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Subject: Re: Which Graphics Card?

Posted by [Rick Towler](#) on Fri, 08 Jun 2001 21:07:03 GMT

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"Pavel A. Romashkin" <pavel.romashkin@noaa.gov> wrote in message news:3B21185F.AB2768D@noaa.gov...

> Hi David,

> I just went through this graphics card choosing business for building a  
> PC for a friend and upgrading my own, although on a different budget  
> level. GeForce3 is the hottest 3D gaming accelerator, but is overpriced  
> (as all new products) and not many programs take advantage of its  
> features. GeForce3's advantages are in shadowing, lighting and massive  
> fill rates used for rendering 3D virtual worlds in games.

Your assessment of the GF3 isn't quite correct. Yes, you will pay a premium for it. And it is true that most of the new features (per pixel shading for example) aren't utilized by most current software packages. But the GF3 sports a new memory architecture and faster clock rate which helps to push more data making it faster than any consumer level graphics adapter on the market even for such mundane tasks as data visualization.

> However, for

> 2D CAD applications (and possibly IDL's OpenGL?) you might want to check  
> into expensive (\$300 and up) professional cards that outperform the GF3  
> hands down.

Yes, there are professional cards that will outperform the Geforce family. It is too early to say that professional cards in the sub \$800US range outperform the GF3. I haven't been able to find any benchmarks pitting the GF3 against professional cards like Diamond's (sonic blue) FireGL or 3d labs Oxygen GVX1 so I think the "hands down" comment is a little premature. I do believe that a price/performance comparison favors the Geforce cards but this is more of a gut feeling.

Take a look at this comparison of the FireGL vs GF2 GTS vs Quadro2 Pro:

<http://www6.tomshardware.com/graphic/00q4/001213/index.html>

And a slightly more dated review of some more professional 3d cards:

<http://www6.tomshardware.com/graphic/00q2/000515/index.html>

I think this discussion is in some serious need of real numbers. It is clear

after parusing the two articles above that there are HUGE differences in performance between applications and that this discussion can only be answered with some IDL specific benchmarks. Hopefully this thread will ignite some interest in John-David Smith's posting regarding an object graphics test for IDLSpecIII.

-Rick Towler

They are useless for games but superb for CAD.

- > I found out that a cheap (\$70) Radeon LE 32Mb DDR card is totally
  - > adequate for my needs. By adding a couple of registry entries, you turn
  - > it into a \$150 RadeonDDR :-) I have not tried IDL on it yet (the CD is
  - > in the mail supposedly), and will report as soon as I try it.
  - > Cheers,
  - > Pavel
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