Avatars2000

A Virtual Event in Cyberspace
www.vlearn3d.org (Oct 13-14), www.ccon.org (Oct 15)

http://www.starshipc3.com

Contents

by: Mary Jo Fahey, mjfahey@interport.net

blaxxun's Web 3D Browser is Based on the Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML) that Originated in 1994

blaxxun interactive is a developer of online community software and owner of several online communities. The software company's award winning Community Platform is based on VRML or the Virtual Reality Modeling Language that has an interesting history beginning in 1994, the year Mark Pesce and Tony Parisi developed a three dimensional interface to the World Wide Web. When they described their interface to Tim Berners Lee, the software engineer who developed the World Wide Web, he invited Mark Pesce to present a paper at the First International Conference on the World Wide Web in Geneva Switzerland.

During that conference the term VRML was coined and a mailing list was formed. Later, with support from the mailing list, that quickly grew to 1000 members, the group (headed by Mark Pesce and Brian Behlendorf of *WIRED* Magazine), decided to adapt Silicon

New York's Open-i Media and Weanet.org to Host Avatars 2000 Face-to-Face Saturday October 14th

Face-to-Face is the name used to describe an in-person component of what is predominantly a virtual event that takes place in cyberspace. This year's Avatars2000 conference, organized by Bruce Damer, Director of the Contact Consortium, will be held at New York's Open-i Media located at 73-75 Franklin Street in Tribeca from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The event is free and Web 3D enthusiasts are welcome.

Thanks to Open-i partners James Chong and Dana Story, face-to-face participants will meet Avatars 2000 attendees via classroom Web browsers and blaxxun's 3D chat software called Contact.

Open-i Media is both a Web development firm and a corporate training facility that has recently added Web 3D to its development agenda. In June, Open-i launched a strategic initiative with both Metastream and Brilliant Digital Entertainment to explore ways in which the company's development staff and trainers could add Web 3D to customer Web sites and course offerings. For example, Ryan Ring, who's Director of Dynamic Media at Open-i, will be setting up introductory Web 3D seminars at the end of the year. For details, send an e-mail to Ryan Ring, rring@openi.com or Danielle Navarro, dnavarro@openi.com.

Weanet.org is a Web entertainment SIG that provides an after-hours forum for writers, filmmakers and animators interested in Web entertainment. launched in

Web 3D Futurist Larry Rosenthal Will Premiere 3D Animated Pilot Called "Starship C3: The Rescue!" Using a Blend of Brilliant Digital and blaxxun Web 3D Technologies

Avatars 2000, a virtual conference in cyberspace run by Bruce Damer, Director of California-based Contact Consortium (ccon.org), is a unique two-day event that attracts Web 3D enthusiasts from around the world. Formed to promote 3D world building and community, the conference takes place within virtual 3D worlds utilizing technologies from companies like ActiveWorlds and blaxxun interactive.

In prior years, the convention has attracted as many as 5,000 visitors who meet each other as avatars in virtual conference halls and listen to lectures, compete in avatar-building contests, view interactive 3D animation within navigable spaces accessed through links on the conference home page http://www.ccon.org/conf00/html/ preview.htm or attend live, face-to-face meetings held in a handful of cities around the world.

On Saturday, October 14th, Larry Rosenthal's "Rescue" will be premiered at a New York Face-to-Face gathering as part of the conference. *Starship C3: The Rescue!* is an 3D animated pilot for an episodic internet show. Viewers will join the adventure by watching the three minute "cliffhanger" in which the crew of the Starship USC3 Hugo fall victim to possibly the same fate as the vessel they've been sent to find. Viewer's then will be able to interact with each other in 3D environments using avatars of the characters within the story.

The narrative, presented as a real-time 3D movie, is made possible through

3D Studio MAX Artists Use Free b3d MAX Plug-in to Make Movies for the Web

One of the most remarkable components of Brilliant Digital's new b3d platform introduced at this year's SIGGRAPH conference, is a free-for-30-days re-downloadable b3d MAX exporter that provides the heavy-duty compression needed to display movies on a Web page. Making b3d movies for a Web page may be compared to creating a "reel" for self-promotion. The biggest difference is a Web version is free. In theory, an animator can sign up for a free Web site at Bizland.com, Yahoo's Geocities or any number of portals, download the b3d MAX exporter from www.b3d.com, create a b3d movie, copy the HTML provided at b3d.com and create a self-promotion Web site. For details contact Larry Rosenthal, larryr@cube3.com.

Brilliant Digital Offers a Barter Syndication Deal That Emulates Television

The new Web entertainment market is sprouting deals that feel a lot like television. For example, Brilliant Digital Entertainment views the Web as an entertainment network and is offering weekly animated content in exchange for ad revenue from banner ads embedded in the skin of their digital projector. The barter deal offers a range of options ranging from no fee for the syndicated animation in trade for 100% of the ad revenue to a fee up front in exchange for participation in the back end.

Interested sites work with Brilliant's technologists to add the appropriate link to their site and content may be served immediately. Webisodes may be embedded in a page or viewed in a floating digital projector window that's served invisibly at the start of the download. Sites in the Brilliant Digital network include Entertaindom.com, Yahoo.com and Scifi.com. Content available for distribution includes Xena Warrior Princess, Ace Ventura Pet Detective, KISS Immortals, Gravity Angels and Short Attention Span Theater. For further information, contact Patrick Barry, pbarry@bde3d.com or 818-615-1500.

b3d Studio is a Next Step for Animators Who Make b3d Movies and It's also Free

Brilliant Digital's b3d Studio is an Adobe Premiere-like authoring tool that's used to create interactive b3d movies. Whereas the b3d MAX exporter is a tool used to create highly compressed animation clips, b3d Studio is a high-end authoring tool that's used to lay up clips, sounds and special effects on a time line for building movies. In-stream hotspotting may also be applied to create Macromedia Director-like movies for playback on the Web. Larry Rosenthal, who's the Brilliant Digital evangelist in San Francisco, calls the tool "a breakthrough product for realtime 3D editing and interactivity." After creating animated Webisodes for high-profile sites such as Entertaindom and Yahoo, Brilliant Digital recently rolled out their toolset in an open beta program that's offered in the form of a free download on the Brilliant Developer's site (b3d.com). For details, contact Kathy Brunette, kbrunette@bde3d.com.

Whereas worldwide production of animated programming has fallen sharply, computer animation is viewed as a market with tremendous growth opportunities. In a recent *Hollywood Reporter* interview, Fabrice Giber, Chairman of Humanoids, said broadcasters are increasingly demanding shows produced with computer animation. She also described the global market for 3D animation as "increasing 50-80% a year."

Larry Rosenthal's 3D Pilot

Brilliant's new story telling platform called b3d Studio. Larry's webisode pilot *"Starship C3: Rescue!"* combines the best of "story telling" utilizing Brilliant Digital's Web 3D movies and "vr community chat" via the blaxxun 3D chat client.

Rob Rothfarb (rob@blaxxun.com), Marketing Director at blaxxun, sees the addition of a b3d movie to a Blaxxun world as "content that naturally complements the community that's engendered by his firm's 3D chat technology." Kevin Bermeister, President of

Brilliant Digital Entertainment says he's "delighted to see the blending of the blaxxun browser and b3d movies because "the experience adds character animation to an immersive 3D space." As he explains, "many of the new Web 3D formats compliment each other rather than compete."

Bruce Damer, President and CEO of the DigitalSpace Corporation and Director of the Contact Consortium, sees new commercial file formats as contributions to the re-growth of Web 3D. As he says, "early Web 3D was a reaction against the limitations of a 2D Web. Homesteading, avatars, 3D chat and community now represent a movement toward Web-enabled virtual reality and that experience is now further enhanced by new Web 3D formats."

Avatars 2000 Face-to-face

June, 2000, Weanet.org will sponsor in-person meetings in New York and San Francisco as well as virtual chats via Open-i Media's PeerFinder client. For example, on October 4th, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Weanet.org and WWWAC's Writer's SIG (co-founded by Robin Schatz and Marc Perton), will co-host a panel discussion at Syracuse University's Lubin House (11 E. 61st Street) with panelists Chris Kalb and Lynn Harris of Oxygen's Breakupgirl.com, Evan And Gregg Spiridellis of Jibjab.com, Chris Cooper of Queernation.com and Ryan Ring of Open-i Media. A similar panel is planned for Tuesday, December 12th at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. To have your name added to the Weanet.org mailing list, send an e-mail to Mary Jo Fahey, mjfahey@interport.net.

blaxxun's Web 3D browser

Graphic's Open Inventor file format to form the basis of VRML.

Investment firm CMGI owns 48% of blaxxun, an international company with offices in Munich and San Francisco. "blaxxun" is a derivation of "Black Sun," a fictitious bar in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* novel.