



# LEWA Line Drops

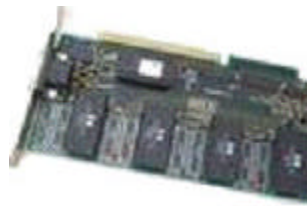
A monthly publication for the Solidworks Users in the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Midwest Area



## Setting up your video card for Solidworks

Anyone using SolidWorks has found out or will find out that having a good video card is essential. Don't skip on this if you can help it. Spending your day fighting the computer and software at every turn with ghosting, blockiness, and large blank gaps on your screen will eventually find you on the roof with an Uzi (or your weapon of choice- Don't let the HR Dept read this!) Through research, forums, VAR support, or just plain plagiarism, here are some simple tips for getting the most out of your video card.

ware OpenGL disables graphics adapter hardware acceleration and enables graphics rendering using only software. For most graphics cards, this results in slower performance. This is typically used for troubleshooting or is automatically selected and unavailable for change if



"Is your OpenGL closed? Not sure if you are rendered or raster shaded. Here's the article for you!"

1) Open GL, what is it? What do I do with it? Soft-

your graphics card does not support hardware acceleration, or does not support it for the current combination of resolution, number of colors, refresh rate, and so forth

2) What is happening when I get white blocks in my screen or I minimize a window and it still shows on the screen? This is generally caused by a back buffer issue. What is meant by that is that there is a buffer within your video card, when this buffer gets too full it tends to not refresh your screen as fast or sometimes not at **(cont'd page 2)**

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### Special points of interest:

- Got something to contribute, want to write an article, submit your ideas here
- What do you want to see in LEWA Line drops. Drop us a line
- We still need ideas for our usergroup meetings, no idea too crazy, no subject off limits. Send us your ideas!

## SolidWorks Standardization: Organization vs. Chaos

Here is the first installment of the ongoing series about trying to standardize Solidworks. Anyone who uses it knows that there are a million ways to make your life easier, either through macros, favorites, custom properties and tem-

plates, blocks, and Design libraries. Anyone who has had their boss say "You're in charge of this..." Has at first felt excited and then after diving in with both feet, felt like they just got dropped into the deep end of the pool with ce-

ment blocks tied to them. What to do? Options? Are you a dictator with iron control over everything, if you are you've probably found that people are circumventing you and doing their own things. Are you **(con't page 2)**



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## Setting up your video card (con't...)

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all. This can be particularly frustrating as the user is probably switching between screens and now can't see what he or she is doing on in their SolidWorks screen. How to fix it, get a bigger, better graphics card.

**3) Funny things are happening with SolidWorks, I get ghosting of images, when I rotate, things are jerky. What's going on?** Ahhh my friend, it sounds like you might have video card driver issues. It

seems those pesky little drivers are always getting updated. I wonder why the companies can't ever get them right the first time? Now, I know there are some on the ball people out there who go out and religiously look for driver updates for their cards. Hooray for you! BE CAREFUL!!!! I went out and downloaded updated drivers for our department's computers and made things worse! Just because it's the latest, don't mean it's the greatest! I now go to SolidWork's page and download only the latest tested and certified drivers from the links at

their page. Here is the link:

<http://www.solidworks.com/pages/services/VideoCardTesting.html>

Now there might be more that I need to cover, or forgotten something. If you the reader have a clever work-around or other tidbits you'd like to add. Send them in. I'll run another article with more helpful tips.

## Organization vs. Chaos con't...

(...con't from page 1)

the laid back surfer type? Then everyone already is doing what they want. Management by the chaos theory. That is until you need to clean everything up. Where's the happy medium on this? Our Department's take on this was to create a network folder with all things that we have created or changed that pertain to Solidworks. templates, textures, blocks, favorites, etc... Easy right? No it isn't, within our Company we have at least four different Departments using Solidworks. And everyone of them has different functions and needs within our Company. Some need custom templates for full scale printing, others need different blocks and BOMs. But **EVERYONE** wants it their way right away. Sounds like Burger King and Wal-Mart all rolled into one. Custom make everything and the customer is always right. That's when things tend to get out of hand. Can't get to it right away, "Don't worry, I'll do it myself..." We've all done that. Fine and dandy if you have strict guidelines and rules along with a checking procedure in place to review what is be-

"...Are you a dictator with iron control over everything?..."

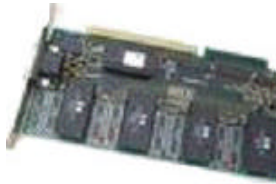
ing created by your department's users, most of the time this is not the case. Someone names a block after the type of day they're having, pretty difficult for the new guy in the department to decipher what Dumba\$\$.sldblk really contains. Ever get the anal-retentive user who calls their blocks 16mmoffsetanglewithzerodegreespin.sldblk? Where's the common sense in this, too far one way no one can figure out what it is, too far the other way and you're wasting space in the explorer with alphabet soup. These are the problems that we faced. Initially one person in the Department was creating blocks and templates and keeping everyone satisfied, then the work was piling up and others started creating their own blocks, templates, and attempts at library features. After a while this person went out to the network folder and

found multiple copies of templates that did the same thing, only under different names. One department had created features that the other departments couldn't use. Suddenly the fun task turned into a nightmare. Where to start to clean this up? First thing to do is take stock of what you got. Find out if anyone is using those templates that are out there. Does the guy you hired last year who only worked for you a couple of months really care if you delete some of his stuff? Communication is the key in this phase. Talk to the people who created all of your data, what do they use, what can we redo better now? Should we place everything on the network or let them work from the local hard drive? Ask these questions, listen to your customers. After that is done now you will need to re-organize things again. What worked the first time,? What didn't work? Don't be afraid of changing things, initially there will be conflict, there always is. After everyone sees how much better things are after the new way, change will become easier. If the new way doesn't work any better  
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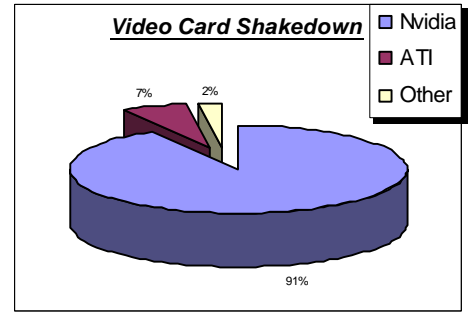
## LEWA Survey results on video cards

Results are in for the LEWA Area Solidworks user group and it looks like the winner is... NVIDIA! From the general consensus of our area users, everyone seems to be using NVIDIA based video cards. ATI was running a distant second and then a few reports of higher end video cards such as Wildcat cards and the likes. It seems in my opinion that NVIDIA is one of the best video card companies out there that want to work with Solidworks to make sure that their card is certified and working with the software. Many companies such as Dell, and HP also bundle NVIDIA cards with their workstations. ATI video cards as of several years ago didn't seem to

play nice with SolidWorks. ATI seems to be reversing this trend as of late. Looking out at the SolidWorks website, ATI seems to be making cards that are both functional and compatible with SolidWorks. Several readers wrote in that they were using some of the



*Video card survey results right here, see where you stack up against your neighbor.*



higher end Wildcat cards and definitely are getting what they paid for. These type of cards are designed with CAD users in mind and have the processors and memory to maximize SolidWorks' potential. The downside, they do cost quite a bit more than the NVIDIA or ATI cards.

## LEWA User group looking to expand membership

As a user group we are always looking to expand and get more area users to come to our meetings. Everyone benefits from the added membership, except maybe in the door prize area, the more people the less odds on getting something at the end of the meeting. But that aside, the Leadership of the LEWA group is always on the look-out for new members. We do understand that it is tough sometimes for our people to make the time in their busy schedules to come to the meetings, but ask anyone in our group, and I'll bet dollars to donuts that they learned something they didn't know before they came. It's also a great place to look for

potential employees. We are having more and more students from the area colleges coming to our meetings (they're looking for jobs and free food at the meeting!) If you know of someone who is using Solidworks or looking to get Solidworks, bring them along, bring your bosses along too! Show them that the couple hours you spend at our meetings are well worth the time. Even if you don't use SolidWorks you are welcome. We've had several companies and individuals who don't use SolidWorks come to the meeting and participate. We are looking for ideas and ways to better serve our membership and expand to become the premiere



user group in our area and several states. So come on over and take in some down home hospitality at the LEWA User group meeting. Check us out online at :

[www.LEWAUSERGROUP.org](http://www.LEWAUSERGROUP.org)

## Organization vs. Chaos con't...

*(...cont from page 2)*

than the old way, try another approach, it's been my experience that departments sometimes practice to be miserable and limp along with something that doesn't work because changing it will cause a lot of re-work and conflict. Plow forward with your reclamation project, the effort and the payoff are there. It might take a couple of months and

a lot of hassle, but after the shock of something new is gone and people see that you are trying to make their lives easier, things should come around. After that, pick core members from these areas and form a group or committee to begin your organization of Solidworks. This creates buy in from the different departments and also brings knowledge from the different areas to bear

on issues that you can't handle by yourself. From there pick a strategy to constantly re-evaluate what you're doing and how you're doing it.

**Next month's article:** To automate or not to automate, that is the question. Or, where's the do my job button?

[www.LEWAUSERGROUP.org](http://www.LEWAUSERGROUP.org)

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**Quote of the day:**

**"...I thought you was dead???"**  
**Reply: "Not hardly!"**

**-John Wayne in Big Jake**

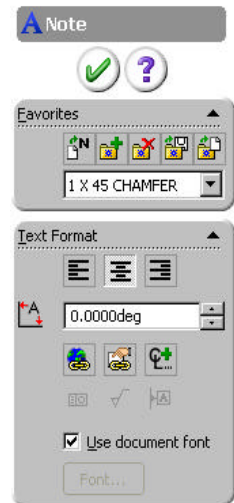


The LEWA User group is a non-profit organization of Wisconsin and Minnesota area Solidworks professionals and VARs that meets 4 times a year to discuss and enlighten each other of the use of the Solidworks modeling software. During these meetings we have presentations by our local VARs and users on a multitude of Solidworks topics. Topics have ranged from API training to Photoworks, sheetmetal, and other interesting topics that cover the many facets of Solidworks. Our membership is also as varied as our topics. We have a wide membership area covering cities as far North as Rice Lake to South of the Winona area and as far west as Rochester. Our group's area covers almost two states and we have people who drive several hours to attend our meetings. Anyone and everyone are welcome! Come take in the food, prizes and fun atmosphere.

## SolidWorks Tips & Tricks of the month

### Tip of the month: Creating favorites that rotate easy.

OK, here's something my office just found out this week. When you create a favorite that you want to put in the Design Library folder, and then drag it into a drawing, the option "Use document font" is automatically checked. What this will do is when you want to rotate this favorite in your drawing, a warning will come up that creating a note at an angle other than zero will clear the Use document font check box. You then have to click on OK to get rid of the warning and then go and rotate the note. When the note is being created and before you save it as a favorite, make sure this check box is unchecked and then save it. When you go to rotate the note in the drawing, you will not get the warning. Clicks saved: 2



## Member Close-up: A LEWA profile

Hi, my name is Don Quinn. Having been pretty much an introvert most of my life I find this task that our esteemed president has assigned to me quite difficult to say the most. Anyway having finished helping out Uncle Sam from 1967 to 1971 I began trying to make a living as a heavy truck mechanic down in a town called Pleasantville WI. I eventually found myself as the service manager of the dealership and decided it was time to simplify my life by becoming a Fleet Manager for a food processor with a 432 truck fleet. This is where I really decided to simplify my life by attempting to self teach myself as to whether or not a computer might help control this mess, (Commodore 64 anyone?) Anyway once this was



*Don Quinn- That shy quiet guy with a soothing voice at the karaoke machine. A best hits CD coming soon!*

completed, about 13 years ago I decided it was time to just go and work 8 hours a day so I started at what was then called AMSCO as a fabricator on the line for 3 years. After starting here I decided to once again simplify my life by agreeing to move into the Engineering department as a Model maker/Product Drafter. Our name has since changed to Homeshield and I have once again further simplified my life by agreeing to use a basically undocumented configure-to-order software module that came with our new ERP software package. Is there a pattern here??? Any way, when not at the Day Job I spend summer weekends on Big McKenzie lake on my pontoon and run the Karaoke show at the resort bar I have a seasonal campsite at.

## LEWA Member Survey:

What do you want to see, in the next issue of LEWA Line drops? Ideas for articles are welcome. Want to try your hand at writing, send in an article to publish. Comments, corrections, send them in! We are always on the lookout for new ideas for articles or stories. Please submit any ideas or articles for publishing to:

[sjohnson@ashleyfurniture.com](mailto:sjohnson@ashleyfurniture.com)

