

Solid Angle Joins Autodesk

Solid Angle is joining Autodesk to help bring creative professionals new capabilities from advanced, efficient, high-quality rendering to scalable, on-demand compute services.

Questions and Answers

$$L_o = L_e + \int_{\Omega} L_i \cdot f_r \cdot \cos \theta \cdot d\omega$$



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What has happened?

Autodesk has acquired Solid Angle SL, a software company headquartered in Madrid, Spain and best known for developing the Arnold rendering software.

Who is Solid Angle and what is Arnold?

Solid Angle is a European software company, created by Marcos Fajardo, with offices in Madrid, Spain and London, UK. Marcos created Solid Angle to commercialize Arnold, an advanced ray-tracing image renderer that he had initially co-developed in collaboration with Sony Pictures Imageworks. You can read more about Marcos and Solid Angle [here](#). In the seventeen years since its inception, Arnold has become the go-to solution for efficient, unbiased global illumination production rendering.

Who uses Arnold today?

Over 500 studios and thousands of individual artists all over the world use Arnold today. It has been used on many of the Academy Award-nominated VFX features and animated shorts in recent years, and may of the industry's highest-profile and biggest-budget film, TV and commercial productions. Some recent examples can be found on the Solid Angle website [here](#).

Why is Autodesk acquiring Solid Angle?

Autodesk is always interested in great technology that can help creative professionals be more productive. A key part of any computer graphics (CG) production pipeline is rendering and as more CG content (and more complex CG content) is being created, efficient and scalable rendering solutions have become highly critical. Arnold offers the advantage of being a high quality, efficient renderer as well as being cloud-ready.

The acquisition is important to Autodesk for three main reasons:

1. Rendering is an important part of the creative production workflow and we want to help customers improve it so that they can create amazing content faster, cheaper *and* better.
2. Arnold supports cloud rendering which is key to helping studios of all sizes better solve critical production bottlenecks as well as to providing the ability to scale production capacity without having to make massive infrastructure investments.
3. The acquisition brings a highly experienced and dedicated team of render experts to Autodesk.

Why did Solid Angle decide to join Autodesk?

Adoption of the Arnold renderer has grown significantly in recent years, requiring Solid Angle to scale its operations in order to continue to develop, market, sell and support its technology worldwide. Since scaling a product successfully requires resources and expertise, joining Autodesk was the ideal path to helping Solid Angle reach the next level. The acquisition will also expand the Arnold development team providing them with access to a large pool of talent and expertise within Autodesk to expand and accelerate their product plans.

How will this acquisition benefit the media and entertainment industry?

By combining the skill, expertise and resources of Solid Angle and Autodesk we will be able to develop more efficient rendering workflows for our products, innovate faster and accelerate plans to provide cloud-based rendering services so that smaller (and larger) companies can scale their render capacity as needed and without having to invest in costly rendering farms.

What are Autodesk's plans for Arnold post acquisition?

Post-acquisition, Autodesk and the Solid Angle team will continue to focus on developing Arnold as a renderer for both Autodesk applications and for third party products like Houdini, Katana and Cinema 4D. We will also be investing in developing cloud-based rendering solutions as well as integration of Arnold rendering with our 3D applications.

What will happen to Marcos and the Solid Angle team?

Marcos Fajardo and the Solid Angle team will become part of Autodesk's Media & Entertainment group. Marcos will continue to lead the Arnold development team and set the technology roadmap for the product. They will continue to focus on developing elegant engineering solutions and collaborating closely with customers, for which they are renowned. The Arnold team will continue to work from the locations they already work in including the Madrid and London offices.

How will Solid Angle's joining Autodesk impact Arnold customers?

Very little will change. As with the Shotgun acquisition, our focus will be on maintaining continuity for customers. You will still be able to purchase perpetual licenses, still be able to purchase licenses for whatever 3D product you use, and still receive the same level of engagement and support from the Arnold team that you are used to.

Additionally, Arnold customers should benefit from the additional resources and capabilities to which the Arnold team will gain access. This will result in a more concerted effort to solve the production and business challenges of rendering – from new capabilities to the ability to tap into the resources of the cloud. Many artists that use Arnold are also Autodesk customers, and will benefit from our combined efforts to improve the rendering pipeline within Autodesk products.

Will Autodesk continue to develop Katana, Cinema 4D and Houdini plug-ins for Arnold?

Yes, Autodesk intends to continue to expand support for third party products with Arnold. We want to help improve the rendering capabilities of any production pipeline, and not just for Autodesk products. The Arnold team will therefore continue to collaborate with third parties (including The Foundry, Maxon and Side Effects) to better support their products as well as to develop new Arnold plug-ins for other applications.

Like Shotgun, Arnold's long-term success depends upon our ability to provide customers with solutions that help improve their overall production capability and capacity. This requires an open approach to their entire production ecosystem. No matter what DCC products you use – Maya, 3ds Max or Houdini – we want to help you better manage your rendering overhead!

Will Maya and 3ds Max continue to work with other third-party renderers?

Yes, you will be able to continue to use whichever renderer you prefer (Arnold, V-Ray, RenderMan, mental ray, Redshift etc.). There will be no obligation, or product requirement, for Maya or 3ds Max customers to switch from their preferred rendering solution. We understand that artists and studios work with many different renderers depending on their production needs and are committed to giving customers more choices – not limiting their options. So yes, Autodesk is committed to supporting other rendering solutions.

Will being part of Autodesk bring about any changes to the Arnold roadmap?

Arnold development and support teams will continue on the path they are on to ensure that they can remain highly responsive to customer needs. There are no current plans to change Arnold's roadmap, although the team expects to expand the scope of its projects within Autodesk.

Does this mean Autodesk will release an Arnold plug-in for 3ds Max?

It is too early to talk about future product capabilities, however we will be investing in expanding Arnold support for other 3D applications including other Autodesk applications.

Autodesk currently offers mental ray with Maya and 3ds Max. What does this mean for the future of mental ray?

mental ray is owned by NVIDIA who are ultimately responsible for the future of that product. Autodesk has historically included a certain number of mental ray licenses with some of our products including 3ds Max and Maya and we will continue to do so for now. While there are no immediate changes planned, one of the things we are now evaluating is making Arnold available with 3ds Max and Maya.

What will happen to Arnold customer support?

The Arnold team will continue to provide the same level of premium support services they have always done. All support contracts will continue uninterrupted.

How do I purchase Arnold now?

For now, you should continue to purchase Arnold as you always have, either directly from the Solid Angle sales team one of their authorized resellers or from the Solid Angle [website](#). Arnold has not yet been integrated into Autodesk's Sales systems and so will not be immediately available from Autodesk resellers, although this is something we will be working on adding over the coming months.

Will Autodesk stop selling perpetual licenses of Arnold?

No, Autodesk plans to continue selling perpetual licenses of Arnold.

Can I subscribe to Arnold?

Today, Solid Angle offers the ability to rent Arnold software which is also currently available for use as part of the Google Cloud Platform ZYNC Render service [here](#). Autodesk is also looking at expanding upon this with its own subscription and cloud-rendering services but we have no details to communicate yet.

What will happen to Arnold trial and education licenses?

There will be no immediate changes to Solid Angle's product offerings including the way they provide trial and education licenses. However as part of the integration process we will be evaluating where it makes sense to transition such programs to Autodesk programs such as our free software program for students.

What will happen to the Solid Angle website and Arnold email forums?

In the short term, the Solid Angle website, Arnold email updates and forums, support site and social media presence will continue to operate much as they do now. They will be your primary source of information as well as your main means of online interaction with the Solid Angle team. However, Autodesk will be working with the Solid Angle team to evaluate next steps as we try to scale the Arnold business.

I have other questions. Who can I talk to for more information?

If you have any other questions please feel free to contact Marcos Fajardo or your usual contact at either Solid Angle or Autodesk.

For press related questions please contact Noah Cole (Noah.Cole@Autodesk.com) Director of Public Relations, Autodesk.

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