Sun Blade™ 1000 Workstation

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Table of Contents

Sun Blade™ 1000 Workstation Positioning

Figure 1: Sun Blade™ 1000 workstation

Introduction

The Sun Blade™ 1000 workstation is Sun's first UltraSPARC™–III processor–based platform. It can be configured as either a single– or dual–processor workstation, and offers the user outstanding system performance through superscalar processor technology, a high–performance system interconnect, high–bandwidth I/O, and accelerated graphics.

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation is an outstanding solution for customers who require high–performance and high–capacity computing. The workstation can expand to up to two CPUs, two 36–GB FC–AL disks, 8–GB RAM, and two high–performance UPA graphics accelerators. The generous expansion capacity in the Sun Blade 1000 workstation allows customers to tailor a solution directly for their needs.

Several graphics accelerators are available including Sun™ Creator3D, Sun Elite3D m6, and Sun Expert3D graphics. These graphics accelerators range from the very affordable, PGX32™ graphics to the high–performance 3–D acceleration of Sun Elite3D m6 graphics, to the very high–performance, hardware–based texture mapping acceleration of Sun Expert3D graphics. A number of dual–monitor configurations are possible.

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation introduces three new industry–standard interfaces to Sun's power workstations that enable the use of Sun's and third–party peripherals. They are:

- A universal serial bus (USB) for low–speed devices (such as a keyboard and a mouse)
- An IEEE 1394 interface for digital video use
- A Fibre Channel arbitrated loop (FC–AL) interface to enable high–speed disk access

All Sun Blade 1000 workstations also include an external 40 MB/second UltraSCSI interface and 100–Mb/second Fast Ethernet.

This workstation's new tower enclosure is designed for ease of expansion and service. Memory, CPU modules, PCI cards, disk drives, and removable media peripherals are all independently accessible. The

Sun Blade 1000 workstation also offers exceptional power−management features. These enable various subsystems to independently enter and exit a low power state depending on activity levels, while maintaining an active network connection.

Please note that the Sun Blade 1000 workstation supports only the Solaris™ 8 Operating Environment (Hardware: 10/00) and beyond. There is no support for earlier versions of the Solaris Operating Environment; however, the workstation maintains full binary compatibility with applications compiled on previous versions of the operating environment.

Product Family Placement

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation is Sun's current flagship workstation. The 8−GB RAM capacity, 18− or 36−GB disks, and two−way multiprocessing capability make the Sun Blade 1000 workstation an excellent fit for customers who use demanding technical applications such as EDA or oil and gas customers.

Sun Blade and Ultra™ systems have several things in common, including:

- The SPARC™ processor
- 100 percent binary compatible from the low end to the high end, including Sun's server family
- Scalable from the low−end uniprocessor systems to the 64−way Sun Enterprise™ 10000 (Starfire™) server
- Modular—easy−to−swap components

Workstation	Target Users and Markets
Ultra 5 and Ultra 10	Designed as low−cost desktop solutions, Ultra 5 and 10 systems appeal to customers looking for a low−price system offering accelerated graphics, expandability, fast application performance, and investment protection. Target markets include software development, financial, government, telecommunications, manufacturing, and education.
Ultra 60 and Ultra 80	The Ultra 60 and Ultra 80 workstations are designed for technical users who require high performance and multiprocessing capability. They also addresses the needs of graphics−intensive users and continue to support and build upon the upgradability features to which Ultra workstation users have grown accustomed. With the 450−MHz UltraSPARC−II processor with 4 MB of Level 2 cache, these workstations are on the high−performance end of Sun's workstation family. The target customer is the traditional "power desktop" user who has performance and expansion requirements that exceed the capabilities of the Ultra 5 and Ultra 10 systems.
Sun Blade 1000	The Sun Blade 1000 workstation has a high−performance architecture that allows users to perform complex tasks far beyond the current Ultra 60 workstations. From a CPU clock rate standpoint, the UltraSPARC−III CPU is about twice as powerful as the previous UltraSPARC−II processor. The system includes the ability to expand to two CPUs providing multithreaded applications with maximum throughput. The Sun Blade 1000 workstation is the right system for both technical and commercial users who need the large number of applications and the functional capabilities of the Solaris Operating Environment, the high−performance of the UltraSPARC−III CPU and dual−headed high−performance graphics.

Key Messages

- **High−performance 600−, 750−, or 900−MHz UltraSPARC−III CPU processor module**
  - 64−bit SPARC version 9 technology

- 4–MB L2 Ecache in 600–MHz models; 8–MB L2 Ecache for 750– and 900–MHz models
- 100 percent binary compatibility with current Solaris Operating Environment
- Runs 32–bit applications unmodified from the Solaris 2.5.1, 2.6, 7, and 8 Operating Environments
- 64–bit applications supported from the Solaris 7 and 8 Operating Environments

- **Exceptional throughput**
  - UPA provides a crossbar–oriented interconnection establishing a 144–bit wide, ECC–protected data path to the CPU
  - Clocked at up to 120 MHz, the UPA crossbar gives a peak throughput of over 1.9 GB/second
  - Memory subsystem offers a 576–bit–wide memory path
  - Architecture allows memory to be installed in banks of four DIMMs to take advantage of 576–bit–wide memory path
  - FC–AL is integrated on the motherboard for high–speed disk access
  - A UltraSCSI channel is also integrated into the motherboard, allowing external devices to be connected to separately, further improving I/O throughput
- **Innovative tower system design provides modularity for easy expansion and maintenance**
  - The Sun Blade 1000 workstation offers the flexibility of starting with a single CPU and adding another CPU later as compute needs grow
  - Memory capacity to 8 GB maximum (eight slots using 128–MB, 256–MB, or 1–GB DIMMs)
  - Supports 18– and 36–GB drive options (supports 1.0–inch high, 3.5–inch, 10000–rpm FC–AL disk drives); up to 72 GB of internal drive space
  - Two UPA graphics slots able to support two Sun Creator3D or Sun Elite3D m6 boards
  - Three removable media bays for options such as 4–mm tape drive, DVD–ROM drive, or floppy drive
- **One of the industry leaders for networking, connectivity, and I/O performance ratings**
  - 100–Mbps Fast Ethernet through twisted pair is a standard feature on all Sun Blade 1000 workstations, but the system also maintains connectivity with 10 Mbps networking technology through an autosensing speed switch feature
  - Advanced networking options include FDDI and additional Fast Ethernet ports through industry–standard PCI option cards
  - Innovative multiple–channel industry–standard PCI I/O bus provides sustained high throughput on all four PCI slots
- **Support for high–power graphics accelerators provides high–end graphics for a mid–range price**
  - Sun Expert3D graphics is Sun's high–end, hardware–accelerated, texture mapping option
  - Sun Elite3D m6 graphics is Sun's high–power, high–end 3–D graphics option
  - Sun Creator3D graphics is Sun's mid–range 3–D graphics option

Availability

- General availability is scheduled for October 25, 2000.

- 900−MHz models are scheduled to ship in limited quantities in December 2000 and in volume in Q1CY01.

Target Users

The target customer is the user who requires maximum computer resources in a deskside tower. There are new alternative solutions involving compute farms from Sun and competitors. While these compute farms provide one alternative, there are customers who require the local compute power of maximum capability provided by the Sun Blade 1000 workstation.

Target Markets

Designed for the power user who requires high−performance, multiprocessing capability, high−end graphics, and large amounts of expansion capacity, the Sun Blade 1000 workstation meets the needs of users in a number of disciplines:

- Electronic design automation (EDA)
- Mechanical design (MCAD/MCAE)
- Financial modeling
- Medical imaging
- Earth resources/GIS (oil and gas)
- Visualization and simulation
- Research and development

With the Sun Expert3D graphics card, the Sun Blade 1000 workstation can perform complex DCC operations for visual/simulation applications, and texture memory operations for intense graphics use. Its two−way CPU capability is ideal for financial services applications that perform simultaneous financial simulations and trading activities.

Industry	Key Features to Highlight
Digital Content Creation (DCC)	• Maximum RAM for large datasets • High−performance CPUs for complex graphics rendering • Dual CPU to handle simultaneous tasks
Electronic Design (EDA) • Chip designers, board designers • System houses • Telco	• High−performance CPUs • High−memory capacity • Availability of applications
Financial • Stock and commodity traders • Banks	• High performance • Compact design • Multimedia capabilities • Multi−headed display capability
Mechanical Design (MCAD/MCAE) • Automotive • Aerospace • Defense industry • Mechanical equipment designers	• High−performance CPUs • High−end graphics performance and functionality • Availability of applications

Industry	Key Features to Highlight
Oil and Gas • 2–D, 3–D, and 4–D seismic analysis • Production engineering • Reservoir engineering	• High–performance CPUs • High–end performance and functionality for both graphics and imaging operations • Dual–headed monitor capability • 3D support for 24–inch displays
Publishing and Imaging • Newspapers • Magazines • Image banks • Advertising agencies	• High–performance CPUs • High–end performance and functionality for both graphics and imaging operations • Dual graphics monitor capability
Research and Development • In–house development • Research institutions	• High computing performance • Feature–rich Solaris Operating Environment
Software Development (CASE) • ISVs • In–house development at large organizations	• High–performance Solaris Operating Environment • Availability of applications • Multithreaded application development
Visualization and Simulation • Scientific visualization • Technical simulation	• High–performance CPUs • High–end performance and functionality for both graphics and imaging operations • Sun Expert3D graphics with high–end texture mapping • Dual–monitor capability

Selling Highlights

Compatibility

The Sun Blade™ 1000 workstation runs the Solaris™ 8 Operating Environment (Hardware: 10/00). It can also run 64−bit applications unmodified from the Solaris 7 Operating Environment, as well as 32−bit applications from previous versions of the Solaris Operating Environment making these systems compatible with previous systems and software.

Market Value Propositions

- As a result of 8−GB memory capacity and high−performance Sun™ Fireplane interconnect customers will notice a significant improvement in application performance and user productivity.
- As a result of the functionality and higher performance of Sun Elite3D graphics product families as well as the ability to use dual Sun Elite3D or Sun Expert3D graphics accelerators to display multiple graphics−intensive applications simultaneously, the customer can be more productive and have shorter turn−around times while using interactive graphics applications.
- As a result of the multiprocessor capabilities of the Sun Blade 1000 workstation, the customer can use all the performance capabilities of Solaris Operating Environment software's multithreaded application base.

Enabling Technologies

UltraSPARC™–III Processor

The Sun Blade™ 1000 workstation is a shared−memory, multitasking system built around the UltraSPARC™−III microprocessor. The UltraSPARC−III processor is Sun's latest generation of the SPARC™ processor family and the second generation of 64−bit UltraSPARC chips. The Sun Blade 1000 workstation comes with 600−, 750− or 900−MHz versions of this processor.

- As a member of the UltraSPARC family of CPUs, full binary compatibility is provided.
- Modules have the 64−bit SPARC V9 architecture.
- Systems have up to 8 MB of Ecache per CPU.
- An on−chip memory controller is included for reduced latency.

New I/O Interfaces

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation introduces two new I/O interfaces to Sun workstations, which greatly increases customers' access to peripherals.

- **USB interface**

  Universal serial bus (USB) support is provided for low−speed devices. Initially devices such as the Sun™ Type−6 keyboard and mouse are supported along with USB hubs. Sun Blade 1000 workstation has four (Type A) USB connectors on the rear panel.

- **IEEE 1394 interface**

  IEEE 1394—also known in the industry as FireWire®—has emerged as a new standard for medium−speed devices such as digital cameras and digital video cameras. IEEE 1394 interfaces provide an isochronous service that provides latency along with delivering a 400−Mbps bandwidth that is required for transferring large images and other multimedia data. The Sun Blade 1000 workstation has two IEEE 1394 (6−pin) connectors on the rear panel.

Fiber Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC−AL)

Sun has been an early and aggressive adopter of Fiber Channel arbitrated loop (FC−AL) technology in its higher end systems and disk array technologies, with over 2000 terabytes of FC−AL storage already in the hands of Sun customers (as of October 2000). The Sun Blade 1000 workstation marks the debut of this exciting high−bandwidth (1 Gbit/second) technology in desktop systems, offering considerable performance advantage and deployment flexibility over the slower UltraSCSI technology. Only FC−AL disk drives are supported for internal disk storage in the Sun Blade 1000 workstations.

Graphics Variety and Power

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation provides access to Sun's most popular and most powerful graphics boards. All of the following products are supported:

- PGX32™ graphics (as X−option)
- Sun Creator3D series 3 graphics

- Sun Elite3D m6 graphics
- Sun Expert3D graphics (as X–option)

The most powerful of these graphics products are Sun Elite3D and Sun Expert3D graphics.

Sun Elite3D Graphics Series 2

Sun Elite3D graphics represents a high–powered graphics subsystem for the 3–D graphics market. Sun Elite3D graphics retains the basic underlying architecture of Sun Creator graphics while maintaining full API layer compatibility and transparent acceleration of 3–D graphics APIs. Like the Sun Creator graphics, Sun Elite3D graphics incorporates the visual instruction set (VIS™ instruction set). Sun Elite3D graphics comes in two models: Sun Elite3D m3 graphics offers users twice the performance of Sun Creator3D graphics while Sun Elite3D m6 graphics can provide four to five times the performance of Sun Creator3D graphics.

Sun Elite3D graphics provides very fast, high–quality transformation and display of 3–D solid and wireframe objects, and dramatically accelerates high–end functionality, such as double–buffering, triangle and quad rendering, and lighting and shading. At the same time, Sun Elite3D graphics accelerates 2–D objects that meet X11 rules. Fast 8–bit and 24–bit window system and imaging performance are provided. Sun Elite3D graphics systems provide 96–bit planes, including full 24–bit double–buffer planes required for smooth animation. A 28–bit Z–buffer is included to provide hardware assistance for hidden surface removal and dynamic rendering for 3–D objects. Sun Elite3D graphics accelerates 2–D objects, fast 8–bit and 24–bit windowing and imaging performance, along with acceleration for decompression and display of compress digital video.

Sun Elite3D graphics systems utilize 3D–RAM technology. This technology is responsible for implementing fast, inexpensive 3–D frame buffers. In addition, Sun Elite3D graphics has three (m3) or six (m6) on–board floating–point processors that speed up floating–point–intensive operations such as transformations, clip tests, face determinations, and lighting.

Sun Expert3D Graphics

Sun Expert3D graphics is Sun's latest high–end graphics product. It complements Sun Elite3D graphics, adding hardware–accelerated texture mapping required by many 3–D graphics applications in all of Sun's technical markets. The Sun Expert3D frame buffer provides Sun's most complete acceleration of the OpenGL® API to date, including 2–D and 3–D texture mapping, image processing, the Sun™ OpenGL® for Solaris™ 1.2.1 API, and a significant number of extensions beyond this API.

The Sun Expert3D frame buffer has similar geometry performance to Sun Elite3D m6 graphics, but its 64 MB of texture memory and hardware texture mapping provide up to seven times the performance of Sun Elite3D graphics in rendering 25–pixel, trilinear–textured, Z–buffered, and Gouraud–shaded triangles. The 64 MB of frame buffer memory allow high–resolution (1920 x1200), double–buffered displays and 1280 x 1024 stereo displays. Sun Expert3D frame buffer hardware supports full–scene antialiasing, but software support for this feature is not part of the initial release. Wide lines and polygon offset are fully accelerated by the hardware.

The Sun Expert3D frame buffer is a PCI 64–bit/66–MHz graphics card. The bus interface ASIC provides the host bus (64–bit PCI) interface for the graphics card. A geometry accelerator ASIC performs transform, clipping, and lighting, and a rasterization engine ASIC performs 2–D and 3–D rasterization, 2–D and 3–D texturing, pixel transfers, imaging, and fragment processing.

System Architecture

Technology Overview

Sun Blade™ 1000 workstation architecture was designed to provide high−performance multiprocessing power, scalability, reliability, and flexibility in a balanced package that does not compromise economy. The very high levels of integration achieved with Sun workstations through the use of application−specific integrated circuits (ASICs) have resulted in a greatly reduced part count, high reliability, and low cost without compromising access to a full complement of expansion options through high performance, standardized interfaces.

An architectural block diagram of the Sun Blade 1000 workstation board is shown in the figure below.

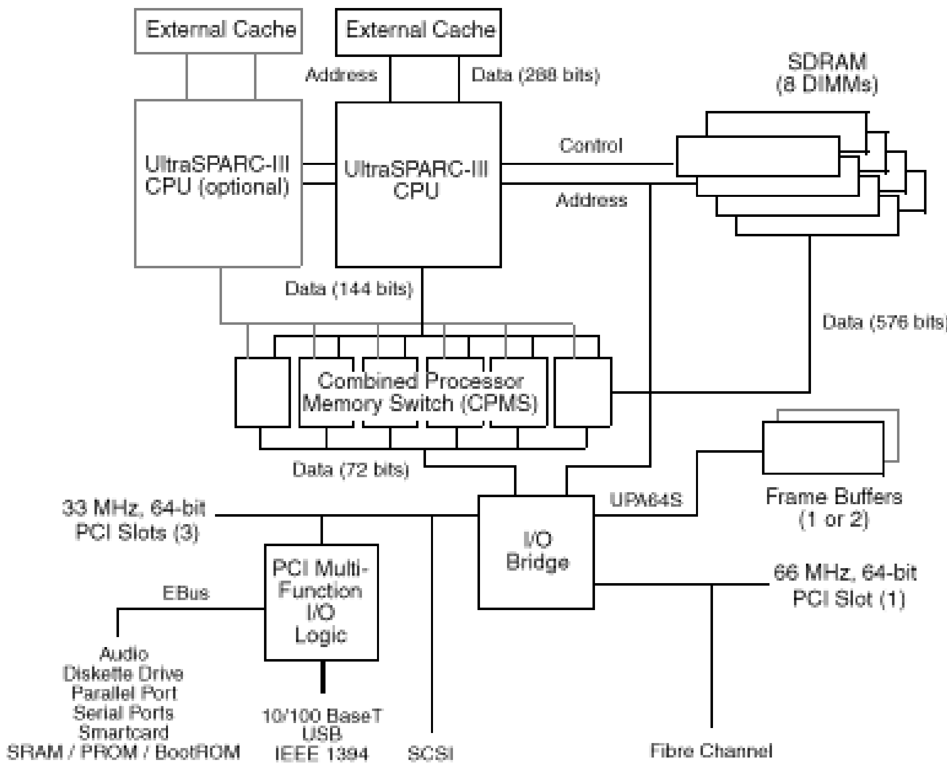

Figure 2: Architecture of the Sun Blade 1000 system

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation is designed for balanced system performance, accelerating applications at every step. Faster I/O and networking, together with the Sun™ Fireplane interconnect, allow fast data fetching. This new interconnect is based on a packet−switched, crossbar architecture. The Sun Blade 1000 workstation has nine buffered crossbar−switched processors that allow the memory and the graphics to interconnect. This architecture provides supercomputing power, and moves data through the interconnect at high speed.

Technical Fact Summary

- Sun's fastest performance uniprocessor and multi–processor Sun workstation; uses a 600–, 750– or 900–MHz UltraSPARC™–III processor
- High–performance system bus provides fast access to memory and graphics
- Flexible hard disk expandability
  - Up to two internal 36–GB FC–AL disks
  - Up to 72–GB of total disk storage
- High–performance memory subsystem
  - Up to 8 GB for configurations (using 8 x 1–GB DIMMs)
- Balanced system design
  - High performance interconnect at 150 MHz or nearly than 4.8 GB/second peak throughput.
  - Matching performance enhancement in I/O, networking, and memory access
    - Internal FC–AL interface for disk access
    - Innovative high–performance PCI I/O bus offering dual independent PCI buses, plus 66–MHz PCI support
- High–end graphics functionality and performance at mid–level prices with Sun Elite3D and Sun Expert3D graphics
- Expansion to advanced networking
  - Fast Ethernet, 100BASE–T, autosensing, and autoswitching to 10BASE–T for backward compatibility
  - PCI networking options include Gigabit Ethernet, ATM, token ring, and FDDI

UltraSPARC–III Processor

Sun Blade 1000 workstations are powered by up to two UltraSPARC–III processors with either 4 MB of external cache operating at 600 MHz or 8 MB of external cache operating at 750 or 900 MHz. Binary compatible with all Sun SPARC™ processor–based systems, the all–new UltraSPARC–III provides very high integer and floating–point performance to address the needs of the most computationally demanding applications. Capable of 64–bit data and addressing, UltraSPARC–III processors have a number of important features to improve operating system and application performance:

- Larger cache, improved branch prediction, lower cache latency, and higher clock rates all combine to double the performance of the UltraSPARC–III
- 6–way superscalar issue, no–stall 14 stage pipeline
- Enhanced VIS™ instruction set with three new instructions for high performance on multimedia and networking applications
- High–efficiency trap management
- Four–way associative on–chip 64–KB data and 32–KB instruction cache, with up to 8 MB of external level–two cache through integrated controller
- Integrated DRAM controller with support for up to 8 GB of memory can transfer data at up to 2.4 GB/sec.

Sun Fireplane Interconnect

In recent years, processor technology has moved so quickly that memory systems and interconnects have been hard−pressed to keep up. As a result, many designs fail to deliver the data bandwidth that modern processors are capable of. With the updated system interconnect, Sun Microsystems continues the tradition of providing superior memory and I/O bandwidth on its desktop systems.

Features of the new system interconnect include:

- Fast 150−MHz operating frequency offers greatly increased performance over previous designs
- Low latency memory access
- Completely separate address/control and data paths for flexible implementation
- Out−of−order transaction processing enables multiple "in−flight" transactions on the bus at one time.
- More economical implementation through distributed control (no central memory controller required)
- Integrated support for multiprocessor configurations
- 4.8 GB/sec. peak data bandwidth
- Separate address and data paths, so no ordering on data and better load balancing
- Distributed arbitration for address control; no need for central arbiter
- Boot bus provides alternate path for booting and diagnostic
- EnergyStar mode built−in
- ECC on data, parity on private data bus, parity on address control

The new Sun Fireplane interconnect directly connects the two UltraSPARC−III processors and the I/O bridge. The address bus runs at half the speed of the data paths, and utilizes DTL signaling. One of the major architectural innovations of this new interconnect is the ability to combine the simplicity of a single bus with the high bandwidth normally associated with a switch−based interconnect. This is accomplished with the complete separation and independence of address and data paths. The address and data paths in most computer systems are very closely related, especially in their low−level sequencing, forcing a strong coupling between the transport of addresses and data between system components. The system interconnect breaks away from this traditional methodology by completely separating the address and data paths—both at the topological level and in low−level sequencing.

Memory

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation supports up to 8 GB of 50−ns, 168−pin, 5−volt, dynamic RAM memory. Memory is organized into two banks of four DIMMs. DIMMs are added in groups of four.

Storage

Internal data storage for the Sun Blade 1000 workstation is provided by up to two , 18− or 36−GB, 3.5−inch, FC−AL disk drives. These 10000−rpm drives offer a peak data transfer rate of 100 MB/second.

In addition to its internal and external high−speed fixed storage capabilities, the Sun Blade 1000 workstation provides three removable media bays that support DVD−ROM, 1.44−MB, 3.5−inch manual−eject floppy, or 4−mm tape for software installation and system management.

Networking and I/O

All Sun Blade 1000 workstation models provide standard 100−Mbps Fast Ethernet which can autosense and drop to 10 Mbps operation. In addition, a wide range of serial I/O options are supported, bringing new capabilities and levels of performance to desktop workstations:

- **USB interface**

  Universal serial bus (USB) support is provided for low−speed devices. Initially devices such as the Sun Type−6 keyboard and mouse are supported along with USB hubs. The Sun Blade 1000 workstation has four USB connectors on the rear panel.

- **IEEE 1394 Interface**

  IEEE 1394—also known as FireWire® —has emerged as a new standard for medium speed devices such as digital cameras and digital video cameras. IEEE 1394 interface provides an isochronous service which helps ensure latency along with providing the needed 400 Mbps bandwidth for transferring large images and other multimedia data. The Sun Blade 1000 workstation has two IEEE 1394 connectors on the rear panel.

- **Fiber Channel arbitrated loop (FC−AL)**

  Sun has been an early and aggressive adopter of Fiber Channel arbitrated loop (FC−AL) technology in its higher end systems and disk array technology. The Sun Blade 1000 workstations mark the debut of this exciting high−bandwidth (1 Gbit/second) technology in desktop systems, offering considerable performance advantage and deployment flexibility over slower UltraSCSI. Only FC−AL disk drives are supported for internal storage in Sun Blade 1000 workstations.

- **SCSI**

  Sun Blade 1000 workstations still support 40−MB/second UltraSCSI (Fast−20) for support of internal removable media devices and legacy external SCSI devices. UltraSCSI is completely compatible with earlier fast (10 MB/second) and standard 8−bit (5 MB/second) SCSI peripherals. A standard external 68−pin connector is provided.

- **Terminal/modem interface**

  Two serial ports are provided, both supporting synchronous communication. The maximum baud rate is 384−Kbaud synchronous and 460.8−Kbaud asynch. Both RS232 and RS423 standards are supported via a software setting. The default configuration will be RS423. Connection is via two DB25 standard connectors.

Sun Creator3D Graphics Series 3 Overview

Sun Creator3D graphics series 3 is the latest generation of the Sun Creator graphics family of accelerators. With one architecture it can accelerate and support diverse types of graphic needs ranging from 8−bit and 24−bit windowing to high−end 3−D graphics.

Sun Creator graphics is designed as an integral part of Sun Blade and Sun Ultra™ workstations or Sun Enterprise™ servers and is, therefore, designed to take advantage of the UltraSPARC CPU performance increases to 300 MHz and beyond. The original generation of Sun Creator graphics has a single graphics/frame buffer clock for all on−board logic. This new generation has one clock for the internal graphics processing and another clock for the frame buffer. This design makes it possible to drive each part at its maximum speed.

Key Messages

- **Solid graphics performance**

  Sun Creator3D graphics performance is based upon the Sun Creator approach to designing graphics. In series 3, the Sun Creator graphics technology is enhanced, with up to 50 percent graphics performance improvement over series 1.

  – UltraSPARC CPU

  Sun Creator graphics relies on the power of the UltraSPARC CPU for floating point calculations, and on the visual instruction set (VIS software) to accelerate imaging–related operations. This eliminates the need for a dedicated graphics processor, and results in a significant cost advantage.

  – Ultra port architecture (UPA) high–speed interconnect for graphics

  UPA provides a high–speed, high–bandwidth interconnect between the CPU, Sun Creator graphics, and main memory. It raises overall graphics performance while maintaining a balanced throughput. Unlike the peripheral buses, such as SBus or PCI, the UPA interconnect ties Sun Creator graphics directly to the CPU and memory, and delivers greater bandwidth by orders of magnitude.

  UPA also allows Sun Creator3D to utilize main system memory for texturing, allowing large texture mapping possibilities.

  – Sun Creator–rendering ASIC (FBC2)

  A completely new ASIC, FBC2 renders graphic primitives at very high speeds. FBC2 accelerates fills, scrolling, text, lines, and polygon rendering.

  – 3D–RAM graphics memory

  This new generation of the 3D–RAM breakthrough in graphic memory provides high–bandwidth and built–in acceleration for 3–D graphics.

- **Scalable performance**

  The performance of Sun Creator3D graphics takes advantage of general system performance enhancements and will scale up with increases in CPU clock rate, making it unnecessary to upgrade graphics as new generations of CPUs become available.

- **More standard functionality**

  All Sun Creator graphics products come standard with high resolution and 24–bit true color, as well as an 8–bit overlay plane. Sun Creator3D graphics supports 24–bit double buffering and a 28–bit Z–buffer. In addition, stereo output support is built–in. Sun Creator graphics has established a new standard for workstation graphics functionality.

  Sun Creator3D graphics series 3 also add support for high–resolution monitors (up to 1920 x 1200) and hardware acceleration of color–space conversion during video playback.

  Four 8–bit color maps for dynamic color–map segment allocation within the 8–bit color overlay plane and support for adjustable gamma correction give applications greater access to colors even in 8–bit mode and give the user the ability to color adjust (gamma correct) for optimal display quality.

- **Fully compatible with existing APIs**

  Sun Creator graphics accelerates existing APIs, including OpenGL®, X11, XIL™, and XGL™ graphics libraries.

Sun Elite3D Graphics Overview

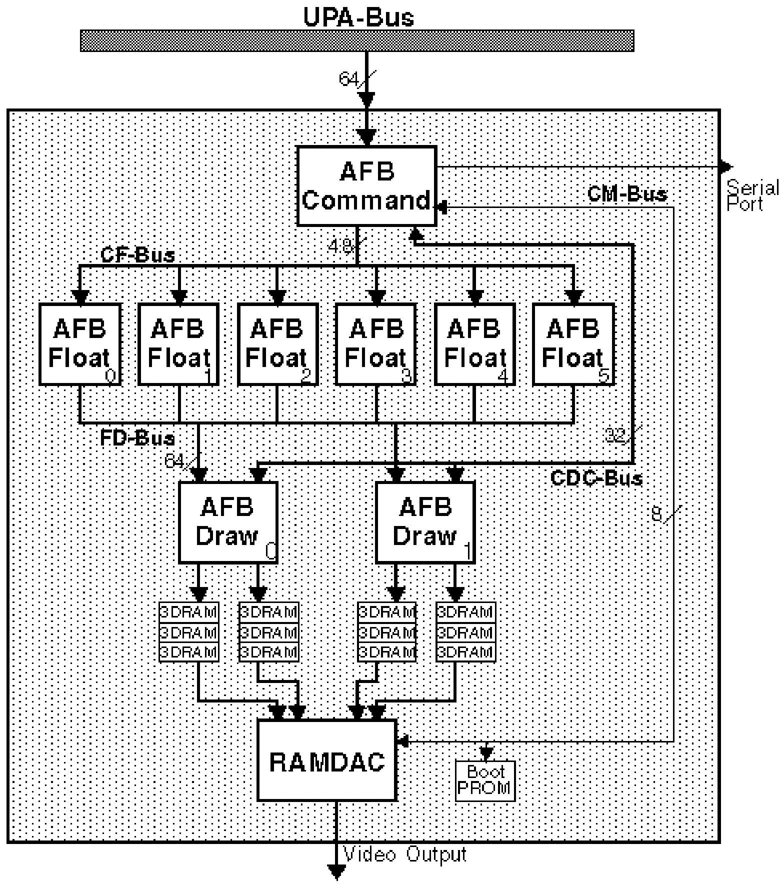

Figure 3: Sun Elite3D m6 graphics chip−level diagram

Sun Elite3D graphics greatly accelerates the rendering of 3−D triangles, vectors, and texture maps over what is possible with Sun Creator or a raw CPU. It does this by adding specialized graphics floating−point units and more powerful pixel−drawing chips. It supports a 1280 x 1024 96−bit−deep frame buffer, configured the same as the double−buffered and Z−buffered Sun Creator3D graphics. The 96−bit pixels support two 24−bit color buffers, an 8−bit pseudo−color overlay buffer and a 28−bit Z buffer, plus some miscellaneous control planes.

Sun Elite3D graphics has a highly parallel and efficient graphics pipeline. The Sun Elite3D graphics architecture uses a new generation of 3D−RAM chip. This chip speeds up a read/modify/write pixel access from 160 ns to 10 ns, changing all of the rules about graphics pipeline behavior.

AFB−Command, at the interface level, is a superset of the Sun Creator ASIC chip. The additional functionality supports rendering of model space geometry. The main change is to allow the most important bits to be packaged up into single−header words that can be passed down with the geometric data without stopping the pipeline. Additional functionality includes complete binary compatibility with the register set and functions of Sun Creator3D graphics and support for the OpenGL platform.

Given the technological changes brought on by 3D−RAM, the primary justification for the existence of a 3−D graphics accelerator is to deliver an order of magnitude more floating−point performance than a contemporary general purpose RISC CPU, at a price less than that of a single CPU and cache.

Sun Elite3D systems are available in two models, the m3 and the m6. Both models are supported on the Sun Blade 1000 workstations. Sun Elite3D m6 graphics provides a high level of performance with six high−performance, floating−point processors. Sun Elite3D m3 graphics reduces this number to three processors, providing greater economy.

The Sun Elite3D m6 graphics accelerator comes as part of some of the standard Sun Blade 1000 configurations. It provides significantly higher levels of performance and functionality than the m3 model including:

- Standard 24−bit color, 1280 x 1024 resolution, MPEG playback acceleration at 30+ frames per second, greater than 4.7 million 2−D vectors per second, greater than 8.2 million 3−D vectors per second, over 5.9 million triangles per second, and on−board image acceleration functions.
- 88−bit planes, including full 24−bit double−buffer planes for smooth animation. A 28−bit Z−buffer is included to provide support for hidden surface removal and dynamic rendering of 3−D objects.
- Support for a wide array of important graphics functions, including Bresenham lines; polygons; fonts; accelerated dots, lines, triangles, and quadrilaterals; antialiasing of dots and lines; Gouraud shaded triangles; specular lighting; hardware per−pixel depth cueing; transparency; texture map support; compressed 3−D geometry decompression; viewport clipping; flexible blending operations; and a full set of Boolean operations.
- Sun/Mitsubishi developed 3D−RAM to improve 3−D graphics rendering performance
- Exploits the high floating−point performance and VIS instruction set of the UltraSPARC−III processor
- High speed RAMDAC can display 8−bit and 24−bit images simultaneously, and features a programmable video timing generator for multiple resolution support
- Completely compatible with existing Sun graphics APIs, including X11, XGL, and XIL graphics libraries. Also compatible with the OpenGL API, a vendor−neutral 2−D and 3−D graphics API In line with its philosophy of uninhibited expansion potential, the Sun Blade 1000 workstation has two UPA64S slots to allow "dual−headed" (two monitor) Sun Elite3D graphics operation.

Sun Elite3D Graphics Features and Benefits

Features	Benefits
• Integrated imaging	• Performs fast imaging and 3−D on unified frame buffer
• Very high−performance, accelerated, 24−bit, double−buffered 3−D graphics	• Smooth animation and interactivity of 3−D graphics
• 28−bit Z−buffer	• Improves visual quality and depth accuracy
• 8−bit overlay plane	• Allows overlay of 8−bit windows on top of the 24−bit visuals without damaging the underlying visual, allowing virtually seamless integration and manipulation of windows
• Gouraud shading	• Allows smooth shading of solid geometry
• Acceleration for geometry decompression	• Allows complex compress geometry to be decompressed at hardware rates
• Alpha blending and screen door transparency	• Simulates transparent materials such as glass
• Line and big dot antialiasing	• Needed in MCAD and visualization for better visual quality

Features	Benefits
• Per–pixel depth cueing	• More accurate depth cueing or fog
• Per–pixel alpha interpolation	• Variable transparency
• 4–bit stencil support with hardware acceleration of OpenGL API stencil functions	• Enables hardware acceleration for OpenGL API
• Accelerated lighting	• More lights can be turned on for enhanced visual display without encountering large performance penalties
• Four 8–bit color maps	• Dynamic color map segment allocation when running 8–bit window systems should eliminate color flashing problems
• Adjustable gamma correction	• Allows users to gamma–correct visuals for enhanced visual quality
• NTSC/PAL video timing support	• Supports frame buffer to video timing
• Stereo 960 x 680 at 112 Hz supported with 21–inch monitor	• With frame buffer, monitor, and window systems support for stereo, users can see better representation of 3–D data
• 1280 x 1024 at 76–Hz resolution standard	• High–resolution display quality
• Two serial–port connectors	• For VR peripherals
• Dual–headed support: two Sun Elite3D m6 frame buffers and/or two Sun Creator3D frame buffers	• For users who need to be able to do multiple things simultaneously, such as command and control applications, 3–D and video playback for animators, design and analysis for engineers, and so on
• Sun™ OpenGL® for Solaris™ 1.2.1, XGL 3.0, XIL, X, and Java 3D™ API support	• A choice of APIs
• Binary compatibility with Sun Creator graphics product family	• Interoperability with existing applications and users

Sun Expert3D Graphics Overview

The Sun Blade 1000 workstation configurations with Sun Expert3D graphics offer a high–performance graphics adapter with on–board texture mapping memory. This PCI graphics adapter provides an outstanding and affordable high–performance graphics solution for demanding 2–D and 3–D graphics applications that specifically require hardware–based texture mapping acceleration.