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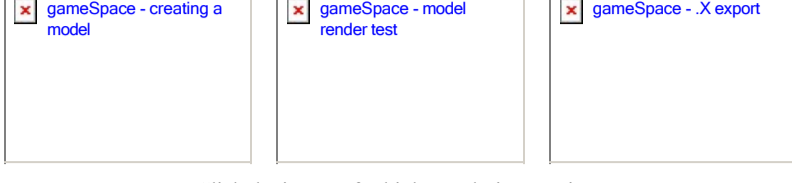
To be honest when putting together the contents list for this issue we were getting a bit worried there might a low article count this month - but how wrong could we have been?! This issue breaks new records in the quantity department and we're pleased to say it's all good solid reading with not too much "trumpet blowing". We've an exciting partnership on the horizon with Caligari and this has bought you exclusive shots of their new 3D modelling package gameSpace. Further to that DarkMATTER 2 is now out so you can expand your quality low-poly model collection for as little as \$0.40 per model! We've also got a great polygon reduction tool, Action3D on special offer for our readers. That and great games, two stunning 20 liners and plenty of news. It all equals another full month. Enjoy the newsletter.

Enter the gameSpace

Here at The Game Creators we've been excited about Caligari's forthcoming 3D modelling package for some time now and a few days ago we got our grubby hands on a burning hot release candidate and took the package for a test drive, DarkBASIC Professional style.



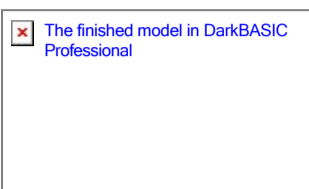
Those of you who are familiar with Caligari's 3D package TrueSpace should feel immediately at home with the interface. For those who aren't there are free video tutorials from Buzz3D to guide you through it as well as a huge easy-reading manual. Working on the principle of a single icon usually performs more than one task - you can left click, right click and hold-down most icons to reveal new panels or control options all without cluttering up your working environment.



Click the images for high-resolution versions

But just what does gameSpace offer you - the game developers? and in particular how can it work with DarkBASIC or DarkBASIC Professional? Well if you take the package on a feature-by-feature basis it actually weighs in there up with the industry heavyweights like 3DS Max and Maya and yet it won't break your bank balance in the process.

The polygon modelling tools are especially fluid and easy to get to grips with. Pick from one of the primitives on offer (such as a rounded box), drag it to the size you require, right-click it and you can then pull around each vertice of the object, slicing them, rotating them, moving them and scaling them as you need. Once done modelling you can texture the object (and even bake-on the textures for more realistic effects) and this is all being previewed in real-time thanks to the DirectX engine.



We took a funky sci-fi model (thanks to Jerry Sandefur of Artv3rk) and imported it into gameSpace without any trouble. Once loaded we modified the mesh, changing the scale and adding a new new body parts to the robot. When finished we previewed the model with the quick render option, exported it to DirectX X format and loaded it into our DarkBASIC Professional program, applying an environment map and metallic shader effect to finish it off - one seriously sexy looking creation! With gameSpace open alongside DarkBASIC Professional we were able to continuously modify the model and re-run our program to see the results instantly.

We firmly believe that gameSpace is a powerful player in the low-cost game specific modelling market and the features it already offers demonstrate this clearly. We are pleased to be working with Caligari and as soon as gameSpace hits retail in a few weeks time we'll have it available from our new site: <http://gamespace.thegamecreators.com>

UK DarkBASIC Convention

Over the 4th and 5th of October 2003 the UK's first DarkBASIC Convention will be taking place in Chichester. Although the convention isn't being organised by The Game Creators, our 3D Technology Developer Mike Johnson will be present and giving two short presentations on Day 1 regarding the future of DarkBASIC Professional and Shades and other FX. Other program highlights include a Q&A session, a talk from Robert Knight on his plugin BLUE, a programming contest and some showcase games on display. Full details including a map, menu and costs are available here: http://www.codingarea.co.uk/html/the_convention.html

Stoked Source Code Released

Andrew Vanbeck, author of the DarkBASIC snowboarding game Stoked has released the entire source code into the public domain. You can grab the 1.6MB zip file and learn an awful lot from the code contained within. Stoked was supposed to be one of the entries for the DarkBASIC "snow themed" competition held at the tail end of 2002 except it arrived a little too late to be judged! But with over 15,000 downloads to date people still seemed to love it. You can view Stoked in the DarkBASIC Showcase [here](#) and download the source code from: <http://www.andrewvanbeck.btinternet.co.uk/Stoked.zip>

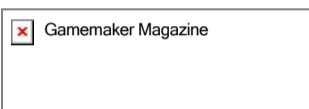


DX9 HLSL Introduction

HLSL stands for "High Level Shading Language" and it's the DirectX9 way of writing pixel and vertex shaders with a scripting styled language rather than the assembly style language that has been used to date. There are several great books on the subject but information is also spreading around the web and this great tutorial was bought to our attention: "An introduction to the High Level Shading Language with a simple example". This tutorial covers the use of the language with a great side-by-side comparison of the HLSL version against the assembly version. You can read it here: <http://www.fairyengine.com/articles/hsl2sided.htm>

Gamemaker Magazine Hits the Shelves

Released on September the 18th was issue 1 of Future Publishings new magazine dedicated to game and mod development - Gamemaker. Weighing in at 116 pages the magazine covers all range of game development topics including creating levels for Half-Life, building Unreal models in 3DS Max, a tutorial on Milkshape, Low Poly Character Design and more. The cover-mounted DVD contains no less than 5 GB worth of maps, utilities and tools to design and create your own games - including trial versions of DarkBASIC, DarkBASIC Professional, DarkMATTER and The 3D Gamemaker. They also dedicate a page to TGC products giving favourable write-ups of them all. Lovely people :) Grab yourself a copy in the UK from WH Smiths, Borders and any decent news agent for Â£5.99.



Powerful Polygon Reduction Tool



Action3D Reducer Special Offer

When it comes to game development speed is everything. One of the best ways to increase the speed of your games is to cut down on the number of polygons you are using in your 3D models. However most forms of polygon reduction either destroy the original model beyond recognition or require software packages costing hundreds. Meet Action3D Reducer.

This awesome utility is designed to perform one task and one task alone - effective polygon reduction without loss of quality! We tested it out on a 29,862 vertice model and crunched it down to 50% it's original vertice count and it still looked great in our game. More importantly, the game ran faster as a result.

The Game Creators and Action3D are able to offer you a special discount on this invaluable utility - you can purchase it online for only \$45. You'll get electronic delivery so no waiting for the post to arrive, it's a small download (6 MB) and it works perfectly with .3DS and .X model files. [Click here](#) to get the full scoop on this great offer.

Game Developer rates DarkBASIC Professional

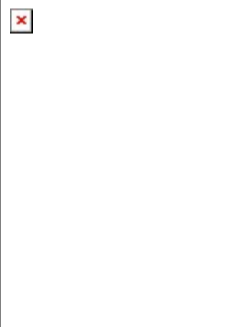
CMP's respected industry monthly Game Developer magazine ran a one and a half page review of DarkBASIC Professional in their September 2003 issue. We were pleased to see a decent and comprehensive write-up of our flagship language and the author Justin Lloyd touched on some good subjects such as capabilities, limitations and features of the program. His overall rating being 4 out of 5 (a "Very Good" in Game Developer magazine terms!). This was encouraging for all of us to read after the months of hard work that has gone and will continue to go into DarkBASIC Professional. You can find Game Developer magazine here: <http://www.gdmag.com/homepage.htm>



Competition Registration



Most of you are probably already aware of the current programming competition being run between The Game Creators and Alienware but for those new to the fold here is the low-down: You can win yourself over \$2100 worth of hot prizes including a stunning Alienware Aurora PC system just by writing a game featuring our alien model (standing over on the right there). Last issue we bought you the final rules and media downloads needed for the competition and this issue we bring you the Competition Registration.



Competition Registration

In order to streamline the submission and judging process when it takes place in early 2004 we have created an on-line registration system. Quite simply all you need to do is to login to your GameCreators account on Wednesday the 24th of September (or any date after!) and on the Welcome page you'll see the competition registration link. Throw in a few small details and you'll be given a registration ID. That's it - you're done! You'll eventually need the ID when you submit your finished game, but for now it will stay active on your user account. If you don't have a GameCreators.com account then [register here](#) for free. It gives you access to our forums, codebase and more.

The Prizes

First Place Prize: Alienware Aurora (AMD Athlon XP Processor 3000+, 512MB DDR SDRAM PC-3200, 120GB Seagate Barracuda 8MB Cache, NVIDIA GeForce FX 5600 Ultra 128MB, Creative Soundblaster Audigy 2), a copy of DarkBASIC Professional, Cartography Shop 3, 3D Canvas Pro and Texture Maker. **Second and Third Prizes:** DarkBASIC Professional, Cartography Shop 3, 3D Canvas Pro and Texture Maker. **Fourth to Tenth Place Prizes:** DarkBASIC Professional.

More Information

Please see the official rules page here: <http://www.thegamecreators.com/>

DarkMATTER 2 Released

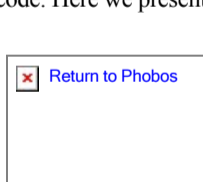
DarkMATTER 2 is now out and available for purchase. DarkMATTER 2 is the sequel to our comprehensive 3D model and texture collection. The new version builds upon the success of the first and offers no less than 98 new fully textured, fully animated models across 10 different categories including: Creatures, Heroes, Monsters, Cars, Guns (Realistic), Guns (Sci-fi), Planes, Props, Space Ships and Tanks.



The package comes with a model viewer (written in DarkBASIC Professional, complete with full source code) which shows how to load and use the objects in your own games. You can buy now from the newly updated DarkMATTER web site: http://www.thegamecreators.com/?m=view_product&id=2104

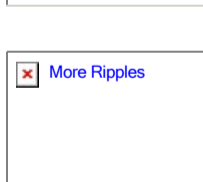
Two 20-Liner Winners

We run a board on our forum that challenges programmers to write the most impressive game or demo possible in only 20 lines of code. Here we present another 2 masterpieces.



Return to Phobos

We didn't really have room or time last month to feature a 20-Liner winner, so instead we've got two of them this month to make up for it. The first is a game by Darin Snow called Return to Phobos. You get to charge around shooting Doom demons in a large 3D level. Considering it's 20 lines is pretty damned impressive, especially as it's quite addictive to just see if you can get 'em all! It even includes a level editor.



More Ripples

It's best to let the author explain this one :) "Yes! The ripples return! What's different this time round is that I'm using a tiled plain created using a memblock, and with slightly curved normals. This allows me to apply sphere mapping with a constantly changing coloured texture to make the ripples look even cooler than before! Memblock meshes need a lot of setting up and manipulating, so I'm amazed I managed to stuff the whole lot into 20 lines exactly, it was originally about 250 lines." Stunning stuff!

3D Map Editor 2.32

At the time of writing we have news that the latest update to the world building package 3D Map Editor will soon be available. We already know it has the following enhancements and fixes:

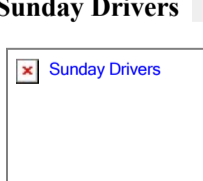
- Windowed Mode
- *FIX* Matrixes Textures : small bug
- *FIX* Matrixes Coordinates/Values display
- *FIX* Inverted X values for Rotates/Scale commands
- *ADD* Use BITMAPs to use Matrixes like terrain
- *ADD* Copy Matrixes
- *INTERNAL* Support for matrixes textures sizes
- *UPDATED* Uses Magic-Windows 1.2b
- *UPDATED* Compiled under DarkBasic Professional 1.05 (Patched 5.1b)

As always you can find out more information and get downloads from here: http://cordier.free.fr/html/index_english.html

DarkBASIC Professional Upgrade 5.1

Upgrade 5.1 is a point-release for DarkBASIC Professional that cures a number of issues with non-English Operating Systems and BSP support. Grab the free Upgrade here: <http://www.thegamecreators.com/>

Sunday Drivers

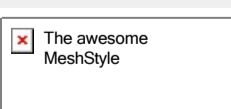


This is an awesome and fun little racing game with a totally cartoony style and look to it. You start off the game with access to only one level and one car but come first in the race and you get to progress through the game. There are loads of cars to unlock and the power-ups floating above the road give you needed extras such as speed-ups, bombs, jumps and ghost mode. The controls are fluid and you never feel as if you've been treated unfairly by the game. Well worth downloading!

[Click here](#) to view the Showcase entry for Sunday Drivers.

MeshStyle 1.0 Released

Every once in a while a package comes along that just makes you think "wow!". MeshStyle is one such package. The amount of love and care that has gone into it is obvious from the outset through both the attention to detail in the interface and the truly massive user manual and tutorial available both. MeshStyle is basically the first real DarkBASIC Professional Matrix Editor and includes a host of very powerful features including a superb height-map reader that will literally sculpt your matrix for you. The tutorial is almost 70 pages in size and covers the a bridge building task. This is well worth downloading and just investing some time into learning.



Full FREE download, screen shots and manuals available here: http://www.duineacu.com/english/htm/mesh_down.php

Packing DarkBASIC EXEs with UPX

We have often received support emails from people asking why they cannot compress their DarkBASIC EXE files with packages like UPX. UPX is an EXE packer which means the EXE file still remains an EXE, but is crunched to a lot less than it's original size. So unlike a ZIP file you don't have to mess around extracting it first, you can just run it immediately. Well the Russian hardcore DarkBASIC programmers Atomic Destruction Group have found a solution and present you their source code and findings on packing DarkBASIC EXEs with UPX and having them work again afterwards!

Full FREE download available here: <http://atd-group.narod.ru/eng/coding.htm> (site hosted in Russia, so bear with the connection speed, it's worth the wait).

This Months Winner

As usual we've plucked one lucky subscriber to our newsletter and for you a completely free copy of DarkBASIC Professional is yours for the asking. The winner is ???@novalicious.??? - just email us and DBPro is yours.

Outro

Got something you'd like featured here? Then email me and let me know about it: rich@thegamecreators.com or use our [Feedback form](#). Eitherway please do let us know what is happening out there in the ever-expanding world of DarkBASIC.