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ATI launches new flagship graphics chip family X1900

By [Wolfgang Gruener](#)

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Markham (ON) - ATI today announced a new graphics chip that will replace the X1800 series as firm's fastest desktop product. The new X1900 will be available in four flavors, carry 48 shader processors and offer substantially more performance than the preceding graphics chip. The company promises that X1900 cards will be available today - for suggested retail prices up to \$650.

The launch of the X1900 follows close on the heels of volume availability of the preceding X1800 series - which was announced in early October of last year, but did not hit retail until November. Add in the six-month delay of the X1800 and the X1900 is just about on schedule again to be ATI's new graphics chip for this year.



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In fact, even if the X1900 may appear to many users to be more of a mid-cycle update for the X1800, its features are substantially different. The X1900 now carries 48 shader

processors, up from the X1800's 16. The new high-end option X1900 XTX increases the X1800 XT's core clock from 625 to 650 MHz, while memory speed is increased from 1.5 to 1.55 MHz. ATI claims that a 3x increase in shader units results in "rich, vibrant scenes" and "brings games to life." Compared to "the nearest competitor," ATI promises that games will run up to 60% faster.



ATI X1900 boxes

The performance enhancement will also offer an overall increase in floating point operations, according to the manufacturer - providing enough room for the firm's planned opening of its hardware platform to allow third party developers to write non-graphics-related applications to run on the graphics processor. The X1900 now offers a performance of 554 GFlops, compared to 273 GFlops of the X1800. ATI did not provide an update when it may open up the hardware and enable a "load balancing" feature.

The X1900 is available in a basic version called X1900 XT, the performance model XTX, a multi-GPU Crossfire version as well as an All-in-Wonder multimedia variant.

The All-in-Wonder X1900 is positioned as the entry-level model with \$500, while the X1900 XT (625 MHz core /1.45 GHz memory) is priced at \$550 and the XTX model (650 MHz/1.55 GHz) checks in at \$650. The Crossfire version is based on the XT model and lists for \$600. The prices are substantially higher than what previous graphics cards generations listed for. And even 512 MB of memory are standard, \$650 for a new graphics card may be hard to swallow.

ATI promises to "hard-launch" the X1900 series: Company representatives told TG Daily that the X1900 has been in full production for more than four weeks and that there will be ample availability to meet demand. We were not able to verify availability of X1900 cards in the first hours after launch - but ATI seems to be quite confident that the cards will be available today and sent us a picture that is said to show X1900 cards arriving at the storage facility of retailer Newegg.

Read the The Tom's Hardware review of the X1900 chip here:

[ATI's Radeon X1900 Heats Up With 48 Pixel Pipelines](http://www.tomshardware.com/2006/01/24/ati_radeon_x1900_heats_up_with_48_pixel_pipelines/)

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UPDATE 24 Jan 2006 13:00 EST: X1900 graphics cards began appearing on several retailer websites by noon today with prices reaching up to \$700 for Crossfire-enabled XTX models.

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