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Welcome!

It seems like only yesterday I was writing the Editorial for Issue 6, but since then the summer months have rolled in, the heat has been cranked up by several degrees and most people are out enjoying themselves rather than being in front of a PC. Most people that is, certainly not all. The staff here are busily working away on a brand new Upgrade for DarkBASIC Professional, a Special FX Library, a couple of top secret projects and the brand new web site. Oh and we've changed the company name too! Read the interview with our Business Director, Rick Vanner for the full scoop.

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.

Upgrade 5 for DarkBASIC Professional

Work continues well on the next step-up for DarkBASIC Professional in the shape of Upgrade 5. At the time of writing the first beta test has already been released and there are some significant improvements to be found. Just a few of these include:

- You can now load objects that have no texture or material data, such as those generated from the "save mesh" command
• PRINT will now automatically scroll the text when it hits the bottom of the screen
• Many Matrix fixes including: Randomize Matrix extends all the way along the X and Z axis, Shift Matrix no longer inverts the height, the "ugly lines" are gone with the new "set matrix trim" command and various other Matrix related fixes.
• The PRINT and STRS() precision value has been increased to allow echoing of floats and long variables
• Music Playing can now detect if CD-Audio or a Music Score has finished
• SAVE IMAGE command is back with support for saving out BMP, DDS, DIB and JPEG formats

These are just some of the improvements and there are many many computer fixes as well including re-worked support for Boolean, Byte, Word and DWORD comparisons, Parameters passed into user functions no longer get parsed as global items, you can pass UDTs into functions now, UDTs themselves can now be assigned directly from array elements to array elements, SELECT statements work with arrays and arrays using UDTs and plenty more.

Beyond even this though are a whole stack of new commands relating to Pixel and Vertex Shaders and Object Manipulation. Some of these new commands include:

- DISABLE OBJECT ZREAD
• SHOW OBJECT BOUNDS
• SET OBJECT SMOOTHING
• SET LIMB SMOOTHING
• SET OBJECT AMBIENCE
• SET OBJECT DIFFUSE
• SET OBJECT EMISSIVE
• SET OBJECT SPECULAR
• SET ALPHA MAPPING ON
• SET EFFECT ON
• LOAD EFFECT
• PERFORM CHECKLIST FOR EFFECT VALUES
• PERFORM CHECKLIST FOR EFFECT ERRORS
• SET EFFECT TECHNIQUE
• SET EFFECT TRANSPPOSE
• PICK OBJECT
• GET PICK VECTOR X
• GET PICK VECTOR Y
• GET PICK VECTOR Z
• GET PICK DISTANCE

As you can see from this list it means that as of Upgrade5 DarkBASIC Professional will have full "Pick Object" support, right down to a pixel perfect accuracy level. So you will be able to write 3D games which allow the users to select objects with the mouse easily.

The final release of Upgrade5 will feature even more changes and additions than the first beta did and for some exciting news regarding the release of the second beta please see Article 7 in this issues newsletter.

Retro Remakes Competition - Final Few Weeks

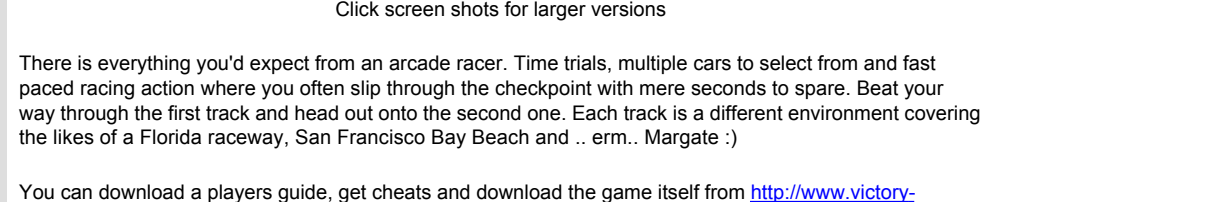
Retro Remakes, the internet's biggest and best game remake site started its first Remake competition on June 1st and the deadline is drawing close. They are looking for remakes of old 8-bit and 16-bit classic games, much the same as the recent highly successful competition that DarkBASIC and NVIDIA ran. They have over AE1000 of prizes on offer to the winners and EVERYONE that enters a complete remake will get a prize worth AE40. 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.

Victory Road

Every once in a while a really stunning game just appears out of nowhere. No work in progress shots on the forums, no emails about it, no real hint of what was coming. That's exactly what happened with Kevin Robinsons DarkBASIC creation Victory Road. Imagine a Daytona styled racing game, with decent opponent AI, fast arcade style laps, bright colourful graphics, booming sound effects and somewhat insane crash sequences and you are close to the mark.



There is everything you'd expect from an arcade racer. Time trials, multiple cars to select from and fast paced racing action where you often slip through the checkpoint with mere seconds to spare. Beat your way through the first track and head out onto the second one. Each track is a different environment covering the likes of a Florida raceway, San Francisco Bay Beach and .. erm.. Margate :)

You can download a players guide, get cheats and download the game itself from http://www.victory-road.co.uk. If your scores are good enough then post them up onto the on-line Leaderboard.

Ask Dr. DB

Last month we asked if there were any questions you'd like to pose directly to the DarkBASIC Development Team of a technical nature. We had a number of good emails and selected the following question for this issue:

"How do I get an angle value using a #F pos and a #Z pos. The way I get the value at the moment, I point an object using the point command and get the #Y value of that object. I'd like to use a more professional way."

```
rem Project: GetAngleFrom2DCoordinate
rem Created: 16/07/2003 00:14:38
rem Author: Lee 'Dr DB' Bamber :)

rem Set coordinates
youx#=320 : youy#=240

rem Main loop
do

rem Set moving target coordinate
targetx#=mousex() : targety#=mousey()

rem Calculate angle from YOUR position to TARGET position
dx#=-targetx#+youx#
dy#=-targety#+youy#
angle#=#atanfull(dx#,dy#)

rem Clear screen
cls

rem Draw coordinates
circle youx#,youy#,5
circle targetx#,targety#,5

rem Show angle by drawing line
line youx#,youy#,newvalue(youx#,angle#,100),newvalue(youy#,angle#,100)
center text: 320,260,"ANGLE = "str$(int(wrapvalue(angle#)))

rem End loop
loop
```

Would you like a question answered next month? If so - write to me and tell me what it is.

The New Web Site Draws Closer

In between creating the newsletter and working on the manual for a new product we're releasing later this year, work on the TGC website continues at some speed. A few weeks ago exclusive screen shots of the new site design (albeit in an un-finished state) were released onto DBDN. Things have progressed a long way since then and all of the new site content is now finished. This is quite an achievement and it's taken many months of hard work to get to this point. It means that the hoped-for August release date is still possible, even if a few of the features and services we wanted to offer are going to be introduced as the year progresses. Although still tightly under-wraps on our development servers, I'm happy to show all of you a very recent screen shot of the site in its current state. Although this screen shot doesn't demonstrate any of the user features, you'll get a good idea for the layout, the concepts being used and the overall design. As with everything we do, more changes will happen before the final official release, but essentially this is the work in progress so far.

Upgrade5 Public Beta Test

Upgrade5 for DarkBASIC Professional contains some significant changes and enhancements to the language and in an on-going attempt to make it as stable as possible for you, the end user, we are taking an unprecedented step with the next beta version. We are going to release it publicly.

Until now all betas of Upgrades have been released privately to the core development team and then onto the DarkBASIC Developers Network (DBDN). DBDN members have already been experimenting with Upgrade5 Beta1, however in an attempt to get the widest possible test audience out there and to ensure we capture and resolve as many bugs as possible this time around we are going to release Upgrade5 Beta2 to the general public. This Upgrade will be announced as available for download from our site within the coming weeks. You will need to install it onto a 2nd installation of DarkBASIC Professional because it has a time-limited trial period (like all betas to date have). But essentially you'll be able to test out all of the new commands, see the shader effects in action and report your feedback via a bugs submission board we will be setting up.

Keep your eyes peeled on the web site and forums for more information.

Texture Gallery Launches

We received an email from Lauri Suopera with regard to a new Texture Gallery that has been created with games designers in mind. Here's the information:

"The site got up and running only few days ago, but already there are over 100 free textures for anyone to download. The site is based on a very nice & slick script making it look all very commercial.

My idea for the start has since been used by this almost exclusively for DB users. That's just because I like the community, and I have been around for quite a while (since DB 1.05)."

You can visit the site at http://web2.hamburg041.server4free.de/coppermine/

Making Waves

Although this nice little piece of DarkBASIC code wouldn't fit into the 20-line category, we still thought it was an interesting effect and one we wanted to share with you. Spanish DarkBASIC programmer Alejandro created this and emailed it into us and we thought it would make a nice freebie download for all newsletter readers. It creates a wave pattern effect on a matrix which is quite soothing to look at and manipulate with the controls.

Download db\_waves.zip, it's only 3k :)

Kidscom and The Game Creators Team-Up

Kidscom.com is a website orientated for kids who can register, login, play games and earn points. Points equate to prizes available from their Loot Locker and at the moment The 3D Gamecreator is the top billing item. Circle 1 Network Business Developer (owners of kidscom.com) Clarke Pulver said "The software has created quite a stir here with our people itching to get their hands on it".

You can visit kidscom.com at http://www.kidscom.com.

Become an Affiliate and Start Earning Today

Do you run a game development related web-site? If so you could benefit from the Affiliates scheme that we now have in operation. Any affiliates who sign-up with us can earn 20% commission on all sales. Registration is free and once approved you get sent the HTML to include on your site that allows users to order from us (via you).

Click here to Register

Richard Vanner Talks About the Future of The Game Creators

As you can appreciate an awful lot has been happening here over the past few months. Some of you will have noticed the news item we posted onto our site talking about the company name change, most of you will know about the new web site coming shortly but only one man really has the roadmap well and truly planned out. In this interview with our business director Richard Vanner you'll get the lowdown on his past and TGCs future.

What have you worked on in the past?

For most of my working life I worked as a Producer at Europress Software. When I first joined Europress I started as a programmer. It was the mid 80s and I was coding on my PC but this is rare due to my roles of being a Dad and Husband. I'm looking forward to the new Counter Strike game and hope it's all its been hyped as. Oh, and one day we might see the new Duke Nuke 'em game (just loved the multiplayer 3D version that we spent hours playing at Europress).

I like to read in my spare time. I'm very interested in personal development. There's a book that I highly recommend to all, it's The Power of NOW by Eckhart Tolle. Check it out on Amazon. If you want to experience more of your life and generate the results you desire then read this book. It's a very easy read and will give you a fresh perspective.

Will there be another Retro Competition soon?

We were amazed to see 95 games entered into the last competition. It really boosted our moral and is a clear indication that the community is highly creative. With such awesome results we decided to work on a new competition idea with the aim of bringing a bigger prize to the winner. We are happy to report that we have secured a great prize and will be announcing the competition later in August... It will not be a Retro comp, it will have it's own theme and I'm sure you can all raid the retro archives to make a game suits the theme. More later...

Final comments

Thanks to everyone out there for supporting us. We are doing all we can to bring you cool game making tools and we are dedicated to this. It's just great working in a field that is simply fun to be in. I'd also like to see more schools and colleges signing up to the FREE Dark Basic offer. So please, all of you, spread the word to your schools, friends, parents, lovers, pets...

We are also always on the look out for new titles to re-sell. We want to focus on tools that help people make games, so if anyone reading this wants us to expand their sales revenue, just send an email to me (rick@darkbasic.com)

What are your non-work related interests?

I love to play 5-a-side football. I used to play this twice a week. Since the birth of our daughter Hollie I have only opted for one game a week. I'm hoping now that she's 8 months old I can get some freedom back. Having a step son of 7 and a baby leaves little time for leisure pursuits.

I do like playing games, my step son Sam has a PS2 and Nintendo 64 - so I usually battle him on Bomberman or SSX. I like to play FPS games on my PC but this is rare due to my roles of being a Dad and Husband. I'm looking forward to the new Counter Strike game and hope it's all its been hyped as. Oh, and one day we might see the new Duke Nuke 'em game (just loved the multiplayer 3D version that we spent hours playing at Europress).

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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 k\*\*@trazer.\*\*\* (part of the address hidden for privacy - if this is you, please email us now to claim your prize!).

Pacman - 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 game is quite awesome. It's a full 3D Pacman game, complete with power-up pills, collecting ghosts, dots to eat and responsive controls all in 20 lines of code! Very impressive work from Mike Smith indeed. You can visit his web site at http://www.btinternet.com/~mikenmaz/

Next Issue...

Another month and another newsletter though the stable. Traditionally these are the quiet summer months, a lot of news we've had this issue doesn't really reflect it. If things carry on like this we'll have to consider releasing a newsletter more often come the Autumn time! As always it's been great fun collecting together the news and articles for this issue - but as with any community driven publication this only exists because people out there are doing things - people like you perhaps? If so why not post your comments to the forums and as always ... contact me and let me know what you're working on - rich@darkbasic.com. Cheers!