

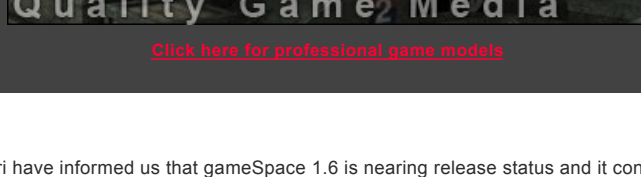


As I write this we're into the final few days of 2004, Christmas is looming and we're all looking forward to a well deserved festive break, away from our computers. But do not fear - 2005 is going to be an action packed year for us! We will see FPS Creator released in January, Upgrades for both DarkBASIC Professional and the Dark Game SDK, a brand new Physics library and a lot more. Looking back over the year it has certainly been one of progression. The range of products we sell has doubled, we've had a great coding competition, have seen some brilliant new releases and welcomed thousands more of you into the community. This is a trend we're keen to continue next year.

I'm not one for New Years resolutions very much, but we'll certainly try and get the newsletter released a little earlier in the month :) Whatever your resolutions are, we hope you stick to them and that they are productive. 2005 is going to be a very big year for us all indeed. To those of you who celebrate it - Merry Christmas from all at The Game Creators!

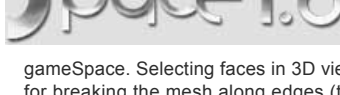
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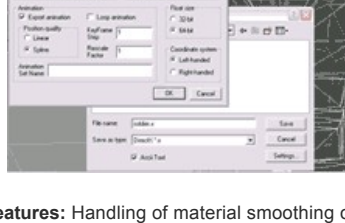
[Click here for professional game models](#)

gameSpace 1.6 is coming



Caligari have informed us that gameSpace 1.6 is nearing release status and it contains some great new features: The main changes we've made in gameSpace 1.6 include easier and more powerful UV Editing tools, better X format import and export, improved support for Conitec 3D Game Studio format, and stability improvements to third party plug-in Puppeteer.

UV Editor Changes: The UV Editor is now modeless, so it is possible to keep it open while working in the 3D views in gameSpace. Selecting faces in 3D view selects the same faces in the UV Editor, and vice versa. User can set color of the UV mesh in the UV Editor. Better interface for breaking the mesh along edges (to disconnect selected faces from the rest of the UV mesh). Interface to specify the resolution of the image exported from UV Editor in cases where no texture is previously assigned. UV projection tools can be run with UV Editor opened. Improved stability of UV Editor



Perhaps of most interest to you will be the new **X Format Features:** Handling of material smoothing on X format export improved, with greater user control over the options on export. Switch to export keyframes from GS added (rather than just use "step value"). Animation exported correctly when the object only has kinematic animation. Correct import of shininess value. Correct scaling of object on import. Correct import of DDS texture with transparency. Correct import of hierarchical vertex animation. Vertex animation from binary files correctly read. X files without header read correctly. Option to export texture to different formats and different resolutions.

You can buy gameSpace 1.5 from our on-line shop today and you will receive 1.6 upgrade details as soon as they become available.

For more information visit: <http://www.thegamecreators.com/>

DarkBASIC Professional Upgrade 5.8

One of our key developers, Mike Johnson has been busy working on the new 5.8 Upgrade for DarkBASIC Professional. This upgrade is set to address a number of the issues reported in the bug forum as well as bringing new features to the fold.

The new upgrade will fix several issues including multiple camera problems, model loading, sticky collision with BSP, some problems with transparency and much more. There's also some useful updates to the core engine that should help to improve the speed of applications.

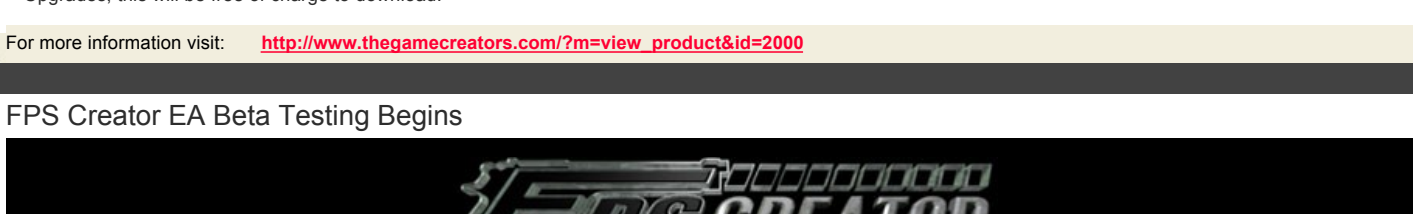
Upgrade 5.8 will also contain many new commands for DarkBASIC Professional including the ability to save objects, perform CSG operations, full access to vertex and index data and some new functionality to exclude objects from the rendering process that can make a big difference to the frame rate.

Updated header files and source will be provided for those wanting to take advantage of the DBO format.

As usual we will release beta tests of the upgrade, stay tuned to the DBPro forum for announcements and download locations early next year. As with all DBPro Upgrades, this will be free of charge to download.

For more information visit: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2000

FPS Creator EA Beta Testing Begins



Last month we said that the EA release was nearly ready - well, we were almost right! A staggering number of issues have been resolved over the past few weeks when FPS Creator entered official beta testing, with new builds every night (testing the broadband limits of our team!). Things are shaping up incredibly well and the new set of shader effects are now in. Some key changes / improvements over the past few days have seen:

- The illumination map shader was re-written to work with version 1.0 pixel shaders
- The Ripple Shader was finished - which can be applied to textures such as lava, grass, etc
- A new cubemap shader has been created for reflective / frosted window effects
- The SOUND RATIO has been added to the FPI (scripting language) to allow you to program the falloff of sounds and distant sound effects
- Full sniper mode controls and weapons have been implemented - you can now zoom in/out as you'd expect for precision kills and headshots ;)
- All stats are now carried through from one level to the next (health, ammo, etc)

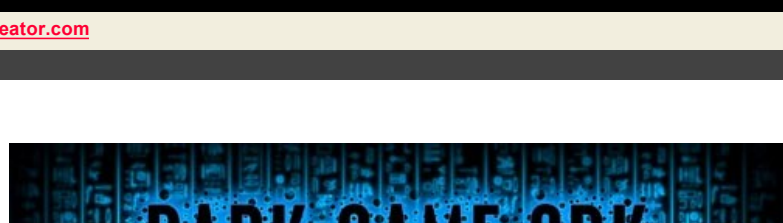
In the first week of January we will announce the official release date of FPS Creator EA (which should be within the month of January, depending on beta test feedback).

FPS Creator Forum
We have created a FPS Creator dedicated board to our forum. You can post FPS related questions there and we'll try our best to answer them for you. Visit the forum here: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_read&i=21

FPS Creator Announcement List
We have created a new announcement mailing list specifically for FPS Creator. We will use it for letting you know when FPS Creator is available to purchase. You will only receive email from The Game Creators and only related to FPS Creator. Your email address will never be disclosed or sold to any 3rd party. Get onboard here: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2001

For more information: www.fpscreator.com

Dark Game SDK Update



A forthcoming upgrade for the SDK will extend the functionality by adding in many more functions and new ways of working. One of the more interesting points about the upgrade is that it brings the ability to use the SDK functions without passing in ID numbers. As an example to make a box object and position it you would currently use something like this:

```
dbMakeObjectBox ( 1, 10, 10, 10 );
dbPositionObject ( 1, 0, 0, 0 );
```

With the release of the new upgrade it will be possible to code in a different style e.g.

```
sObject* pBox = dbMakeObjectBox ( 10, 10, 10 );
dbPositionObject ( pBox, 0, 0, 0 );
```

It's also possible to set the position of the object directly without using a function call e.g.

```
pBox->vecPosition = vector3 ( 0, 0, 0 );
```

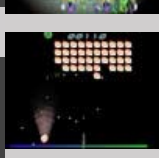
Either the first original method can be used or the second new approach. Both have their advantages and it will offer more control and flexibility for those using the SDK. New functions will be exposed for the likes of the CSG functionality to bring the SDK in line with Upgrade 5.8 for DarkBASIC Professional.

Several bugs fixes are included that sort a few problems with sprites and particles. Also included are a collection of functions to access specific internal data for the engine. This will be very useful for getting more control over the way your game works. And finally the documentation is in the process of being updated with more explanations and more information about how the SDK works.

Full details about the Upgrade will be made available when ready and will be a free upgrade to all existing Dark Game SDK owners. Remember if you order the Dark Game SDK before the end of 2004 you'll get an automatic 10% discount. If you purchased DarkBASIC Professional from us, you'll get another 10% discount - this is a time limited offer.

For more information visit: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2128

Delirious Christmas Space Invaders!



Captain-Ouais (Jerome Levasseur) has released a fantastically festive DB game / demo. It starts out with some classic old-skool demo effects (2D line vector scrollers, etc) and then moves into what is the best part - the insane Santa Claus space invaders game! Quite simply blast away at the santa heads above and clear each wave. Things start to get really quite manic however - some santa heads trigger strange and wonderful effects, like Bubble Bobble bubbles, Pacman, crash and burn, Aliens and power-ups. The power-ups fall like presents and include faster rates of fire and more bullets. See if you can blast Santa as he flies across the top of the screen in a space-invaders "mother ship" style :)

The gameplay is brilliant and you're sure to have fun blasting away at this festive little DBPro shooter. My favourite part has to be when you shoot certain Santa heads the Star Wars arcade game lasers appear and blow him away - check it out to see :)

Download from: [DBProChristmas2005.zip](#) (3.6MB)

TPCToolkit Version 1.10

TPCToolkit is a set of supporting tools that helps a DarkBASIC programmer write Third Party DLLs more productively. It is basically an extension of TPC framework provided by Ian Mold at Matrix1 software (ian at matrix1.demon.co.uk). A couple more macros have been added to make the type conversions between C/C++ types and TPC types transparent by following the DarkBasic Pro TPC specifications. Also written are a few helper functions to simplify several common tasks, such as return string buffer allocation, assertion, file existence checker, etc.

Aside from all these extensions there are also a set of tools that automate certain process in writing TPCs. They are:

XML Source Documentation Generator (XMLDocGen)
By using the modified framework, along with some predefined XML tags for source documentation, this program will automatically extract the information describing each function into an XML file. This XML file is the main data source for the two following tools.

String Table Resource Generator
By reading the XML file produced by XMLDocGen, this program will automatically generate the string table resource that is needed when compiling and linking the TPC DLL. It will output the string table resource to a file, and all you need is to copy it from the file, and paste it into the resource file of your TPC DLL.

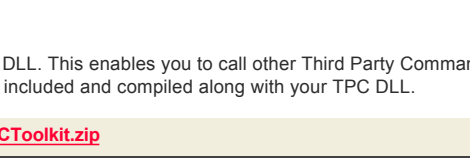
Automatic HTML Documentation and Functions syntax Listing Generator
This tool will read the XML file generated by XmlDocGen, and extract the inline source code documentation that will automatically produce a HTML help file for your TPC DLL. This will make your TPC DLL more users friendly, as long as you make an effort to comment your source code using the predefined XML tags while writing your TPC DLL. Besides that, this program also generates the functions syntax listing file that is required by the DarkBasic Pro IDE for syntax highlighting.

Third Party Command DLL Stub Generator NEW!!!
This tool allows you to generate stub files from a TPC DLL. This enables you to call other Third Party Commands from your TPC DLL. The stub files consist of a C++ header (.h) and source file (.cpp). These files must be included and compiled along with your TPC DLL.

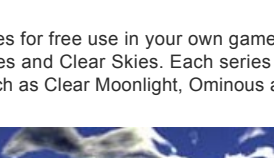
Download from: <http://www.badnose.com/dbpro/TPCToolkit.zip>

Free Skyboxes & Planets

Mark Alsip has released a whole set of skybox and planet textures for free use in your own games. The skyboxes cover 6 different series at the moment including: Stormy Skies, Natural Skies, Sunsets, Maritime Skies, Alien Skies and Clear Skies. Each series has a good range of skyboxes within - for example the Stormy Sky series has no less than 19 different skyboxes covering effects such as Clear Moonlight, Ominous and my personal favourite - Clearing Sunset.



Not content with just giving away stacks of skyboxes for free, Mark has also started on his next collection of royalty-free media: Planets. Mark himself says: "These .X models are being developed along with my free skyboxes in hopes of putting some useful free media out there for amateur game writers such as myself. This first generation of planets are low poly and the textures are also low resolution jpg files. I think the sample program will show that they can work well in a game environment as a type of 3D, real-time solar system map that leads the player into higher resolution scenes taking place on the surface of those planets."



You can download sample DBPro programs and all of the media mentioned from Marks web site.

For more information visit: <http://www.alsip.net/gamedev/media/>

Free Model Packs

Forum member "Badname" has started releasing free 3D model packs onto his web site. There is an active forum thread regarding his models and up-coming work. The models are all very well textured and provided in 3DS and X object formats ready for immediate import into your game. So far there is a Rusty Barrels pack, Crates and Trees. Hopefully he'll also release the models still being worked on such as the Beretta.

The forum thread with pictures is here: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&b=3&t=42656&p=0

For more information visit: <http://www.apollostudio.nl/badname/>

IRC Chat Log

Tonight (23rd Dec. 2004) the entire Gamecreators team held an open chat session on the #darkbasic IRC channel where any questions could be posed to us over an hour and a half period. A few new TGC projects were announced (most specifically the physics extension) and various other questions relating to the development of DBPro, FPS Creator and more. You can download the entire log of the chat for entertaining and informative reading. Our thanks to the IRC ops who made it run smoothly and to those that took part.

Download: [23rdDec_IRC_TGC_Session_Log.zip](#) (12KB)

EZ_Serv 1.0

game server, EZ_Serv can handle it all. This application is designed with Client developers in mind. By simply installing and running EZ_Serv, the developer is free to work on his or her client code, and is afforded an unlimited, completely extensible, TCP/IP server to develop against. Things like Ping Timeouts and Login Management have been coded into EZ_Serv as user options, and are all managed for you. Even the ability to define your own protocol message stubs, and set how and where client-messages get delivered is already provided in EZ_Serv. As a local development host, or as a full-fledged production server, EZ_Serv is the tool that no multi-user/multi-player software developer should be without.

Visit the web site for more information and the complete Users Guide.

For more information: http://www.mod2software.com/dbp/ezs/ez_serv.htm

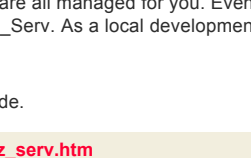
Games to Test

We noticed a number of promising looking games that have been released in beta / test form recently. Why not give some of the following a try and see how they work for you and perhaps send the author some feedback?



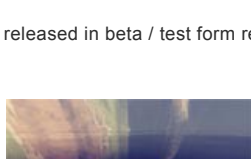
Ballistica - Arcade Style Physics Action!
For my first real DBPro project, I wanted something that was both stunning and fun to make. The result? Ballistica! This is a game that is similar to such titles as Super Monkey Ball and Marble Blast Gold. Basically, you must maneuver your ball through various levels to get to the end. Newton physics are nicely incorporated into the game, along with dynamic reflections and a Delta Time method. I already have lots of ideas on what to do for some of the levels, such as physics crates, moving objects, boost panels, and lots of other stuff to make gameplay real exciting."

[View Details](#)



Puznik
Not much to say about this one other than it looks very nice graphically (almost GameCube Zelda'ish!) - give the demo a try and let them know what you think.

[View Details](#)



Sunday Panzers
Developed with DBPRO V5.7, from September2004 to December2004. The second of "Sunday" series, this time you've to smash tanks in a funny and chaotic battle. 50 levels, 8 different tanks, 10 squads to unlock and 6 scenarios, plus powerups and more. Control a max of 12 tanks versus 28 enemy tanks and 5 guest tanks!! Have fun!! the project is file by file and with source code.

[View Details](#)

For more information: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2000

From the Forums

We recently upgraded our dedicated forum server so it can now handle more connections, running on a more stable build of PHP and an improved optimised MySQL. Changes to the base forum software are on their way. As always our community forums is proving to be an interesting place to hang out! Here is a short summary of very interesting threads that you may wish to take a look at and perhaps participate in?

Lua in Dark Game SDK - LUA is a scripting system and use of it has been ported to the Dark Game SDK environment.

Read more: [Lua for Dark Game SDK](#)

Sonic Invaders - This one is different! It's a space invaders style game with no graphics at all (not even ASCII) but rather you play it via the sounds it makes only. Handphones should be used because the game play is heavily based on the positioning of the sounds in the stereo field. It is extremely difficult to play with speakers, unless they are properly aligned, and, even then, not recommended.

Read more: [Sonic Invaders](#)

Sky Grabber - A little function that can render a skysphere from any scene - uses the camera and point so it's real slow with high resolutions, but it works. Check out the example, there's code to display the results too.

Read more: [Sky Grabber](#)

Default Project - For those of you who have slight trouble setting up a standard Windows 32-bit Visual Studio .Net 2003 project, included is a default project in this post - its blank except for the default headers (plus windows.h), and has the DarkSDK void function in it. In addition, all optimisations have been activated. This will work for .Net 2003 professional, and may or may not for the Standard version.

Read more: [Default Project](#)

TGA Maker 1.0 - This program lets you calculate the alpha channel for any image with a variety of operations and settings. Save a 32-bit TGA with alpha channel, for use with CShop or another program.

Read more: [TGA Maker 1.0](#)

Grass Plugin - New Grass Plugin with alpha sorted transparency released.

Read more: [Grass Plugin](#)

Visit our forums: <http://forum.thegamecreators.com>

This months winner

We've plucked one lucky subscriber to our newsletter and for you a completely free copy of DarkBASIC Professional is yours for the asking. The winner is willymcg@?????????.net - just email us and a free copy of DarkBASIC Professional is yours.

For more information visit: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2000

Outro

Got something you want thousands of people to read about in the next issue? Then get in touch! Email me: rich@thegamecreators.com or use our [Feedback form](#).

Contact us: <http://www.thegamecreators.com/>