DarkBASIC Newsletter Issue 4 cover - click me for a high resolution version

Contents:

Welcome!

It was only last month I was saying that the community never ceases to amaze me and yet again I've been proved right. If the sheer quantity and quality of the Retro Compo entries are anything to go by then we've got one of the most vibrant and talented communities around. Since the deadline for the competition we have been playing through no less than 95 games, hours and hours of our time has gone into preparing reviews and commentries of every single game along with screen shots and download links because we felt it was only fair that such quality entries should have a decent site to go with them - not just a "This won" list. So please do take a moment to read the rest of the news this issue because after you've done that you'll find the results and some insights from the biggest competition we've ever held. Onward...

Beginners Guide to DarkBASIC Game Programming Book

We now stock and sell the Premier Press publication 'Beginners Guide to DarkBASIC Game Programming' by Jonathan S. Harbour and Joshua R. Smith. Weighing in at just over 750 pages this is massive tomb to the DarkBASIC language and will serve as an excellent starting point for those new to programming. All the basics are covered and if you follow the tutorials through you'll even cover how to write a complete 3D multi-player game. The book comes with a CD-Rom, covers both DarkBASIC and DarkBASIC Professional and is available for purchase now. Click the cover on the right for more information.

Beginners Guide Book

Dark Basic Software are looking for 3D artists and Musicians

Have you got what it takes to help produce the next DarkMATTER?

We're on the look out for 3D model artists and Sound Effect producers/Musicians. You will be working on a new version of our top-selling DarkMATTER product (you can familiarise yourself with it at http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2104) which will be retailed across our web sites and distribution network. At the moment we are after:

1. 3D Model Artists. Must be able to demonstrate a high quality level of work (including texturing/skinning) on a regular basis.
2. Sound Effect and Musical products to work on a new sound and music library.

Please send samples of your work and details of availability and previous commercial experience (if relevant) to Rick Vanner (rick@darkbasic.com). Please do not send attachments larger than **1.5** Megs in size (or contact Richard rich@darkbasic.com for upload details if you'd like to send us more).

Music Maker 2003, Video Deluxe and other titles now available

We now stock a range of music and video related products on our web site. These products have been chosen for their ability to see the user create decent music with minimal skill (something the more sonically challenged of us will find useful!). So if full-on Cubase MIDI composition is not your forte but playing with advanced drum machines and synth boxes is - check out the likes of Music Maker 2003. The full range of new products can be found here.

Music Packages
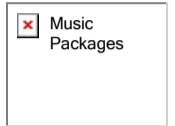
Music Maker 2003

New Plasma Demo from Frederic Cordier

In keeping with the whole retro theme this issue we saw a nice new demo from Frederic Cordier released this week. It's a remake of the old Amiga demo effect - plasma - but with other things on-top for good measure. You can download it (and soon the source) from his web site (click the Code Source 2D link on the right-hand side)

Plasma Demo - Click for larger screen shot
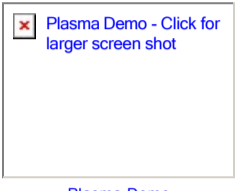
Plasma Demo

The CADSA GAP is looking for Team Members

We received an email from Mark Alfonsi about an exciting new project going on down under. Here is what he had to say: "Children of Sivara is a 3rd person adventure game where you travel to various parts of the world during the 19th century. Our level 'The Circus' is being developed as a deep slice.


Children of Sivara screenshot

Cadsa Gap (Centre for Advanced Digital Screen Animation - Games and Puppetry) is a government funded initiative with the Film and Telivison Institute of Western Australia to create a games and animation industry locally. This initiative is to get programmers, 2d/3d artists story writers and even puppeteers talking to each other.

We currently are a bit short staffed in the programming area and would like to invite anyone with some Dark Basic experience, Who lives in Western Australia to join our cohort. This is a volunteer position under interlectual property contracts, which will entitle team members in an equal share of profits. If this sounds interesting contact me at markalfonsi@hotmail.com"

New version of Cartography Shop in development

Cartography Shop developer Josh Klint has been hard at work on a new version of CShop which will be available freely to all registered CShop owners when completed. The new version boasts the following features:

1. Constructive solid geometry (carving) allows you to carve chunks out of solid objects, or cut a hole in a wall.
2. Hollowing objects lets you make an enclosed room out of a simple box.
3. Import Quake, Quake 2, Q3A, and Half-Life maps, Quake 3 BSP's, and .DBO.
4. Export .map, .X, .DBO, and DarkBASIC BSP's, with the DBBSP compiler.
5. Any Cartography Shop map can be saved as a prefab.
6. Support for import, export, and object DLL plugins lets you add new primitives or exporters.
7. Scale, rotate, and skew mousetools.
8. Vertex manipulation.
9. UV coordinate options like offset and scale.
10. Standard Windows interface.
11. OpenGL 3D rendering.

Cartography Shop 3 - click for larger version

Cartography Shop 3 - click for larger version
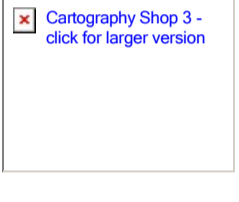
More information will be available as we have it, but for now you can check out the screen shots on the right or order the current version here.

Retro Compo Results Introduction

To say we were a little overwhelmed at the response to this competition is an understatement. Never before in the history of Dark Basic competitions have we had such an amazing selection of games entered. We've seen everything from remakes of Double Dragon to Commando to Elevator Action. We've played more Pong than we probably ever cared to, shot more aliens and collected more gems than is good for someone - and it's been a blast! We extend our absolute thanks to everyone who entered this competition - your games have been an inspiration to us all and to see the hard work and dedication that has gone into this makes us proud of what has been accomplished.

From **Lee Bamber**, developer of DarkBASIC and DarkBASIC Professional: "The response to the Retro competition was nothing short of awesome, and it's great to see such creativity thriving in the DarkBASIC community. Some of the entries reached commercial quality in many areas, and with continued development can be published. The hardest part of judging is choosing one game over another, when just as much work has gone into the game that was not chosen. I wrote many games in the past that became 'unchosen', and used the feedback I got to make improvements and ultimately make better games. You have already done the hard work, my challenge to you now is to continue improving your game, sell around 30 copies and buy your own prize. That way, you still win!"
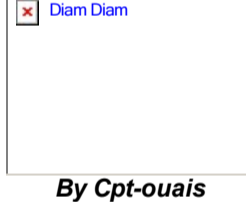
It's always hard choosing the winners, but it has to be done and the follow games were selected by us all as being worth of the prizes. We now present the winning games, **click on any screen shot** for further information and a download link.

| First Prize
Girls from the Block | Second Prize
Diam Diam | Third Prize
Jetpac 2003 |
|---|---|---|
|
Girls from the Block |
Diam Diam |
Jetpac 2003 |
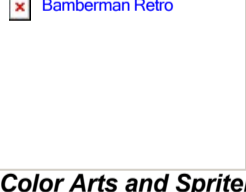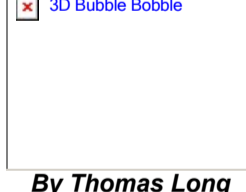| *By Dmitriy Korabelnikov* | *By Cpt-ouais* | *By Van-Simple Designs* |
| Hailing from the heart of Russia, Girls From The Block (GFTB) is a truly stunning Sokoban clone. Incase you're not aware of Sokoban it goes something like this - there are X crates per level, each crate must be pushed into its designated place. Once they are all placed you advance a level. The trick of the game is that you cannot pull the crates, you can only push them. So if you push too far or into a wall you have to restart the level. GFTB is Dmitriy's take on this timeless classic and its been crafted with DarkBASIC V113. Instead of crates you have girls, cute little anime style girls who will follow your command as you move them into position to complete the level. | Here we have Boulderdash bought into the DarkBASIC world. If you don't know the objective already it's pretty easy - dig through the earth to collect the diamonds, but leave a gap above you and a rock could fall and crush you. You can push the objects around to the left and right and everything falls just that little bit slower than you, so if you are quick enough you can run away out of the way of the impending rockslide. Diam Diam presents all of these game options and a whole lot more. Play takes place in very large areas as you scroll around it trying to collect enough diamonds in order to open up the exit to the next level. Sometimes there are set sequences in which you should approach a situation but more often than not a bit of blind luck and nimble rock dodging will suffice. This game has playability by the bucketload and should not be missed. | This is Jetpac to the max and I'm sure even the Stamper Brothers would agree that VanSimple have done their baby proud. Just as with the original the first level requires you to perform a bit of interstella DIY and put your ship back together and then fill it up with fuel before blasting off for pastures new. All the while aliens bombard you and in this version small snakey creatures crawl along the ground - although they don't hurt you they do slow you down when trying to walk through them (i.e. trying to get a vital last fuel canister). Later levels see's the environment change, the platforms move about, the aliens get more intelligent or just change tactic altogether. On the second level for example the aliens turn into a meteor storm of kind and just rain from the sky exploding on contact with the ground or (even worse) you. Although the main character looks like he could do with a month or two on a Slimfast plan you can't help but feel engendered to him. His plight is your plight, his wellfare in your control. This is arcade gaming action at its finest. |

It doesn't end here...

Due to the fantastic amount of games we received we extended the prize list! As well as the Top 3 above we have also selected another 6 games that are really something special and each game featured here wins a prize of any piece of software of the developers choice that we sell (including non-DB products). Well done to you all!

Bamberman Retro	3D Bubble Bobble	Astral Mega Invaders
Bamberman Retro
3D Bubble Bobble
Astral Mega Invaders
By Color Arts and SpriteMill	*By Thomas Long*	*By Gary Crook*

GoJoe PoGo	Retro Fighter	Galactic Chaos
GoJoe PoGo
Retro Fighter
Galactic Chaos
By Ross Mcrae	*By Dienye Boham*	*By Kevin Verbeek*

The final three winners are...

Finally we have selected three games that we feel should receive special mention, each game here will receive a free years membership to DBDN.

Battle for Hoth	Super Kario	Red Situation
Battle for Hoth |
Super Kario |
Red Situation |
| *By Banshee Studios* | *By Luis Angel Curiel Sanz* | *By Tupix Studios* |

This Issues Winner is...

Every issue we give away a free copy of DarkBASIC Professional to one lucky subscriber of the newsletter. The name will be picked at random from the list. If the winner already owns DarkBASIC Professional they can pick any one of our other software packages instead. This months winner is **karldevine@???????.com** (part of the address hidden for privacy - if this is you, please email us now to claim your prize!).

CrazyBall the 20-Line Winner

On the forums we have a board especially dedicated to programmers trying to write the most impressive program they can in 20 lines of DarkBASIC code or less. It's open to contributions from anyone for either DarkBASIC or DarkBASIC Professional and some of the results are amazing! Each issue of the newsletter we will be picking out our favourites and awarding free lifetime membership to DBDN to the winners.
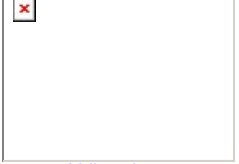
This month we've got an amazing DarkBASIC game called CrazyBall. The aim is to bounce your ball to the end! It's even got a level editor (kinda!) and it's all nicely done and good fun to play! Do you want to win a free DBDN membership? Then get coding and post your work to the forum!

20-line winner

Next Issue...

Well I'm positively exhausted after such a busy month! I had no idea it would take so much time and energy to play games :) But I'm glad I did and I feel confident that every single game submitted was played for a decent amount of time by several people - and now it's your chance to play them because we host them all for download on our new file server. Enjoy, post your comments to the forums and as always ... we *do* love to know what you're working on so why not tell us? rich@darkbasic.com