

Cadalyst Pro Tips #2

TIME TO BUY A NEW WORKSTATION for CAD?

Consider these six tips
as you configure your
next machine.

TIP 1 MAKE IT A WORKSTATION

WHY? Forego the consumer-grade PC and invest in a professional workstation that is purpose-built to support the demands of compute-intensive applications (i.e., YOURS). Designed to expand and upgrade easily, workstations not only support the demands of today but can scale to meet bigger challenges in the future.

TIP 2 MAKE IT ISV-CERTIFIED

WHY? Workstations that are certified by an independent software vendor (ISV) have passed extensive testing to ensure they are equipped to support a given CAD, CAE, or other software application. Choose a workstation that is ISV-certified for your most critical programs and you can be confident it won't buckle under your workload.

TIP 3 BALANCE YOUR CORE

WHY? Whether you should select a workstation that has fast CPUs or numerous CPUs depends on your software and your work style. For example, if you run multithreaded applications such as rendering, finite-element analysis, and computational fluid dynamics, you'll benefit from multiple processing cores. If you typically run multiple programs simultaneously, you're a candidate for the fastest CPU you can afford. Your workstation vendor can help match your needs to your new machine.

TIP 4 GRAB THE RIGHT GPU

WHY? Professional graphics processing units (GPUs, or graphics cards) are designed and fine-tuned to optimize CAD applications (whereas consumer-grade GPUs are designed primarily for gaming). Keep your GPU driver up to date to ensure your workstation is always operating at its full potential.

TIP 5 OPT FOR ECC, SSD, RAID MEMORY

WHY? Error Correcting Code (ECC) memory can detect and correct single-bit errors that occur in memory, saving you headaches and downtime you can't afford. Solid-state drives (SSDs) offer two to three times the bandwidth and have read latencies far lower than those of conventional hard drives. For the highest storage performance and data security, choose RAID 5 or RAID 1+0 (or RAID 10) storage; these combine redundancy and distributed data across drives and deliver both single-drive failure tolerance and higher-access bandwidth. Know your memory ABCs and you can practically eliminate crashes and errors that hinder your productivity.

TIP 6 FIND PROFESSIONAL WORKSTATION ROI

WHY? If you keep return on investment (ROI) in mind, you'll buy the newest professional workstation you can afford now to save money later. Easy-to-upgrade workstations prolong the life of your investment as your computational demands increase. What is your ROI day to day? Improved productivity! Don't waste your time waiting for your computer to catch up with you.

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For more information on workstations,
go to Cadalyst.com/cad-workstations