

RenderPal V2

The professional Render Management System

Point Release 3

Release notes

RenderPal V2 Version: 2.3

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What's new in RenderPal V2 Version 2.3

Net Job Presets

Creating net jobs is, without doubt, the most frequent task to perform in a render farm. With the introduction of net job presets, this task has become even easier and more comfortable with RenderPal V2. Each preset contains settings of several, selectable setting groups (so you can have presets that only contain the pool and client selection or only some net job events, for example) that can be either applied directly inside the net job editor, or be used as a base for new net jobs. Instead of applying the same settings over and over again, you can now just create and use a net job preset - a huge time saver!

Frame checking improvements

The frame checking, one of the most popular features of RenderPal V2, has received several improvements. Foremost, frame checking can now also be performed on single net job chunks, not just on entire net jobs. This allows for a quick check whether a given chunk was rendered properly - and create new net jobs for the missing frames, if necessary. In previous versions, manual frame checking was only possible on done or cancelled net jobs; this has also changed, and frame checking can be performed on net jobs of any status. Last but not least, most frame checking settings are now made automatically, making its configuration even easier.

Scheduled idle clients shutdown

To further automate automatic shutdown of unused clients in a render farm, it is now possible to specify a schedule for automatic idle clients shutdown activation. During these scheduled times, the automatic idle clients shutdown will be automatically activated for the corresponding pool, so that you can, for example, let your entire render farm be shut down after working hours once all renderings are done. This feature is another helpful tool to create a "green" render farm that saves energy and money whenever possible.

VNC integration

VNC (Virtual Network Computing) is an easy way to remotely access a computer. In this new release, we have integrated VNC support to let you manage your render farm with even more comfort and ease. To use the VNC integration, all you have to do is to specify the executable of a VNC viewer application of your choice, as long as with its commandline, and if everything is set up properly, you can remotely access your client machine with a simple double-click.

Networking

The entire network code between the RenderPal V2 Server and Remote Controller has been rewritten. The new network code results in a significant reduction of network traffic, as well as performance improvements on both sides. Especially in larger render farms, the impact of these changes can be huge.

Connection handling

The RenderPal V2 Server now handles client connections in a more intelligent and efficient way, leading to a great reduction in unnecessary connections made. In previous versions, the server always connected to clients whenever a chunk was pending and no client was available, disregarding any pending connection or wake-up attempts. In combination with automatic clients shutdown, this can significantly reduce energy usage in a render farm, as only the necessary amount of clients will be used at any time.

Console Remote Controller improvements

The console Remote Controller has received some important improvements:

Login

Previously, the login information for the server had to be specified in the Remote Controller configuration file, and it was not possible to use a different login without editing the configuration. This has now changed with the introduction of the `-login` switch, which can be used to easily specify the username and password via command-line.

Importing render sets

Render sets can now be imported via the `-importset` switch. This is especially useful for pipeline integration: just create a render set outside of RenderPal and import it when submitting new net jobs.

Net Job presets

Net Job presets can not only be used in the GUI versions of RenderPal V2, but also in conjunction with the console Remote Controller. Using a net job preset is not just convenient and a true time saver, but it also allows you to submit jobs via command-line which include net job events and other feature which are not directly supported via command-line.

Other changes and improvements

Besides many smaller changes and fixes, there are a few improvements that are worth mentioning:

Pool states

The expanded/collapsed state of client pools in the main client list is now preserved. When the RenderPal V2 Server or Remote Controller is restarted, RenderPal no longer "forgets" which pools were expanded and which were collapsed. A small but important "convenience change".

Total CPU time

Each net job now shows a column for the cumulated CPU time a net job has used. This is especially useful for render farms which are being leased.

Environment variables

This version introduces support for a file containing environment variables (`RenderPal.env`) which are loaded on startup. Many renderers can be configured using simple environment variables, so this is an easy way to define variables specific to the usage with RenderPal V2.

Full changelog for RenderPal V2 Version 2.3

```
+-- Legend -----+
| + New Feature   |
| # Modification/Improvement |
| ! Bugfix       |
| - Removed feature |
+-----+

[# Global] The usual amount of fixes and improvements here and there
[# Svr/Rc] The expanded/collapsed state of pools in the main client list is now preserved
[+ RmCtrl] The console Remote Controller now supports specifying the login to use via command-line (-login)
[+ Svr/Rc] Added a "Total CPU time" column to the net job list (rendering times of all chunks accumulated)
[+ Global] RenderPal will now load a file containing additional environment variables on startup (RenderPal.env)
[+ Svr/Rc] Net jobs now have a field for additional email recipients
[+ RmCtrl] Added a new switch to specify additional email recipients for a net job to the console Remote Controller (-nj_emailrecpt)
[# Server] Net jobs with only failed chunks will now be shown as erroneous
[+ Svr/Rc] Added support for net job presets
[! Global] The start extension wasn't applied when using the Maya Default renderer
[! Global] The V-Ray for Maya renderer didn't support the output name, project directory and output directory settings
[+ RmCtrl] The console Remote Controller can now load net job presets via -nj_preset
[+ Server] The highest net job ID can now be reset to 1 if the queue is empty
[# Server] Chunk resubmissions due to too short/too long rendering times are now counted as chunk errors
[+ Svr/Rc] Pools can now be scheduled to automatically activate idle clients shutdown
[# Svr/Rc] Frame checking can now also be performed on net jobs which aren't done or cancelled
[# Svr/Rc] Made several improvements to the manual frame checking
[+ Svr/Rc] Manual frame checking can now also be performed on single chunks
[# Server] The history for a net job chunk has been limited to a maximum of 100 entries
[+ Svr/Rc] Added VNC integration for clients
[# Server] The server now performs NetBIOS name resolution in its own thread (prevents blocking)
[# Svr/Rc] The net job progress bar now includes rendering chunks (shown in yellow)
[# Svr/Cl] Attempts to map a network share will now timeout after 30 seconds
[# Server] Made the connection handling of clients more intelligent (will only connect/wake up when really needed etc.)
[! Client] Custom renderer executables without paths were reported as not found if no ending was specified
[+ Global] The Renderman for Maya renderer now supports the number of threads flag (-n)
[! Server] The render set filenames for net jobs were saved with complete paths
[+ Global] Added an entry to the help menu to create an archive containing files that are essential for support requests
[# Global] The RenderPal directory can now be opened via the Tools menu
[+ RmCtrl] Added a new switch to import a render set to the console Remote Controller (-importset)
[# RmCtrl] Restricted the Remote Controller to a single running instance
[! RmCtrl] The -retnjid incorrectly required a value
[! Global] Fixed a networking bug that could lead to invalid data during heavy traffic
[- Server] Removed the "Disable Remote Controller live data updates" option
[! RmCtrl] The elapsed idle time of clients wasn't properly refreshed
[# Svr/Rc] Completely redone the RC->Server network data transfer
[# Server] When using render sets with more than one scene, the scene name will now be prepended to the output name instead of appended
```

Contact

...Heute ist nicht alle Tage, ich komm' wieder, keine Frage...

Shoran Software

Heidekamp 1
48268 Greven
Germany

Phone:

+49 (0)2571 - 953 353

Fax:

+49 (0)2571 - 953 443

E-Mail:

contact@shoran.de

<http://www.renderpal.com>

<http://www.shoran.de>