SOLIDWORKS HARDWARE RECOMMENDATIONS

PROCESSORS

SolidWorks 2010 runs on Intel and AMD based systems. Intel® Pentium® 3, AMD Athlon™ and Athon XP™ CPU's are not supported. CPU must support SSE2 (Streaming SIMD Extensions 2), see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SSE2 for more details. Please note that SolidWorks is not supported on Apple Mac based machines, but some of our customers are running it on Parallels or Boot Camp successfully.

CORES

SolidWorks is multi-threaded. Many of the user interface activities such as redraw and dialog box interaction, etc., take advantage of this technology. However, the solving process used for parametric modelling is by nature very linear and cannot take full advantage of multiple or dual core processors. No benchmark tests have been done to determine the increased speed associated with running on a multi/dual core-processor machine but there should be a slight performance gain.

OPERATING SYSTEMS

SolidWorks 2010 is supported on:

- Windows 7 Business and Ultimate Editions (32-bit and 64-bit)
- Windows Vista Business and Ultimate Editions (32-bit and 64-bit)
- Windows XP Professional (32-bit and 64-bit)

*Microsoft Windows 2000 and earlier versions of Windows are no longer supported.

DOES SOLIDWORKS SUPPORT WINDOWS XP/VISTA/7 HOME EDITION?

SolidWorks does not support Home Editions of Windows. However, due to the similarities between the two operating systems there should be no problems encountered if SolidWorks is used with Windows XP/Vista/7 Home Edition. When choosing to run on Windows XP/Vista/7 Home Edition, you should realise that without official support, problems identified that are unique to Windows XP/Vista/7 Home Edition will not be handled with a high priority. The same is true for running SolidWorks on a Mac.

RAM

Solid Solutions have a large customer base and from this experience with typical customer usage, we recommend as much RAM as your budget allows. If you are using XP and are only going to be running SolidWorks for simple parts and small assemblies, 2GB RAM will suffice. However, if you are likely to be running other programs such as Outlook, Excel, 2D CAD, or are running Windows Vista or 7, we would recommend starting with 4GB of RAM.

If you choose a 64-bit machine, we would recommend 6GB. Depending on the size and complexity of your assemblies increased RAM may be the best investment for performance improvement.

Graphics Cards

Although SolidWorks is designed to work with any generic graphics card that supports Windows (desirable resolution would be 1024x768 or higher with 32K colours or more), a graphics card with hardware OpenGL acceleration will provide improved performance, especially in 3D model viewing (repaints, spins, zooms and pans). Detailed info on video card support and testing is available at:
http://www.solidworks.com/sw/support/videocardtesting.html
Video cards designed for "gaming" or multi-media applications (typically NVIDIA GeForce or ATI Radeon) do NOT offer maximum performance for SolidWorks and other 3D CAD applications. Game/multi-media cards' drivers are optimized for a low number of polygons displayed on the screen, and a high frame rate. CAD applications have the opposite requirement, polygon count is high (all the details in your design model) and the image does not change rapidly, so high frame rates are not as critical. NVIDIA Quadro FX or ATI FireGL/FirePro are examples of cards optimised for CAD.

File Storage

For maximum performance, files should be worked on while stored on the PC's local hard drive. Files opened and retrieved over a network will always be slower than accessing a local drive. The SolidWorks Data Management products Workgroup and Enterprise PDM automatically manage the movement of files from network servers to local hard drives for the CAD user to ensure maximum performance whilst also automatically managing revisions and access control.

Product Data Management Requirements

Ideally a dedicated Windows server should be used for either a SolidWorks Workgroup PDM or SolidWorks Enterprise PDM vault. Besides allowing for maximum performance for the CAD users, using a dedicated server provides a location to store company standards and templates. For hardware specifications for a PDM system, please visit:
http://www.solidworks.com/sw/support/PDMSystemRequirements.html

What is Your Current Hardware Recommendation for SolidWorks?

We recommend the following hardware configuration for SolidWorks:

- 4GB RAM for XP 32 bit, 6GB RAM for Windows Vista 64 bit or Windows 7 64 bit
- Fast processor
- 100Gb hard drive (or larger) for file storage
- NVIDIA graphics card as listed on http://www.solidworks.com/sw/support/videocardtesting.html
- 3 button (including scroll wheel) mouse

If you are regularly performing FEA analysis with the SolidWorks Simulation family of products, we suggest upgrading your RAM to at least 6GB and considering multi core processors (dual or quad core). In our experience, purchasing one speed lower than the fastest available CPU will usually provide you with the best value.

For our latest hardware offers see http://www.solidsolutions.co.uk/Solid-Solutions-Promotions.aspx for more details.

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