

NVIDIA GPUs Power All 2010 Best Visual Effects Academy Award Nominees

Oscar-Nominated Visual Effects Studios for "Avatar," "District 9" and "Star Trek" Tap NVIDIA Quadro GPUs to Achieve Creative Acclaim

SANTA CLARA, CA -- Each of the films nominated for an Academy Award for Visual Effects in this year's competition depended on [NVIDIA® Quadro® professional graphics](#) to power their stunning special effects.

The nominated films -- "[Avatar](#)," "[District 9](#)" and "[Star Trek](#)" -- all delivered unprecedented levels of sophistication and realism to the screen in the form of computer-generated fantasy and science-fiction worlds. The winner will be announced at the 82nd Academy Awards ceremony on March 7th at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, Calif.

[Weta Digital Ltd.](#), of Wellington, New Zealand, served as the primary visual effects vendor on "Avatar" and is a longtime NVIDIA customer. It deploys both Quadro professional graphics solutions and NVIDIA [Tesla™](#) high performance computing solutions in its visual effects (VFX) production pipeline. The computational complexity of its "Avatar" shots was significantly higher than any project Weta had ever faced.

"We needed to think about rendering in a completely different way, given the complexity of 'Avatar,'" said Sebastian Sylwan, Weta's head of research and development. "[By working together with NVIDIA](#), we found a way to render incredibly sophisticated scenes in far less time, giving artists the critical ability to freely experiment with different lighting and iterate faster."

[Industrial Light & Magic \(ILM\)](#), based in San Francisco, produced 850 of the approximately 1,000 shots in the most recent "Star Trek" film and had created visual effects for six of the previous 10 editions in the series. The work required extensive demolition of planets, the creation of the Starship Enterprise and other spacecraft and creatures, as well as extensive digital matte paintings.

"This project marked our most ambitious effort on a 'Star Trek' film to date. We tapped the iconic references from the series and previous films and really took them to the next level driven by J.J. Abrams' creative vision," said Michael DiComo, ILM Digital Production Supervisor.

"Our teams at ILM have established a solid development partnership with NVIDIA to help move the boundaries of visual effects technology to the next level. In the facility, there is an NVIDIA Quadro FX 5800 card sitting on each of our top end workstations to provide the kind of real time visualizations of the high-fidelity and very complex level of work that a film like 'Star Trek' demands."

[Image Engine Design Inc.](#) of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, led the visual effects work on "District 9," which seamlessly integrates an alien race into gritty documentary-style footage of Johannesburg, South Africa. The firm deployed nearly 100 NVIDIA Quadro professional graphics cards in Linux workstations in producing every alien shot in the film.

"The decision to standardize on NVIDIA Quadro graphics for 'District 9' and other film projects was very simple -- they just work really well," said B. Terry Bates, head of systems, Image Engine.

[The Embassy Visual Effects Inc.](#), also based in Vancouver, completed the climactic Exo-suit sequence in the film and also used NVIDIA processors.

"We were faced with animating a very complex, high-poly count character featured in over 100 shots," said Simon Van de Lagemaat, The Embassy's CG supervisor. "NVIDIA graphics cards were essential in giving our artists the speed and feedback they needed to produce amazing animation on an extremely tight deadline."

Dan Vivoli, senior vice president, NVIDIA, said the company was proud to play a role in these achievements.

"The intricate and immersive computer generated worlds created by this year's visual effects nominees have amazed theater goers and shattered box-office records. While we don't know who will take home the Oscar, we do know that NVIDIA is honored to partner with all of them. The Embassy VFX, ILM, Image Design, and Weta Digital challenge us to create technologies that, in turn, enable them to evolve their craft in ways we could never imagine."

About NVIDIA

NVIDIA (NASDAQ: NVDA) awakened the world to the power of computer graphics when it invented the graphics processing unit (GPU) in 1999. Since then, it has consistently set new standards in visual computing with breathtaking, interactive graphics available on devices ranging from portable media players to notebooks to workstations. NVIDIA's expertise in programmable GPUs has led to breakthroughs in parallel processing which make supercomputing inexpensive and widely accessible. Fortune magazine has ranked NVIDIA #1 in innovation in the semiconductor industry for two years in a row. For more information, see www.nvidia.com.

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About NVIDIA

Since 1993, [NVIDIA](#) (NASDAQ : NVDA) has pioneered the art and science of [visual computing](#). The company's technologies are transforming a world of displays into a world of interactive discovery — for everyone from gamers to scientists, and consumers to enterprise customers. More information at <http://nvidianews.nvidia.com/> and <http://blogs.nvidia.com/>.

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