

WORKS ZEBRA RELIES ON **ATI** TO KEEP THE MARKETING WHEELS TURNING FOR AUTO GIANTS LEXUS AND TOYOTA

For nearly two decades, Works Zebra of Tokyo has been the go-to source for car makers looking to stand out in a hypercompetitive global market. With help from ATI Technologies, Works Zebra continues to find innovative new ways to deliver cutting-edge marketing techniques and sales tools that have a positive impact on car shoppers.

Award-winning Japanese auto giant Toyota Motor Asia Pacific recently hired Works Zebra to create interactive, wide-screen 3D presentations for use as a high-profile sales tool in its Lexus showrooms.



Lexus is the luxury car division of Toyota, the world's third-largest automaker with operations in 26 countries and more than 200,000 employees. As a global auto giant competing with elite brands like BMW and Mercedes, Lexus is constantly pursuing state-of-the-art methods to market their vehicles.

"Our goal on the Lexus project was to create something innovative and compelling in the form of an e-Catalogue - a truly stunning, interactive 3D, HD-video quality presentation of vehicles using a 50-inch flat panel display controlled by a tablet PC," says Jaja Ishibashi, Director of Business Development for Works Zebra. "We needed nothing less than photo-realistic quality at real-time rendering speeds - something that would impress viewers and drive sales."

The e-Catalogue delivers razor-sharp video of interior and exterior vehicle features while allowing viewers to alter body styles, trim options and colors on-screen. Car shoppers can also see their favorite Lexus model traversing roads in a variety of settings.

To deliver the exceptional production values required for the Lexus e-Catalogue, Works Zebra relied on a powerful one-two punch that combined its proprietary "Zeany" video presentation engine with ATI's FireGL™ V7100 workstation graphics accelerators.

"The large flat panel display is powered by ATI's FireGL V7100, which comes with a promise to deliver unprecedented speed and image quality - and I can tell you we were not disappointed," says Ishibashi. "We are delivering true cinematic quality rendering of complex content along with compelling animation and visual effects."

The Lexus e-Catalogue is currently being used by Lexus dealers in Taiwan, Korea and Singapore after being featured at the Seoul 2005 Motor Show.

"Development, modeling, authoring and the e-Catalogue showroom display kiosk itself all rely on ATI technology. ATI graphic boards allow us to create the foundation of the e-Catalogue," says Ishibashi. "Without ATI's superior frame rate and pixel shading speed, the project itself would not have been possible. ATI FireGL technology has been amazing, giving us the sophisticated video processing, filtering and acceleration features we needed for this type of interactive multimedia application."

The e-Catalogue is based on CAD data provided directly from Toyota Motor Corporation in Aichi, Japan, says Ishibashi, briefly explaining the workflow for the project from his Tokyo office:

"We obtain the CAD data and take it to 3DMAX via Rhino. From there we pass it through our real-time surfacing technology called zSurfacing to achieve per-pixel shading, then we construct our lighting and reflections through proprietary zReflections. After that, our authoring environment is done on Macromedia Director utilizing our Zeany engine via ActiveX. Playback of the e-Catalogue is done on a Windows platform using ATI video cards only."

While Works Zebra considered Nvidia products for the project, the decision to go with ATI products was clear-cut.

"Our research of the technologies showed that ATI was the only graphics board that accelerated certain texture blending at 16-bits," says Ishibashi. "And ATI has long been the leader in shader technology. With the release of DirectX 9.0 and Render Monkey, ATI was the first to offer an easy-to-develop platform for our engineers, while understanding the vast versatility of pixel and vertex shaders. For 3D-rendering capabilities, ATI's versatile shaders make visualization possibilities endless."

The need for speed on multimedia projects like the Lexus e-Catalogue is constant and on that point Ishibashi is direct in his assessment of ATI's contribution: "ATI chips are simply the fastest on earth."

Works Zebra's e-Catalogue was unveiled at the Seoul Motor Show in May, 2005, and faced a demanding debut as members of the public eagerly put the big-screen display through its paces. But the presentation was flawless and pleased the many car fanatics on hand.

"The conditions inside the Seoul Motor Show were hard on the Works Zebra kiosk, with heat dissipation posing potential problems, but our ATI hardware never gave up and delivered a solid show for over seven days straight," says Ishibashi.

Beyond the value, performance and stability that ATI's hardware consistently delivers, Ishibashi has high praise for the product support provided on the Lexus project: "ATI developer relations has assisted us in every way to provide the optimum performance of the video cards. ATI made sure we got what we were after with the e-Catalogue."

Looking ahead, Ishibashi notes that while CAD has played a proven role in auto design in the global market, CAD is quickly proving instrumental to firms like Works Zebra in developing innovative marketing tools like the Lexus e-Catalogue.

"The automotive industry is advancing at an alarming rate towards more usage of CAD-based marketing materials like our e-Catalogue. In the past, data utilization of CAD was focused on vehicle design and development, and performance and assembly simulations. That continues but the rate of growth of marketing tools produced using CAD is incredible," says Ishibashi.

"Fortunately, we are at the pinnacle of what is evolving, providing cutting-edge, real-time 3D presentations based on our Zeany technology and ATI products. The work we do and the results we demand require the fastest graphic cards on the market. We know we can always rely on ATI for the accuracy and speed that is crucial in delivering the ultimate results expected by big customers like Lexus."

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