PARTNER
Creative Bloke

INDUSTRY
Media & Entertainment

CHALLENGES
To enable a small independent visual effects facility, Creative Bloke, with a versatile GPU that contains a combination of portability and performance to cater to their wide and varied portfolio of clients.

SOLUTION
Creative Bloke utilized the AMD Radeon P Pro WX 9100 graphics card in the Apple-recommended Sonnet eGFX Breakaway Box 650W, with Sonnet connected to an AMD FreeSync-enabled 4K display.

RESULTS
Enhanced performance, power, and speed enabled Creative Bloke artists to work faster and more efficiently. For a Radeon ProRender scene he created, the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU took 10 minutes and 8 seconds to render the scene compared to more than 42 minutes for the laptop’s internal Radeon Pro 560X.²

SOFTWARE USED
After Effects | Adobe
Premiere | Adobe
Final Cut Pro X | Apple
Cinema 4D | Maxon

AMD TECHNOLOGY AT A GLANCE
Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU

From the UK’s National Trust to magazine publishers to manufacturers, digital content creator Mike Griggs has a wide and varied portfolio of clients for whom he creates 3D art, motion graphics and multimedia exhibits. A typical day might involve sampling birdsong near Virginia Woolf’s country estate or creating 3D animations for VR. To keep on top of these demands, Griggs wanted to take the full power of the GPU computing revolution on the road.

“My work is never the same from one day to the next, and I need the power that GPU computing offers for CGI animation and portability – for client visits, working on the go, collating data from photo and video shoots and just exploring ideas while sitting on the sofa,” said Griggs, Founder of Creative Bloke.

However, until recently, Griggs found the combination of portability and performance led to many compromises instead of the optimal “laptop turned desktop workstation” he sought. Then Apple officially rolled out external GPU (eGPU) support for Thunderbolt 3-equipped Macs³, only recommending eGPU solutions powered by AMD graphics cards.

“I was thrilled,” Griggs said. “The eGPUs have long been the grail of modular computing, and staying with the Mac has become so much easier because of the eGPU support.”

Griggs chose the AMD Radeon Pro WX 9100 graphics card in the Apple-recommended Sonnet eGFX Breakaway Box 650W, with the Sonnet connected to an AMD FreeSync-enabled 4K display. The combination overcomes a “frustrating compromise” that Griggs had made for years — that of having to switch between his Apple MacBook Pro and higher-powered Windows-based workstations he custom-built.

With the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU, Grigg says his laptop feels like a workstation. “Day-to-day tasks feel quicker with the powerful GPU,” he said, adding that “the Radeon Pro WX 9100 throws graphics and UI elements around the screen smoother than a hot knife through butter.”

He said in his experience, the performance of After Effects and Premiere, both from Adobe, is enhanced by the powerful GPU, while his favorite editing application, Apple Final Cut Pro X, is “a beast” on the eGPU when scrubbing, rendering previews and working with effects and motion graphics.

“When the eGPU is working with the Radeon Pro WX 9100 and MacBook Pro, it is truly awesome.”
Mike Griggs, Founder, Creative Bloke

AMD RADIANT PRO SUPERPOWERS MAC GRAPHICS
An eGPU is a full-sized graphics card installed in an external enclosure with its own power supply that is then connected to the host PC or laptop via a Thunderbolt™ 3 USB Type-C interface. The latest macOS versions robustly integrate eGPU support for Radeon Pro graphics, providing a simple, plug-and-play experience for artists such as Griggs to easily and instantly boost the graphics capabilities of his Mac system.

“After Effects I Adobe
Premiere I Adobe
Final Cut Pro X I Apple
Cinema 4D I Maxon

AMD + EGPU CASE STUDY
In his own tests, Griggs said the speed improvements when using the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU with a MacBook Pro for Maxon Cinema 4D are also dramatic. For a Radeon ProRender scene he created, the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU took 10 minutes and 8 seconds to render the scene compared to more than 42 minutes for the laptop’s internal Radeon Pro 560 integrated graphics. This is a benefit when working under tight deadlines.

“With everything delivered digitally, if you’re on a one- or two-day turnaround and someone’s screaming at you, a half hour can make a difference,” he said.

With a performance increase of up to 4x, the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU in tandem with the MacBook Pro also has a creative impact, according to Griggs.

“Quicker render times means quicker iteration which makes better images,” he said. “You are starting to explore things with your creativity you would not have before because it would take 45 minutes to render. Now what you see is what you get, you can tweak and update while maintaining a continuous workflow.”

RADEON PRO WX 9100 EGPU CREATES FLEXIBILITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

All these workflows can become even more efficient, as a single MacBook Pro or iMac Pro can support multiple Radeon Pro WX 9100 powered eGPUs through multiple Thunderbolt 3 connections. “You could create a scalable, modular workstation with multiple eGPUs combined with the powerful internal Radeon graphics cards the iMac Pro ships with,” Griggs said.

He noted the different performance and price points of Radeon Pro graphics cards should make them accessible to most graphics content creators. Coupled with an eGPU enclosure, all will enhance the desktop experience when using a MacBook Pro, he said. Griggs added: “It is worth the investment, as when the eGPU setup is working with the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU, it is truly awesome.”

1. Requires a monitor and AMD Radeon™ graphics, both with FreeSync support. See www.amd.com/freesync for complete details. Confirm capability with your system manufacturer before purchase. CD-127
2. In independent testing performed by Mike Griggs, founder of Creative Bloke, using the Radeon Pro WX 9100 eGPU with a Thunderbolt 3-equipped Mac running Mac OS X 10.13.4 or later (support.apple.com/en-us/HT208544).
3. Testing conducted by AMD Performance Labs as of June 18th, 2018, on a 2017 i5 Mac Book Pro test system comprising of Intel Core i5 quad-core processor® 3.1GHz, 16GB DDR3 system memory, Mac OS 10.13.2 (High Sierra), Radeon Pro 560 integrated graphics, and Sonnet eGPU Breakaway box with AMD Radeon™ Pro WX 9100 graphics. Benchmark Applications: Maxon® Cinema4D® and Radeon™ ProRender. Autodesk® Maya® and Radeon™ ProRender. Performance measured using the internal “AMD_motorcycle” model for Cinema4D, “helmet demo.mb” for Maya. Results of benchmark with “AMD_motorcycle” model: Onboard graphics = 939 seconds, Onboard + eGPU = 269 seconds. 939/269 = 3.49x improvement. Results of benchmark with “helmet demo.mb” model: On Maya: Onboard graphics = 1644 sec, Onboard + eGPU = 408 seconds, 1644/408 = 4x improvement. PC manufacturers may vary configurations, yielding different results. Performance may vary based on use of latest drivers. R9P1-20

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