



NVIDIA GRID™ APPLICATION SIZING GUIDE FOR: AUTODESK MAYA 2017

NVIDIA Performance Engineering
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USERS PER SERVER (UPS)

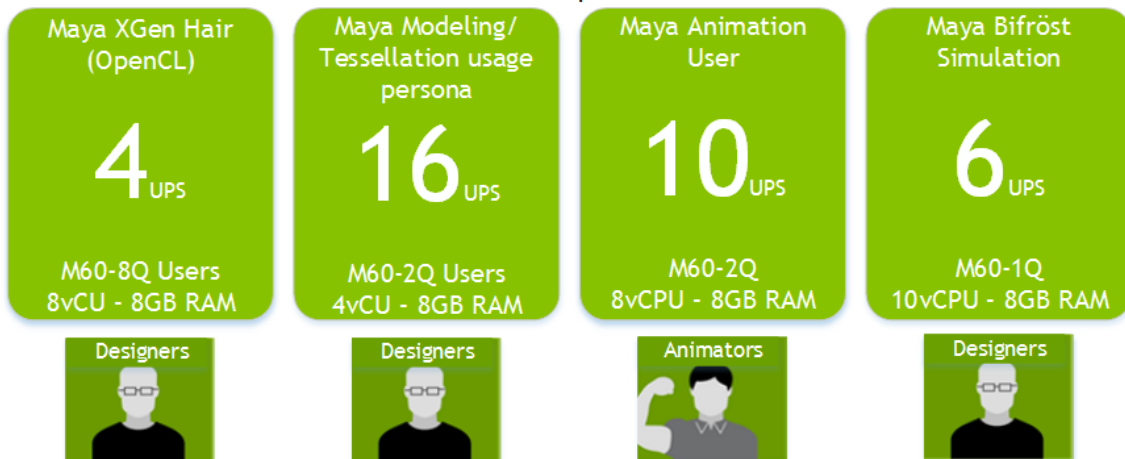
The purpose of this guide is to give a detailed analysis of how many users organizations can expect to get per servers based on performance testing with the Autodesk Maya applications. The NVIDIA Performance Lab worked in cooperation with the Autodesk Maya team to determine the maximum recommended number of users for the reference server configuration. Autodesk provided specific test scripts for the Maya 2017 software that are not generally available to end users, which the NVIDIA GRID performance team used to test specific combinations of virtual machines for performance and scale. These test scripts have been submitted to the SPEC review committee for inclusion in a Maya 2017 SPEC benchmark. Based on extensive testing, NVIDIA GRID provides the following performance and scalability recommendation.



NOTE: THESE NUMBERS ARE INTENDED TO BE USED A GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF USERS PER HOST. CHANGES IN SERVER CONFIGURATION AND DIFFERENCES IN USAGE OF THE SOFTWARE WILL CAUSE PERFORMANCE TO VARY.

AutoDesk Maya 2017

UPS - Users per Server



DETERMINING USERS PER SERVER

Since Maya 2017 is used as both modeling and animation software, both user functions are important to consider when determining sizing of a virtual environment. Our testing reveals that these functions have differences between the amount of GPU used for each function that can be quite significant. Also, the tests have shown that the availability of vCPU resources (i.e. cores) is critical to performance for animation workloads.

These tests were written to replicate typical artist workflows which use effects and take advantage of the GPU.

The following tests were provided by Autodesk:

Table 1 Maya Test categories

Test area	Test
Bifröst simulation	Bridge
Animation	Jungle
Modeling/Tessellation	Character
XGen Hair	Tiger

For simplicity purposes, test will be often referenced by their shorter name, i.e. Character, Jungle, Bridge and Tiger, throughout this scalability report.

SCALABILITY TEST RESULT SUMMARY

The test results show that XGen modeling workloads, or any workload that requires OpenCL, the maximum possible number of users per server is four. Testing shows that **with 4 concurrent M60-8Q profiles running simultaneously**, all users see less than a 10% degradation in performance, well below discomfort level. **We conclude that 4 concurrent users per server is the maximum.** The Character modeling/tessellation test can **support 16 VMs/Users per server**, which is the maximum number of VM's for the M60-2Q profile. Both the Tiger and Character workflow tests achieve the maximum number of VMs per GPU board, but the tests themselves are not GPU intensive. The frame buffer allocated to the VM was not entirely used by the application during test execution.

The Jungle animation and Bifröst simulation Bridge tests exceeded acceptable usability levels when reaching 10 VMs, and the Bridge test was found to perform better when more vCPU was added to the VM. Both tests put a larger demand on the CPU than GPU. In the case of the Bridge test, reconfiguring vCPU to 10 increased the performance

of the VM. However, as such, the host CPU would become too overallocated if the host had **more than 10 VM's running**. On this class of server, the maximums VM's which are concurrently executing for Bifröst simulation or the Character animation work modelled within the test **reside between 6 and 8 users per server**.

ABOUT THE APPLICATION: MAYA 2017

Maya provides a comprehensive suite of tools for your 3D content creation work ranging from modeling, animation, and dynamics through to painting and rendering to name but a few. With Maya, you can create and edit 3D models in a variety of modeling formats and animate your models using Maya's suite of animation tools. Maya also provides a range of tools to allow you to render your animated 3D scenes to achieve photo realistic imagery and animated visual effects.

GPU Override is feature which is enabled by default in Maya 2017, this feature allows the GPU to perform operations which would otherwise be performed on the CPU. GPU Override requires Viewport 2.0 to be active, and the Evaluation Manager must be set to Serial or Parallel modes (Parallel is recommended and set by default). When the Maya preference "GPU Override" is *enabled* in Maya 2017, then standard deforming animation (i.e. Character animation) will offloaded to the GPU rather than CPU. If a user disables "GPU Override", then these deforming animations would be processed on the CPU.

It is important to note, not all effects will be performed by the GPU even when GPU override is enabled. The following is a list of effects which make more use of the GPU:

- Scenes which use Viewport 2.0 effects such as lighting, shadows, SSAO, motion blur, depth peeling transparency.
- Playback and tumbling with very dense geometry.
- Generally, operations that use OpenCL (i.e. XGen).
- OpenSubdiv smoothing.

The following is list of effect which are CPU limited and do not take advantage of the GPU:

- Playback or tumbling in scenes with very large numbers of objects.
- Rigging in general (i.e. editing Character rigs).
- Modeling on dense meshes.
- Particle simulation and caching.

ABOUT NVIDIA GRID

NVIDIA redefined visual computing by giving designers, engineers, scientists, and graphics artists the power to take on the biggest visualization challenges with immersive, interactive, photorealistic environments. NVIDIA Tesla GPU Accelerators bring this same power to the virtual desktop. Leveraging NVIDIA Tesla™ GPUs, NVIDIA GRID™ delivers virtual workstations from the data center or cloud. Architects, engineers, and designers are now liberated from their desk and can access their applications and data anywhere. The NVIDIA Tesla M60 GPU accelerator works with NVIDIA GRID software to provide the industry's highest user performance for virtualized workstations, desktops, and applications. This solution allows enterprises to virtualize any application—including professional graphics applications—and deliver them out to any device, anywhere.

Table 2 Tesla M60 Features and Specs

Virtualization Use Case	Performance-Optimized Graphics Virtualization
GPU Product	NVIDIA Tesla M60 - designed for the datacenter
GPU Architecture	NVIDIA Maxwell™
GPUs per Board	2
Max User per Board	32(16 per GPU)
NVIDIA CUDA Cores	4096 NVIDIA CUDA Cores (2048 per GPU)
GPU Memory	16 GB of GDDR5 Memory (8 per GPU)
H.264 1080p30 Streams	36
Max Power Consumption	300 W
Thermal Solution	Active/Passive
Form Factor	PCIe 3.0 Dual Slot

TESTING AND METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION

This section describes the tests performed and the method of testing used to determine sizing and server loads.

Test Environment

The following table describes the server host:

Table 1 Reference host specifications

Reference Host	
Model	Supermicro SYS-2028GR-TRT
CPU	Intel Xeon CPU e5-2698 v3 @2.30Ghz
Logical Processors	64
Memory	256 GB
Storage	26 TB
GPU's	2X Tesla M60
Hypervisor	VMware ESXi, 6.0.0, 3380124
VDI Management Software	VMware Horizon 7.01
NVIDIA GRID Software	Virtual Workstation
NVIDIA GRID Software	369.17(host) 367.43(guest)
Server BIOS Settings	
Turbo Boost Technology	Enabled
Power Settings	Maximum Performance
Hyperthreading	Enabled

The VM operating system was Windows 7 SP1 with VMware Tools was installed. All testing was run on a single, full HD (1920x1080) monitor.

Test Descriptions

Modelling/Tessellation: Character

The following is a screenshot of the Character test during test execution:

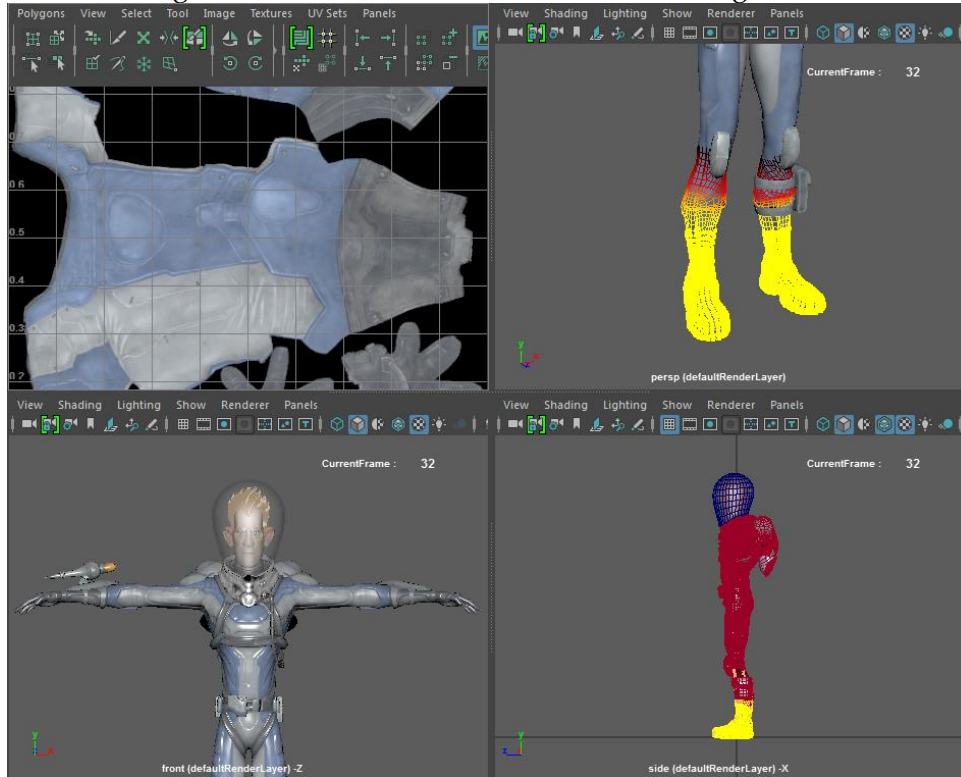


Figure 1 Character test screen shot

Display settings, such as number of vertices, edges, faces, tris and UV's, determine the complexity of the model. The following screenshot describes the display settings used for the test:

Verts:	327275	0	3935
Edges:	653423	0	0
Faces:	326404	0	0
Tris:	652399	0	0
UVs:	332545	0	0

Figure 2 Character test display settings

Animation: Jungle

The Jungle test provides basic animation information for a specific object in a scene. Below are two screenshots taken during Jungle test execution:

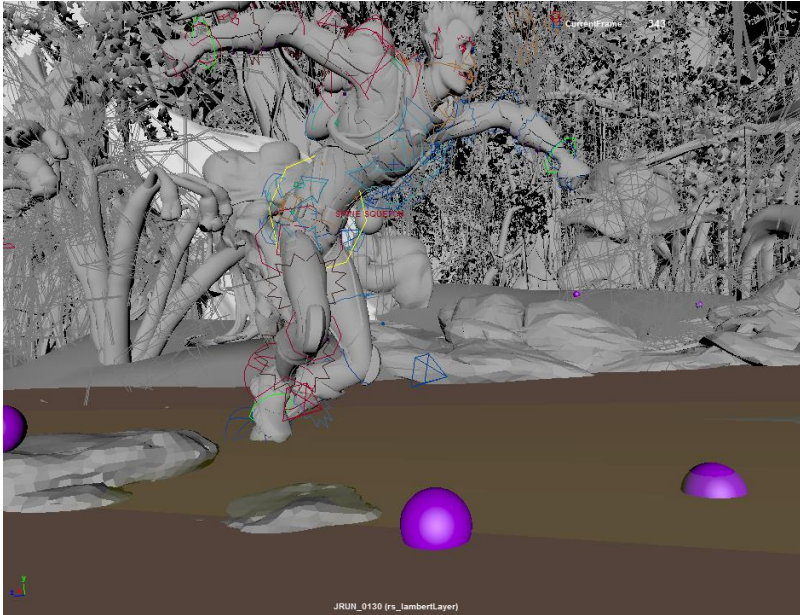


Figure 3 Jungle test screenshot

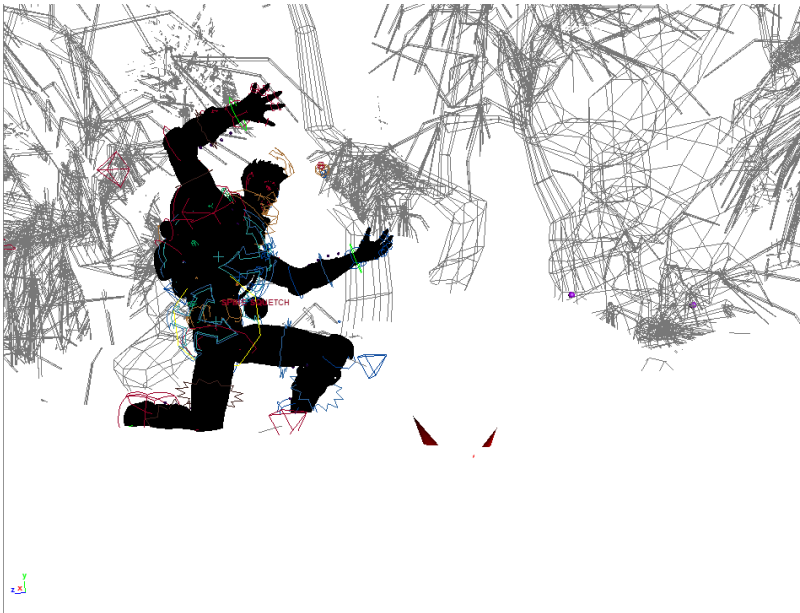


Figure 4 Jungle test screenshot

Color shading is turned on and off during the tests. The following screenshot describes the complexity of the scene:



Figure 5 Jungle test display settings

Bifröst Simulation: Bridge

Autodesk describes Bifröst as a procedural framework that can create simulated liquid and aerodynamic effects using a FLIP (fluid implicit particle) solver. You can generate liquid from emitters and have it fall under gravity, as well as interact with colliders to direct the flow and create splashes, and use fields to create jets and other effects.

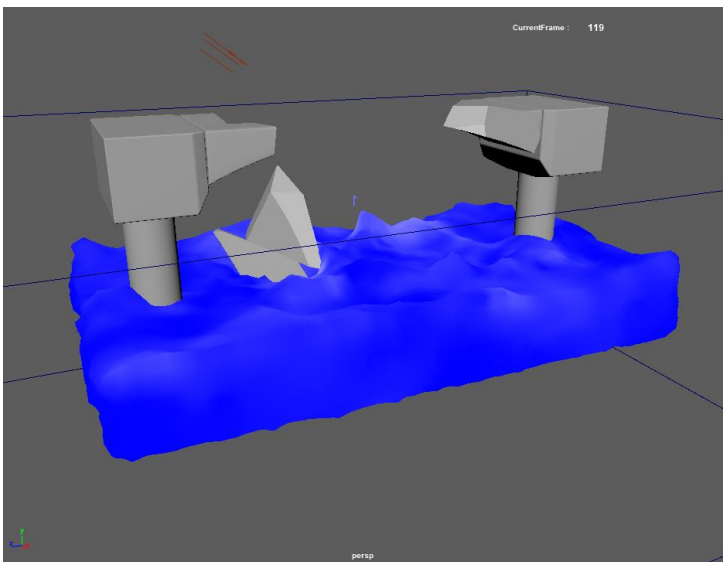


Figure 6 Bridge test screenshot

The following screenshot describes the model:

Verts:	3562	0	0
Edges:	6718	0	0
Faces:	3188	0	0
Tris:	7060	0	0
UVs:	6581	0	0

Figure 7 Bridge test display settings

XGen Hair: Tiger

XGen is described by Autodesk as users can procedurally create and style hair, fur and feathers for characters. With XGen users can create realistic, self-shadowing fur and short hair on multi-surface NURBS, polygonal and subdivision surface models. The Tiger tests is the most GPU intensive test and **requires** [OpenCL](#). The following is a screenshot of the Tiger test during test execution:

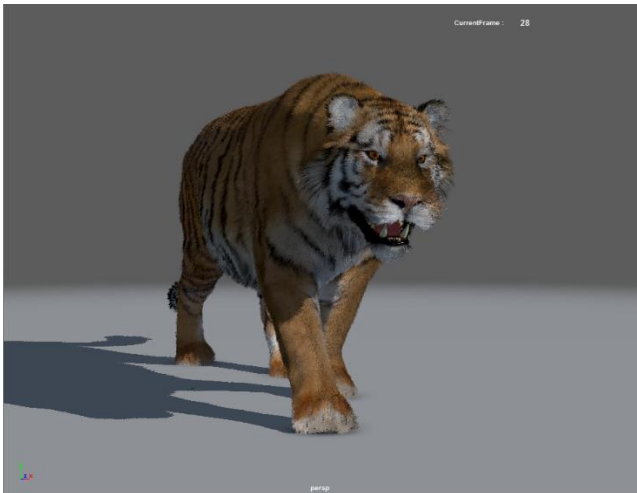


Figure 8 Tiger test screenshot

The following screenshot shows the heads up display settings of the scene:

Verts:	15242	0	0
Edges:	30922	0	0
Faces:	15770	0	0
Tris:	29898	0	0
UVs:	16356	0	0

Figure 9 Tiger test display settings

Importance of vCPU vs. vGPU

Configuring the virtualized environment is essential for providing a consistently performant user experience. Improper configuration can lead to errors within the

application, sluggish performance or worse yet, application crashes. Autodesk has provided some error detection within the application to assist users in understanding issues which that may use to address issues which can occur due to insufficient GPU resources.

For Maya to take advantage of the GPU and multi-threading, the test scripts automatically enabled Parallel Evaluation and GPU Override.

Evaluation:	Parallel
EM State:	Ready
GPU Override:	Enabled (0k)

Figure 10 Maya test script parameters

The following is a screenshot of an error message which occurs if the application does not have the proper amount of graphics memory (frame buffer) available as a resource:

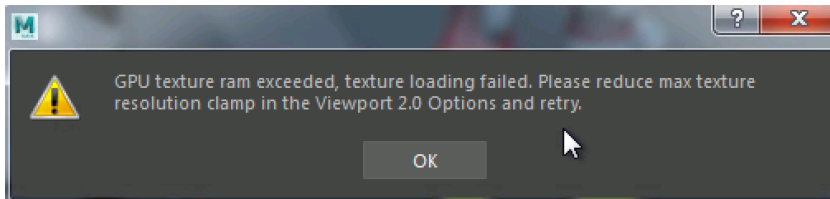


Figure 11 Error message due to low memory config

Additionally, certain workflows such as those captured in the XGen Hair (Tiger) test requires OpenCL. When virtualizing the GPU, and using the GRID M60 card, the only vGPU profile which enables OpenCL is the M60-8Q Profile. If the M60-8Q profile is not assigned for this workload, Maya will crash upon opening. The following application event 1000 error was captured in the Windows Event log.

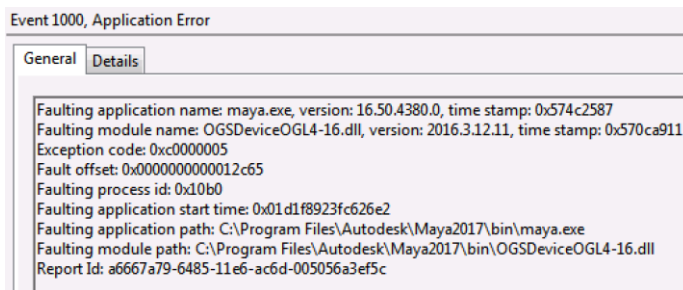


Figure 12 Event 1000 Application Error

To avoid this application crash, users should consult the Maya output window which is displayed in front of the application. This output window will indicate this issues exist with graphic card drivers and/or Open CL requirements.

Other configuration items, such as vCPU, memory and network are equally essential to provide a great Maya user experience. These configuration items will be highlighted in the upcoming test approach sections.

Maya 3D Viewport Settings

Maya has several 3D viewport settings that the application can run. Each of these viewport settings may perform differently, therefore all tests ran using all 3 viewport settings. These settings were applied using environment variables and are as follows:

- DirectX 11
- OpenGL
- CoreProfile

The default viewport setting is CoreProfile.

Test Metrics

VM Metrics

- Maya Application Logs
 - o Total test runtime
- Windows Performance Counters
 - o CPU
 - o Memory
 - o Disk
 - o Network
 - o NVIDIA GPU

The Windows NVIDIA GPU performance counters were added at NVIDIA GRID 367.17, 367.14 version release. These counters measured frame buffer (FB) used and GPU % Utilization within the VM.

Host Metrics

The following host metrics were captured and analyzed:

- Esxtop (Utilization by Core)
- NVIDIA-smi (GPU Usage)

Test Limitations

Automated scalability testing can be considered more aggressive by nature than a typical user workflow. In most cases, it is not typical that 10 users will be executing rendering requests simultaneously or even to the degree of which were replicated in multiple test iterations. As such, the test results from our automated scalability testing can be considered worst case scenario and in most cases, a host should be able to support more than the concluded amount of VMs. The degree to which higher

scalability would be achieved is dependent on the typical day to day activities of a user, such as the number of meetings and the length of lunch or breaks, multi-tasking, etc.

This type of peak performance testing leads to conservative estimates of scalability, by design. It is therefore likely that results in typical or even aggressively loaded datacenters will have higher scalability. These results indicate likely minimums for rarefied conditions, to serve as “safe” guidelines.

Methodology Description

The scalability testing was conducted in two phases.

- ▶ Single benchmark phase
- ▶ Scalability phase

Single Benchmark Phase


In this phase, virtual machines were created with a standard configuration. The test suite of four tests were run on the individual VMs to determine the amount of critical resources each test workflow typically used.

To ensure that each workflow had adequate resources (vCPU, GPU and RAM) to perform the workflows optimally, the single benchmark VMs were intentionally overprovisioned with CPU and Memory; 16 vCPU, 16GB of RAM. Each benchmark test also used the M60-8Q vGPU profile which provided access to the entire GPU. The utilization rates of these resources as well as test run times were then analyzed to determine the optimal VM configuration for each workflow. In some test cases, tests were re-executed at scale after re-configuring VMs.

vGPU Calculation

The following table indicates the GPU memory (frame buffer) utilization rates of the M60-8Q profile. This value was calculated by examining how the 8GB frame buffer was being utilized within the VM during test execution. These values, assisted in identifying the appropriate vGPU profile needed to support each workflow as follows:

Table 2 Typical test resource utilization

Workflow	Test Name	% GPU Memory	GPU Memory	vGPU Profile	Comments
Bifröst Simulation	Bridge	11%	0.88 GB	M60-1Q	
Modeling Texturing	Character	24%	1.92 GB	M60-2Q	
XGen Hair	Tiger	34%	2.72 GB	M60-4Q M60-8Q	OpenCL requirement; M60-8Q See below
Character Animation	Jungle	19%	1.52 GB	M60-2Q	
 Note: NVIDIA GRID with Tesla M60 supports both high-end graphics and CUDA/OpenCL accelerated computing					

Since the XGen functionality within the Maya application requires OpenCL, the Tiger test required the M60-8Q profile. Currently OpenCL capabilities are only enabled using the M60-8Q profile.

vCPU Calculation

It is important to note that a VM with more vCPU does not necessarily outperform a VM with less vCPU when using multi-threaded applications. In most of the tests, the 8-vCPU configuration was adequate, however since Maya is multi-threaded, test runtimes for the Bridge and Character tests decreased when the vCPU was altered; the Character VM increased performance when the vCPU count was lowered to 4. Theory of operation for this phenomenon holds that the Maya application generates threads for every vCPU it finds. This can lead to thread contention, which decreases performance. The following tables describes the required vCPU for each test:

Table 3 vCPU configurations for testing

Workflow	Test Name	vCPU Reconfiguration
Bifröst Simulation	Bridge	10
Modeling/Tessellation	Character	4
XGen Hair	Tiger	8
Character Animation	Jungle	8


vCPU configuration becomes increasingly important during the next phase of testing; scalability testing. Allocating too much vCPU to a VM can cause a performance overhead on the host. Allocating too little vCPU can cause sluggish performance no matter how much vGPU the VM has. Aggressive vCPU allocation management is warranted.

Single Benchmark Results

The following tables summarize how the vCPU and vGPU were reconfigured after analyzing the single benchmarks to support each type of workflow:

Table 4 vGPU and vCPU configurations for each test

Workflow	Test Name	vCPU	vGPU
Bifröst Simulation	Bridge*	10	M60-1Q
Modeling/Tessellation	Character	4	M60-2Q
XGen Hair	Tiger	8	M60-8Q
Character Animation	Jungle	8	M60-2Q

	Note: * Bifröst Simulation workflow within the Bridge test reported 11% decrease in test runtime when increasing vCPU from 8 to 10.
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Scalability Testing Phase

The second phase of testing consisted of scalability test runs for each individual artist workflow. A series of scalability test runs were executed and were incremented; 4, 8, 10, 12, 16 VMs. Between each test run, results and metrics were analyzed to understand how the application was performing as well as how the shared host resources were being utilized. In some test cases, VMs were reconfigured to improve the VM test run time. All configuration used are highlighted in the forthcoming test results sections.

Over 500 tests were run during scalability tests. Test were initially executed using the optimal VM configuration determined in the single benchmark phase.

The vGPU profile assigned to each workflow dictates the amount of density which is achievable in regards to the scalability of concurrently running VMs on the host. For example, XGen Hair (Tiger) workflow, required the M60-8Q profile due to its OpenCL requirement, therefore the maximum number of VMs is 2 per board. Our test server has two NVIDIA Tesla M60 cards, each card has 2 GPU's, totally 4 GPU's. Therefore, the maximum amount of currently running VMs using the M60-8Q profile is 4. The following tables describes the maximum number of possible currently running VMs for each of the test workflows and their vGPU profile requirement:

Table 5 Maximum possible VMs for test

Workflow	Test Name	vGPU	Max # of VMs
XGen Hair	Tiger	M60-8Q	4
Modeling/Tessellation	Character	M60-2Q	16
Character Animation	Jungle	M60-2Q	16
Bifröst simulation	Bridge	M60-1Q	32

During scalability testing, three of the four workflows (Character, Jungle, Bridge) scaled up to 16 concurrent VMs and the test results were analyzed. The Tiger tests scaled up to 4 VMs.

Scalability Test Metrics

The Maya application logs were the first level of analysis. Total test runtimes were post-processed for additional calculations:

- ▶ Standard Deviation across all VMs
 - This value can be used as indicator to instability. If a higher value is reported, test run times are slower or faster from one VM to another.
- ▶ Average runtime for each scalability test
 - This value is the reported value for the entire scalability test run. For example, a 4VM scalability test, reports the average test runtime of all 4 VM test runtimes.
- ▶ Percentage change in test runtime was also calculated.
 - This value was considered the final threshold value for determining the amount of VMs which the host could adequately support without severely degraded user experience.
 - Test thresholds less than 30% were considered to deliver adequate user experience. This threshold value is slightly higher than a typical physical or single user threshold, taking in consideration of the aggressive nature of the stress test. This level therefore became the threshold for our testing.

Once these outputted VM metrics were analyzed, the host metrics were analyzed to determine the test bottleneck to performance.

Scalability Test Results

The following tables describes the test results from our testing and the amount concurrent VMs adequately supported on the host:

Table 6 Concurrent users per host

Test Name	Test Area	# of VM's	vCPU	vGPU	% Change Threshold	
Tiger	XGen-Hair	4	8	M60-8Q	-7.87%	Cards at full capacity (32GB)
Character	Modeling/ Tessellation	16	4	M60-2Q	-22.58%	
Jungle	Character Animation	10	8	M60-2Q	-20.79%	
Bridge	Bifröst Simulation	6	10	M60-1Q	-28.21%	

! **NOTE:** Overall, all the four artist workflows provided by Autodesk showed that **the bottleneck on the host was CPU rather than GPU.**

Although the Tiger and Character workflow tests could achieve the maximum number of VMs per GPU board, the tests themselves are not GPU intensive. Therefore, the frame buffer allocated to the VM was not entirely used by the application during test execution.

As in the Tiger and Character tests, the Jungle and Bridge tests also required more CPU than GPU. As such, the test threshold value was quickly surpassed when the amount of concurrent VMs increased to 10. The following table shows the increase in test runtime as the amount of concurrent VMs increased:

Table 7 Bridge test threshold results

Bridge Avg. Test Time- 1Q vGPU Profile - 10vCPU				% Change Threshold
	1VM	6VM	8VM	1VM vs 6VMs
CoreProfile	02:35.4	03:36.4	04:12.3	-28.21%
OpenGL	02:35.2	03:36.5	04:09.2	-28.32%
DX11	02:35.6	03:36.6	04:09.2	-28.15%

As discovered in the single VM test, the Bridge test runtimes were most optimal using 10vCPU. However, if the amount of concurrent VMs were increased to 32 to reach to GPU maximum capacity of the GRID M60-1Q profile, the host CPU would be over allocated (320 vCPU) since the host has 64 logical cores with hyper threading enabled. Powering on more VMs meant using more vCPU than the host had as a shared resource.

CONCLUSION

The test results show that XGen modeling workloads, or any workload that requires OpenCL, the maximum possible number of users per server is four. Testing shows that **with 4 concurrent M60-8Q profiles running simultaneously**, all users see less than a 10% degradation in performance, well below discomfort level. **We conclude that 4 concurrent users per server is the maximum.** The Character modeling test can **support 16 VMs/Users per server**, which is the maximum number of VM's for the M60-2Q profile. Both the Tiger and Character workflow tests achieve the maximum number of VMs per GPU board, but the tests themselves are not GPU intensive. The frame buffer allocated to the VM was not entirely used by the application during test execution.

The Jungle and Bridge tests exceeded acceptable usability levels when reaching 10 VMs, and the Bridge test was found to perform better when more vCPU was added to the VM. Both tests put a larger demand on the CPU than GPU. In the case of the Bridge test, reconfiguring vCPU to 10 increased the performance of the VM. However, as such, the host CPU would become too overallocated if the host had **more than 10 VM's running**. On this class of server, the maximums VM's which are concurrently executing for Bifröst simulation or the Character animation work modelled within the test **reside between 6 and 8 users per server**.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL TESTING: MAYA 2017 SPEC

Maya 2017 SPEC contains eight artist workflows. The 4 workflows referenced in this whitepaper are also included with SPEC. The following is a list of the tests included in SPEC:

- Bifröst Bridge
- Jungle Animation
- Seven Space Animation
- Space Crash
- Seven Character Animation
- XGen Hair Tiger
- Character Model Texture
- Toy store

This SPEC test provides individual elapsed time test results for the different modes tested such as animation, Bifröst, smooth shade (SSAO, edges, texture, all lights), and wire. These elapsed times were compared to a physical NVIDIA workstation graphic card and the test results were within range. No crashes or errors were reported.

The Tiger workflow was modified for SPEC; the same Tiger model is loaded but exercises the GPU more heavily by rotating the model on the screen. This SPEC Tiger workflow intends to model real Maya users who build models as they are animating on the screen and requires both powerful GPU and CPU. Since the Tiger XGen capabilities within Maya requires OpenCL, the SPEC benchmark was ran using the same GRID M60-8Q vGPU (8GB) profile as used in our original test.

The following graphs illustrated GPU and CPU Utilization rates on the VM during a single benchmark test. This graph captures the entire SPEC benchmark (total of 8 tests).

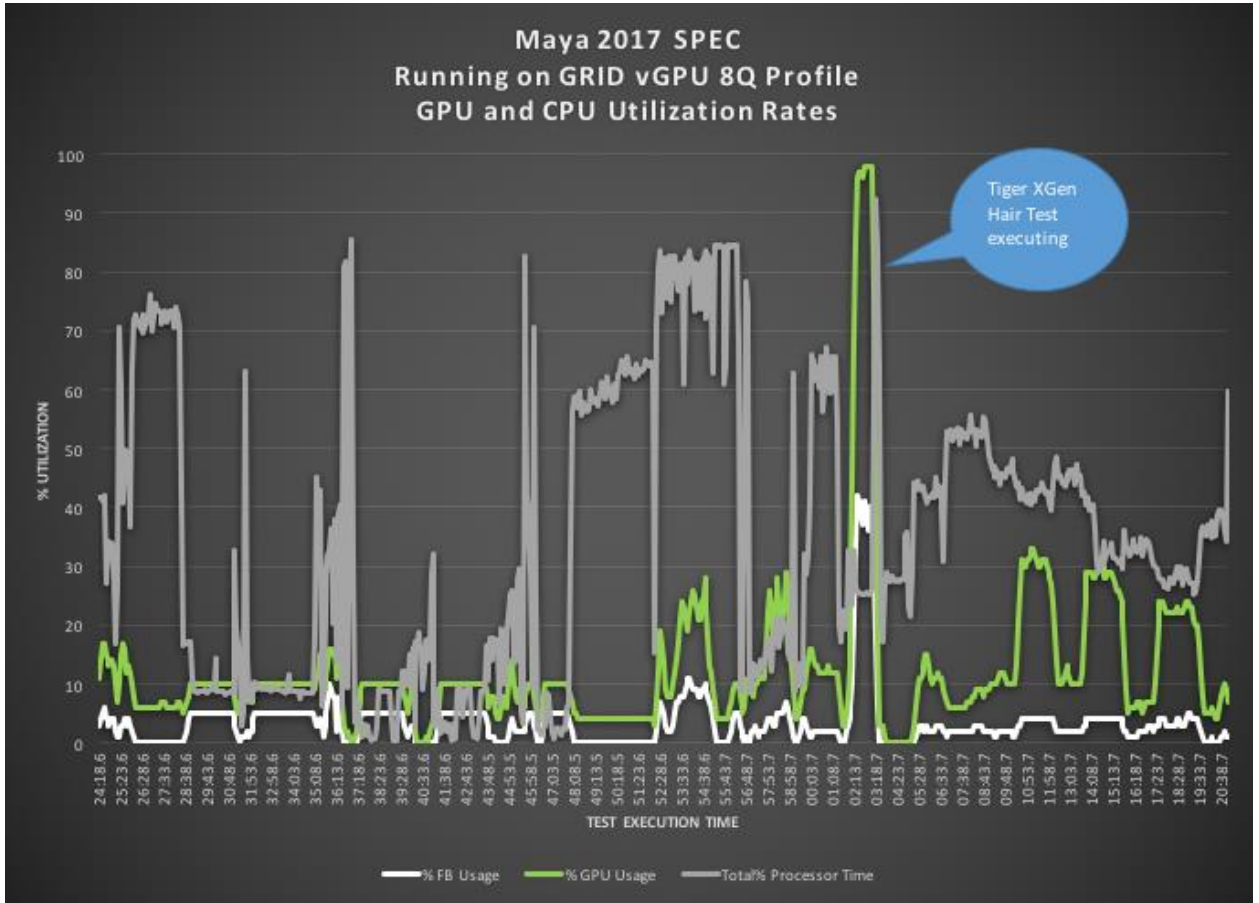


Figure 13 GPU and CPU utilization rates

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