E8500 > Q6600

1. The E8500 is faster at 3.16Ghz vs the Q6600 at 2.4GHz.

2. A dual core will generally overclock further (if you do this). An E8500 will get you, almost guaranteed, to at least 4GHz on air.

3. A dual core will use less power.

4. A dual core will make less heat.

5. A dual core will put less strain on the motherboard/Northbridge (really only important if overclocking).

6. The E8500 is 45nm versus the Q6600 being 65nm. The biggest point to this is that the E8500 is faster clock for clock (~10%), on top of already being faster by default. This means, for example, that an E8500 even at 2.4GHz would be ~10% faster than the Q6600, so add to that the faster speed it has by default and it's quite faster. Other points to being 45nm include SSE4.1 and more L2 cache (games love it). Yes, I'm aware the Q6600 has 8MB in all, but it's really 2x4MB (since it's not true quad core but rather two dual cores). In other words, they share cache per 2 cores, so you can say either the E8500 has 6MB per two cores versus the Q6600 with 4MB per 2 cores, or you can say it's 3MB per core (E8500) versus 2MB per core (Q6600).

7. The software world doesn't take advantage of quad cores CPUs really much at all. Not even 3/4 of the software out there take advantage of a dual core as it is. So, yeah, you have two extra cores, but they're kind of useless, and then there's all these pros for dual core CPUs. I know which one I'm choosing.

You've got to love marketing and the more is better mentality they get to you with to take your money. Unless you're an insane multitasker (don't kid yourself), a fast dual core CPU is all any normal user will need. The rest is waste, and you also forgo all of the pros of th E8500 versus the Q6600.

Oh, and no, future proofing doesn't count for two reasons. 1. There's no such thing. 2. By time quad cores become needed (long, long ways off), both the E8500 and Q6600 will be obsolete anyway.

As for the rest of your system, it looks okay, but I'd get a motherboard with a P35 chipset if you can. As for the PSU, 550 watts says nothing. What brand and model is it? If it's a good quality PSU, 550 watts is enough, but if it's not a good brand, it's a gamble.