

Astro Studios

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Customer Success Story

Autodesk® AliasStudio™



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President
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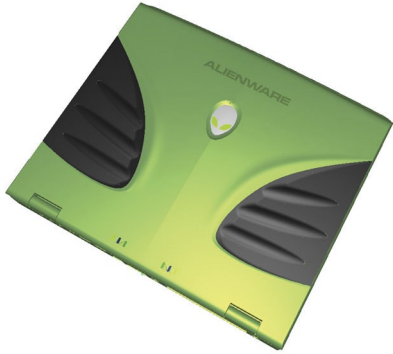
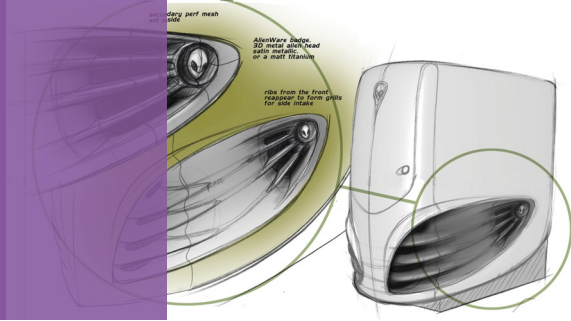
Astro Studios' Sci-Fi Design for Alienware PC Wins Gamers Hearts

Autodesk® AliasStudio™ helps Astro create the extreme computer's complex shape

Project Summary

A couple of computer geeks are hanging out in Miami, tweaking systems so their games work better. The next thing you know they're running a \$100 million company called Alienware®, selling high performing PCs that look like they came from outer space. It's a modern day twist on the classic Cinderella story and cutting edge design firm, Astro Studios, helped make it happen by creating Alienware's iconic sci-fi brand of products.

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The Challenge Creating Expressive Designs

"Astro Studios focuses on creating products that are relevant to the user and reflect the cultural influences around that user," explains Brett Lovelady, president of Astro. "In the case of Alienware, users express themselves in ways different from the mainstream culture. The target user group is young, online gamers who like science fiction, comic books and new technologies. We sought to embody that total brand personality in a 3D form."

Astro used Autodesk® AliasStudio™ to create an all new look, something that would establish a clear brand identity. Until then Alienware had been making unique computer "internals," but the outside of the computer was generic. Astro lead designer Nate Cervantes and 3D director Adam Barry worked with Lovelady to create not just a front custom bezel, but a complete 360-degree uniquely molded skin.

The Solution Flexible 3D Modeling

"Autodesk AliasStudio allows us to control complex surfaces better than anything else out there," explains Lovelady. "With it we can address the true subtleties of product design, expressing translucent or transparent properties and dealing with small surface changes and reflection. It's that really great look and feel that we're after. Autodesk AliasStudio helps us get it."

Astro sometimes uses Autodesk AliasStudio for active exploded views and full 3D tours of a product design, but the software is most often used for rapid visualization. "We grab different views, light them in different ways, add details,"

says Lovelady. "Sometimes we'll put together some quick surfaces in Autodesk AliasStudio and then export to PhotoShop to sketch over the top, but we're finding ourselves doing less exporting and relying more on Autodesk AliasStudio as an illustration tool because it's so well adapted to the process of form manipulation and conceptualization."

The Result Product Progression

Astro studios developed many ideas and concept refinements to tackle the complex task of providing an efficient system for cooling and airflow. The results speak for themselves—Alienware tripled its sales in just half a year and the current design is adaptable for future requirements.

The second generation Alienware desktop computer, the ALX, features an even higher speed processor than the original, so fast that it has to be liquid cooled. Astro anticipated this product development path by designing the original so that only one part needed to be removed for an easy upgrade."

"Designing a product like this is a complex task," explains Lovelady. "Not every computer needs to be refrigerated. We had to adapt our design to real world constraints like cooling and airflow and at the same time develop a strong persona that was appealing and expressive."

Judging by the awards the design has won and the fact that Alienware has tripled its sales since the brand was introduced—in just a year and a half—it looks like Astro has succeeded in accomplishing its goal.

The freedom and flexibility found in Autodesk AliasStudio software enabled Astro Studios to easily create and manipulate the complex forms required to develop the unique, sci-fi style of this product. They focused on creating a look and feel that reflects the cultural influences of Alienware's customer base.