

Changes to rendering in Autodesk Maya 2017

Questions and Answers

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Overview

With the release of Autodesk® Maya® 2017 on July 25th 2016, Autodesk will replace the rendering software it includes with Maya. Moving forward, we will no longer include licenses for NVIDIA's mental ray with Maya, instead, customers will be able to use Arnold as the default out-of-the-box renderer for foreground processing. Customers who need to scale their rendering will be able to choose the renderer that best supports their needs, whether it is mental-ray, Arnold, V-Ray, Renderman, Octane, Redshift or another third party renderer.

1. So what exactly is/is not changing with Autodesk Maya 2017

On July 25th 2016, Autodesk will make the following changes when it ships Maya 2017:

- Autodesk will **no longer provide mental ray licenses to customers** with Maya 2017.
- Customers **will have access to the Arnold renderer** for foreground processing with Maya 2017.
- Arnold will be the default renderer included with the Maya 2017 software download.
- Customers who wish to use mental ray with Maya 2017 will be able to purchase new licenses and download the mental ray plug-in directly from NVIDIA.
- Customers currently using mental ray with previous versions of Maya are unaffected by these changes.
- Maya support for third party renderers such as: mental ray, V-Ray, Renderman, Octane and Redshift will be unaffected. Licenses for these renderers can be obtained from the companies that develop them and/or their authorized resellers (if any).
- These changes apply to all customers who download and install Maya 2017 including new and existing subscribers as well as customers on an Autodesk maintenance plan.

2. Why is Autodesk making these changes?

Earlier this year Autodesk purchased Solid Angle, the company that develops Arnold, with the goal of adding high-quality rendering to our product portfolio. As a result of this acquisition, we have decided to create an open rendering ecosystem for our products where different renderers, including both mental ray and Arnold can compete equally. For this reason, we will no longer be bundling mental ray, or another background renderer, with Maya. There is a lot of innovation happening in rendering at the moment and with more and more choices in terms of speed, price, quality and capability we want to allow customers to choose the renderer that works that best for them.

However, we also believe that Maya should have the ability to produce high-quality renders out-of-the-box. We will therefore include the ability for customers to use Arnold *foreground processing* within Maya so that you can get started creating amazing content immediately.

3. Who is affected by these changes?

These changes will affect any customers who download and install **Autodesk Maya 2017**. This includes new and existing subscribers as well as customers who download the software as part of their maintenance plan. It does not impact customers using older/previous versions of Maya.

4. What are my options if I want to continue using mental ray with Maya 2017 and later?

If you want to continue to use mental ray with Maya 2017 and subsequent releases you will need to purchase new licenses and download the plug-in directly from NVIDIA. Before installing Maya 2017, **please contact NVIDIA** to check pricing and availability of their plug-in for Maya 2017. More information about NVIDIA and mental ray may be found on their [website](#).

5. What about 3ds Max customers? You just announced an Arnold plug-in, will we be impacted?

These changes do not currently affect Autodesk® 3ds Max® customers who will continue to receive mental ray licenses as before. However, that may change in the future. We are excited to announce the new MAXtoA plug-in for Arnold at SIGGRAPH and we will keep you posted of developments as we continue the integration.

6. Will adding Arnold affect the way mental ray and other third party renderers work with Maya?

No, we are committed to supporting third party renderers, including NVIDIA's mental ray. We will continue to work closely with our render partners to make sure their solutions work well with Maya. With new and diverse renderers constantly appearing on the market, each with their own distinctive benefits, we want to make sure you can continue to use whatever renderer best works for your needs – and that our software works as well with the renderers you prefer to use as with any other 3D software out there.

7. But doesn't including Arnold with Maya put your render partners at disadvantage?

Maya customers will be able to use Arnold out-of-the-box. However, it can only be used for foreground processing on your workstation. You will need to purchase additional Arnold licenses if you wish to scale your rendering capability using either a render farm or the cloud. This helps put Arnold on an equal footing with other third party renderers and allows customers to freely choose which renderer they wish to license when planning their workflows.

8. When will the mental ray plug-in be available for Maya 2017?

NVIDIA will release mental ray for Maya 2017 soon after it completes final testing on the publicly released version of Maya 2017. You can try the Beta version right now by emailing mental-ray-beta@nvidia.com.

9. I am a Maya mental ray user with an active maintenance plan. What should I do?

As long as you continue using your current version of Maya nothing will change. However, when the time comes to upgrade to Maya 2017 you may wish to purchase new rendering licenses.

Here is what we recommend:

- Carefully evaluate whether you will need additional rendering capability beyond foreground rendering using Arnold with each license of Maya 2017. **Note:** The Arnold functionality included with Maya 2017 can only be used within the Maya application, and cannot be not used to render your projects in the background or on a render farm.
- Choose which renderer you wish to invest in. Now is a good time to do some research to find out which renderer works best for your budget/needs.

- Once you have made your decision purchase the licenses you need directly from the developer:
 - mental ray from NVIDIA
 - Arnold from Autodesk
 - Or Renderman, V-Ray, Octane, Redshift, etc from their respective developers

You should now be able to upgrade to Maya 2017 with the full rendering capability you need to get your projects done.

10. As a Maya subscriber using mental ray, what should I do?

If you wish to continue using mental ray, you will need to purchase licenses and download your software directly from NVIDIA. Please refer to **Question 9** on how we recommend you should proceed.

11. Will I be able to purchase mental ray licenses for Maya 2017 from Autodesk?

No, customers who need mental ray licenses for Maya 2017 will need to purchase them directly from NVIDIA. However, Autodesk will continue to sell additional standalone licenses of mental ray for previous versions of Maya, including Maya 2016.

12. I am using a previous version of Maya and need additional mental ray licenses. Can I still buy these from Autodesk and/or its resellers?

Yes, if you are using previous versions of Maya (Maya 2016 and older) you can still continue to purchase mental ray standalone licenses from Autodesk and its authorized channel partners until further notice.

13. Can I continue to purchase mental ray licenses from my reseller for Maya 2017?

Autodesk channel partners will not be authorized to sell mental ray licenses for Maya 2017. However, they may have a separate distribution contract with NVIDIA that enables them to do so. Contact your reseller or NVIDIA directly to find out more on how you can purchase the mental ray plug-in for Maya 2017.

14: I am using mental ray with Maya 2016, can't I just use it with Maya 2017?

Upgrading to Maya 2017 will break compatibility with all previous versions of mental ray, you will require the new mental ray plug-in for Maya 2017 which is coming out from NVIDIA (see **question 9**).

15. Will my Maya scenes created using mental ray shaders still be compatible with Maya 2017?

Yes, Maya scenes containing mental ray shaders will still be compatible with Maya 2017 but will require a compatible version of mental ray to be installed. **This will need to be purchased separately.** Out-of-the-box, Maya 2017 will not support mental ray shaders with non-compatible versions of mental ray.

16. Will Maya 2017 notify me if I load a setup that includes mental ray shaders but do not have mental ray installed?

Yes, Maya 2017 will warn you if you try to load a scene that includes mental ray shaders but do not have a compatible version of mental ray for Maya installed. You can choose to cancel the load or continue and replace the shaders with new ones that are compatible with Arnold or another renderer you have chosen.

17. Where can I go to get support for mental ray for Maya 2017?

Autodesk will continue to offer support for previous versions of mental ray. Contact NVIDIA for information on support for mental ray for Maya 2017.

18. I am using mental ray standalone, what do I need to know?

If you have previously purchased a mental ray standalone license from Autodesk, you will continue to be supported by Autodesk. You can also continue to purchase additional licenses of versions of mental ray, prior to the mental ray plugin for Maya 2017, from Autodesk for now. However, we strongly recommend that you contact NVIDIA as they will be transitioning standalone licenses purchased from Autodesk to NVIDIA licenses at no additional cost. This will ensure that going forward you will continue to be able to receive the latest product updates and support from NVIDIA.

19. I am currently using mental ray with Maya. Do I have to switch to Arnold?

No, there is no obligation to switch. You can continue to use mental ray. NVIDIA will continue to offer mental ray for Maya as a plug in. Mental ray will continue to be an option for Maya users. Please contact NVIDIA for more details on pricing and availability.

20. Can I install Maya 2017 without installing Arnold?

There is no requirement to install Arnold. You can simply choose to opt out of the Arnold installation by disabling the Arnold for Maya option during the installation process.

21. With Maya 2017, can I use Arnold stand ins to help simplify render complexity?

Yes, Maya 2017 will allow you to export stand ins as well as to load them using the MtoA StandIn Create option. Similarly you can both export and import .ass files. You will however need to render such files from within Maya or purchase an Arnold license to batch process them.

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