

Futuremark Overhauls "The Gamers' Benchmark" With 3DMark®06

Benchmark includes improved Shader Model 2 tests, new CPU tests and HDR Shader Model 3 tests for system-wide gaming performance measurement.

Saratoga, California USA – January 18, 2006 – Continuing forward in the development of advanced game performance benchmarks, Futuremark announced today the release and immediate availability of 3DMark06. A more comprehensive and unrestricted benchmark than previous versions, 3DMark06 includes an array of 3D graphics, CPU and 3D feature tests for overall performance measurement of current and future PC gaming systems. With this broader design approach, 3DMark06 will be the benchmark of choice for all PCs with top-of-the-line graphics hardware and CPUs. Futuremark predicts that 3DMark06 will emerge as the most complete 3D graphics benchmark for Windows XP, paving the way for new benchmarks targeted at future OS environments such as Windows Vista.

New Technical Heights

Building on 3DMark05 as a foundation, Futuremark improved the core 3D engine, adding more complex ShaderModel 2.0 tests, stunning High Dynamic Range (HDR) ShaderModel 3.0 tests, and overall enhanced the product with substantially higher polygonal counts expected to be found in games two years into the future. Even with the addition of HDR/ShaderModel 3.0 tests, 3DMark06 still enables ShaderModel 2.0 compliant graphics card owners to run most of the benchmark and get a fully comparable 3DMark score. With these demanding new DirectX 9 implementations, 3DMark06's four graphics tests measure performance of the most advanced hardware while showing visually the compelling advantages of these new shader types.

3DMark06 is the first product from Futuremark using the AGEIA(tm) PhysX software physics library in two very complex, game-like threaded CPU tests conceived to measure properly performances of single processor, multi-core and multiple processor systems in next generation of games. In addition to using real-time physics, both CPU tests also employ multi-threaded artificial intelligence algorithms. By combining the results of the two CPU tests and four graphics tests, 3DMark06 enables users to get a 3DMark score which reflects the overall gaming performance of their PC. Futuremark and their industry partners anticipate that CPU performance promises to be increasingly important in next generation PC games as new titles increase their use of artificial intelligence and complex physics and their reliance on multithreaded processing.

"The PC industry and PC gamers alike want true apples-to-apples comparisons, and with 3DMark06, they get it," said Tero Sarkkinen, Futuremark's executive vice president of sales and marketing. "3DMark06 is by far the most technologically advanced gamers' benchmark we've ever delivered. With new CPU tests, four graphics tests and expanded feature tests 3DMark06 will provide valuable overall performance scores. And by updating three existing graphics tests we are able to produce taxing, yet beautiful content, graphically revealing what these mathematically complex shaders can provide while measuring system wide hardware performance."

New Scores and More

The new scoring system in 3DMark06 acknowledges the use of CPU related tasks in the latest and future games, and accordingly the CPU results affect the final 3DMark score. To further enable media professionals, end-users, IHV's and OEM's to compare pure graphics and CPU performance, 3DMark06 also provides three new sub scores – SM2.0 Score, HDR/SM3.0 Score and CPU Score, all of which are fully valid and comparable scores.

Industry cooperation during development

Futuremark is known industry-wide for producing well designed, unbiased and impartial benchmarks based on next generation game workloads and 3DMark06 adheres to those guiding principles. Developed in conjunction with BDP members AMD, ATI, Dell, Imagination Technologies, Intel, Microsoft, NVIDIA, S3, SIS, Velocity Micro and XGI, this latest offering from Futuremark is a collaborative effort that reflects the projected workloads of game content two years from today.

"For gamers and power users it's all about system and graphics performance," said Kevin Kettler, chief technology officer and vice president, Dell Product Group. "Among the many industry-standard tools Dell uses to evaluate technologies in its XPS gaming PCs, 3DMark06 stands out as a critical benchmark for analyzing how next-generation processors and 3D graphics engines can benefit customers."

"We applaud Futuremark's continued support of Microsoft's DirectX 9.0 set of APIs, which provide our partners and the industry with a robust and time-tested foundation for their benchmarking tool," said Dean Lester, General Manager of Graphics and Gaming Technologies, Microsoft Corporation. "As DirectX 9.0 was designed to make game development on the Windows platform more advanced and efficient, 3DMark06 provides additional benefits for mainstream applications by providing users with Futuremark's latest set of diagnostic tools."

Key Features

3DMark06 provides a host of standard features. All editions (basic, advanced and professional) include:

- DirectX 9 3D game performance benchmarking,

- Separate tests for graphics cards and CPUs,
- Workloads that simulate next-generation gaming requirements,
- Advanced 3D gaming engine that supports HDR rendering with SM2.0 and SM3.0 Shaders,
- Two HDR/SM3.0 game tests and two SM2.0 game tests,
- Threaded CPU performance testing based on AI and physics workloads applied to a variety of processor environments.

The advanced edition of 3DMark06 has these additional features:

- Full control over benchmark display configuration,
- 3D graphics feature tests that include Fill Rate, Pixel Shader, Vertex Shader, SM3.0 tests, and Batch Size tests,
- Professional tools, including image quality analysis and graph creation of runtime statistics,
- Importing of results from MS Excel for easier result management and report creation, and
- Access to the Pro-Online ResultBrowser,
- Playable mini-game based on CPU test, and
- Full demo.

The professional edition has these exclusive features:

- Command line functionality for test automation,
- Batch-run functionality for automated testing,
- Licensed commercial use of 3DMark06, and
- Demo Loop option.

Price and Availability

Futuremark's Basic, Advanced and Professional editions of 3DMark06 are available now. The Basic Edition is free and can be downloaded from Futuremark's Web site at <http://www.futuremark.com/products/3dmark06>. An Advanced Edition is available online for \$19.95 per license, or \$29.95 plus shipping and handling for software on CD. The Professional Edition costs \$490 per license when downloaded electronically, or \$500 plus shipping and handling for the software on CD.

About Futuremark® Corporation

Futuremark ® Corporation is the leading provider of performance analysis software and services for PCs and smartphones. Futuremark® is known around the world for its benchmark products, including the 3DMark® and PCMark® Series and SPMark™ (with more than 30 million copies distributed worldwide) and value-added services powered by a database of over 12 million real life benchmarking results. Futuremark® maintains offices in Saratoga, California and Helsinki, Finland. For more information, please visit <http://www.futuremark.com>.

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