

Rendering Tales: How Long Will It Take?

“I spent about two years visiting high-end animation customers on behalf of *Discreet*. I remember visiting Cinesite in Los Angeles when they were working on the film *Waterworld*. They were complaining because a single frame of animation was taking 16 hours to render. The water was all procedurally generated and it took that long to compute all the affects at the high resolution for the wide screen. Forty-five seconds of water effects was going to set the film back a month in schedule, and this was in spite of using SGI computers, not PCs.

I also remember foolishly telling one student I would render his animation for him while I was away at a tradeshow. He handed in 10 scenes, each with several thousand frames of animation. I had a portable computer in the room with me, but I didn't know how to set up batch rendering. For a week, I set my alarm to wake me up in the middle of the night so I could start the next rendering going. As was to be expected, the finished animation was long and uninteresting and badly in need of revision, but no one had the time to make it better. Too little time is spent getting the animation right; too much time is spent desperately rendering bad animation against deadline.”

Mark Gerhard
3ds max Expert