Subject: Great, now you will need TWO $500 video cards to be leet
Posted by Blazer on Thu, 13 May 2004 16:01:33 GMT
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Alienware announces dual PCI-Express graphics subsystem
Posted 05/12/2004 @ 4:40 PM, by Ken "Caesar" Fisher

Alienware is known for building top-of-the-line, enthusiast friendly computers aimed at gamers with really good jobs or really large trust funds. In recent years, the company has gone from being a kind of novel specialty builder to being a potential force even against the big OEMs (indeed, Dell's Inspiron XPS is aimed squarely at the Alienware crowd). Now Alienware is looking to up the ante with some of their own technology designs, and wouldn't you know their opening salvo has gaming performance written all over it. Meet "Video Array."

Video Array is an accelerated graphics processing subsystem that will allow users to add multiple, off-the-shelf video cards to their Alienware computer systems and have both cards process graphic commands in parallel. Understanding the wide-ranging wants and needs of its customers, Alienware designed its solution so that it is not tied to any one specific video card. This design will allow users to take full advantage of the fastest video card on the market for a significant performance increase.

Wrap your head around that: a graphics subsystem that can make video adapters work in parallel, even when they're not from the same manufacturer. SLI has apparently met steroids. "Ah," you say, "who cares about adding a bunch of PCI backup support to my AGP card." That's where part 2 of the knockout punch comes: X2. Might we interest you in a motherboard with two PCI-Express graphics slots?

Alienware's exclusive Video Array combined with X2, an Alienware-designed motherboard which is currently based on Intel Corporation's next-generation chipset and will include dual PCI-Express high performance graphics card slots, will deliver significant performance gains over current graphic solutions.

I think that's the sound of a pin dropping. If the technology proves itself, it could start a whole new level of bragging contests among gamers. It could, more importantly, lead other companies to develop similar technologies. Of course, there are plenty of questions to consider: do games have to be written in order to take advantage of this technology? What tasks can and can't be split up for parallel processing? The answers may have to wait until Q3/Q4, when ALX systems with Video Array and X2 will be available. Would it be nice if you could plop in a GeForce 6800 Ultra and a Radeon X800 XT and get the best of both worlds? Wouldn't it be nice if you were rich enough to be able to do that? For some info-light flash promotions of ALX and Video Array, hit Alienware's info page.