



## PIXAR'S TRACTOR

### FAQ

Here at Pixar's RenderMan Products we're excited to release Tractor, our new distributed processing solution for render farms. Tractor 1.0 is built on a brand new architecture and is capable of managing a much higher workload than its predecessor, Alfred. At the same time, we want our Alfred users to have a smooth transition over to Tractor, so we've taken pains to build in backwards compatibility (Tractor can read Alfred scripts), and we've also put a strategy in place to allow our current Alfred users a smooth transition to Tractor and at your own schedule. The following FAQ is intended to help answer questions about Tractor and this transition. If this FAQ does not completely answer your questions, please contact us directly at [rendermansales@pixar.com](mailto:rendermansales@pixar.com).

#### General questions about Tractor:

##### 1. Who is the intended user of Tractor 1.0?

Ultimately, Tractor is designed to evolve into a universal distributed processing solution applicable to a wide variety of applications, not just Pixar's RenderMan. However, in the initial phase of Tractor 1.0, development has focused on raw performance and streamlining the core architecture with the expectation that version 1.0 will appeal to mid-sized and larger installations who both require the high performance of Tractor and who have the resources to integrate Tractor into their custom pipelines. Certainly we encourage any RenderMan user to evaluate Tractor, but there may be generic features of use that will not appear until later releases of Tractor, such as expanded out-of-box functionality and a more sophisticated GUI.

##### 2. Is Tractor compatible with RenderMan Studio and RenderMan for Maya?

Yes, upcoming versions of RenderMan Studio 3.0 and RenderMan for Maya 4.0 will provide full support for Tractor, and these versions will be released later this year. Current versions of RenderMan Studio 2.0 and RenderMan for Maya 3.0 will require some additional configuration to integrate Tractor, which Pixar's RenderMan Customer Support may be of assistance with.

##### 3. Is Tractor multithreaded?

Yes. The Tractor-Engine, the central job queue and task assigner, is a multi-threaded high-performance C++ application which is responsible for responding to HTTP transaction requests and maintaining a database of spooled jobs as a shallow hierarchy of files on disk.

##### 4. Can Tractor utilize any number of threads and cores on dispatched tasks?

Yes. Tractor is a "task centric" distributed processing solution independent of hardware or software dependencies. How each of your tasks is allocated resources can be configured by you when dispatching tasks to Tractor.

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### **5. Will Tractor be included with RenderMan Studio?**

Yes, the single Alfred license included with each RenderMan Studio purchase will ultimately be replaced with a single license of Tractor. Upgrades to this single Tractor license will also be made available independent of the main RenderMan Studio release cycle.

### **6. Will Tractor be included as a standard part of RenderMan Pro Server?**

No. Tractor will be phased out of RenderMan Pro Server, eventually becoming a separate product and purchase. For those RenderMan Pro Server customers currently on maintenance, we have a transition strategy for your Alfserver licenses based on a “like for like” principle. That is, we offer a free conversion from your Alfserver licenses to an equivalent number of Tractor licenses until June 30th 2012, allowing you time to plan a smooth transition.

### **7. When Alfserver is retired from RenderMan Pro Server what will replace it?**

Though remote execution server capability will no longer be included in RenderMan Pro Server after June 30th 2012, its equivalent value will be replaced with additional features in development.

### **8. Will Tractor 1.0 provide any plug-ins for out-of-box integration with other CG applications and renderers?**

Tractor 1.0 is primarily developed to dispatch RenderMan Pro Server tasks, however Tractor’s extensible architecture makes it a straightforward task to build custom plug-ins. Additional tools are planned for Tractor 2.0, including expanded out-of-box functionality and a more sophisticated GUI.

### **Tractor pricing and licensing:**

#### **1. How much does Tractor cost?**

Tractor is \$99 per license. Importantly, a Tractor license is only checked out when a task is executed. This “task centric” licensing model means that the Tractor-Engine, the Tractor-Blades, and the Tractor-Dashboard will never fail due to an unforeseen licensing failure, like the crash of license server. This model gives Tractor another level of dependability.

#### **2. How much does Tractor maintenance cost and what does it cover?**

Tractor maintenance is \$20 per license on all new Tractor licenses and covers technical support and upgrades within a one-year term. Please note that existing annual RenderMan Studio and RenderMan Pro Server maintenance covers Tractor until June 30th 2012, with the exception of newly purchased licenses after Tractor 1.0 is released.

#### **3. When will Tractor 2.0 release?**

Though no date has yet been announced, Tractor 2.0 should be available in 2011. As Tractor is a version 1.0 product, customer feedback will also determine the pace of upcoming intermediate dot and full releases. Greater release flexibility is one reason why Tractor is a standalone product so there are no dependencies on other applications.

#### **4. Can a Tractor task use an unlimited number of processors/cores?**

Yes, Tractor’s “task centric” licensing model only counts dispatched tasks and it is up to the user to determine what resources in terms of processors are allocated to that task.

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**5. If I am running two render tasks on one remote machine do I need two Tractor licenses to manage these tasks?**

Yes, each dispatched task will consume one corresponding Tractor license, while that task is executed.

**Installation and operating system compatibility:**

**1. Which operating systems does Tractor 1.0 support?**

At version 1.0 the Tractor-Engine supports Linux 32bit and 64bit and OS X. The Tractor-Blade and Tractor-Dashboard is compatible with Mac OS X, Linux 32-bit and 64-bit, Windows 7 (32 & 64 bit variants), Windows XP 32 bit, Windows Vista 64 bit and Windows Vista 64 bit HPC Server.

**2. When will Tractor-Engine support Windows?**

Full Windows support is currently scheduled for Tractor 2.0

**Questions about the Tractor Transition Plan:**

**1. If I have Alfred and Alfserver licenses currently on maintenance, can I transition to Tractor for free?**

Yes, existing Alfred and Alfserver licenses can convert to an equivalent number of Tractor licenses at any time until the transition term ends on June 30th 2012. This includes standalone Alfserver licenses for which no current maintenance offering exists. In this situation, your corresponding Alfred licenses extend transition coverage to the combined Alfred and Alfserver entitlement.

**2. If I am using one Alfserver to launch multiple invocations of RenderMan on one machine, how does the transition work?**

Under the “like for like” principle, you are eligible to transition to one Tractor license for each Alfserver. This aligns with the “task centric” nature of single invocation unlimited threading licensing introduced in RPS 15.0. Note that launching additional invocations of RenderMan on the same machine is still possible but will require one additional Tractor license per invocation. For the purpose, multiple Tractor licenses can be allocated to a single machine, and if additional Tractor licenses are required, they may be purchased for \$99 each.

**3. My studio has an established custom Alfred pipeline; how will the transition to Tractor work for us?**

To provide a smooth experience during the conversion from Alfred to Tractor, we are providing our existing Alfred and Alfserver customers a two year period to decide when the time is best to make the upgrade to Tractor. You can run both products side by side and phase in the transition as best suits your particular needs, and when you receive your Tractor licenses from [rendermansales@pixar.com](mailto:rendermansales@pixar.com) your Alfred and Alfserver licenses will remain active. Keep in mind that Tractor has been engineered to read Alfred scripts, with the idea that it should be easy for Alfred customers to transition to Tractor. The transition period will end on June 30th, 2012 when Alfred and Alfserver will be deprecated, as we expect full adoption of Tractor at that time.

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**4. When I transition to Tractor, will I still be able to use my existing Alfred and Alfserver licenses?**

Yes. We understand that transitioning to Tractor will not happen overnight, so during this period you will have access to your Tractor licenses and your Alfred and Alfserver licenses. Then at your maintenance renewal we will ask whether you have successfully made the transition from Alfred to Tractor, and if you still need time to transition, you can continue to use both solutions until either you no longer need Alfred or the transition deadline of June 30th 2012 is reached. If necessary after that date, Alfred licenses can be supplied until the software ceases to function due to no further development or upgrades.

**5. What if after my evaluation, I prefer to wait until Tractor 2.0 before transitioning from Alfred and Alfserver?**

There is no pressure to transition until June 30th 2012 at which time Tractor will be several versions further advanced. We would like to know your reasons for choosing not to transition and what areas of Tractor require development that will enable you to do so.

**6. Can I convert to Tractor if I have an educational license of RenderMan that I purchased online?**

As Tractor is a v1.0 product in its initial release primarily targeted at studios, at present no conversions to Tractor are available for online academic purchases. However a future upgrade path will be made available, so please check back to this FAQ in future for an update.

**Questions about new Tractor Purchases:**

**1. What if I want to purchase additional Tractor licenses beyond my existing entitlement?**

Additional Tractor licenses beyond your "like for like" entitlement are available at \$99 each.

**2. What is the maintenance charge for new or additional Tractor licenses?**

For those licenses covered under your existing RenderMan Studio and RenderMan Pro Server maintenance agreement there is no additional cost. For new (or additional) Tractor licenses, annual maintenance covering support and upgrades is available at \$20.

**3. I'm interested in evaluating Tractor for my studio, but we have no Alfred licenses under maintenance; do you offer evaluations of Tractor?**

Yes. We are able to offer standard 30 day evaluations, with 30 day extensions granted upon request.

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## Questions about Tractor Maintenance:

### **1. Will the annual maintenance I am paying for Alfred (as a part of RenderMan Studio) and Alfserver (as a part of RenderMan Pro Server) cover future upgrades to Tractor?**

Yes, while Alfred and Alfserver remain supported products, upgrades to Tractor will be supplied within the “like for like” principle covered by your existing maintenance, until June 30th 2012. The only exceptions are additional Tractor licenses that are purchased after Tractor 1.0 is released. After the end of the Tractor Transition Plan, maintenance will be charged when due at the next RenderMan Pro Server maintenance anniversary on all Tractor licenses that are not associated with a RenderMan Studio license at \$20 per license.

### **2. Am I entitled to a “like for like” transition to Tractor if my licenses are not on current maintenance?**

No, only those Alfred and Alfserver licenses associated with products on current maintenance can be transitioned to Tractor. Your options to convert those licenses off of maintenance are to either (i) upgrade to the current version and renew maintenance for the desired number of licenses, or (ii) purchase additional standalone Tractor licenses at \$99 each.

### **3. If I have parked licenses off maintenance can I transition my remaining active licenses that are on maintenance to Tractor?**

Yes.

## Questions about the future of Alfred and Alfserver:

### **1. Can I continue to run Alfred and Alfserver until June 30th 2012 even after my licenses have transitioned to Tractor?**

Yes, Alfred and Alfserver will remain available until both products are retired on June 30th 2012, however when you have exercised a transition to Tractor, new Alfred licenses will not by default be reissued when your licenses are renewed at your annual maintenance anniversary, unless you request this. Please contact [rendermansales@pixar.com](mailto:rendermansales@pixar.com) if there are any difficulties.

### **2. Will Alfred and Alfserver receive any further development?**

Further development of these products is now minimal going forwards, though dependent application and operating system compatibility will be maintained. Alfred and Alfserver will be deprecated on June 30th 2012.

For more information, contact us on 020 7348 1920 or email us on [technology@escapestudios.com](mailto:technology@escapestudios.com).

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