

Adobe After Effects 5.5 expands creative options

The new version of Adobe's *After Effects* motion graphics and visual effects software boasts precise control features which include multiple views, colored shadows, stained glass lighting and the Advanced 3D Renderer for creating high-quality intersecting layers. Import and output options include Advanced RealMedia export and integration with Alias|Wavefront's *Maya* and Discreet's *3D Studio Max*. *After Effects 5.5* supports additional 16-bit per channel file formats including Maya IFF, RPF, SGI and QuickTime.



This upgrade natively supports Mac OS X, Windows XP and Pentium 4 optimizations. The new Effects Palette helps users organize and apply effects, with eight new effects including Color Stabilizer, Advanced Lightning, and Grid. *Zaxwerks 3D Invigorator Classic* is included with the *After Effects 5.5 Production Bundle*.

Adobe After Effects 5.5 will ship in the first quarter of 2002. The Standard version will sell for US\$649; the Production Bundle US\$1499. Upgrades from *After Effects 5.0* will cost US\$99 for either version. Upgrades to the Production Bundle version are US\$899. More information can be found online at www.adobe.com/store.

Kodak buys inkjet manufacturer ENCAD for US\$25 million

Eastman Kodak Company is acquiring ENCAD, Inc., a manufacturer of wide-format inkjet printers, for approximately US\$25 million, making Kodak one of the top three sellers of wide-format inkjet products in a \$2.4 billion output market. ENCAD will become a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Kodak expects the transaction will close in early 2002, pending receipt of regulatory clearances and ENCAD shareholder approval.

CreoScitex and DuPont form thermal proofing alliance

CreoScitex, a division of Creo Products Inc., and DuPont have announced a worldwide strategic alliance to promote and enhance thermal halftone proofing systems based on DuPont WaterProof Thermal Halftone proofing media for CreoScitex CTP proofing systems.

According to their press release, this relationship enables CreoScitex and DuPont to offer a complete solution to customers, including both consumables and either a Proofsetter Spectrum digital halftone proofing device or a Spectrum digital halftone proofing option for CreoScitex CTP devices. DuPont WaterProof Thermal Halftone proofing media is the next generation in the WaterProof product line.

Although CreoScitex will promote DuPont thermal halftone proofing media, customers will still have a choice of thermal halftone proofing media.

DuPont will also support customers who wish to use WaterProof Thermal Media on thermal imaging devices other than those produced by CreoScitex.

CreoScitex becomes simply Creo, Iris Graphics moves to B.C.

Beginning January 2002, Creo Products Inc. will consolidate all of the company's activities and businesses under one brand name and logo: Creo. This phases out the use of the name CreoScitex, which currently designates its graphic arts division, although this will not impact the current CreoScitex product line. The Creo logo will also be updated and shareholder approval sought to change its legal name from Creo Products Inc. to Creo Inc.

In addition, Creo will move production, customer support and engineering for its Iris proofing products from Massachusetts to Vancouver over the next year. Research and development on the next generation of Iris products, as well as the manufacture of specialized ink jet components, will continue in the Boston area.

Sony introduces "world's first Internet-ready digital camcorder"

Sony's new DCRIP7BT MICROMV Network Handycam IP, measuring only 4"x 3"x 2", is a Bluetooth-compatible device that lets users e-mail images and video without connecting to an external PC.

Bluetooth is a short-range 2.4GHz wireless technology that allows communication between devices such as notebook computers, printers and phones. The MICROMV Network Handycam IP enables Internet access through either the Bluetooth-compatible modem adapter (BTANW1) or a Bluetooth-compatible mobile phone. Users can save short video clips and still images on Memory Stick media, then e-mail them. The handycam also allows users to wirelessly browse the Internet on the LCD screen anytime, anywhere.



Sony's new MICROMV format is based on MPEG2. According to Sony, the MICROMV format provides DV-equivalent picture and sound quality in significantly more compact media—MICROMV cassettes are 30 percent the volume of MiniDV cassettes.

The DCRIP7BT MICROMV Network Handycam IP is priced at \$2,899.99. Check www.sonymstyle.ca for more details.

Agfa pulls out of digital camera and desktop scanner markets

Agfa has announced that it will discontinue the sale of its digital camera and desktop scanner products in North America, as of December 31, 2001. This includes all markets in Canada, the United States and Mexico. The announcement came at the end of October.

Agfa has already stopped introducing new digital camera and scanner products into the region, and is implementing programs to aid customers and distributors sell through their remaining inventories.

Apple's second generation AirPort wireless networking



Apple's second generation AirPort wireless network solution features a new AirPort Base Station offering a built-in firewall, 128-bit encryption, and a data rate of up to 11 megabits per second to enable simultaneous sharing of a single Internet connection by up to 50 users. It has a typical range extending to a 150-foot radius.

The solution consists of the AirPort Base Station, AirPort Card and *AirPort 2.0* software for both Mac OS X and Mac OS 9. AirPort's new connectivity and security features also include: two Ethernet ports (10BASE-T and 10/100BASE-T); RADIUS support to enable centrally managed user access control; and AirPort Card compatibility with Cisco's LEAP security method.

AirPort is now available for \$149 for the AirPort Card and \$469 for the AirPort Base Station. *AirPort 2.0* software is available as a free download from www.apple.com.

Deneba ships new digital photo sharing software

DenebaShare 1.0 for Microsoft Windows 95/98/NT/2000/XP is a standalone application that transforms a PC into a secure digital photo server, viewer, and organizer.

All images remain under owner control, with full encryption and password protection, yet are instantly viewable by others over the Internet. Owners of 2 to 5 megapixel digital cameras need only a simple web browser and a password to navigate shared photo collections. *DenebaShare* can also serve as a searchable photo organizer and browser.

DenebaShare ships with *Adobe Illustrator* and *Photoshop* compatible plug-in filters. A free full working introductory copy of *DenebaShare 1.0* for Windows can be downloaded from www.denebashare.com. A Mac OS X-optimized version of *DenebaShare* will be released during Q1 2002.

Corel licenses DiamondSoft's Font Reserve font manager

Following Corel Corporation's announcement that it has licensed DiamondSoft's *Font Reserve*, a Mac-compatible Corel Edition of the font management software is to be included in *CorelDRAW 10* for Macintosh and *Corel Graphics Suite 10* for Macintosh. Both sophisticated graphics packages have been specifically designed

for Mac OS X.

DiamondSoft's *Font Reserve* lets you activate, preview, sort and copy fonts for your system. *Font Reserve 2.6* enables users to download fonts directly from the Internet through the MyFonts.com website. The Corel Edition of *Font Reserve* enables users to support up to 2000 fonts in the management software's database.

Information on Corel products is available at www3.corel.com.



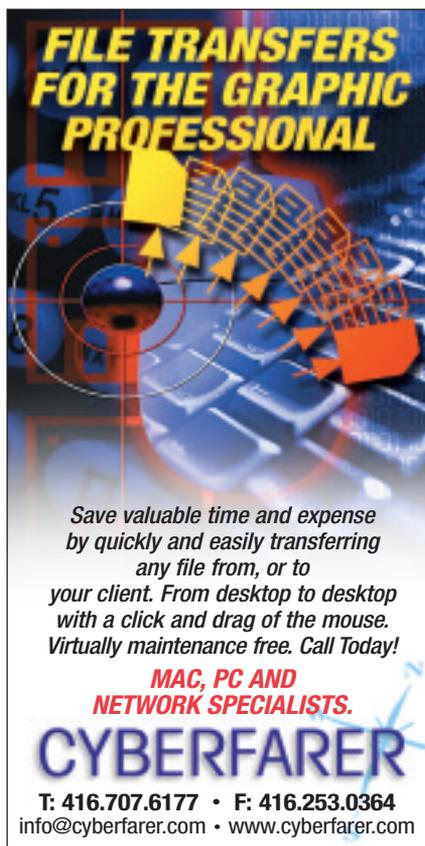
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Interface Improvers for Adobe Macromedia, Quark products

InterfaceImprovement.com offers thirteen Interface Improvers for *Adobe Photoshop*, *Adobe Illustrator*, *Adobe ImageReady*, *Adobe InDesign*, *Adobe PageMaker*, *Adobe Premiere*, *Adobe GoLive*, *Macromedia Dreamweaver*, *Macromedia Flash*, *Macromedia Fireworks*, *Macromedia Director*, *Macromedia FreeHand*, and *QuarkXPress*.

Interface Improvers place secondary toolbars, palettes and windows offscreen, freeing up more design space. They can be retrieved from the edge of a monitor with your mouse pointer. According to InterfaceImprovement.com, it usually takes one to two hours to adapt and “then you start working much faster (up to 15%!) than before.”

All Interface Improvers can be downloaded for free from www.interfaceimprovement.com. These shareware programs may be used for a period of 14 days, after which the registration fee is US\$17.



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At last, a wearable computer worth wearing?



Given the right content to justify its hefty price tag, Panasonic's newest addition to its Toughbook series of portable computers could be the first wearable computer that's worth its weight in utility.

The Toughbook CF-07 is comprised of a handheld strap-on wireless display unit (the MDWD or Mobile Data Wireless Display) and a Panasonic remote MiniPC (300MHz Pentium III with 5GB 1.8-inch hard drive and 128MB RAM, expandable to 256MB). The CF-07's US\$3,000 street price includes the display and MiniPC, but the display can also be purchased separately to run from any computer equipped with Wireless LAN. For an extra US\$599 users can add a docking station that converts the unit into a full-fledged workstation.

Less than 6" x 9" in size and weighing just a pound and a half, this little display unit can be toted around for hours if necessary. In open spaces the display works as far as 300 feet away from the MiniPC without compromising performance. But the PC, at barely two pounds itself, can also be easily strapped to a hip, or hung from a belt, or stashed in a shoulder bag.

Since it runs any version of Windows, the success of this product will depend first on whether there is digital content suitable for its 5x7" display. And this content must be simple enough to operate by touchscreen. Interactive applications from *Macromedia Director* or *Microsoft Powerpoint* work well as do web technologies like *Flash* and XML.

However the most promising delivery format may be Adobe's PDF. The PC comes pre-installed with *Acrobat Reader* and its interface suits PDF documents perfectly. I installed *Acrobat e-book Reader* on my unit, and for the first time since the advent of e-book technology, I actually found myself reading in bed! It can run off its lithium batteries for up to five hours, according to Panasonic, and has a Type II PC Card slot that can be used for Ethernet/modem to access local networks and the Internet, built-in mini-USB for connecting digital cameras and other peripherals, plus ports for serial, DC-input and Wireless Display interface.

The CF-07 also has an impressively crystal clear 800 x 600 color screen—with the backlight on, it even looks great in direct sunlight. It uses a touchscreen interface, with touchpen for acute navigation, a configuration menu, and right-click button. The display unit includes a screenshot feature that can store up to 100 full-screen images for use away from the PC unit. Unfortunately, although the computer can power full motion color, the wireless display is limited to 256 colors and a refresh rate that is not suitable for video.

But the “tough” in Toughbook means the CF-07 can withstand bumps, drops, water, dust, and temperature far better than any standard laptop or palmtop. Panasonic will be targeting it at industrial and utility services, health care, construction, and other field-based professions. However anyone producing e-books will also want to take a look at this product. With over 70,000 Toughbook units already in the field, owners may start taking their work home with them—and end up reading e-books before they go to sleep! For more information, visit www.panasonic.com/computer/notebook/html. ~Ryan Sutherland



Special Report

Xbox heats up battle for \$billion gaming market

by Dinah Tolton

Along with green globes and a software titan's half billion-dollar marketing plan, comes the humbly named Xbox.

Microsoft is looking to its video game console, released November 13th, to bolster weakening PC sales and compete with the giant of consumer electronics, Sony's Playstation 2. Touting its future as a hub for linking home computing appliances and communications networks, Xbox includes a sophisticated sound system, a DVD player (which by itself almost justifies the price tag), and gear for high speed Internet connections to allow on-line multi-player gaming. Microsoft reported November shipments of 100,000 units per week to stores across the United States.

In another corner of the profitable electronic home entertainment industry stands the monolith of the gaming market—Nintendo. In its first week of release at the end of November Nintendo claimed to have sold half a million units of its new game console, GameCube. In this kill-or-be-killed gaming war it's not always an advantage to be out first. Then again, 20 million Playstation 2 sales since October 2000 probably hasn't hurt Sony.

GAME PUBLISHING

The future of the console war lies in the games (Sony Playstation 2 supports over 1,000). For the Xbox, EA Sports contracted with Toronto-based Pseudo Interactive Inc (www.pseudointeractive.com) to create a video game called *Cel Damage*.

Cel Damage looks like a World War II tank chase—*Rocky and Bullwinkle* meet *The Simpson's Itchy and Scratchy*. It feels

much like a bumper car ride, with access to thirty-six cartoon weapons, including a spider web catapult, boxing gloves on long extenders, axes which cut vehicles in two, and chainsaws.

Pseudo Interactive president David Wu studied computer science in the early 90s at the University of Toronto and went on to work on the space battle game *Wing Commander* at Origins in Texas. Back in Toronto in late 1996, Wu was working on development of a gaming engine when he got together with two university friends, Rich Hilmer and Dan Posner. Together the trio formed Pseudo Interactive Inc.

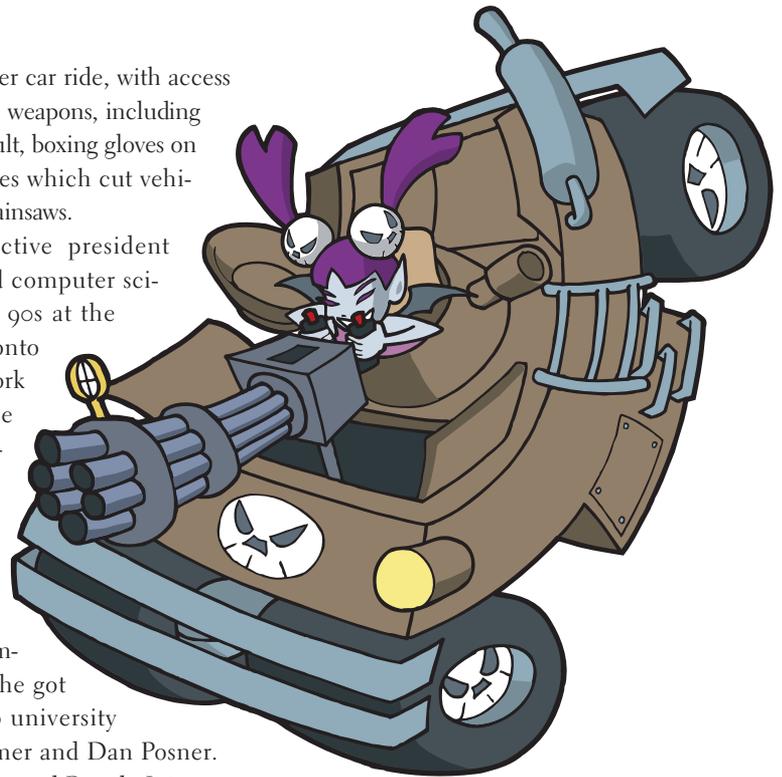
At the 1997 Game Developers Conference, Wu showed a demo of his first physics simulator to a group from Microsoft's Entertainment Business Unit (EBU). Every gaming engine has its strengths and weaknesses. There are car racing engines, first person shooter engines, real-time strategy engines. Wu's engine happened to be conducive to cartoon rendering which made it unique. Microsoft liked Wu's engine so much that it committed development funding through to December, 2000.

After that, Pseudo Interactive needed a publisher for *Cel Damage*. Jeff Hilbert, the company's agent, negotiated a deal with EA Sports, and software development began in earnest.

THE GAMING CULTURE

Artists working at Pseudo Interactive are expected to have strong traditional art skills which can be enhanced with 3D software tools. They have to be avid gamers to be hired. The platform of choice is PC, running 3D *Studio Max*.

In the lounge of Pseudo's downtown Toronto headquarters, employees have ac-



This cartoon character comes from the game *Cel Damage*, just released by EA Sports for Microsoft's new Xbox and created by Toronto software developer Pseudo Interactive.

cess to every current game console, complete with an extensive library of newer games.

To fill its requirements for artists, Pseudo has a strategic alliance with Seneca College. The company has also hired talent from University of Toronto's computer sciences courses, University of Waterloo, and the Art Institute in Dallas. Math, 3D modelling, C++ programming and the arts are some of the key educational criteria for hiring a game designer.

"We are not in the heat of competition, but game publishers are, and particularly the game console manufacturers," observes Kevin Barrett, Pseudo Interactive project director.

As long as the game console market stays hot, Pseudo Interactive should have no trouble feeding the fire with more ram-bunctious products such as *Cel Damage*.

Cel Damage for Xbox was released early in November (SRP US\$49.95); a version for the GameCube is also in the works. To view samples, check EA Sports's *Cel Damage* website at www.celdamage.ea.com.

GretagMacbeth Eye-One Pro color calibration to be bundled with Sony Multiscan monitors

Sony has announced that its high end Multiscan CRTs, the 24" FW900, 21" F520 and G520, will be bundled with GretagMacbeth's color calibration system. GretagMacbeth's *Eye-One Pro* simplifies the color management process and ensures consistent color reproduction across a wide range of media.

Sony's G-Series and professional-grade F-Series models feature FD Trinitron technology. Each model combines a minimal aperture grille pitch (the F520's is 0.22 mm) with the L-SAGIC electron gun to provide the smallest possible circular beam spot up to the edges of the screen. More info on Sony CRTs is available at www.sonystyle.ca.

Using GretagMacbeth's Eye-One Monitor measurement device, and the *Eye-One Match* software, a display can be calibrated and profiled through a "wizard-like" interface. *Eye-One Share* software defines colors in terms of spectral data; color palettes can then be electronically communicated to the rest of the design team or customer. More color creation tools will be regularly added to *Eye-One Share* and updates are distributed free of charge on the icolor.com website.

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HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON



When Absolut Vodka threw its recent website launch party at a tony downtown Toronto art gallery, was there some kind of special marketing strategy behind collaborating on the event with New York's Vice Magazine, the cheeky bunch whose website (www.viceland.com) features "The Vice Guide to Anal Sex" and "Guide to Giving Head"?...Trade reports say that Apple may introduce a flat panel iMac at Macworld San Francisco in January...Will the fighting ever end? No, we don't mean in Afghanistan...Macromedia and Adobe are back in court, this time because the Dreamweavers want a judge to block sales of Photoshop and GoLive -- Macromedia contends that it patented the technology behind both programs back in 1998(!)...From a recent Seybold Report: A Pew Research study on the success of pay-for-content websites showed that, when asked to pay for online content, 88 per cent of Internet users rejected the offer and simply found the same content elsewhere for free...If you read our report in the last issue on German scientists merging brain cells with silicon chips, then you were surprised by neither the recent report of Israeli scientists who claim to have constructed a computer out of DNA molecules nor the announcement out of Bell Labs in the U.S. concerning breakthrough work in creating transistors from "conjugated molecules" made out of carbon, hydrogen and sulfur, and poured onto gold electrodes...Say, how about that big November bust of a Taiwanese outfit trying to smuggle a container full of counterfeit Microsoft Windows boxes into Los Angeles -- authorities said the shipment had a commercial value of \$100 million, which we calculate must be worth over \$500 at street prices...