a willingness to work with us across every roadmap will get priority when sampling the 'fastest product in the world'

When I got your 'land fill' reply, I decided that I was not going to forward your name to Munich as part of my list

It was possible for Munich to insist that you go - but they agree with my thinking and decided not to

You then decide to show amazing professionalism and explain to me that I have no idea what I am doing and that 'nVidia are eating us for breakfast, lunch and dinner'...

...which you send to nVidia as well

I will tell you now that I have no intention of working with you on anything for the next 6 months at least

i.e. I will look at the situation again around the CeBIT timeframe and let you know if I feel that we can have a positive/productive relationship

If you act toward me/ATI in an open/honest/professional way between now and then - I will be more than happy to re-establish relations

If you don't - then at least you know that it was your choice

You can write what you like on your site - I prefer that press feel no obligation one way or another and are impervious to pressure - that works for me

How publications behave on a personal level is important to me and I am looking for 2-way, mutually beneficial relationships where we can engage at every level

If you are not sure what I mean, then I suggest that you go for a bite with someone like Koen, Michiel or Hilbert and ask them if they feel that ATI treat them reasonably/fairly

I honestly look forward to buying you a beer at CeBIT...

...and I hope you are also open to this idea

Kind regards.

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com <<mailto:abania@ati.com>> [/sep14th]

Email September 15th :

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis" <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2005 2:39 PM

Subject: RE: Response...

Hi Sander,

It is not a text-based misunderstanding

Also, I am only working on open, written communication between the two of us

Specifically, I have not 'cc-ed' in your competition to say "Oh look how bad Sander is"...

...whereas you decided to 'cc' Adam to explain how bad you think we are

For me - all of these things together - mean the environment does not feel right

I am going to blow it all off - forget about it - and try starting again with you at CeBIT

Once again, you can write what you like - all I am concerned with is building a working relationship where ATI engages with press in an open and honest way, we bring our products, information and personnel to the table - and all we ask in return is a route to market

We need that route - you know it and I know it - but it needs to work 2-ways and cannot be a 'cherry picking' operation combined with threats to 'drop your share price if you do not comply' etc

Let's blow it off for now and try again next year

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com

Quotes :

I will tell you now that I have no intention of working with you on anything for the next 6 months at least

i.e. I will look at the situation again around the CeBIT timeframe and let you know if I feel that we can have a positive/productive relationship

I am going to blow it all off - forget about it - and try starting again with you at CeBIT

You can write what you like on your site

Andrzej Bania also mentioned in both of these <emails><sep15th>, and this is the reason why I did go forward with the posting of the preliminary R520 benchmarks, that he didn't care what I wrote.

Conclusion: ATI only works with publications it can control and that it can trust to publish the information in proper form for them.

Email Conversations

Andrzej Bania wrote : Email conversations

...

However, including ATI's direct competition on 'cc' in such an email is another thing entirely.

To then 'jump to the moral high ground' when your 'threats' have been exposed is laughable.

CONCLUSION: Once you pick the rules of engagement - don't get upset when your true character is revealed later on

The CC to Adam at NVIDIA was just that: a CC, open and honest, no blind CC (bcc) to hide the fact that someone else was also privvy to that conversation. I did that because his comments were hilarious, and my statement pretty bold (quoted below), hence they would also make Adam smile. We've all

done a fair bit of CC-ing in the past, including him. Usually when funny remarks are made or when someone goes out on a limb and makes a really bold statement, like I did.

Quote:

You sure know how to win the press over, excellent strategy! I guess I now know why NVIDIA is eating your lunch, or breakfast for that matter, at every level.

But now Andrzej Bania takes that out of context and pitches it as if I chose to slander him by putting Adam in CC. He knows full well that this is not the case. For example when we all meet at some tradeshow or press event far bolder statements are uttered about ATI or NVIDIA products and/or technologies and then laughed at, it is all in the game really.

The below email thread, date June 10th is a good example where both NVIDIA and ATI are CC-ed on an email regarding a question Andrzej Bania asked.

Email June 10th :

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>
To: "'Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis'"
<ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
Sent: Friday, June 10, 2005 9:21 AM
Subject: RE: Andrzej Bania asks...

Just remember...

...we offered to bring you AND your girlfriend to London for CrossFire luvvin ;~)

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis
[mailto:ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com]
Sent: 09 June 2005 14:53

To: Andrzej Bania
Subject: Fw: Andrzej Bania asks...

Your answer...

Sander Sassen
<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com>

----- Original Message -----
From: "Adam Foat" <AFoat@nvidia.com>
To: <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2005 3:51 PM
Subject: Re: Andrzej Bania asks...

Because I tried to use all new people.

Or people that didn't go last year.

In fact only Tim Smalley is coming who came last year.

I wish I could take more people.

:(

A

Ps why are you not in Canada?

-----Original Message-----
From: Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis
<ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
To: Adam Foat <AFoat@nvidia.com>
Sent: Thu Jun 09 06:49:04 2005
Subject: Andrzej Bania asks...

Andrzej Bania says:
BTW: Why are you not in SF ?

Good question, why aren't I?

Sander Sassen
[http://www.hardwareanalysis.com\[/jun10th\]](http://www.hardwareanalysis.com[/jun10th])

Furthermore he mentions I threatened him and/or ATI, which is again a blatant lie. As mentioned we often used to communicate often by joking around in a lighthearted manner, hence the *'lets see if we can drop the stock price shall we'* remark is taken fully out of context.

We've made jokes like that before, and he usually countered with a funny reply or remark. Here's an example of a previous email conversation, on June 23rd, between us, where I jokingly ask whether my column has had any affect on ATI's revenue report for that quarter.

Email June 23rd :

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>
To: "'Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis'"
<ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2005 3:02 PM
Subject: "...did my article..."

...yes !

And I also heard that extra rain fell in the Kalahari dessert as a result of your analysis

;~)

----- Original Message -----

From: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis"
<ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>
To: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2005 2:05 PM
Subject: Re: F*cking fast graphics?

> Oh and:

>

> "Revenues for the fourth quarter are expected to be in the range of \$550 million to \$580 million, an range that has been adjusted down because of a > "conservative expectation" on a range of new products."

>

> Did my 'Don't get caught in the Crossfire' column have anything to do with > that?

>

> Sander Sassen

> [http://www.hardwareanalysis.com\[/jun23rd\]](http://www.hardwareanalysis.com[/jun23rd])

If he now interprets the *'lets see if we can drop the stock price shall we'* remark differently as this previous remark then something has apparently changed in how he choose to communicate with me, and I wasn't made aware of that. Andrzej Bania never before mentioned that he does not like these kind of jokes, on the contrary he's been more than willing to join in the fun and joke around with me of which above given sample is proof. Therefore I can only conclude that the fact that the below email, dated September 8th

suddenly showed up quoted fully out of context is an attempt to smear or discredit me.

Email September 8th :

----- Original Message -----

From: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis"

<ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>

To: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2005 10:39 AM

Subject: Re: Editors Day

> So you're telling me I'm not invited is that it? I feel an ATI column coming
> up, lets see if we can drop the stock price shall we?
>
> Sander Sassen
> [http://www.hardwareanalysis.com\[/sep8th\]](http://www.hardwareanalysis.com[/sep8th])

Also, to further support my claim, the *'lets see if we can drop the stock price shall we'* quote mentions another important detail which he seems to conveniently ignore. It mentions *I feel an ATI column coming up*, which refers to the column I wrote that day and which can be found at the below noted url. Notice the time it was posted at and factor in the time difference. My local email client is operating on GMT+1, whereas our webserver is operating on EST, so there's a 6-hour time difference between the two.

ATI texture filtering quality? Shimmer this!

Thursday, September 08, 2005 09:30 AM EDT

<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com/content/article/1812/>

Furthermore it is apparantly alright for Andrzej Bania to leak emails to DriverHeaven and have them post these emails for all to see? That a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black. Although the posting of that email has far greater effect, it is a smear tactic, than sharing jokes or bold statements between people that often meet during trade shows and press events and where such jokes or bold statements are kept between them.

Conclusion: Posting emails to discredit someone is far worse than what Andrzej Bania accuses me of.

Figures

Andrzej Bania wrote : The Figures

When considering the performance of our next-generation products, you need to ask yourself one very simple question:

"Would ATI seriously bring 100 of Europe's top press to a Technology Day

where they can run whatever benchmarks they choose if we thought that we were going to lose?"

Sander claims that these numbers were given to him by a trusted source.

The numbers shown do not match any pattern that we have for our next generation products.

CONCLUSION: Either Sander lied - or his 'trusted source' set him up to look stupid on a global stage for printing made up results

Again Andrzej Bania seems to suddenly question my journalistic integrity, whereas he's held me in high regard before, as outlined above. Therefore I don't see why he would state that I would 'lie' about these benchmarks, clearly that would not bode well for me if that indeed was what had happened, does he really think I would stoop that low? He frankly knows me better than that.

These benchmarks are provided with a DISCLAIMER, which is quoted below. I however found them interesting enough to post, taking into account that I was not bound by an NDA and Andrzej Bania made it very clear (twice) that he doesn't care what I write.

Quote:

The numbers you see reflected in the next few pages are therefore provided AS IS, as we have no way to verify them as we don't physically have a board, they are accurate as far as we can see and in line what we've been expecting.

Obviously the fact that he had decided to cut me off for at least the next 6-months, even after I made a peace offering and apologized on September 15th, did motivate me to include a comment in the article about the fact that he, and hence ATI, has been very hard to work with.

Email September 15th:

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrzej Bania" <abania@ati.com>

To: "Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis" <ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2005 2:39 PM

Subject: RE: Response...

Hi Sander,

It is not a text-based misunderstanding

Also, I am only working on open, written communication between the two of

us

Specifically, I have not 'cc-ed' in your competition to say "Oh look how bad Sander is"...

...whereas you decided to 'cc' Adam to explain how bad you think we are

For me - all of these things together - mean the environment does not feel right

I am going to blow it all off - forget about it - and try starting again with you at CeBIT

Once again, you can write what you like - all I am concerned with is building a working relationship where ATI engages with press in an open and honest way, we bring our products, information and personnel to the table - and all we ask in return is a route to market

We need that route - you know it and I know it - but it needs to work 2-ways and cannot be a 'cherry picking' operation combined with threats to 'drop your share price if you do not comply' etc

Let's blow it off for now and try again next year

Kind regards,

Andrzej Bania
PR and Marketing Manager
Northern Europe & South Africa
ATI Technologies (EUROPE) GmbH
Tel: +44 7074 xxx xxx
SMS: +44 7949 xxx xxx
Email: abania@ati.com

-----Original Message-----
From: Sander Sassen - Hardware Analysis
[mailto:ssassen@hardwareanalysis.com]
Sent: 15 September 2005 13:56
To: Andrzej Bania
Subject: Re: Response...

Andrzej,

This is beginning to look a lot like a flame war doesn't it? I'm guessing neither you nor me will profit from taking each other apart. Let me state the obvious and say that I'm pretty forthright with my opinions, as is Hardware Analysis and that's what most people stop by for. I'm going to go further out on a limb here and tell you I'm sorry if I offended you when you where

making a genuine offer and I brushed it off with the landfill joke.

I think this all must've been the result of a text-based misunderstanding, which is unfortunate, as I happen to have liked the way we got on in the past. In memory of that I write you this email, to see if you too are ready to move past this and pick up where we left off. In an effort to get us back on the right track I'd like to propose you get me a R520 prior to the launch and we agree to be nice and civil to one another from that moment on.

Are you in the game?

Sander Sassen

<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com>

Conclusion: If ATI's partners are providing this information, how can we expect the final scores to be good? Furthermore since I've been left out from the launch I'm entitled to call it as I see it, and this is how I see it.

Edits

Andrzej Bania wrote : Edits

Intelligent readers also need to be aware that the first version of the story he posted seemed to accuse every site who attends the ATI Tech Day of a fundamental inability to be independent in their testing and copy.

Needless to say that I am sure several sites have 'web-wacked' that original version and will be considering taking action to defend their names.

CONCLUSION: If you are going to accuse the largest independent publications in Europe of being bent - make sure you have enough money in the bank to retain good council

I agree, I initially worded things a little stronger, as I don't always subscribe to how certain journalists go about their business. This is however a personal opinion, and not necessarily the views of our publication. Hence I edited that out, as it isn't fair to generalize everybody that does get an invitation to every ATI press event, product launch or briefing as such. Notice though that it was a broad generalization, I did not name specific publications as Andrzej Bania seems to imply.

This comment was however edited out minutes after posting and for what it's worth I hereby would like to comment that I regret having said that and make a public apology to anyone that saw that comment and felt offended by it. All men err and sometimes take it a notch to far, I did on that occasion and hereby stand corrected.

Conclusion: I apologized because I made a mistake.

Logic

Andrzej Bania wrote : Logic

The whole thing has clearly been engineered - to what purpose no one can say for certain.

...

Whether it was one of these reasons - or a completely different twist of logic - one thing is for certain - it has certainly acted as an appetiser for ATI's next generation launch... and for that I have to say 'Thanks Sander !' 😊

...

Has it been engineered? Well not in the way Andrzej Bania is implying. Have I been in touch with a few of the AIBs prior to talking to to him about the launch event? Well, yes. The condesending tone of his emails however are what motivated one of the AIBs to get me some early scores of the R520 architecture. The article wasn't meant to smythe ATI, although the introduction outlines why I feel ATI has been rather difficult to work with, that is another story though.

The benchmarks provided are not knowingly false or meant to put ATI's new architecture in a negative light, but provided AS-IS as they are run on a preproduction sample. In all honesty I'm glad that my article has attracted such massive attention, and that a lot of people, that includes me, are no eagerly awaiting the introduction of this new architecture and are curious as to how it performs. As mentioned the benchmarks we've posted were run on pre-production hardware and thus they could be far off from the actual performance of the R520 architecture.

I'm glad Andrzej Bania took the time and effort to step forward and offer ATI's perspective on the matter. With this post I now have presented mine, we'll let the readers decide what to make of this. Unfortunately it meant I had to correct quite a few of his '*inaccuracies*' which I've now set in stone by providing full transcripts of emails which do put the majority of his comments in an entirely different light. Fortunately there simply is no getting around the truth I'm afraid. I do hope we can now move beyond this, although maybe not on a personal level, as ultimately we both want the same thing; proper coverage of ATI's products on a popular and high-profile website.

I'd also like to mention that I will not be devoting more time to this. I've taken the effort to defend myself in forums the world over, sharing my views, thoughts and issues that led me to post these benchmarks and the note directed at ATI that accompanied them. I ask you when's the last time

someone has bothered to fight his cause to such lengths? My final reply regarding this is this document. If you've read my previous forum replies you'll notice that I never stoop down to the level of personal insults or quoting things out of context, etc. I sincerely believe that these things are best dealt with by being open and honest, not by attacking the person.

Regards,

Sander Sassen

<http://www.hardwareanalysis.com>

Monday, September 19th 2005.