

CAD2 VISION DQX

COLOSSAL AND POWERFUL are probably the best adjectives to describe CAD2's new Vision DQX workstation. It's a specialist piece of kit, primarily designed for high-end design visualisation, though with a little tweaking on the graphics front the machine will be of equal interest to specialist CAE users.

The system is built around two high-end Quad Core processors, Intel's Xeon X5460, codenamed 'Harpertown', which run at an incredibly quick 3.16GHz and feature a Front Side Bus (FSB) of 1,333MHz. Intel's Quad Core processors have really taken off in recent months and now match its Dual Core CPUs GHz for GHz. (In fact Intel's top end Quad Core Xeon, the X5482, actually outpaces the Core 2 Duo with a clock speed of 3.20GHz and a Front Side Bus (FSB) of 1,600MHz).

What this latest technology means for CAD2's Vision DQX is eight of the fastest CPU cores currently available, making it an absolute dream machine for users of multithreaded applications. The Vision DQX ripped through our 3ds Max rendering tests and should offer similar benefits for CFD and FEA studies, particularly when analysing multiple design iterations concurrently.

Of course, having all this processing power at your fingertips is of little use if you don't have the memory to back it up. The system comes with 8GB DDR-2 as standard, but will be able to take a breathtaking 32GB in its 8 slots when 4GB modules become available. Windows XP x64 Edition provides the headroom for all of this memory but be sure to check compatibility with your existing software.

All of this cutting edge processing technology is backed up with one of the most powerful professional graphics cards currently on the market. ATI's FireGL V8600 is an ultra high-end card featuring 1GB of on-board GDDR4 memory, and 320 Stream processors, which are dynamically allocated to geometry or shader tasks as required. This means you can harness the full power of the card regardless of whether your model is geometry heavy or texture heavy. In practice this translates to unprecedented levels of performance under high-end graphics applications like 3ds Max.

In terms of features the card also boasts 2 x Dual Link support, which means you can drive not only hi-res monitors like Apple's Cinema Display at resolutions of 2,560 x 1,600, but go right up to 9 mega pixel displays featuring resolutions of 3,840 x 2,400. While many manufacturers stopped production of these breathtaking monitors last year, a revival is predicted in 2008. Stereo support also comes as standard in the FireGL V8600.

In summary, the Vision DQX is a beast of a machine, both in terms of size and performance. The raw computational power on tap for multithreaded applications is astounding and the ultra high-end graphics card provides plenty of power with which to manipulate enormous datasets fluidly. A mainstream CAD workstation it is certainly not but if you're in the market for a design viz or analysis powerhouse then £3,995 could still be money well spent for a machine which has the potential to revolutionize your product development workflow

Please visit the following URL for the full workstation group test: -

http://www.mcadonline.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=504&Itemid=1&limit=1&limitstart=0

Specifications



CAD2 VISION DQX

- 2 x Intel Xeon X5460 Quad Core (3.16GHz)
- ATI FireGL V8600 1GB Graphics
- 8GB (4x 2GB) DDR-2-667 ECC
- Intel 5400X Workstation Motherboard
- 150GB 10,000RPM + 500GB 7,200RPM
- 20x Dual Layer DVD +/-RW (SATA)

£3,995