

Welcome!

After such a hectic month in April with the fantastic NVIDIA sponsored Retro Game Competition we were expecting this month to be relatively placid in comparison. But no such luck! Things are burning ahead here at DBS with some exciting new changes and products on the horizon. This month we're starting up a new section of the newsletter - "Ask Dr. DB" where we'd like your technical/programming questions and we'll give direct feedback from the development team themselves. Would you like to see DarkBASIC used in your school/college? Then why not mention our Free For Schools offer to your teachers - you could be responsible for kitting the class out with full licensed versions of DarkBASIC. Now wouldn't that make lessons more interesting ;) This month also see's DarkBASIC Professional 4.1 released, an impending update to Texture Maker and more.

Our FREE DarkBASIC Offer For All Schools, Colleges and Universities Worldwide

Learning to program is fun and free with this unique education offer. Taking your first steps in computer programming can be intimidating but thousands of IT teachers are now being offered a unique way to motivate their pupils A- and it's completely free!

The innovative solution comes from UK company Dark Basic Software Ltd and centres on its revolutionary programming language DarkBASIC which gives even inexperienced programmers the power to create computer games of a commercial standard.

From schools and colleges to universities and adult learning centres, any educational body can receive 10 free DarkBASIC licences worth \$400. All they need to do is log onto the DarkBASIC offer page at http://www.thegamecreators.com/, fill in a registration form and upload an image of their letterhead.

Retro Remakes Programming Competition



Retro Remakes, the Internet's biggest and best game remake site is launching its first Remake competition on June 1st. They are looking for remakes of old 8-bit and 16-bit classic games, much the same as the recent highly successful competition that DarkBASIC and NVIDIA ran. They have over £1000 of prizes on offer to the winners and EVERYONE that enters a complete remake will get a prize worth £40. Dark Basic Software are sponsoring this competition and are offering a complete copy of DarkBASIC Electronic Edition + the Enhancement Pack for every successful entry as well as three Top prizes of DarkBASIC Professional. Please note that you can submit your game written in whatever language you like.

Retro Remakes was formed over 2 years ago by JJ, but he has taken a back seat and the site is now run by a team of 4 remake nuts! The site lists just short of 800 remakes, 150 of which they host as well, with such classic names as Bomberman, Dig Dug and Manic Miner available to download and play.

Full details available at their website http://www.remakes.org for those that would like further information.

More Than Just A Face-Lift

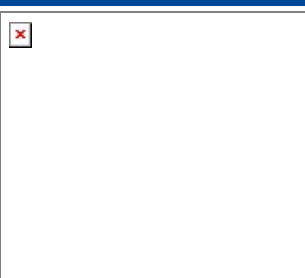
Since the start of the year we have been hard at work planning out the strategy for our Internet presence and how to cope with an ever expanding range of products as well give all of our web sites a much needed face-lift. Months of coding and graphic design templates have gone into the new site and we hope you'll all find the layout much more coherent and easier to use, as well as providing some great new features. The new sites will be going live within the next couple of months but one of the areas we especially wanted to bring to your attention now was the new public CodeBase.

The CodeBase allows registered members to upload, maintain and publish their own source code snippets for DB or DBPro. You can attach media to the code and other users are able to rate the code as well as write comments/ask questions about it. We track downloads and views along with the ratings to provide a "Top Code" list. More excitingly though is that you can also personalise the template for your code pages by uploading a banner graphic, modifying the colour scheme and adding free-text and/or links.

This personalised information is then wrapped around any code you submit to the CodeBase giving all of your code a consistent look and feel and really getting your name known. Another nice touch is that you will also be able to activate a PayPal "Donation" feature for each item of code - if someone really likes the code, they'll be able to thank you with \$ dollars \$. This will in future extend to the ability to sell your code on-line. With a fast code search facility, email notification of updates and new releases and an easy to use on-line code manager we hope that the CodeBase will quickly fill up with quality bits of source code.

Upcoming Release of Texture Maker Will Includes Normals Generator

Tobias Reichert's incredible Texture Maker application recently saw the release of version 2.6 into beta testing. There are a whole host of new features some of which are listed below. One of the most important however is the Normals Generator - normals are special textures created from a base texture that are used in bump mapping in DarkBASIC Professional. A detailed texture and normals set can create some incredible looking effects without increasing the polygon count of your objects.



- Mask shapes now support anti-aliasing
• Improved Smoothing-Performance
• Smoothing now always uses Gaussian kernel
• Most functions reviewed and improved (e.g. translate/puzzle doesn't create double tiles anymore)
• Surface point panel removed to free up some screen space
• File/Export/Normal-Map for creating smooth normal maps for games
• First Day 2 Engine improved: 3D clouds, better shading MIP-Mapping, better atmosphere model, stars at night...
• 3D Texture Preview supports "Environment Sphere" for panoramas
• Particle System Animator lets you define framerate for the output AVI file
• Better rescaling (without shifting)
• Quick Texture Mixer can be used with the Texture Selection at the left side
• Advanced Shader supports two light sources now and has improved highlights
• Improved stability on SMP systems

You can purchase Texture Maker online at http://www.thegamecreators.com/

DarkBASIC Professional Upgrade 4.1 Released

To further enhance and stabilise the core of DarkBASIC Professional we released Upgrade 4.1 which is free to download. With over 40 changes including the re-introduction of previously removed model formats such as MD2,MD3 and 3DS it's well worth installing. The primary reason for release was to cure the massive "lag" time that certain ATI video card owners experienced.

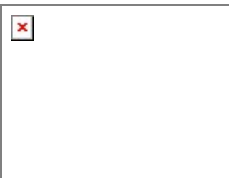
You can download it from http://www.thegamecreators.com/. Upgrade 5 will contain some exciting new changes to the object system including the implementation of the nodetree support and CSG support as demonstrated on DBDN this month.

Underware Design Forum and Affiliate Program Opens

UnderWare Design have recently opened up a new forum on their website. Their free support forums are provided to assist users and customers alike and you're more than welcome to join and participate in any discussions taking part there. UnderWare Design have also partnered up with a couple of affiliates and you're now able to view associates products on their site including the brilliant 3D World Creator for DarkBASIC - 3D Map Editor and character designer and animation program E-Volution.

PowerMad Released

In the tradition of classic strategy games like Nuclear War and board games like Risk comes POWER MAD an easy to learn yet tough to master game right out of todays headlines! Choose your opponents from 10 world leaders and have an all out battle for power supremacy in this turn based strategy game! But this is no grim view of the world at war - Power Mad has a great sense of humor! This game is about fun and is a perfect stress reliever!



The game is "not" meant as any sort of political statement (other than maybe the absurdity of it all) and every leader in the game receives the same level of disrespect :) I developed the game mainly for anyone who, like me, feels like they're being CNN-ed to death on a daily basis. It's a stress reliever.

Download a trial version and view more screen shots at the web site: http://www.gamethoughts.com/powermad/

Ask Dr. DB!

Next month we'd like to start-up a regular column called "Ask Dr. DB" in which you can pit any DarkBASIC/Pro related technical question to the development team and get an answer direct from the "horses mouth" so to speak. Perhaps you'd like to know how to create a cartoon texture, or handle sliding collision or get fast text entry? Well now is your chance to ask. We'll publish select questions (and their answers) here next month. Send your questions to: rich@darkbasic.com

Three Weeks in Paradise Extreme Psycho Pong Nikki Nitro

Three Weeks in Paradise
By Team SpecNG

Extreme Psycho Pong
By Snake Software

Nikki Nitro
By Jeremy Wood

Originally on the Sinclair Spectrum, Dave Perrys 'Three Weeks in Paradise' has been faithfully converted to the PC for the Retro Competition by Team SpecNG. The game involves the Week family (there are three of them, gettit?!)

Here we have the classic Pong given the DarkBASIC treatment. So I bet you're wondering what's so 'extreme' and 'psycho' about it? Well that's the beauty of this game - there is nothing different at first. It just seems like a normal 1 or 2 player pong game albeit a rather blue coloured one and in 3D.

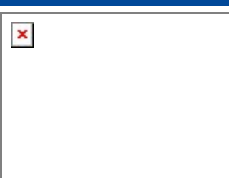
Again with the Jetpac remakes :) As if you didn't know by now you have to re-build your ship and drop fuel into it in order to blast off to the next level (and repeat). Nikki Nitro does all this but in full-on and very psychedelic 3D!

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 kenny_ken01@?????.co.uk (part of the address hidden for privacy - if this is you, please email us now to claim your prize!).

Two Player Tetris - 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 have an incredible two-player Tetris game by Karlos. Player 1 uses the keys: Q W and D for Left, Right and Rotate. Player 2 uses the keys U, I and L (for the same). This is some awesome coding, so congratulations to Karlos.

Next Issue...

If all goes according to plan, you should have a new-look newsletter (and site!) next issue. Be here at the end of June for all the latest DBS news including an exclusive interview with Magnus Esko, DB developer and owner of Digital Awakening. 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