So by default that makes this issue the Christmas issue! and in true TGC style we're bringing you a festive truckload of goodies to download and use in your DBPro or FPSC games. There are also two new plugins released for DBPro this month, a new terrain editor, the final 5.9 Upgrade, and a massive new DBPro programming book. As you know I'm a bit of a retro gaming fanatic. I used to subscribe and write for the Retro Gamer magazine before it sadly folded and vanished into the magazine history archives. When the magazine vanished it did so leaving a large number of freelance writers out of pocket due to un-paid work. What is more, they had all virtually finished Issue 19 of the magazine, which never made it as far as the printing press. So to right some wrongs, and keep up the flow of solid retro info they banded together and formed Retro Survival. The objective was to release all of the content that would have been in issue 19. plus a truckload of earlier material and exclusives. The end result (after many months of collation and compilation) is the Retro Survival DVD. My copy of the DVD turned up the other day and it is great! Stacks of articles to read, videos to watch and screen shots to admire, this is what Issue 19 should have been and then some. You can buy the DVD from the Retro Survival web site for only £5 (+P&P) and it comes in a professionally printed box and pressed DVD (not some home copied CDRW + marker pen affair). Full details can be found at http://www.retrosurvival.com (btw I built the web site and did all the graphics for them, free of course - my contribution to the project). Well that's it for now - you can read all the 'Happy Christmas' stuff in the Outro at the end, but it's time to get into the real meat of the issue now. Have fun one and all. Contents TextureMax Released Editorial Hands on DBPro **Unity Released** DBPro 5.9 Released T.Ed Released Free Christmas Gifts! **Last Ordering Dates Block Verse DBPro Tutorial - Encryption Evochron Alliance Winners Dark Injector** Helios Sneak Peak **DBPro Tutorial - Platformers FPS Creator News** Caimen Game Compo gameSpace \$100 off **NVIDIA 7800 GTX Dark Snippet** From the Forums Awesome DBPro Code This months winner Outro Hands on DBPro Volume 1 We're very pleased to announce the immediate availability of this brand new programming book dedicated to DarkBASIC Professional. This book offers an easy-to-follow, self-study introduction to games software development using DarkBASIC Professional - a programming language designed specifically for creating video games on a PC. If you are new to programming or just want to find out how to write computer games, this text will get you started. "Hands On DarkBASIC Pro delivers both detailed coverage and explanation of the commands, as well as essential development advice that will make your code cleaner, easier to debug and maintainable." -- Lee Bamber, DarkBASIC Professional Developer Find out how to produce anything from a simple guessing game to a two-player, animated sprite space game. Use 3D positional sound and video. Create games that use the mouse or a joystick. Fundamental software design and implementation is also covered. Find out how to design and create modular programs, how to create test data and construct software using bottom-up and top-down methods. Use arrays, files, and record structures. The hands-on approach used throughout the book means that most of your time is spent at the computer creating programs. The numerous examples and exercises (with solutions included) lead you through both the basics and subtleties of the language. There are several complete games for you to study and modify. This book is truly massive, both in scope and in size. With over 740 large-format pages (the book measures 11.5" x 8") everything is explained through clear explanations, example code, notes, screen shots and illustrations. Purchase details, two sample pages and full table of contents can be found at the web page below. Web Site: Hands on DBPro Volume 1 Unity (Lua) DBPro DLL Released The Unity scripting pack takes your DarkBASIC Professional games to the next level. Unity marries the commercially used Lua scripting language with DarkBASIC Professional. Unity is a Third Party Command set that allows your DarkBASIC Professional games to utilise the Lua scripting language in your games. Lua has been used in the games industry for years in titles such as Warcraft 3, Far Cry and Homeworld 2. As well as offering the script support, it also allows for loading and saving of structured files quicker than before (i.e. save ames) and can be used as a replacement for DarkBASIC Professional arrays. Arrays in Lua are fully dynamic and can grow, shrink, reorder and shuffle as well as having string based key indexes instead of just numeric. Lua is an entire language all in itself. Designed from the start to be a tiny and simple language it offers programmers extensibility. Lua scripts run in a safe environment, have automatic memory management, and powerful string and dynamic data handling features. Consider it a 'glue language', allowing a component-based approach to development. Although a simple language in structure, it is a very powerful one. Offering: advanced data-types, a fully threaded environment, arithmetic/relational and logical operators, concatenation, control structures, functions, iterators, very powerful array handling, matrices, linked lists, queues, string buffers, data serialisation, metatables and object orientated programming functionality (classes, inheritance, multiple inheritance, and privacy). Unity features: 25 new commands • Full support for directly reading and writing to Lua variables . Full access to the contents of Lua arrays Call functions written in Lua from your DarkBASIC Professional games Access the 3D DarkBASIC world directly from your scripts Ability to load compiled scripts or scripts as text files - using just one command Innovative message queue system for Lua to/from DBPro communication Full keywords list and help files with example code for each command Full tutorials included to help you get started Unity is available to buy and download today. It costs \$20 / € 16 / £ 12 Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2081 TextureMax DBPro DLL Released TextureMax is a tool for easily adding great customisation to the media of your DarkBASIC Professional project. Using the TextureMax application you can separate your images into channels. You can then apply different colours to each channel adding instant variation to your media. Making a racing game? Give your users the ability to choose the colours for their car. Simply create your texture in your favourite paint program. When finished, open the texture up in the TextureMax application. Add channels for each area of the car, such as the body, racing stripes and interior. Paint over the image with the appropriate channels. When you are done you can load the saved .tmx file in DarkBASIC Professional and texture your 3D object with it. You can then apply whatever colour you wish to the body of the car and any colour to the racing stripe with a couple of simple commands. With a special customer TextureMax application for creating colour channels and 19 new commands for DarkBASIC Professional, this is a useful plugin for games where variety is the spice of life. TextureMax is available to buy and download today. It costs \$20 / € 16 / £ 12 Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2084 T.Ed Released The Game Creators are pleased to announce they are now resellers for the popular professional terrain and environment editor T.Ed. The technique behind designing and using terrain objects can be a minefield of choices, as there are so many different ways of doing it! T.Ed is designed primarily for games programmers and 3D artists to make those choices easier. There are 2 main categories regarding terrains in games: 'Static Mesh' and 'Dynamic LOD'. T.Ed can help in the development of both! T.Ed is a dedicated terrain tool to allow the creation of small to large mesh landscapes, either as a series of blocks, or as a single terrain. It allows for superb blended textures either by using vertex alpha or by rendering a 'Supertexture' for each terrain block. Through an easy to use and learn interface, featuring mouse look and game walk controls, you will be walking around your virtual lanscape in minutes The software and exports also take into account the problems of using entity / texture alpha with vertex alpha, and has features designed in to eliminate those dreaded problems. T.Ed is available now and will be replacing Geoscape3D in all of our bundle packs. Download a free trial, view screen shots or purchase from the web site below. The price is \$27.99 / €23.99 / £15.99 Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2102 Free Christmas Gifts! We're happy to bring you this free grab-bag of 3D models and textures direct from The Game Creators 3D guru Simon Benge. We've collected them all together and bundled them up into one nice and tidy zip file for you. You can use these royalty free in your own games (DB, DBPro or FPS Creator). The only thing you can't do is sell them. The Christmas Pack includes the following items: • 3D Objects including a detailed normal-mapped AK47, Childrens ball, Barrel, Blocks, Tin can, Statue, Rubber Duck, Horse Statue, MR2 (car), Archery Target and a Tree. The objects include the X, 3DS and MAX files, plus all textures in native and DDS format. The AK47 even includes an ammo model and HUD for conversion to FPS Creator. • In the Graphics Folder you will find an Animated Flame Decal, a great sci-fi style wall texture, a moody and atmospheric skybox and a great wallpaper image! This is all free of charge - our Christmas gift to you, our loyal readers! Enjoy. Download: xmas2005.zip (31.5 MB) Last Ordering Dates I know people seem to think that all companies write about their 'last posting dates' for Christmas in order to encourage people to buy. But in actual fact if you are planning on buying one of our products as a gift for someone, you really do need to think about doing so now. Boxed items ship from the UK, so unless you share these pleasant shores with us, they need to travel overseas, and at this time of the year that can take a while. For all boxed items the last ordering dates are: Within the United Kingdom: December 19th Within Europe: December 12th USA, Australia, Far East: December 9th Orders for Electronic / Download)items will be processed right up to, and including the 23rd of December. We are sorry but orders for the Hands On DBPro book are already too late for Christmas delivery outside of Europe. Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com DarkBASIC Professional 5.9 Released The Game Creators are pleased to announce the immediate availability of Upgrade 5.9 for DarkBASIC Professional. This upgrade and its accompanying Extras pack introduce new features, new header files, the ODE DLL source code and bug fixes. 5.9 is essential for anyone wanting to use the new Unity or TextureMax plugins. Two new (but un-supported) DLLs are included in the release for ODE (physics) and Multiplayer-Plus support. These are to allow DBPro to compile the FPS Creator Game Engine source code. New examples and documentation showing the collision and ODE commands can be found in the projects/u59examples folder. The Extras Pack includes the C++ source code to the ODE DLL. This is released as open-source to the community, feel free to modify. Also included are the latest Globstruct and DBO Header format files. For the free download and full list of changes please go to the following web page: Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2000&page=upgrades Block Verse A quick glance at the screen shots and you'd be forgiven for thinking 'hey! I've played this before'. Well, if you were one of the thousands of people who downloaded the games entered into our Puzzle Game Competition, then you may have seen BlockMan Remix - the predecessor to this game. I'll let the developer explain: "It suffered from faulty controls, lag, and in general not a long enough development cycle. This is version 1.1, and the difference between it and the compo version is the difference between night and day. Almost everything has been fixed, the levels have been rethought, and the controls are more responsive and far simpler (it also supports joypads). There are two tutorials in the game, and now every level of the game is on a different world. The visuals have been updated, and the game is now less static and more The original game was good fun as it was, if a little tricky to control and master. This version addressed all of those things that stopped people voting for it and really benefits from the extra time in development. The concept is simple - move around each level, picking up and stacking the blocks until you can reach the exit. It is fiendishly clever though, and requires some solid logical thinking to get past the later levels. With great cell-shaded style graphics (from DarkBASIC Classic!), different tunes, visuals and new control support this is well worth checking out whether you played the original or not. Forum Thread: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&t=62964&b=8 DarkBASIC Professional Tutorial - :7&-\$ =;: Encryption Listen carefully...I will say this only once. Now, I'm showing my age, quoting lines from comedy shows of the 80's, so I'll move swiftly on to the point of this tutorial. Sometimes we need to protect data, without introducing over-complex routines. A perfect example is High Score tables. It would not be wise to save the information in a plain text file. Conversely, be able to read and write the information efficiently. We'll use the example o Along the way, we'll introduce reading from and writing to files, using bitwise operations and the advantages of not-so random numbers. A High Score System Starting with the basics, we need to create a file that can be easily read from, and easily written to. In line with what we have learnt in previous tutorials about encapsulating functionality in include files, we will create a User Type, an Initialisation function, and two additional functions to read and write from the data file. Example 1 sets out the framework for the functionality required. It does not include any encryption, but because the code is encapsulated we can change it later, and any program using it can run in exactly the same way. As this tutorial is primarily about simple file encryption, I will leave you to download, review and run example 1 to understand the way the high score system is implemented. The key functions are: • HiScoreInit - must always be called to initialize the high score system • HiScoreSetFile - if the high score file is anything other than hiscore.dat, this function can be used to override the default name • HiScoreSetCount - the default number of entries for a high score table is 10. Use this function to override this value. • HiScoreLoad - Load the high scores from the file. . HiScoreSave - Save the high scores to a file.

the game creators

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The Game Creators Newsletter Issue 35

of schedule needed changing.

Welcome to the Christmas 2005 issue of The Game Creators Newsletter. Wait a minute? What happened to the November issue?! Well, as you

might have guessed we have had a little shuffle in our release schedule in order to bring some sanity to this chaos. Back in the good-old days we used to release the newsletter on the 20th of the month. This was when quite frankly we didn't have all that much to write about. These days however we seem to be bursting at the seams with content, and having a sporadic 'oh it'll be released -around- the 25th of the month, maybe..' sort

To this end we will now publish the newsletter on the 1st of every month, for that month. In other words - today is the 1st of December, and this is the December issue. It's the way magazines do it (although unlike most magazines, we won't be stretching to 13 issues a year), and it just makes

sense. In order to effect this change however one month had to fall victim, and it just happened to be November. Sorry old chap.

 HiScoreGetName - retrieve a player name from the table by position • HiScoreGetScore - retrieve a score value by position • HiScoreCheckScore - check whether a score is a winner. Returns the position, or -1 if a losing score. HiScoreAddScore - Add a name and score to the table. There are other, supporting functions but these would not be used in the main program. Adding Encryption Moving on, we now need to encrypt the data when we save it, and decrypt it when we load it back in. The only functions that require modification are HiScoreLoad and HiScoreSave. Between loading and saving, we can use the same, unencrypted version of the data. Firstly, I am going to use an "Exclusive Or" bitwise operation (XOR) on the data, using a keyword. This is a calculation that has a very useful characteristic; when you perform the same calculation twice, the data returns to it's original state. This is best illustrated with an

The asterisks represent unprintable data. As you can see, the same password can encrypt and decrypt the data. In Darkbasic Professional code, we would carry this operation out

char2 = asc(mid\$(pass\$,n,1)) result\$ = result\$ + chr\$(char1 ~~ char2) next n The bitwise operation is performed using the ~~ operator, on the ASCII values of the characters. Without knowing the keyword, it is impossible to decrypt the data. If you have a sample of data, then it is possible to work it out, and for a high score table this is a potential problem. The data is displayed to the user each time they play. So we need to be a little more cunning with our algorithm. Not-so Random numbers People often debate the fact that random numbers are not random, and they are correct. Random numbers always follow the same sequence of 32000 preset values. To the human mind, this is random, as long as we start at a different position in the sequence each time! We can use this to our advantage. Rather than do a character for character encryption of our data with the keyword, we will take characters from the keyword "at random". We will save the random number seed, a value between 0 and 32000, in the data file, so that we can recreate the same random sequence on demand. Because we can generate a new random sequence every time we save the file, the data is never the same. The keyword is never the same either, because we are continually reordering it. This is beginning to sound more complex than it actually is, so here is the enhanced code to illustrate. name\$ = "Joe Bloggs" pass\$ = "MyPassword" passlength = 15seed = randomize timer() for n = 1 to len(name\$)

example

like so:

name\$ = "Joe Bloggs" pass\$ = "MyPassword"

Until next time, Happy Coding!

Steve Vink

for n = 1 to len(name\$)

char1 = asc(mid\$(name\$, n, 1))

char1 = asc(mid\$(name\$, rnd(passlength),1)) char2 = asc(mid\$(pass\$,rnd(passlength),1)) result\$ = result\$ + chr\$ ($char1 \sim char2$) next n We now have everything we need to create our new, encrypted high score file. Download, review and run example 2 to see the code in action. Remember, this functionality is complete, and can be dropped into any project. Take a moment to look at both the encryption and decryption functions; you may be pleasantly surprised! Once again, we have added to our knowledge of Darkbasic Professional, and added to our library of reusable code in the process. What we have covered here is very basic encryption, and there are bigger, better more secure ways to do it. In the context of what needs to be achieved in this environment, this is more than adequate. I would encourage you to take this code and modify it. Creating your own encryption algorithm is a fantastic way to make it more secure.

Incidentally, the title of this tutorial was encrypted using this exact algorithm, and a keyword of "TheGameCreators"!

decompressed data back to the EXE.

tell the dbpro exe an error occurred and it will silently exit.

reset for the next onslaught.

exclusive screen shots.

Mega Music Pack

each track: http://fpscmusic.bravehost.com/down.htm

FPSPack 2.2

Techno / Rock Music Pack

Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2001

Caiman Easter 2006 Programming Competition

Web Site: http://www.caiman.us

virtually all popular game formats.

the Thread]

Futuristic Vehicle Compo

Snowy the Evil Snowman

This months winner

Outro

some games)

and zip files)

movement DLL, a printer DLL and a gamepad DLL. [Read the Thread]

Star Wars - Trench Runner by CPU

Pro expansion packs, just email us to claim your prize.

You can find our forums at: http://forum.thegamecreators.com

Download the code from: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&t=64911&b=5

Just email us with your address details and DarkBASIC Professional will be in the post to you.

Share your product / project news with over 12,000 active games developers!

Famous Quotes: "There aren't any good Plan B's, Tim. If they were any good they'd be Plan A's!"

The deadline for Issue 36 is December the 25th

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Each month we award one lucky subscriber a free copy of DarkBASIC Professional. The winner this month is: twistedfish@???????.com

Web Site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/

only barely in beta. I can probably claim that this was the first DBPro Third Party utility."

View screen shots of its development, grab the download and source from the forum thread below.

Forum Thread: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&t=64995&b=5

NVIDIA GeForce 7800 GTX Released

Caiman is a web site dedicated to free games. The site lists hundreds of them all available for download, but they are now turning their attention to running a game programming competition with \$4500 worth of prize money to be won. The deadline is 31st March 2006 and games should ideally have an 'easter' theme. Thankfully the minimum specs are DirectX 9, so DB/DBPro is covered, and pretty much anything goes re: content and game genre. The first 25 winners will get a

DBPro Beginners - 2D Side Scrolling Game Engine, Part 2

screen support, skin support, and more. It's now free to all users. Grab it from: http://www.rastaworld.com

Download the tutorial + resources: DBPro_Tutorial_Encryption.zip (108 KB) Evochron Alliance Winners Last month we gave away three copies of the brand new space combat game Evochron Alliance. All you had to do was answer this simple question: 'What is the name of the enemy force attacking the Alliance?". The answer was of course the 'Vonari'. The three winners are: Steve Jacoby, Eric Pearson and Douglas Androsiglio. Congratulations to the three of you, your prizes are on the way! Web Site: http://starfighter.home.att.net/evochronalliance Dark Injector for DarkBASIC Professional

Dark Injector is a free utility that will place your own DLLs into the DarkBASIC Professional start-up sequence. Here the author, the_winch, explains:

DarkBASIC Professional EXEs consist of a normal EXE with data appended onto the end. The EXE part is very similar between all DarkBASIC Professional EXEs. The same EXE handles the three different types of EXE: Normal, Compressed and the PCK File Loader. With a compressed EXE the EXE sees that the first appended file is "compress.dll". It then extracts "compress.dll" and calls the decompress block function within the DLL. To this function it passes a pointer to the rest of the appended data and its size. The "compress.dll" decompresses the data and returns a pointer to the

In short - this utility allows you to insert your own code before your DBPro EXE runs. Included is code to check if the user has DirectX 9 installed, and if not it errors out nicely (instead of silently crashing, or causing DD errors). But you could also use it to do other things such as prompt the user with a question, check for the existance of something, connect to a web site, etc. Anything you can code into a DLL you can include here. Grab it from the following forum thread and let the author know if you find it useful. Forum thread: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&t=65264&b=5 Helios Meheness Sneak Preview The ever prolific geecee3 is getting ready to unleash his latest game onto the masses. Based on the now classic Helios tech demo this game is a true hardcore arcade blaster in the vein of Defender and we were lucky enough to get a sneak preview demo of the nearly-finished thing. The game fully supports the X-Arcade 'joypad' for that authentic arcade feeling and fire-button mashing sessions, but if you don't own one of these beasts then a simple keyboard will suffice. The aim of the game is to fly your spaceship across the horizontally scrolling landscape, collecting the pods which lurk at the bottom of the screen, and dragging them up to the mother ship at the top. You must rescue them all, plus shoot the required amount of baddies, within the time limit set. This of course is easier said than done. The time limit is quite strict, leaving not much room for error as you nip around the spacey 3D world, blasting for all your trigger fingers might, and trying to carefully swoop to collect the pods. There are some nice twists - for example when you pick up a pod it adds to your firepower (although with a limited amount of

bullets). Should the pod get shot by an alien, it'll fall from your grasp back down to earth. Should it get shot too much, it'll explode. The same goes for you - your shield decreases with every hit. Some aliens will drop power crystals which beef your shieid back up again by a small amount, but usually you're left praying for the end of the level to gain a full shield

Although only a beta Helios Meheness was already looking sweet. The pods leave a gorgeous alpha trail behind them, explosions are bright and vibrant, the background smooth and moody. The version we tested had 10 levels, although to be honest we didn't get beyond level 4. The final game should have a final boss encounter, some stomping music and improved visuals. All in all - definitely one to look out for! Could this be THE DBPro game of 2005? You can decide when released later on this month, for now here are some

If we inject our own "compress.dll" as the first attached file then the DarkBASIC Professional EXE will extract our DLL instead and call our compress_block function, passing a pointer to the rest of the appended data. We can then just pass back the already decompressed appended data and the EXE will start as normal. We can also return 0 which will

Forum WIP Thread: http://forum.thegamecreators.com/?m=forum_view&t=65751&b=8 FPS Creator News (: Wow, you are a creative lot! This news round-up features stacks of royalty free musical tracks and models to enhance your games. Check them all out **FPS Creator Model Pack 1 Ready** Incase you missied it last month - we've got the first FPS Creator Model Pack ready for release. Featuring a brand new set of "Modern Day" styled entities and characters it will lend your games a more current feel. There are SWAT soldiers, SAS, Specialists, rocky caverns, a toilet and my personal favourite - a set of gibs! The pack is on sale for \$19.99.

only €7.99. A free sample and ordering instructions are on the web site: http://www.aeilkema.dds.nl/mega/

This pack contains 31 music tracks in different styles, perfectly suitable for background music in all kinds of games. All of these tracks are original and can be used in freeware, shareware or commercial-ware as often as you like. Each track comes in 3 different formats and you can buy them all on CD for

Continuing on our musical theme a new Techno / Rock Music Pack has been released. It contains 6 music packs, each around 3 minutes in length and you can buy them all for use in your games royalty-free for only \$6 / £3.50 via PayPal from the following web site, where you will also find samples from

Housewares Model Pack This pack of low-poly models contains 22 different household items for your FPS Creator games. They can all be used royalty free and come fully textures. Items include a coffee maker, toaster, PC tower, soda can, cereal box, kitchen sink, milk carton, a pizza box and more! The whole pack costs \$8 via PayPal and you can see screen shots, the complete model list and buy from the following site: http://www.technocade.com/modelpack/ FPSC Sign Pack 1 Want some signs in your game? You know, like road signs and wall-signs that say "Caution: Chemicals" or "Authorised Personnel Only"? Well grab the Sign Pack! It costs \$7 and contains no less than 30 different signs and 10 country flags. My personal favourite has to be "Do not Enter Explosives" (I mean, enter explosives into where?!). More details from: Please note that The Game Creators do not support, or endorse, any product sold via 3rd party web sites. We present this information here for your own use only. FPS Creator is available today priced \$49.99 / €43.46 / £29.99

FPSPack is a Game Packer for use with FPS Creator which allows you to pack and compress your entire game into a single EXE with options such as password protection, splash

game with tile map system. This is a monster sized tutorial! The download runs to over 10MB, but it's worth it for all the media, example code and EXEs you get. Building on what you learnt last issue you now get to make media for your game, add in scrolling backgrounds and even a hero. The zip file contains the DBPro source code, media, EXE and tutorial in Microsoft Word format. Download Part 2: DBPro_2DScroller_Part2.zip (10.1 MB) gameSpace \$100 Off Holiday Special For the month of December we are offering \$100 off the purchase price of Caligari gameSpace! This brings it down to just \$199, with × exactly the same great features - nothing is removed!

For all beginner DarkBASIC Professional programmers, Mike S is back with the second and final part of his series of tutorials covering developing a complete 2D side scrolling

prize, and you can submit your game to their forum for peer review. The deadline gives you plenty of time, and the prize money is quite attractive, so why not give it a shot? If you do

enter a DB/DBPro/DGDK/PlayBasic game into this competition then please let us know so we can feature it here (especially if it wins!).

gameSpace is the only high-end 3D game graphics authoring environment designed specifically for game developers. It includes absolutely everything you need to create characters, objects, worlds, weapons and more! This all-in-one package contains advanced modeling, texturing, rendering, animation, bone, skin and inverse kinematics capabilities. Along with the power to import and export to

Web Site: http://www.nvidia.com Dark Snippet Pro and new DBPro DLLs It seems like only yesterday when I was first reporting on the Dark Snippet Pro utility! In actual fact it was years ago, coverage of it being one of the first newsletter features. For those unaware of what this can do here's a quick summary: Dark Snippet is a handy snippet storer for all your code snippets and functions. The Pro version works with the DBPro IDE and can launch it with the code in place. The Lite version is for DarkBASIC Classic and works with DarkEdit. Dark Snippet Pro has now reached the end of its development life,

its author explains: "I've decided to end programming for this program simply because I feel it's hit the end of the road, it does everything like it should and has zero bugs, and has spawned less than 5 bugs during its 3 years, 6 months and 3 days lifespan. I started it on the 12th of April 2002 on the Dark Basic Developers Network (DBDN) when DBPro was

We don't usually cover hardware releases, after all there are enough of them to fill this entire newsletter several times over each day. However when NVIDIA sent through

That is some serious firepower! and now it comes with as much memory as most off-the-shelf PCs do. If you can afford it, put this at the top of your Christmas list!

details of this new graphics card we just had to show you how cool it was. Make no mistake about it, this is the fastest graphics card on the planet (this week anyway!). With twice the memory of previous GPUs, and faster clocks to boot, the GeForce 7800 GTX 512MB pulls ahead of its sibling with 32% more overall performance. It has

established a world record in 3DMark05 for a single GPU solution. This thing can has a fill rate of 13.2 billion pixels per second, and can process 1,100 million vertices per second.

×

From the Forums Ever vibrant, here are some threads of interest from our game development forums: The Convention was held in Chichester, England and saw a small but distinguished gathering including TGCs Mike demoing the new physics extension, TGCs Lee talking about FPSC output into DBPro, Philip covering legal eagle aspects of game dev and a coding competition. View some pictures here. [Read the Thread] Quikly Game Studio Pro

QGS is a drag and drop style game making package, similar to FPSC, only you can make different style games and it outputs DBPro source code. Interested? Take a peek. [Read

Over on the 3D forum they've been having something of an in-house compo to design a futuristic vehicle. You can see the entrants and place your votes - Mach appears to be the

run-away winner for now (look at that gorgeous render and see why!) [Read the Thread] Dumbo & Cool Released We'll give this one better coverage if they send us the full game;) But for now check out the excellent Dumbo & Cool in this thread. Shots, playable, demo, etc. [Read the Thread] Populous Engine Demo This is a playable demo of a Populous style game engine. Raise and lower terrain, watch the tree placement, watch the peons wander about. Now all it needs is the volcano action. [Read the Thread] Square Enix's Methods This thread is quite fascinating. Ever wanted to know how the 'big boys' do it? Well check this thread out for pics and info on the geometery Square uses to create those ubergorgeous 3D models. Mostly you'll be left thinking "it's all in the texture work!", which it is, but even so well worth a peek. [Read the Thread]

No it's not some game featuring insane snowmen (although thinking about it, that would be fun), but it's one seriously proactive forum member who likes nothing better than to chuck out quality DBPro DLLs. We'll feature them in a little more depth in another issue, but for now check out this thread for freebie downloads including a perfect timer based

This is a complete re-creation of the trench run sequence from Star Wars Episode IV (if you don't know what that is, go and hang your head in a corner in shame right now, and don't come out until Yoda allows.) What is most amazing about this is that there is NO media, it's all internally generated. There are also a quite amazing number of controls to master :-\ but, well, you can limit them down a bit! When you get into it however the game rocks, with lazer fire blasting all over the place. Roque Squadron, eat your heart out. Go to the forum thread, grab the code and run it (don't let the lack of a screen shot put you off, there is more to this one than meets the eye). The author of this code has won any of the DB

So that's it for another year! What a ride it has been. We've seen the release and success of FPS Creator, several updates to DBPro and a host of cool new extensions for it, as well as masses of quality releases from the community. Some of those Puzzle Compo games still stand out in my mind as examples of the best DBPro coding yet seen, and next year will bring even more. My thanks to our diligent tutorial authors Steve Vink and Mike Shah, who have provided great and FREE learning resources for you all tirelessly and on-time every month. What will 2006 bring? Well, that would be telling, but we're working on some exciting new projects here. In the wider world perhaps it'll bring us Windows Vista? Or a peanut sized iPod? Who knows! But we'll be here January the 1st to welcome you all into 2006, but for now have a great December and holiday period (perfect time to go and make

If you have something you'd like featured in a future issue then please get in touch and include as much information as possible (including where applicable: screen shots, URLs