Native OS X version of Alias|Wavefront Maya with advanced rendering to ship by September 25th

Alias|Wavefront announced at Macworld New York that its Maya Complete software for Mac OS X is scheduled to ship on or before September 25th, 2001 and will include the company’s latest advancements in Maya rendering technology.

According to Alias|Wavefront, since Maya was last demonstrated at Macworld San Francisco, all of Maya Complete 3 has been made Mac OS X native; and its state-of-the-art texture and rendering enhancements have been brought to the Macintosh.

The company is launching a special two-part order promotion. Anyone ordering the product before December 31, 2001 can receive twelve-months of maintenance, including upgrades and support. In addition, for those who place their orders before the product ships in September, a complimentary productivity pack consisting of a voucher redeemable for a Wacom tablet, a copy of the coffee-table-style resource book, The Art of Maya, a three-button mouse, a limited edition Maya jacket, and a Maya training DVD, will be added to this offer.

Maya Complete for Mac OS X will sell for US$7,500, the same price as Maya for the IRIX, Linux and Windows NT, Windows 2000 Professional platforms.

Epson consumer level Perfection scanners offer resolutions up to 2400 x 4800 for under $600

Epson Canada has just announced three new consumer level Epson Perfection scanners—the Perfection 2450 Photo, the Perfection 1650 series and the Perfection 2550 series.

For the first time, Epson now offers 2400 x 4800 dpi resolution with its top-of-the-line consumer scanner, the Perfection 2450 Photo, which also has USB 2.0 and IEEE-1394 (FireWire) connectivity. This model, available in early October for under CDN$600, offers a 3.4 Dmax and 48-bit color-depth as well as a built-in 4 x 9” transparency adapter.

The Perfection 1650 series includes two different models: the Perfection 1650 and the Perfection 1650 Photo, both with resolutions of 1600 x 3200 dpi, 48-bit scanning and USB compatibility. They will be available in early September for estimated street prices of CDN$529 and CDN$569, respectively.

The Perfection 1250 and 1250 Photo scanners offer 1200 x 2400 dpi hardware resolution and 48-bit color depth, and are due in early September at CDN$499 and CDN$529, respectively.

Check www.epson.com for additional information.

Extensis Suitcase 10 for Macintosh adds font collection, auto-activation, activate on demand

Extensis has just released Suitcase 10, an upgrade to its popular font manager. A carbonized OS X version of Suitcase 10 will ship later this year.

New Suitcase 10 features include Auto Activation, which automatically activates fonts in many popular graphics programs, including a QuarkXPress XTension which allows users to open the exact font used in a QuarkXPress document. Users can also create application sets so that any time the program is opened, necessary fonts are activated as well. Activate on Demand lets prepress operators temporarily activate fonts needed for a print job by dragging them into Suitcase. Deactivating these fonts is a single keystroke.

Suitcase can now copy all font files necessary to print a document to a specified location. It includes LemkeSoft’s FontBook, which previews and prints font families in 24 different layouts. A corrupt font finder tracks which font crashes a system and marks it. Suitcase also resolves duplicate font conflicts.

Suitcase 10 Server, which can run on either Mac or Windows, allows individual users on a network to view all Server sets created by the administrator and subscribe to only the sets they need. It includes five copies of Suitcase 10 for Macintosh.

For additional information on Extensis Suitcase 10, visit www.extensis.com/suitcase10. For information on fonts in OS X, visit www.extensis.com/suitcase/fonts_and_osx.html.

Suitcase 10 is available now from the Extensis website. Estimated street price is US$99.95. Suitcase 10 Server is available for an estimated street price of US$999.95. French, German and Japanese language versions will be available very soon.

Xerox introduces 16 ppm letter/legal size color printer with new ColorStix II solid ink technology

Xerox Canada has announced the introduction of the Phaser 860, its latest network color printer. Starting at an estimated retail price of CDN$3,499, the Phaser 860 prints at 16 pages per minute in color. Xerox claims that the Phaser 860 has the fastest first-page-out-time in the industry, a mere ten seconds.

Xerox also introduced a new generation of its solid ink technology, ColorStix II Solid Ink, which offers vibrant color on any type of paper and on-the-fly replacement.

The Phaser 860 transfers a full color image to paper at 1200 dpi print resolution in a single pass, allowing for higher print speeds. It includes 64 MB of memory standard (expandable up to 256 MB), expanded media flexibility, including legal size paper and support of up to 110-lb. index stock, automatic two-sided printing, and 10/100 BaseT Ethernet. Check www.xerox.com/officeprinting to learn more.
Bell Fund publishes step-by-step guide to new media production

New Media, New Business: The Producer’s Guide, a new publication designed to be a step by step guide for producers of new media content, was recently launched during the Banff Television Festival by the Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund.

Leading members of the Canadian new media industry have contributed insights and experience for New Media, New Business which outline each stage of the production process, from concept to sales. It was published in association with Telefilm Canada, Liberty Village New Media Centre and the Ontario Media Development Corporation and retails for $19.95 through the Bell Fund offices as well as various industry associations and bookstores. Look for information at www.bell.ca/en/about/bic/fund/preleasenewpublication.asp.

Bryce 5 allows unlimited cross-platform distributed rendering

Corel Corporation has just begun shipping Bryce 5, the latest version of its 3D landscape creation and animation application for both Mac and Windows.

Bryce 5 is Corel's first application for the Mac OS X platform, and the first of many products Corel will deliver for this advanced OS in the coming months.

A new Network Rendering feature dramatically increases rendering speed by using multiple computers for a single image or animation. There is no limit to the number of systems used, and it is platform independent, enabling Mac and Windows users to render their images on either or both platforms simultaneously.

Also added are improved rendering capabilities. Premium Rendering Options facilitates the creation of naturally photorealistic images with depth of field, blurred reflections, and soft shadows. The Tree Lab enables the creation of organic 3D trees, where users may specify the exact look and feel of trees in a scene. Metaballs are a primitive object type that let users quickly create organic shapes. The Light Lab gives more control over lighting direction, intensity and tinting.

Bryce 5 for Windows 98/ME/2000/NT 4.0 and Mac OS 8.6 or higher retails for US$309 for all platforms. For more information, visit www.corel.com.

Collabria print e-procurement company bites the dust

In a deal announced in July, the core hardware and software assets of Collabria, including its PrintCommerce 3.0 platform, have been purchased by Printable Technologies.

Set your browser to www.printable.com for more information.

Corel launches procreate product line at Macworld

At Macworld New York, Corel unveiled an revised alignment of its graphics products under the new banner procreate, which groups Mac and Windows creative applications geared specifically to the professional creative market, a segment the company is targeting as part of its growth strategy. Corel has also stated that it will put heavier emphasis on developing and supporting creative software for the Mac OS.

The procreate product line includes Painter 7 and upcoming versions of KPT and KnockOut. New versions of KPT and KnockOut will be available in fall 2001, and future procreate products for Macintosh will be optimized for OS X.

For more information about procreate, point your browser at www.procreate.com.

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Special Report

Total Training for Adobe GoLive 5

by Jason Lee

Back in the Dark Ages of the Internet, GoLive was called CyberStudio GoLive. It was acquired by Adobe in 1999 and with the release of version 4, it was ported to Windows. The latest release, Adobe GoLive 5, has been available for about a year now and is starting to gain inroads into Macromedia Dreamweaver territory.

One of GoLive’s strengths is its tight integration with other Adobe products. Photoshop JPEG images and ImageReady animated GIFs are seamlessly updated in GoLive when pictures are resized. The drag-and-drop use of complicated JavaScript “objects” is also a bonus. Many of my colleagues have wanted to try GoLive but they are so wrapped up in Dreamweaver that they can’t afford the time to retrain themselves. Well, here it is folks, the fast-start, no-manual approach to mastering GoLive in a week.

Our company has been using GoLive since version 3 and I thought I was quite adept at creating web pages with this application—until I was handed nine “how to” videos for GoLive 5 produced by California-based Total Training (www.total-training.com). Total Training has produced Total Training for Adobe GoLive 5, a collection of nine training videos, sixteen hours of instruction in total, targeted at both novice and expert users. Using these videos, you can create dynamic websites without ever opening GoLive’s user manuals.

The instructor is Deke McClelland (author of The Photoshop 6 Bible). Since he is also an experienced web designer, he incorporates real world Photoshop/GoLive situations into the lessons and allows users to develop their skills at their own pace. Printed manuals can only explain how to use a program as well as the reader can understand it. But the Total Training for GoLive 5 series shows how to apply the correct fundamentals of web design utilizing drag-and-drop features as they were intended to be used by the developers.

In addition to the nine videos, a CD-ROM containing data files relating to each lesson is included. This is a great way to backward-engineer the sample projects to see how websites should be done. Both Mac and PC platforms are demonstrated in the lessons, so web developers on either platform can take advantage of the cross-platform compatibility of GoLive. Printed Quick Reference Cards provide summaries for each lesson as well as duration times, so you can jump to a desired lesson without shuffling through the entire tape to find it.

While watching the tapes, I found myself constantly saying, “So that’s what this thing is used for!” Although I had learned a lot through trial and error by reading the manual and applying my own style of workflow, watching the videos cleared up some confusion about how the program designers intended the software to be utilized efficiently. For example, I would often use an “action” to open a new pop-up window, each time with different images. I would have to create the same action over and over, resulting in a page with a lot of HTML scripting. Instead, I learned that a simple drag-and-drop Global Variable could be created once and called up repeatedly to minimize the HTML code and produce the same results. I also learned about the do’s and don’ts of advanced Cascading Style Sheets and Javascript by watching how to do it, rather than using my own interpretations of the manual’s explanations.

If I have any complaints about the video it would be about one important feature that wasn’t mentioned—GoLive’s advanced QuickTime Editor. This is one feature that puts GoLive ahead of the competition, future volumes of the GoLive training series should include the QuickTime Editor, especially with broadband approaching.

So if you recently had an interest in creating dynamic websites but didn’t know where to begin or what software to choose, this series can provide a solid foundation. For all those professionals who can write code in their sleep, the Total Training series can open a window of opportunity to further their skills and increase the productivity of their businesses. Manuals are valuable resources, but a professionally produced video provides a chance to watch-learn-and-duplicate, which is far more effective than reading and assuming what the result is supposed to be.

With all the tools that Total Training provides, these videos make the learning experience complete in a single US$249 package.

Jason Lee works for BC Pictures, an award-winning new media production company that creates content for TV, CD-ROM, DVD and Internet websites. He can be reached by telephone at 416-521-7462 or by e-mail to b.connolly@sympatico.ca.
New 64s hit 867 MHz, include GeForce2 MX graphics cards

Apple took the spotlight at Macworld New York to introduce its new line of Power Mac G4s with 733 MHz, 867 MHz and dual 800 MHz PowerPC G4 processors. Both the 867 MHz and dual 800 MHz processors include 256K of on-chip level 2 cache running at processor speed and a large 2MB of level 3 back-side cache per processor. NVIDIA GeForce2 MX graphics cards are now standard on all models, with the new NVIDIA GeForce2 MX with TwinView card for dual monitor support standard in the dual model. Apple’s SuperDrive, a combination CD-RW/DVD-R, is now standard in Power Mac G4 models starting at CDN$3,799.

Housed in an updated “quicksilver” enclosure, the Power Mac G4 line includes five slots, including four high-performance 64-bit 33 MHz PCI slots and a 4x AGP slot with NVIDIA GeForce2 MX graphics card with TwinView and 64MB of SDRAM for dual display support in the dual 800 MHz model, or NVIDIA GeForce2 MX graphics card with 52MB of SDRAM in both the 733 MHz, and 807 MHz models; two 400Mbps FireWire ports and two 12Mbps USB ports; iTunes “jukebox” software, Disc Burner software for creating data CDs, and iMovie 2 digital video editing software; built-in 10/100/1000BASE-T Ethernet; and three 3.5-inch hard disk drive expansion bays with one pre-installed Ultra ATA hard drive up to 80GB.

Suggested retail pricing on the newest Power Mac G4s is as follows: 733 MHz, CDN$2,599; 867 MHz, CDN$3,799; dual 800 MHz, CDN$5,299.

Check www.apple.com/ca to get complete details.

Corel acquires Micrografx in US$32 million stock exchange

Corel Corporation and Micrografx, Inc. have announced an agreement whereby Corel will acquire Micrografx in a stock-for-stock transaction valued at approximately US$32 million.

Corel’s initial growth strategy focuses on strengthening its position in the graphics market and effectively managing its business applications division to upgrade its large base of existing users. The company then plans to develop advanced Web-based functionality within existing and new product lines. The third stage will involve developing new technology to target fast-growing emerging markets, such as wireless and Web-based services.

This acquisition is expected to be accretive to cash flow and cash earnings per share in the fourth quarter of Corel’s fiscal 2001 and thereafter. The deal is expected to close in Corel’s fourth quarter.

Atomik 2.0 performs Quark to XML processing in single pass

Atomik 2.0, a new version of QuarkXPress-to-XML software by Easypress Technologies, now features document-by-document processing, enabling users to extract the content of an entire QuarkXPress document in a single pass. Atomik also supports the extraction of tabular data from QuarkXPress into a structured format. New in version 2.0 is automated image extraction so users no longer have to manually associate images with text-based content.

The enhanced Ruleset Manager in Atomik 2.0 permits faster and easier configuration of documents for the XML extraction process. It also brings greater control through the Style Property Filter that enables the use of pure and altered styles.

Atomik 2.0 is available now, direct from Easypress Technologies in the UK. Suggested retail price is US$6,995. Check www.easypress.com for more information.
Macintosh users are brand loyal.

No, it’s more than that. They’re Apple evangelists, witnessing for the children of Jobs at every opportunity.

“Viruses? Oh yeah, I remember dealing with one a couple of years ago. You could have avoided this whole mess if only you’d bought a Mac instead.”

THE ROOTS OF MACSMUGNESS

Make no mistake, Mac users are smug about the proficiency and user-friendliness of their machines, but perhaps they have good reason to be. After all, as Steve recently pointed out at Macworld New York, G4 chips are faster than their Intel-based competitors. But it goes deeper than Megahertz, the Velocity Engine, and the highly intuitive user interface. The Mac OS is accessible to new users, but it’s also ideal for power users, thanks to a little thing called AppleScript.

Every version of the Mac OS (since OS 7.5) ships with a built-in Script Editor that allows users to create automated controls for various System functions as well as compliant third party applications. Many of the major software developers (comprising hundreds of applications), including Adobe, Quark, Microsoft, Canto and FileMaker, have incorporated AppleScript support in their desktop apps in order to facilitate the demand for automation required by business and creative production environments. Think of it as a bridge between the generic OS that comes out of the box and your customized workflow style.

And it’s not that difficult to learn how to use it. Unlike the more arcane Visual Basic scripting that can be accomplished in the Wintel world, AppleScripting the Mac can actually be fun—well, as fun as any sort of programming can be, anyway.

Core System functions, like creating folders, moving files, changing file/folder names and labels, printing, mounting remote volumes, even changing the appearance of the user interface, are relatively easy tasks.

Let’s take this straightforward example: Search for “Script Editor” with the Find command.

Launch the application.

Paste the following code into the Script Editor:

tell application “Finder”  
activate  
make new folder at desktop  
end tell

Press the Check Syntax button to check your code. If no error pops up, you’ve typed it correctly and it should run. Next, press the Run button.

There, you’ve just created a new folder on your desktop. Using the “with properties” command, you can assign a label color, folder name and position of your new folder.

Obviously, that was an easy one, but learning to use AppleScript effectively is something that you build on, one trick at a time. Get the easier ones under your belt and soon you’ll be scripting your favourite software to do things that will save you time—even sending Apple Events over IP networks, like the Internet, or reorganizing files before and after AppleScript-evoked application processes. And that’s what automation is all about.

To find out which of your apps are scriptable, just open the Script Editor and (under the File menu) select “Open Dictionary...”. Then, using the dialog box that appears, navigate your way to any application and select it. The AppleScript-compliant features of the software will be revealed.

DIVE DEEPER WITH COURSEWARE

The Mac OS includes AppleScript Help, to get you up to speed on the features of this handy resource, but an excellent CD-ROM tutorial entitled Workflow Automation with AppleScript—at the modest price of US$99—can be purchased from TECSoft (www.tecsoft.com), a consulting and development firm specializing in publishing and workflow automation solutions with AppleScript technology.

TECSoft also offers AppleScript training, a good portion of which has been condensed into this unique self-training guide. The tutorials are easy to follow, and demo versions of QuarkXPress 4.1 and FileMaker Pro 5 are included, along with a single user version of Canto’s digital asset management software (Cumulus v.5) and a full version of Netscape Navigator 4.08, each of which is highly scriptable.

The training interface contains a glossary of terms which, when any item is se-
lected, shows not only its definition, but where its use is demonstrated within the interactive courseware.

As you make your way through the various stages of the course, each section lights up in red, so you know where you left off when you last accessed it. Running your cursor over any of the Aqua-flavoured dots in the main screen reveals the content of that particular subsection.

Some of these sections even contain QuickTime movies of various operations and solutions which act as informative illustrations of the task being accomplished.

Functional AppleScript demo solutions are included, which give this training CD a real-world feeling. As the introduction says, the course won’t make you an AppleScript genius overnight, but it will give you the solid foundation you need to take your automation to the next level. TECSoft deserves high marks for providing one of the most useful AppleScript tools around.

AppleScript. Just one more reason to use a Mac, I say.

Panasonic shipping first combination DVD-RAM/R drive

Panasonic has announced that in October it will begin shipping to retail customers the industry’s first combination DVD-RAM/R drive, called DVDBurner. OEMs are receiving shipments now.

This branded drive will include DVD video recording/editing software. In addition to reading from and writing to both DVD-RAM (rewritable) and DVD-R (write-once) discs, the multifunction drive provides all of the functionality of the DVD Forum specifications for DVD-RAM and DVD-R General, including maximum compatibility with DVD video players, recorders and DVD-ROM drives.

With the ability to write to and read from general-purpose 4.7GB DVD-R discs and 2.6GB/5.2GB to 4.7GB/6.4GB DVD-RAM discs, the drive provides the familiarity of CD-R/RW. Other features include the ability to play back DVD video, DVD-ROM and DVD-R discs, and 24x CD media. Using 4.7GB DVD-R General media, the DVDBurner provides a transfer rate of up to 11.08 Mbps, or a 22.16 Mbps transfer rate for 4.7GB DVD-RAM. Seek times are 75ms for DVD-RAM and 65ms for DVD-R, DVD-ROM and CD media.

The Panasonic DVDBurner will sell for under US$600 (for the ATAPI internal version). Visit the company’s website at www.panasonic.com.

New US$70 Iomega 100MB Zip drive connects via USB

Iomega Corporation recently introduced its lowest priced external Zip drive ever, the Zip 100MB USB VL-Series drive, available now for US$69.95.

The Zip 100MB USB VL-Series drive is a low-power design that requires no power adapter, connecting to a host computer with a single USB cable. The drive is compatible with all Iomega Zip 100MB disks, and is designed for horizontal or vertical placement on a desktop.

Find out more at www.iomega.com/zip.

Pinnacle to release real-time DV editing and authoring system

Pinnacle Systems has announced Pinnacle Pro-ONE, an advanced real-time DV-based editing and authoring solution that speeds up rendering. Users can combine two digital video streams with titles, graphics, and 3D objects and apply up to ten digital video effects simultaneously in real-time.

Pro-ONE includes a hardware DV capture and effects card with digital and analog video and audio inputs and outputs, along with Adobe Premiere 6.0, Pinnacle’s Hollywood FX-RT, TitleDeko RT for video editing and Pinnacle Impression DVD-SE for DVD authoring. Pro-ONE allows the independent slow motion control of two video clips simultaneously in real-time.

Pinnacle Pro-ONE will be available soon at a retail price of US$1299. Visit www.pinnaclesys.com for details.

FlightCheck 4.0 adds preflight support for Microsoft Word files

Markzware has announced the release of FlightCheck Classic v4.0 for the Macintosh. New features include preflight support for Microsoft Word (versions 4, 5, 6, 8 [Office 2000] and 9 [Office 2001]) — an industry first. There are seventy new “views” on the Views Palette which are essentially the same as the Ground Controls for colors, fonts and images. This allows you to get a specific list of just TIFF images, or TrueType fonts. Four new Ground Controls for detect the presence of application-generated clipping paths, ICC Profile usage, Postscript Color Space Management and Ink Density. A new “Next Problem” button on the Problems Layout lets you locate the next occurrence of any problems based on the currently selected criteria.

FlightCheck Classic v4.0 is available on Macintosh PPC/68K for US$399. See www.markzware.com for details.
While most of us are waiting for Puma -- the code name for Mac OS version 10.1 scheduled for release in September -- unauthorized copies of beta versions have apparently escaped from Cupertino, with reports surfacing on a few major Internet news networks...And is there any truth to the rumour that Adobe is more than slightly miffed with Apple for not delivering a more stable version of OS X sooner, and that this was why the company decided to skip Macworld in New York?...Did you hear about the German court which ruled that Hewlett-Packard owes millions in retroactive "intellectual property" fees due on the sale of CD burners in Germany over the past three years? Needless to say, HP disagrees...Meanwhile, still in the courts, Apple has won another round against Imatec over who really invented ColorSync...Quark is determined to build a version of XPress for OS X, and proved it with a demonstration of a carbonized version at Macworld...Once Adobe realized how bad it made them look, it didn't take them long to reverse their position on arrested Russian programmer Dmitry Sklyarov, jailed for exposing security flaws in e-books and PDF...One thing about the demise of Apple's G4 Cube -- it gives everybody else a chance to win those industrial design awards...A sure sign that digital technologies are going to the dogs -- look no further than the world's first canine interpreter, due for release next February by Japanese toy-maker Takara Company. The "Bow-lingual" reads a voice print of your pup's barking via infrared beams transmitted from a collar microphone and translates it into human-readable form, using a vocabulary of 200 words -- all for the low low price of only US$104...

Media Lab’s PhotoCaster 3.0 for Director adds Photoshop layer and text import features

Media Lab has announced availability of version 3.0 of its PhotoCaster software, an Xtra for Macromedia Director. PhotoCaster now lets users import Photoshop files, layer by layer, into their Director cast with one click. Each layer appears as an individual cast member—indexed, anti-aliased, properly registered, transparency preserved and ready to go.

New features include the ability to carry over Layer effects (Photoshop 5) and layer styles (Photoshop 6); Photoshop drop shadows now move through without a hitch. PhotoCaster 3 also gives the user a choice between importing “live” text with limited text styling (fonts, font size, bold, italic, underlining) or importing text as a graphic. All color options are now selectable regardless of monitor color depth. PhotoCaster 3 can import graphics in 8-, 16- or 24-bit mode with any custom palette. Better 16-bit import quality and dithering options for 8-and 16-bit import are also included.

PhotoCaster 3.0 is available by download for US$199 or on CD for US$249. Cross-platform Mac and Windows versions, cost US$329 when downloaded or US$379 for the CD package. For more details, or to download a trial version of the software, visit the Media Lab website at www.medialab.com.

What’ll It Be?

You can’t read everything, so we do it for you. We summarize every important story from magazines & Websites for graphic designers and put it in a newsletter you can read. Contact us for a FREE ISSUE.