

QUICKTIME AUTHORING EH?

LIVESTAGE PROFESSIONAL FROM VANCOUVER'S TOTALLY HIP SOFTWARE DELIVERS A ROBUST SET OF TOOLS

BY BOB CONNOLLY

LIVESTAGE PROFESSIONAL, FROM CANADA'S TOTALLY HIP SOFTWARE, is a powerful and extensive QuickTime authoring environment and development tool designed for creating interactive rich media content for the Internet, CD-ROM and DVD-ROM.

To appreciate *LiveStage*, it's important to understand that QuickTime is much more than just video and sound. It is a true multimedia architecture that allows the integration of text, still graphics, video, animation, 3D, VR and sound including midi music sequences — all in one QuickTime data file. *LiveStage* and QuickTime allow for combining these media types together in an interactive, compelling experience using the QuickTime browser plug-in or *Movie Player* application.

INTERACTIVE CONTENT

Web developers now have a way to create interactive content for the web that is easier and more powerful than creating JavaScript rollover effects or navigational image maps. Web pages can contain interactive video instead of animated GIFs. Currently, many developers dive into dynamic HTML, Java or JavaScript, but that method doesn't work in many browsers. With *LiveStage Professional*, you first create graphics, sound and video using your favorite application, then drop the various file formats onto the "Live" stage and arrange them the way you want. Unlike HTML, you can overlap images, and if the graphics contain alpha channels or masks, you can composite them together just like *Photoshop* layers. These layers can become interactive wired sprites for animation or hot spots for interaction with the mouse.

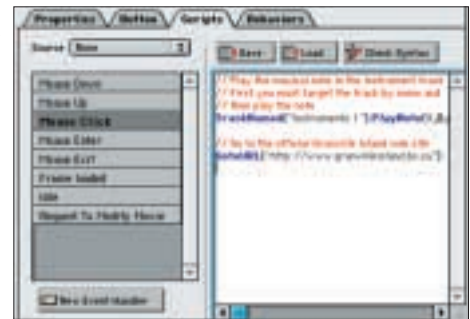
With one line of script, *LiveStage* lets you designate what movie or URL to display when an image button is clicked.



LiveStage "image properties" allow for the creation of buttons for mouse over, mouse down, etc. With one line of script, you tell each image button what movie or URL to display when it is clicked. Save the file as a QuickTime .mov and place it in a web browser — now you have a really cool interactive interface to launch other web pages. No need to slice and dice up the image with *Fireworks*. All of the interaction is contained in one tiny streaming QuickTime .mov file.

LiveStage operates like Macromedia *Director* in many ways, but without the need for a Shockwave player or browser plug-in. In this case, all the interactivity is accomplished using QuickTime. Scripting is pretty straightforward if you understand *Director's* lingo and with a little practice, learning *LiveStage's* basic programming language is fairly simple.

Scripting in *LiveStage* is fairly simple once you learn its basic programming language.

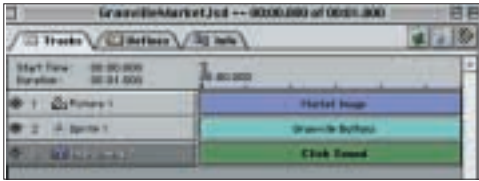


LAYERED MOVIE TRACKS

To the new user, the best function of *LiveStage* is its ability to build layered movie tracks with special effect transitions such as dissolves and digital zooms. For example, if you want to deliver via the web a slide show that has several pictures and/or video timed to narration, you can now lay out the elements over a time line and transition the pictures using QuickTime effect tracks. *Premiere* could accomplish the same effects by creating a 30 frame per second QuickTime .mov file but that file was huge and the resulting movie was not interactive.

Using QuickTime tracks and *LiveStage*, each sequential image

is loaded into RAM and transitioned by QuickTime. Instead of creating a one second, 30 frame dissolve that would require 30 JPEG still images, QuickTime can accomplish almost any digital transition in two frames by using the computer to manipulate and move the image. The resulting file is small enough for streaming delivery via 56k modems.



With QuickTime and LiveStage, a one second 30-frame dissolve can be created with two frames instead of 30 JPEG stills, making it small enough for streaming delivery through 56k modems.

Smaller bandwidth 240x180 videos can be overlaid on still image backgrounds that are transitioned as full screen slide shows. Add a little *Flash* animation or vector text graphics for bullet point emphasis, and voila, you have *PowerPoint* presentations with sound and interactive video over the Internet.

Without a doubt, *LiveStage* is the most robust interactive QuickTime authoring package on the market. It's a must for anyone who is planning to develop broadband content directed at Intranets, cable or ADSL web users. Pricing is comparable to *Director* (just over \$1000) and well worth the cost if you are planning to produce rich media web sites.

LIVESTAGE PROFESSIONAL 2.0.1

System Requirements

Power Macintosh 266 MHz or faster
OS 8.5 or later
QuickTime 4
15MB of hard disk space for installation
10MB of RAM for application

List Price
\$1050

ESD (Electronic Software Delivery)
available from Website

Totally Hip Software
Telephone: 888-884-3447
Web: www.totallyhip.com

And best of all, it's Canadian-made. *

BOB CONNOLLY IS A VETERAN MULTIMEDIA, TV AND CD-ROM PRODUCER (LIFE NETWORK, PBS, VISION) AND A PRINCIPAL IN BC PICTURES. HE CAN BE CONTACTED BY E-MAIL BY ADDRESSING B.CONNOLLY@-SYMPATICO.CA OR BY TELEPHONE AT (416) 521-7462.

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