Subject: Re: OT: recommendations for high preformance workstations
Posted by swisswuff on Sun, 13 May 2007 08:52:47 GMT
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For the 64-bit computing, my experience covers:

* Fujitsu Siemens workstation, Celsius v830, with two AMD Opteron
processors running Suse Linux; first I had one at home, and now we
also got one for me at work replacing an old Powermac G5 for computing
with IDL (at home: 2 x AMD Opteron 254, 8 GB RAM; at work: 2 x AMD
Opteron 280, 32 GB RAM);

* IBM Intellistation 275 with Power PC processors running AIX which we
bought about 3 years ago;

These machines were evaluated with considerable effort; at the time of
purchase, the AMD Opteron 254 offered an extremely good performance /
price relation for single core processors and it still does what I
require it to do. These machines are extremely reliable work horses
and I can not say anything bad about them.

Even though IDL is not supported for new releases under AIX any more,
we found that new releases do not contain relevant features for our
work, and so it is not really necessary for this, or the next year, to
replace that machine. However, Power PC processors are somewhat slow
with IDL, so I would not suggest them as prime choice. AMD processors
turned out to run particular IDL routines faster than available Intel
processors that we compared, maybe as floating point array operations
are particularly optimized. However, it may well be that current
options for Intel look as good as AMD Opteron options, best to conduct
hands-on tests before buying. We evaluated for AMD Opteron and I can't
say we regret it.

Apparently there had been a glitch with the manufacturing of the AMD
Opteron 254 but we had not experienced any problems; anyway, Siemens
technicians came to swap these processors before any problems would
occur.

The BIOS of the Fujitsu-Siemens workstations appears to have issues
with certain Linux distributions so not any would run; for example, we
could not get Fedora or Ubuntu to run for some reason. I am reliably
running Suse and no problems with this.

In terms of mobile work, I got an Asus A6T AMD Turion 64 X2 computer
running a dual boot setup (Windows XP; Suse Linux 10.2); even though
RAM is only extendable to 2 GB, it is a fast 64-bit computer and
running IDL is nice.

Good luck with the choice!

Wolf Schweitzer.