

Product Documents (2016-09-02)

Product type: pCon.planner – Technical Tips

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1 Technical Tips

1.1 Checking the system requirements

Always check before installing pCon.planner 7 that your hardware meets the recommended minimum system requirements. If this is not so, there is no guarantee that the software will run smoothly.

You will find the system requirements that we recommend [here](#).

1.2 Type of graphics card

The type of graphics card installed on your system will be a crucial factor in stable operation of pCon.planner 7, determining the level of performance.

There are two basic types of graphics card. One is the onboard card. These are simple graphics chips without their own processor (GPU) and have only a small memory of their own with which to process graphics data. They make use of parts of the random access memory (RAM) of the computer into which they are installed. They have the advantage of not consuming much electricity, being relatively cheap to buy and being suitable for most applications such as text and image processing. Onboard cards are, in particular, frequently installed in laptops.

The other sort is the dedicated graphics card system. These are cards which have their own processor (GPU) and a high-volume graphics memory. They are systems which will always provide very much higher performance than onboard card solutions. They are available for everyday office use, which usually means 2D applications, such as in image processing, but they are also intended for use in the 3D field.

As the pCon.planner 7 is 3D software, it will need adequate resources on the hardware side. This means that it can only be used to its full performance level if installed with a dedicated graphics card.

It is, however, possible to operate it with onboard systems, although with some limitations. There is a description below of what to do to optimize operation on the lower-performance type of system.

There are laptops which use onboard and dedicated graphics cards. These are called hybrids. The user can decide which graphics card to use to support the application currently being operated. If you have a hybrid, you should therefore assign the dedicated card to pCon.planner 7. We have written more on this in our blog entry: [High-quality computer, low-quality display?](#) and recommend you look at it.

1.3 Up-to-date graphics card drivers

Quite often, any problems with the pictures in pCon.planner 7 are not due to the graphics hardware but to a certain piece of software, the driver program, which was used to install it in the (Windows) operating system. For that reason we recommend you always use an up-to-date graphics card driver. These are usually to be found on the web pages of the particular graphics card manufacturer.

1.4 Setting the desktop color depth (Windows XP)

To operate pCon.planner 7 without problems we recommend that you set your desktop color depth to 32 bit as standard. However, in certain cases, it may help your picture quality if you change the color depth to 16 bit.

1.5 Testing the render modes

The modes of render for pCon.planner 7 are distinguished by their processing speeds. If you choose **Concept** mode for up-to-date graphics cards, that will usually be the quickest. On older systems the quickest will be **Shaded** mode. It is worth trying out how the differences between the modes work out on your system.

2 Familiar problems

2.1 Second monitor/projector

If a second monitor or a projector, which extends the main display so that there is a second screen, is connected to your computer while pCon.planner 7 is running, there may be picture faults and even a crash of the software. One of the most frequent reasons is shortage of graphics card memory. In both cases (crash or poor pictures) we recommend that you operate only one monitor while running pCon.planner.

2.2 Black sections of screen

When using pCon.planner 7 on computers with NVIDIA graphics cards and the Windows XP operating system, it is possible that the 3D area may show up as black or black in part. One of the settings in the driver program will be to blame. Here are the instructions on how to remedy the problem of black sections of screen:

1. Open up the systems control for NVIDIA. This is to be found on the main Windows control panel.
2. When you open NVIDIA systems control, a dialog will come up with the various tasks on the left. Select the *Manage 3D settings entry*.
3. Now click on the *Program Settings* tab.
4. Click the *Add* button and then select the "planner.exe" file. (This will usually appear with the path C:\Program Files\EasternGraphics).
5. Now, select the Common *unified back/depth buffer* function and disable it by changing the setting to *Off*.

2.3 Poor pictures with ATI graphics cards

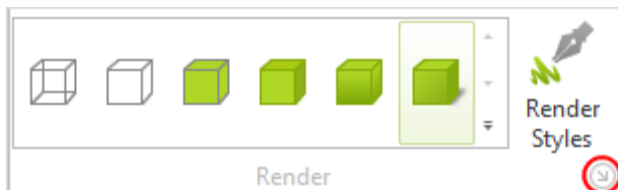
In the driver program for ATI graphics cards, the setting *A.I.* will normally be on. This may cause the textures in pCon.planner 7 to be poorly represented because of incorrect computation. Deactivating the setting can remedy the problem.

3 How to optimize the performance

Use the following tips to help you optimize performance. They can help particularly in the case of graphics hardware that is more than 2 years old, so that despite the limitations you can work with the software.

3.1 Extended Options

The Extended Options provide you with the opportunity to adapt the graphic representation, enabling it to make less demand on the hardware resources



The Extended Options are to be found in the *Render* group, *View* tab. There is a small icon on the right lower edge (see the red circle in the screenshot on the left). Click on this.

Change over to the *Quality* tab. Set *Texture Quality* to *Simple* and the *Shadow Quality* to *Normal*. *Global Edge Reduction* has been preset to 11%. Raising this figure will have a positive effect on the computations for the representation of objects.

On the *Misc* tab there are two entries for synchronization. Both should be disabled if the graphic performance is weak.

3.2 Opening the program more than once

You should avoid opening pCon.planner 7 more than once, as the hardware resources required would then have to be shared rather than simply being available to the one program.

3.3 3D applications open

While running and using the pCon.planner, do not use other 3D applications at the same time (for instance AutoCAD), as the same hardware resources will be accessed by both applications and in each case there will be a reduction in performance.

3.4 Reducing the Viewport to one window

If you have fairly weak graphics hardware, it may be wise to work simply in one viewport without subdividing it. Also, reducing the size of the screen area used for the software on your monitor will mean the graphics are computed faster.

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