COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER JAN. 2005

I know that we've all been enjoying this new year for several weeks now, but this is still the first newsletter the game creators for 2005 - so Happy New Year! While it's true that we were planning on having this issue focusing specifically on the launch of FPS Creator that simply wasn't possible due to the release date moving to Development is moving along at a frantic pace here with the beta test group really getting into the swing of

things. More optimisations and changes are taking place meaning that we will hopefully have the EA release for you next issue! Even so, we've got a lot of great FPS Creator content this issue as well as other goings-on within the wider TGC community. For those of you who are new here - the EA release of FPS

FPS Creator Videos Media Copy v1.0 mono 3D Planet Builder Colour Splash **DB Network X Games to Test** From the Forums

This months winner <u>Outro</u>

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FPS Creator Shots

Omega Basic allows you to create and test games and applications for mobile phones, PDAs and smartphones on your Windows, Linux or Mac × computer using the Omega Basic language or Java. Omega Basic is designed for new programmers and advance developers alike, featuring built

in support for sprites, graphics, sounds, music, animation, video, network and multiplayer. The language uses the easy to use BASIC command set with a twist, the special commands makes it easier than ever to start programming great games! Omega Basic's intelligent build system also enables professional programmers to develop in Java using the Omega Basic extensive API set. Omega Basic can create games and applications for any device supporting the Java (J2ME) logo. This includes Mobile Phones, Personal Digital Assistants and SmartPhones. There is a free trial version to download which includes all of the necessary Java SDK installation files to

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

gameSpace 1.6 released

For more information visit: http://www.thegamecreators.com/ Minesweeper Tutorial

He may be quite new to the TGC community, but programmer Santa2000 (aka Robert Smith) has written an extremely detailed and comprehensive tutorial on coding a Minesweeper game in DarkBASIC Professional. The tutorial is massive and covers everything from dissecting the original game to figure out how it works, to implementing a simple "array test" version to coding the whole game. You can work

http://www.atnasonline.com/

You can buy gameSpace 1.6 from our on-line shop today.

through the tutorial following the code and doing so will give those new to programming a fundamental insight into the planning and processes involved in creating a game - even one as "simple" on the outside as Minesweeper appears to be. Perhaps if more beginners read tutorials like this we'd see less of the "Join me to make a World of Warcraft beater!" in the forums :)

You can read the tutorial on Roberts web site where you'll also find source code examples for other games including Tron, LegoSlide, Tetris and the ubiquitous Pong. There is even a pack of royalty free game background images.

watch the FPS Creator forum for the latest information We have also added some more features into FPS Creator which has already opened up new possibilities. For example trigger zones can now make other objects

are actually using the software today, even in its evolving state.

activate - you'd use this perhaps set off a trap when the player enters a dangerous area of your level. We also added in player check points - so after you create your game level, you can pick key areas where the player would be re-generated if he/she was killed. We have also added lots of extra key presses to make the level editing experience easier and more enjoyable. The product will be a BROADBAND delivered title ONLY, as it's 400 Megs in size. The price will be: £30 = 43 Euros = \$56

Beta Group Opinions As FPS Creator nears its EA release we thought it would be a good idea to solicit the opinions of some of the beta testers. These comments come from outside of The Game Creators and from people who have been getting down and dirty with FPSC for the past few months. These aren't just gratuitous compliments about FPSC, they also include comments on how the program works, the end result and areas for improvement. But it will certainly give you the impressions of those who

it to the limits, I was astounded at the entire program. The First Use tutorial helped me get underway nice and quick, and I soon realized that in a matter of minutes, I had a fun, playable (albiet short) FPS game on my hands, all rolled up into a nice easy distributable package. After more playing around, it became apparent that almost everything was customizable, from how the enemy Al behaves, to what the rooms look like, to being able to pick up a cup from a desk, and move around the chair. Personally, I've never been one for the FPS games, but I think FPSC may have me creating and playing them in no time."

-Life 2, look again. On the other hand, if you simply want to give your thriving FPS ideas a little life and don't want to

"It has been a great treat to test the EA release of FPS Creator. Going from speculation about what FPSC does, to actually using the application myself, and pushing

spend weeks learning how to program, then FPS Creator should be perfect for you."

Robert Knight:

style shooters, with enough flexibility to make it interesting for more advanced users as well. The ability to fine tune enemies and weapons makes it possible to create much more balanced gameplay. Graphically FPSC is solid but not stunning, with a little care the lightmapping can look quite atmospheric. FPSC gameplay is entertaining in a Serious Sam way. "Where I think FPSC needs improvement is in terms of story-telling possibilities, the ability to display mission summaries or a secret map on screen or play a movie. The ability for users to vary the scenery and the characters more without having to resort to a full-blown modelling program would also be useful. The ability to spray dust, snow, or cracks and rubble onto segments for example, or to be able to select an individual segment and change its texture. The ability to scale segments to create more interesting architecture and get away from the 'blocky' look would also be welcome. I think a proper particle engine would also be a very welcome

"FPS Creator's map editor is very user friendly, suitable even for artistically-challenged individuals like myself. FPS Creator is very good at creating simple arcade-

"So far I've found FPS Creator to be an enjoyable experience. I normally wouldn't use a click solution to game creation, but I could find myself using this to relax from a day. The editor is easy, the games it builds are nice, and the overall speed from the compiled projects I have is great. I would highly recommend FPS Creator to anyone who was looking for a fast easy solution to creating the FPS games and don't have any programming experience." "FPS Creator is very easy to pick up and go with. I had done my very first level after around 20 mins of playing. Then once you start to get more deeper into what you can do with it (with scripting, light mapping etc.) You suddenly find that things you thought cold not be done are suddenly available. I'm sure that lots of people will find that they can do things that even the programmers hadn't thought of. I'm currently working on a game based on a space ship along the lines of... "You are sent

staircase leading up to another layer. It seems to love making little rooms and cutting details like doors and windows into the architecture - adding detail that would take forever to model and texture is simply painless. One thing that can lift a product like this is the ability to add your own media and ideas - even with the beta versions I'm able to throw my own media into the mix, collision is not even a concern and a spiral staircase that I added. I can't wait to see what people achieve with

You can see a whole stack of screen shots and videos this very issue in the next article! **FPS Creator Forum** We have created an FPS Creator dedicated board to our forum. You can post FPSC related questions there and we'll try our best to answer them for you. Visit the **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:

coming out. I'm buying myself a new computer for it! So if thats not recommendation enough, I don't know what is!!!"

For more information: www.fpscreator.com **FPS Creator Screen Shots**

The same map as above, but in Test Game mode with NO light mapping yet applied.

And here with the complete lightmap the atmosphere really starts to show.

A view of a level loaded into the editor with light placement. You can see various lights located above the computer monitors, etc.

And here a reception area with Aiko performing secretary duties rather than blasting your head off!

Here is a WW2 game scene from Robert Knight, in the midst of the action!

The same game but this time from a different location.

FPS Creator Beta Tester Robert Knight has produced no less than 7 videos showing FPS Creator in action. They include 4 videos from the end-result games and 3 videos showing the map building process. Each video is between 30 seconds and 2 minutes in length and all are under 2MB in size. You will require Windows Click a link above to download and view the video. Many thanks to Robert for sharing them with the community.

A complete step-by-step guide to creating a level in FPS Creator has been posted to the forums. It includes screen shots of every stage so you can see how the level

Media copy is a new tool for Cartography Shop and DarkBASIC Professional users to help you transfer all dependent textures of a Cartography Shop map file into

This tool will prove invaluable when dealing with large scale maps that require hundreds of textures to move into your Projects media folder. Using this tool, you can

and the colour they leave behind changes the behaviour of any enemies that travel over it. A sort of "player controlled difficulty curve" where the

In reality what happens is the game starts with a nicely black screen (or white if you select that version, more later). Large "aliens" (coloured circles) float across the landscape. When you shoot them they leave a colour patch of nebula like gas on the background image and break into smaller shapes (ala Asteroids). These break down into yet smaller shapes when shot until they are tiny and die completely. When they get into the small stage they cause you problems! Collisions lose energy, when they go over certain colours in the background, they shoot at you and sometimes they just ram right into you for fun. The game starts out very quietly, the few circles there are posing little threat. Keep playing for just 5 minutes and you'll soon have a whole different matter on your hands as the screen is full of cycling colours, enemies and bullets. Oh the bullets! Various power-ups give you different waveforms on your bullets which swirl around you, rebounding off the edges of the screen and

This is one fun game and we strongly recommend you download it and give it a play. One hint - although it's harder on the eyes to start with starting with a white background actually makes it easier to play in our opinion. Because the aim is then to turn the screen black and it's towards

This is certainly a bit different from the usual programs we feature in the newsletter, but it was created with DarkBASIC Professional and we really had fun playing with it! 3D Planet Builder is the tool to build planets, asteroids and other space objects simply by the use of heightmaps

Some time ago DarkBASIC Professional developer Paul Harthen released a children's colouring book program called Colour Splash. It featured a fun and intuitive interface and the ability to colour in a variety of images. It's not often we see educational software in these pages, so we felt it worth mentioning that Paul has now released Colour Splash free of charge and you can download it from his web site (along with a

Described as "Part Asteroids, Part Robotron and Part Paint Shop Pro" you are left wondering just what is in store when you start-up this sublime little shooter. From the instructions: "The aim of the game is to change the colour of the entire screen from black to white or white to black. This is achieved by shooting the alien blobs that colour the background when destroyed. There are 3 colours of blobs to shoot (red, green and blue)

more of the screen you colour, the more the enemies behaviour changes."

http://www.binaryzoo.com/games/mono/ (4.3 MB)

http://homepage.ntlworld.com/paul.harthen/pages/games/games.html

http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&t=45313&b=8

move necessary textures and then allow easy incorporation of embedded media into your DarkBASIC Professional .EXE.

Import the 2D-heightmap of a planet and the program converts the 2D-heightmap into a real 3D-sphere! Finally put a texture on it and your planet is ready within 1 minute! Now you can save your planet in directX-format (*.x). You can use it to build planets with real surfaces to use in your games or simulations! Full download and purchase details are available on the web site.

From TGC forum member 1tg46: "This is an ongoing project that I just started, and I need beta testers. Right now I have it so that DarkBASIC Network X will give you 77 commands that you can use as you please. The commands deal with Registry, IO, Dialogs, and much much more. And I am hoping to have even more commands after a while. I have noticed that lots of the commands may not work so please tell me if you find the ones that don't work. Information and documentation

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

Dumbo & Cool

the very end of the level that you have the most manic things going on on-screen, so the clearer your display is the better:)

work for you and perhaps send the author some feedback?

This is actually from the same developer as Dumbo & Cool above - the highly prolific (and talented) Drew Cameron. "Ahoy matey! 9 levels of treasure collecting, cannon blasting missile launching madness await! Explore 3 exciting worlds, collecting treasure and defying the perils of the sea along the way! A 3D pirate ship game, featuring 6 levels and 3 stageboss battles, 2 weapon types, 30 gameplay obstacles and joypad support!"

Gina's Gems is a 2D game programed in DarkBASIC Classic. The main idea is to get the goal bar down before your time runs out. When the goal bar is completely

Marble Run

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 FPS with Newton Physics - Physics coder made this after playing around with walabers fps demo. He added sound effects, a 3 storey room to run around in,

Matrixy Graphical Effect - From NathF: "This is a sorta graphics demo I made in the last half hour, using circles and lines instead of clearing the screen to make a nice effect. The mouse emits a shadow from the screen center. If you point near the middle of the screen, the screen will be cleared normally. Also, by pressing the

DeleD 0.90 - A bit old this one (sorry guys!) but even so worth looking at. DeleD 0.90 has been released, This version contains lightmapping, a more flexible plugin-

It is something of a mix between Marble Madness and Trailblazer, the run of a marble through a straight path of static and moving obstacles, teleports and speed-ups. **View Details** http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2000 For more information:

left mouse button you turn on a falling character thing like in the matrix.' Read more: Matrixy Graphical Effect Free Textures - There appears to be a continuing trend of giving away free textures at the moment and this is no exception. 25 Free Textures + 300 Textures Pack. Read more:

3D Pixel Effect - The last of the graphical code snippets for this month - but a very nice one to end on. Make night-vision effects (albeit slow ones), etc. 3D Pixel Effect Cartography Shop IRC Channel - A new IRC channel has been created specifically for Cartography Shop users. **Cartography Shop IRC Channel** Read more:

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

Each month we award on lucky newsletter subscriber a free copy of DarkBASIC Professional. The winner this month is: dust????@divergent??????.com - just email us with your address details and DarkBASIC Professional will be in the post to you.

http://forum.thegamecreators.com

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. http://www.thegamecreators.com/ Famous Movie Quotes: "I say we take off and nuke the entire site from orbit. It's the only way to be sure."

If you only get time to try out one game this month - make sure it is mono. A truly psychedelic and frantic the other one is Duo v2:)

Creator means "Early Adopter", a pre-release of the Version 1 that will ship several months later. It's a way to get your hands on the software ASAP and then upgrade to the full release without any additional expense. blaster created in DBPro and currently gaining massive (well deserved) praise on the forums. If you have time to try two games, make sure Omega Basic Released

make the process as painless as possible. The only limitation on the trial is the length of program you can write. You can buy Omega Basic from our on-line shop today for only \$59.95 / &eur;45.99 / £32.99

We reported last issue that gameSpace 1.6 was due out shortly and it appeared only a few days after the newsletter was published. To celebrate we have a special offer until the end of January 2005, save yourself \$50 and buy the brand new 1.6 version for \$249. After January the price will return to its usual \$299. The 1.6 release contains some great new features: 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.

For more information visit: FPS Creator EA Beta Comments

FPS Creator Release Details As of today we are predicting a release date of February 11th. This date is subject to change should the current testing phase throw up any unexpected issues, so

Anyone who purchases the EA version will automatically qualify for the full retail version when it is completed. There will be a shipping and packaging charge to pay, this will be announced when the weight of the retail version is known. The final version will also come with a printed manual. Due to contractual agreements we cannot sell the EA version to anyone based in France. This is because we have an exclusive deal with Focus Marketing. French users must wait until Focus release the French version into the retail market.

Dave Johnson: "Originally I had no intention of purchasing the FPS Creator at all, but upon having the chance to privately test the product and get a closer look at its capabilities, my mind has definitely changed. The product provides the average user with the ability to create their first game in a matter of minutes, whilst the customisability and script-editing features allow the more advanced user to spend hours fine tuning their game down to the smallest detail so it looks and runs just like they imagined. If

Jess Telford:

addition - the multiplayer won't work without some serious explosions, plasma bursts, smoke rising from guns and so on. Last but not least, any nifty additions for better gameplay the team can think of will be most welcome. Andrew Vanbeck: "The first thing that struck me about FPSC is how quickly I had a basic level constructed - no quicker had it loaded than I had a sci-fi room with a little corridor and a

FPSC.

aboard a ship as a Junior Science Officer, you make your way through security up to the bridge. Once there the ship becomes under attack by an unknown force and you teleport to the crew quarters to keep out of everyone's way. Once you get there you find something sinister has happened..." The first level of the game will tell this story up to the teleport part. The second will be in the crew quarters. I'm having fun creating it (More than I thought I would). I can't wait to see and try levels other people have worked on. **Chris Blundell:** 'FPS Creator is working like a dream at the moment. The editor is intuitive, easy and powerful and the lack of sub menus means that everything is at your fingertips. Even on a low spec machine like mine, the graphics look excellent and the lightmapping can turn your games into something that looks really special. It's great to be able to think about actually MAKING A GAME, rather than coding. And the possibilities of the level making really will shine within a few months of the EA version

The following screen shots were taken from a recent build of FPS Creator by Jason Dean. Here you can see the interface and resulting game from several angles with and without lightmapping enabled. Click on each screen shot for a large 1600x1200 pixel version.

For more information: **FPS Creator Videos**

www.fpscreator.com

Media Player 9 in order to watch them.

Step by step Room Creation

was built and how it looked in the final lightmapped version.

www.fpscreator.com

your projects Media folder. For only £7.95, you will receive free support and updates.

http://www.apexnow.co.uk

zapping the aliens in vibrant explosions.

http://www.3dplanetbuilder.com

for the plugin are included in the zip file. Please report any problems to me."

few other graphical demos and pieces of music).

Download from:

and textures

For more information: Media Copy v1.0

For more information visit:

mono

For more information: Colour Splash

For more information visit:

DarkBASIC Network X

3D Planet Builder

The original Dumbo and Cool appeared many years ago on the DarkBASIC Archive CD and they'v been bought back to life in their own puzzle style game. You get to play as either of the colourful characters, collecting coins, avoiding enemies, solving puzzles and generally having a blast. Try out the alpha release and leave your feedback in the forum thread. **View Details**

View Details

Games to Test

down, you move on to the next level. To score points and to get the goal bar down you need to get three or more matching gems in a row horizontally. To do this you have to swap gems by using the mouse. If you get a high enough score, then you'll get to be on the highscore list. **View Details**

look at and perhaps participate in? Jelly Morph - A nice DBPro graphical demo effect from Ric. Read more: **Jelly Morph** shootable boxes, cylinders, etc. **FPS** with Newton

Visit our forums:

This months winner

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From the Forums

Read more: **DeleD 0.90** EZ_Serv 1.1 - We reported on EZ_Serv in depth last issue, but this forum thread announces the release of the 1.1 Upgrade and details about what it offers. Read more: Read more:

system and has new levels, prefabs and textures.