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D.FILM: MISSION STATEMENT

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Abbie Hoffman once ever Digital Film showcase at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival.

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D.FILM: MISSION STATEMENT

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Abbie Hoffman once of the festival is both to entertain, by showing audiences the very best work done by today's new breed of digital filmmakers, and to inspire, by actively teaching them how they can do it themselves.

In it's first year D.FILM was presented in New York, San Francisco, San Diego and London. Every show in every city was sold out. The first leg of D.FILM's second season has included screenings at Stanford University, the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany, at the Digital Video Conference and Expo in Pasadena and in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"For me the great hope is now that 8mm video recorders are coming out, people who normally wouldn't make movies are going to be making them. And that one day a little fat girl in Ohio is going to be the new Mozart and make a beautiful film with her father's camcorder. For once the so-called professionalism about movies will be destroyed and it will really become an art form." -- **Francis Ford Coppola**

Background

In the early 80's the introduction of inexpensive personal computers, scanners and desktop printers created the desktop publishing revolution and led to radical new styles of graphic design. In the late 80's computers and samplers revolutionized the world of music by allowing the creation of home recording studios and entirely new forms of music like rap, house and drum and bass. Very soon, computers and other forms of new technology (such as digital camcorders and the internet) will radically change the way films are made and distributed. This technology is changing the rules as to who will be able to make films.

The common thread between these three revolutions is that the introduction of low-cost technology has allowed non-professionals access to powerful tools previously available only to large corporations. For example Adobe's After Effects software which costs around \$600 US (\$1k for the pro bundle) allows a user to create effects which could have only been done before on a \$100,000 Flame machine. Likewise, SGI recently introduced their O2 computer which was used to create effects for some of this year's biggest blockbusters, including Titanic and Armageddon. Despite it's ubiquity in the Hollywood digital effects industry, the O2 can be purchased with software for around \$10,000, well within the range of serious filmmakers outside of the film industry.

D.FILM is at the center of this revolution. Our goal is twofold: first, to showcase the best work by talented new artists and filmmakers using these new forms of technology, and second, to inspire and instruct our audience to create digital film themselves. D.FILM is the name that people will turn to when they think of making film with this new technology.

What is D.FILM?

Radical New Technology

We believe technology is revolutionizing film in several ways.

- **Low Cost.** The low cost/high quality equation of digital filmmaking means that a much wider range of people will be able to make film. Many more stories will be told.
- **Ease of use.** Most digital film and animation software is relatively easy to learn. Powerful software can be learned in days instead of years.

- **Ubiquity.** With computers now in 43% of American homes powerful filmmaking tools are for the first time within the reach of a large section of society.
- **Digital Auteurs.** Technology is allowing one person to do what once took an entire team: write, shoot, mix sound, create graphics and visual effects and edit.
- **Distribution.** The internet will allow filmmakers to connect directly with their audience and bypass traditional "filters": Major Studios and Networks.

Tomorrow's Hot Directors and Artists

As a direct result of our 1997 shows films were picked up by MTV, Saturday Night Live and Showtime. The festival features work from a stellar list of rising talent, including artists from MTV Networks, VIFX, ILM, Wired, Rhythm and Hues, Blue Sky, Adaptec, Colossal Pictures along with complete unknowns. In the 98 festival a \$300,000 Airwalk commercial by Doug Liman, the director of the film "Swingers", showed next to a film that Rodney Asher created in his living room with a total budget of \$32.

High Profile Media Coverage

Press coverage of D.FILM has been substantial. This year the festival has been covered in a range of magazines, newspapers and television shows including WIRED, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Le Monde, USA Today and on KCET and ZDTV.

Online Presence

In 1994 D.FILM's predecessor The Low Res Film Festival came online with one of the first websites to feature downloadable movies. In 1998 D.FILM continued an aggressive internet presence that resulted in not one but two Cool Site of the Day awards and awards for the New Venue from Invision, Project Cool and High-Five. D.FILM's site lets visitors download movies from the traveling festival, read interviews with directors talking about how their films were made, buy and sell equipment or trade tips with other D.FILM members and get information on how to create digital film themselves.

D.FILM recently launched The New Venue, an online festival of films created specifically for the internet. The New Venue was developed by Jason Wishnow with a grant from Stanford University. Today movies can be found everywhere on the web yet virtually all films you find online were made to be seen in a theater or on a TV monitor and later merely "scaled down" for the net. The New Venue encourages filmmakers to develop a new and unique aesthetic for filmmaking on the web.

D.FILM and @HOME will soon launch Click Cinema, an online festival specifically for viewers accessing the web via high-speed cable modem. Look for major new developments online from D.FILM and web design partners Akimbo Design in 1999.

Bart Cheever

Executive Producer, D.FILMPRESS QUOTES.

Wired Magazine

"One of the 25 players bringing Hollywood into the 21st century"

San Francisco Magazine

"One of five ideas that will change your life"

The New York Times

"The core of D.FILM's mission is inspiration and empowerment"

The San Diego Union-Tribune

"A computer-savvy, grassroots revolution"

The Wall Street Journal

"The computer has made us all publishers and broadcasters, so why not filmmakers? As this traveling festival shows, the technology is out there, and it's growing higher in quality and lower in cost every day."

Roger Ebert

"(D.FILM's) films push the boundaries of what can be created on computers"

San Francisco Bay Guardian

"D.FILM plays David to Goliaths like Jurassic Park and those digital slingshots really smack 'em where it counts!"

AfterImage Film Journal

"A benchmark event the work in the festival clearly confirmed that digital media has an exciting future"

USA Today

"Now Hollywood comes in a box, allowing even one person the ability to shoot, edit and distribute their own film."

El Nuevo Dia, Puerto Rico

"Truly radical; what independent cinema has ceased to be once it allied itself with the major studios."

Wild Wild Web Television

ABUOT TRAVELING FESTIVAL

"For this digital world, the future of film festivals is D.FILM. A prestigious showcase of digital film, this film festival may become as well known as Cannes D.FILM's touring festival is presented in a single 90 minute screening, consisting of (approx) 20 short films or excerpts from longer works. We feel these films represent the very best digital film being produced today.

In 1997 D.FILM was presented in New York, San Francisco, San Diego and London. Every show in every city was sold out. As a direct result of that tour, films were picked up by MTV, Showtime and Saturday Night Live. For the festival's second season we intend to bring D.FILM to 21 cities worldwide, and so far this has included shows at Stanford University and in San Diego, San Juan, Puerto Rico and the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany. For information about upcoming shows, click the "Tour Schedule" button above.

"NEW TESTAMENT"

DIRECTOR: PHILIP PELLETIER

EFFECTS: VERNE LINDNER

Pelletier has directed theater in New York and LA, conducted the LA Philharmonic and produced records for the Pixies and Lily Tomlin. "New Testament" is his first project as a director.

- ☐ [2.2 MB QuickTime Clip Part 1](#)
- ☐ [0.6 MB QuickTime Clip Part 2](#)
- ☐ [0.2 MB QuickTime Clip Part 3](#)
- ☐ [The making of "New Testament"](#)

"BUDDHA BAR" (WORLD PREMIERE)

DIRECTOR: RODNEY ASCHER

As half of the filmmaking duo Rodney & Syd, Ascher was responsible for last year's "Somebody Goofed", an eerie take on the world of Jack Chick's religious tracts brought to life with Adobe's After Effects software. When that film premiered at last year's D.FILM shows in New York the producer of Saturday Night Live, who was in the audience, was so impressed that he offered the team a deal to produce short films for a regular slot on this season's Saturday Night Live.

"Buddha Bar" is set in the San Francisco Chinatown bar of the same name, an infamous hang out of Jack Kerouac and other members of the beat generation. The entire piece was shot with a disposable 35mm cardboard camera - the kind you buy at a 7-11 when you forget your real camera at home. The resulting images were scanned into a Macintosh and animated with After Effects.

- ☐ [3.3 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"MILLENNIUM BUG" (WORLD PREMIERE)

DIRECTOR: LEE LANIER

"Millennium Bug" is a surrealist's peek at the future of urban sprawl. The film was created using archival black and white photos which were digitally manipulated and composited with computer generated 3D animation.

The title refers to the New Millennium Dictionary, from which the names of the animations were taken. Lanier works at Pacific Data Images in San Francisco.

- ☐ [2.4 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"DOCUMENT 44," "EQUIIS" (WORLD PREMIERE)

DIRECTOR: FABIAN TEJADA

Tejada is a student at the School of Visual Arts in New York. As a "digital homage" to the wildstyle graffiti of Brooklyn, he was inspired to create "Equiis" which he calls "an aesthetic pursuit towards understanding and defining what x as a symbol represents" following a special D.FILM presentation at SVA last year. Tejada has designed for Drop Magazine, Konami and Clarke-Thompson.

- ☐ [5.0 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER" (WORLD PREMIERE)

DIRECTOR: SHEPARD FAIREY

Fairey is best known for engineering the massive "Andre the Giant Has A Posse" sticker campaign, which he started while a student at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, Rhode Island. Fairey is responsible for having over 15 million stickers and posters bearing the image of wrestler Andre the Giant posted across cities all over the world.

- ☐ [2.3 MB QuickTime Clip](#)
- ☐ [0.2 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"PELLUCID SPACES"

DIRECTOR: JON MCCORMACK

PRODUCER: STEVEN CHURCHILL

Pellucid Spaces is a unique film in that the computer generated organisms in this work were evolved within the computer using artificial life programs, not designed. Instead of being scripted as in traditional filmmaking, the organisms generated themselves.

Churchill is the producer of the highly successful "Mind's Eye" series of videos.

- ☐ [1.7 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"THE WEEK BEFORE"

DIRECTOR: DAVE MCKEAN

McKean is well-known in the comic world as the primary artist for the highly successful "Sandman" series of graphic novels. This is an excerpt from his first film, which tells the story of how god created the world and features both 3D animation done with Alias and compositing done with After Effects.

- ☐ [3.0 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"VIRTUAL DATE"

DIRECTOR: DOUG LINEN

As the director of the cult hit film "Swingers", Liman showed California 20-somethings repurposing themselves through the lens of 60s lounge culture. "Virtual Date", created for Airwalk shoes, is his own take on the future of dating.

- ☐ [2.8 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"DREAMBOY AND BRIMSTONE" (WORLD PREMIERE)

DIRECTOR: CHRISTOPHER DANTE ROMANO

The latest installment in the DREAMBOY! series which was picked up by MTV as a result of it's world premiere at

D.FILM New York last year. Romano has been meticulously recording his dreams every night for the past 7 years after reading a book on dream interpretation by Jung. His day job as an animator at high-end LA digital effects house VIFX ("VOLCANO", "THE RELIC") has allowed him to create detailed computer generated recreations of his dreams, the result of which is "DREAMBOY!"

□ [Inside Chris Romano's "Dreamboy"](#)

"5:MOVEMENT" (WORLD PREMIERE)

DIRECTOR: LANCE FERGUSON

Lance Ferguson: "5:MOVEMENT is a film about emotions and human interaction with architecture. The narrative is set by the location; the movement is the dialogue; the tone is set by the filming style and the music.

"I've been to a lot of crowded cities and I see that most people wear a shadow of themselves. This film is about people whose emotions have pushed them to the point where they break through that shadow. Their problems and their joys have added up to such a degree that their humanity reappears. Their screaming/jumping/running/fighting/singing is what makes them alive. The film is a perspective of that point in life for six people at the same location.

"5:movement was shot on one rainy day and two pleasant days. It was made with a 16mm Bolex on Fuji film and then edited on a Macintosh Media 100. Titles and other effects were made in Adobe After Effects."

"BECAUSE TOMORROW and EDUCATION, AN EXTENSION OF THE SYSTEM"

DIRECTORS: VANESSA BERTINOTTI + SIBILLA SOLDINI

"Because Tomorrow" and "Education, an extension of the system" (mixed clips from original installation) Sibilla Soldini and Vanessa Bertinotti Sibilla and Vanessa are two filmmakers based in Switzerland. "Because Tomorrow" was created entirely with still pictures which were colored and retouched in Photoshop, animated with After Effects and edited on the Media 100. The subject is paper recycling, but also has a universal meaning; it is based on an everyday life principle, "Everything reaches an end, every end leads to a new beginning".

"Education, an extension of the system" consists of images from an installation created by the pair. The piece is about education, life and rules. The structures, the grids, the gears, the prisoner's number, the dummies and the words as: rules, discipline, mechanization, passive dedication ... shown in the animation are metaphors that may apply to different aspects of our existence from the army to the school. The video is composed of pictures and textures scanned into a Mac and then animated with Adobe After Effects and edited in Media 100.

□ [0.7 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"SILENCE"

DIRECTORS: JOHN A. TAYLOR + BRENT SIMS

SILENCE is a new film shot entirely with the toy NINTENDO GAMEBOY CAMERA, a still camera which fits onto the NINTENDO GAMEBOY handheld videogame system. The GAMEBOY was specially modified for this film to feed a video tape recorder and results in a series of striking images reminiscent of the silent film era. The film was directed by Brent Sims and John A. Taylor, best known for their film "GUTTER PUNKS", a feature documentary on New Orleans homeless street punks which was shot entirely with consumer digital camcorders and which showed widely at film festivals last year. Silence was produced at Cactus Pudding Productions. **"NAKED PAVEMENT"**

DIRECTOR: JOSHUA TUNICK

Naked Pavement is a documentary about New York photographer Spencer Tunick, well known for his nude photographs - sometimes involving several hundred people at once - on the streets of New York. "Pavement" was shot entirely with consumer-level digital camcorders and edited with Premiere and the Media 100. This gives the film a "you are there" immediacy which would be lost if the film was shot with larger, more professional cameras.

Joshua's passion is documentary film: "I think it has an amazing and unparalleled power to reach all people; this medium can enlighten, shock, inform, educate, and entertain. There is nothing more exciting than the truth, nothing more surprising than real life. I hope to have the opportunity to really utilize this incredible medium and make the films that I see; to touch people with my vision."

□ [3.9 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"TATOOINE OR BUST"

DIRECTOR: JASON WISHNOW

Tatooine or Bust is an epic documentary about hard core filmgoers camping in line for a movie (that they had already seen before). Communicating via Internet, shooting with Sony VX-1000 digital camcorders and editing on the Media 100 allowed director Jason Wishnow to send 5 full camera crews to 5 cities across the country on the same night to interview people standing in line for the premiere of the Star Wars rerelease. A perennial favorite at the D.FILM traveling shows, "Tatooine or Bust" is an exploration on how deeply movies affect our lives.

□ [4.5 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"HOPPER"

DIRECTOR: TOM MCCLURE

"Hopper" was created by scanning paintings based on the style of Edward Hopper. Characters were then composited and morphed over moving paintings and finally 3D geometry and animation was used to create shadow passes, giving the illusion of being able to travel through Hopper's paintings.

□ [2.3 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"SOMEBODY GOOFED"

Based on a comic book/religious tract by ultra fundamentalist Christian comic book artist Jack Chick, "Somebody Goofed" was created by scanning Chick's drawings along with source material gathered from a huge and unlikely number of sources - Children's Encyclopedias, Record Covers, personal photographs, magazine articles, automobile enthusiasts' web pages etc. The images were then animated with Adobe AfterEffects.

- [2.5 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"ANNA IN THE SKY"

Mark Edgington's "Anna in the Sky", which was edited in Premiere and screened at this year's Sundance.

- [2.5 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"DREAMBOY"

DIRECTOR: CHRISTOPHER DANTE ROMANO

After reading a book by Carl Jung and friends in December 1991, Chris Romano began recording and transcribing his dreams into short stories. This led to the publication of his works in the form of a book called "December 22nd" and eventually to a website, where animated versions of his dreams, aka "DREAMBOY", are regularly posted. The animations are only transcriptions - no attempt at interpretation is made.

- [5.0 MB QuickTime Clip](#)
- [Inside Chris Romano's "Dreamboy"](#)

"ABDUCTEES"

DIRECTOR: PAUL VESTER

An intense visual interpretation by Rhythm and Hues artist Paul Vester of several apparently true stories of alien abduction. Designed in the pencil test and animatic stage on an Amiga computer, the live footage was printed out from video and blown up on a Xerox machine, then repegged and reshot to give the footage a grainy, surreal look.

- [4.1 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

"CUT THAT OUT"

DIRECTOR: GRANT GLADISH

In a funny but tense send up of "reality based" news programs, "Cut That Out" follows two Canadian undercover cops as they investigate a common domestic dispute gone horribly wrong. Like the medium it parodies, "Cut That Out" examines the marriage of banality and extreme violence that is televised reality.

- [1.1 MB QuickTime Clip](#)

FILM ON THE NET:

Someday the internet will give independent filmmakers the power to distribute films themselves - creating a direct connection between filmmaker and viewer. A film uploaded from a filmmaker's living room in Sao Paolo or Indiana becomes instantly available to anyone with net access, anywhere on earth, 24 hours a day.

The state of film on the web today leaves a lot to be desired - small window size, low quality, long download times, etc. As the New Venue's Jason Wishnow says, film on the web today is akin to the turn of the century Kinetoscopes and Nickelodeons people used to pay to peek into, more exciting for their potential than their actual content. But with major breakthroughs in internet speeds on the near horizon like the phone companies' DSL technology, or satellite and cable modems - which can deliver content at speeds up to 1.5MB/sec for around \$40 a month - and with radical new technologies like photonics which are now being developed, using the web as a medium to distribute film is looking more viable every day.

D.FILM has been a major proponent of film on the web since the launch of the Low Res Film Festival web site in 1994, created by 3 of D.FILM's founding members and one of the first sites to let users watch movies on the world wide web.

D.FILM continues to be a leader in internet film with both:

[The SKYY Screening Room](#), a weekly showcase of new shorts by some of the world's top directors and

[The New Venue](#), an online film festival showcasing films made specifically to be shown on the internet.

And if you want more, you can watch the movies featured in D.FILM's acclaimed [97 - 99 travelling Digital Film Festival](#).

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D.FILM RESOURCES : HOW-TOs

This section is designed to provide information on making digital film for both first timers and veterans.

Our goal at D.FILM is not only to showcase digital filmmaking through our traveling festival and website but also to actively inspire our audiences to make films themselves. With the introduction of high-quality consumer digital camcorders and low-priced editing and computer animation software designed to run on home computers, there's never been another time in history when such a large segment of the population had access to so many powerful filmmaking tools.

That's the message of the festival: for years only a few networks and film studios could afford this kind of technology - today the same technology will probably run on the computer you have in your house right now. Just get a camera or a 3D package and go do it.

DIGITAL FILM/VIDEO BASICS

By Bart Cheever

The following is an extremely general overview covering the basics of digitizing and desktop film production. It's intended only as a first time introduction to how the digital filmmaking process works for anyone unfamiliar with computers.

Digitizing

The process starts with analog video source footage, either originally shot on video or shot on film and transferred to video. The analog video signal must be converted to digital information, or digitized, so that you can work with it on your computer.

The Video Card

The video signal is fed from the deck into a video card, which sits in one of the expansion slots inside the computer. Usually, the video card is attached to a breakout box, an external box with jacks which plugs into your video deck. The amount of information in a video file is massive, so while converting the signal, most cards also compress the signal to avoid bottlenecks which can arise at the CPU (the computer's "brain"), the data bus (the connection from the card to the computer) or when storing information (writing) to the hard drive. When bottlenecks occur, that is, when one of the above points cannot process the incoming data fast enough, the most common result is that frames are left out, or "dropped".

Now that a stream of video is being fed into the computer, an actual movie file can be created. You specify a frame rate to your video capture software, say 15 fps, and the capture software grabs a sampled image of the incoming signal from the video card and puts it into the memory buffer every fifteenth of a second, then writes it to a movie file on the hard drive.

The most common place for bottlenecks to occur is at the hard drive. So it's important to have a drive with the highest possible level of sustained throughput, that is the largest amount of data you can expect the drive to be able to process consistently. It's common for people making broadcast level video and film on their computers to use fast and wide drive arrays - configurations of several drives working together for maximum throughput.

On the Desktop

Once the video is digitized into movie files, it can be edited using a variety of non-linear editing systems like Premiere, the most widely used software only system, or Avid and Media 100, high-end hardware/software combinations which are common with feature film and broadcast TV production. The advantage of editing on a non-linear system is that video clips can be dragged and dropped at random. They can be cut, trimmed or processed an unlimited amount of times and in an unlimited number of ways. Then the final edit can be output to video via the video board. A director or editor can also edit on a home computer - taking as much time as he or she likes - and use their edit to compile an EDL or Edit Decision List. The EDL can then be used to control the machines in a professional edit suite - in this way a high-quality final version of the edit can be compiled at a fraction of the cost.

Once digitized, the files can also be processed with powerful post-production software like AfterEffects, DeBabelizer or Photoshop. You can tweak the final image, clean up mistakes, change colors, add effects, drop in text, etc. Sound can also be processed using software like SoundEdit16 and ProTools which allow sound to be manipulated and processed with drag and drop simplicity. This kind of flexibility is important in that it allows a single

person to do what once took an entire film crew to accomplish. It also means it's not necessary to go to film school, or have the backing of a studio or major network to create broadcast quality work. This is the age of true digital auteurs.

Because the process of digital video is at this moment still evolving and being defined, it has its share of headaches. But the upside is that there are no rules - those creating film on their desktop are doing no less than actively redefining the medium of filmmaking itself. This is the greatest revolution in filmmaking since its inception - what part do you want to play in it?

For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the [D.FILM Glossary](#).

THE VERY BASICS OF 3D ANIMATION

By Steve Baker

The concept of computer animation may seem somewhat abstract. Basically a computer animator creates simulated objects and motion in a virtual 3 dimensional environment. In other words an animator can create graphic objects with a computer which appear to have depth, width and height. These objects can be moved, rotated and scaled to be viewed from any position, direction or angle. Sounds pretty complicated? Well, it is. There are five major steps involved in the process of computer animation; modeling, texturing, lighting, animating and rendering.

First the artist must create the objects and characters which will appear in his or her scene. Most 3D animation software allows the artist several different ways to create the objects for their animation. The artist can quickly call up simple shapes such as squares, spheres and cones which can be scaled, stretched, twisted and otherwise distorted and manipulated to meet the requirements of the scene. The sides and corners of most objects are made up of points or series of connected points. These points can be individually moved, edited and manipulated to create details and unusual shapes. Almost any object you can imagine can be modeled in this way with a multitude of functions that add points, edit points and extrude surfaces. After being given proper shape and form the models must be given a simulated surface texture or appearance. Most modeling software give the artist several options when applying textures to their models. Many of these programs even include a small library of common surface textures like wood grain, metal surfaces (chrome, silver, steel, etc.) and stone or marble. There are also CDs with larger libraries of stock textures in various file formats available. Some artists may choose to create their own textures. This can be done using paint programs like Fractal Design Painter or PhotoShop. Textures can also be scanned into a computer using a peripheral device like an image scanner. Stock photographs can be scanned for textures or the artist can scan an actual object for its texture. For example a piece of lumber can be scanned to acquire a wood grain texture. All textures must be stored in file formats the 3D application can understand like tiff, pic or pict depending upon the application used. The artist also controls the material attributes of each texture like reflectivity and opacity.

Now simulated light must be added to the scene. A scene can be one or many objects. Again most 3D software packages include many options for lighting. Some of these options may include spotlighting, point lighting or infinite lighting. Some further options for light may include light intensity and color. Because these lights illuminate the objects and the scene shadows may be cast from objects. The artist can control whether or not the lights will cast shadows and if so the hardness and softness and/or lightness or darkness of the shadow. Also, the artist can control the amount of falloff or gradual decay of light.

If the scene is to include motion over time it must be animated. In a scene many things can be animated in many different ways. For example the objects themselves can be animated to stretch, fall, rotate or otherwise move and distort. The camera can be animated to zoom, pan, dolly, rotate or even change focus. The lights can be animated to move, fade, flicker or change color. The textures can be animated to blend, change and become more or less reflective and opaque. With all this flexibility it is easy to see why 3D animating tools are so powerful. In fact with a high end software package like SoftImage, Alias Wavefront, 3D Studio Max or ElectricImage almost any scene that can be imagined can be created.

Now that the scene is complete it must be rendered so it can be viewed. Rendering is the process by which the computer creates the animation frame by frame based upon the variables the artist has given it. This process can take minutes, hours, days or even months depending upon the complexity of the scene, the resolution of the output and the equipment and software being used. The computer must process and extrapolate all the variables the artist has given it and figure out how they relate to each other frame by frame. For example a scene with two objects could take twice as long to render as a scene with one object. The more objects, lights and movements that are in a scene, the longer the render time. Also if an animation is going to eventually be output to film it will take much longer to render than if it is being output to video. This is because the resolution of film is almost infinitely greater than the resolution of video which is limited to a finite number of a few thousand pixels. For the rendering process the artist need not even be present. Most of the time he or she will set a few variables for resolution, anti-aliasing, output size etc. and leave the computer to render. Barring any problems with the render the artist will have a final animation that can be viewed.

This article is intended as a very brief and basic outline and summary of the process of computer animation. The actual process can involve many more variables and details than have been enumerated here. Even though 3D animation can be a long, arduous and very complicated technical as well as artistic process it allows for limitless potential, and stunning realism of result. And because it can be done using anything from an SGI work station to a personal home computer, it can give individuals incredible creative freedom. Now a scene that would have been impossible for well know and well financed filmmakers fifteen ago can be accomplished by almost anyone with a home computer and some 3D animation software.

For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the [D.FILM Glossary](#).

FIREWIRE (AKA IEEE-1394) BASICS (JULY 1997)

By Steve Baker

FireWire, in a nutshell, is a data intensive digital input/output configuration created by Apple. It is unique from other common I/O configurations in its capacity to handle the large bandwidth that broadcast quality digital video and graphics require. As a result FireWire is now being used primarily to transfer broadcast quality video from digital camcorders directly to PC and Mac computer hard drives, eliminating much of the quality loss that results from digitizing video through an analog video board.

Currently you cannot buy a FireWire [Firewire cable] adapter (AHA-8940) directly. They are sold preinstalled in dedicated video editing computer packages. The only two that are on the market already are DPS Spark DV-2000 Digital Video Editing Kit (for Windows 95 and Windows NT) and the ProMax FireMAX DV Editing System (for Power Macs) . These packages include a FireWire adapter card with software and come bundled with Adobe's Premiere non-linear editing software.

In addition to the adapter component and software you will need a FireWire compatible camcorder. Currently there are five models on the market. Sony's DCR-VX700, DCR-VX1000, DCR-TRV7 and DCR-PC7 and Panasonic's NV-DE3 DV. If you have a PC you will need at least a Pentium 133, 32 megs of ram, a 256k cache, a high speed SCSI hard drive and an Ultra or Ultra Wide SCSI adapter. If you are using a Mac you will need at least 180 MHz, 64 megs of ram, OS 7.6.1 (or later), Quicktime2.5 (or later), a SCSI accelerator, and Ultra or Ultra Wide SCSI. In addition to this stuff you will need quite a bit of hard drive space available for your digitized video. Keep in mind that one minute of video requires 216 MB of hard disk space. 3 gigs of storage space is fine if you are working with small clips but at least 13 gigs is recommended for creating clips of up to an hour. FireWire digital video can't be compressed so more can fit on your system as it's compression rate is fixed at 5:1.

Happy shopping.

More Information:

- ☐ [Apple's FireWire page](#)
- ☐ [Adaptec's 1394 FireWire page](#)
- ☐ [Adaptec's 1394 FireWire FAQ page](#)
- ☐ [proMAX Web Site](#)
- ☐ [DPS Spark Direct DV Editing System Info](#)

For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the [D.FILM Glossary](#).

SOFTWARE REVIEW "KNOT 3.7.1"

By Staceyjoy Elkin

When most people go through a nasty romantic breakup, they usually do something like go down to the corner bar and ponder the mysteries of love over a series of beers. Some even start listening to country music. Instead, when Lloyd Burchill -- a 28 year old, self-taught Mac programmer and former graphic illustrator -- said goodbye 4 years ago, he skipped the brews and the George Jones angst and sat down and wrote Knot, now in it's current incarnation as version 3.7.1.

Burchill said he first conceived Knot as an application that would combine organic, amorphously slippery imagery with the precision of a computer's mathematically perfect drawing ability. Indeed, the first version of Knot drew a single, unchangeable image, uncannily resembling a pile of intestines. But after posting the program on the internet, Burchill was beseeched by artists and animators to add controls that would allow users to manipulate their own graphics.

So he did.

Knot's capabilities are truly amazing. You can now create Quicktime and 3D (anaglyphic) movies, VR objects (viewable with the free QTVR player from Apple's website), still images, icons, composite masks for video, or tiles. Within these functions, Burchill has thought of, and provided, just about every control you can imagine. Want to light up your creation with 3 hot red spots from below? No problem. You can specify up to 4 separate lights' direction, softness and color, including a GOBO feature, and ambient light.

Animated knots are created with a traditional keyframe approach, there's a built-in interpolator that morphs between any two keyframes you design. I've found that smoothness is dictated somewhat by the number of frames you specify to be built, and the amount of difference from one keyframe to the next. Strands (as individual knots are called) are easily cut, pasted, smoothed, kinked or linked to each other to create a new kind of texture called "ribbons", which mathematically combine the shapes of individual strands within a keyframe. Checking one box turns the strands into multiple spheres, another into neon glow.

You specify how many keyframes you want to create, what format to save it in, how many colors, how shiny, large, metallic, rough or iridescent. In other words, what this application produces are beautiful and complex abstract images.

Currently fulfilling a lifelong dream, and teaching English in the scenic countryside of Korea, Burchill said that one of the goals in creating the program was to combine a minimum of effort on the part of the user, along with maximum output from Knot. In fact, if you don't feel like entering any parameters, he's included a function called Magic Knot, where you can check a few boxes, specify how many keyframes and what kind of strands, and have Knot design for you. I think he's succeeded.

On my Powermac 7600/120/80, I've been getting fantastic rendering times. For instance, I can get a 60 frame, 350 X 350 pixel QuickTime movie, with millions of colors and an alpha channel, in under 3 minutes. Yeah! Larger frame size, fatter individual strands, or more keyframes will up your rendering time. Knot doesn't require a FPU, and will work on any Mac, with slightly longer render times for older machines. Burchill has thoughtfully provided a preview

function, so you can see your creation in a wireframe mode, and make changes until your happy with the results, then render.

When I first downloaded the last version of Knot, I was a bit intimidated by about half of the interface, which will make anyone not comfortable with parametric equations (isn't that 98% of the population?) sweat. However, the good news is that if you are so inclined, the included printout manual explains very clearly how simple it is to understand, what the values mean, and how they affect your strands. If your eyes are still glazed over, rest assured that you can enter just about any numerical values, just to see what will happen. And it's usually interesting and beautiful.

I've always designed, in whatever medium I've worked in, with layers of number sequences combined with traditional design devices, such as mirror image, half drop, etc. Since first seeing Harry Smith's gorgeous and hypnotic filmed animations about 15 years ago, I've been on the lookout for something modern that would allow me to use my secret methods to extract beauty from numbers, with visual results.

Knot is that program. Not to mention that it's a hell of a lot of fun, especially when you begin to master it, and can boss those strands around! The output is infinitely diverse.

I've started a web site, "The Knot Room", to showcase some of my experiments using Knot, on the way to creating short animated videos. You can check out some of Knot's capabilities there, and also submit your own work. That can be movies, stills, icons, or anything else made with Knot, see the Submission Guidelines for more information.

Knot is shareware, very modestly priced at \$20.(US) and available for download at the usual Macintosh shareware haunts, or Lloyd Burchills website, where you can also find his interesting Photoshop plug-ins. The program is fully functional unregistered, but your final renderings will have a globe that says "Please Register Knot" in the corner. For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the [D.FILM Glossary](#)

PHILLIP PELLETIER AND VERNE LINDNER TALK ABOUT THE MAKING OF "NEW TESTAMENT"

By Steve Baker

In a garish display of commercial overkill, Jesus Christ appears as the spokesman for "New Testament", a wine cooler. This is the premise of Swankytown's short, "New Testament" that appears in this year's D.Film Festival. With the excess of many of today's ad campaigns, Jesus Christ singing jingles to sell alcoholic beverages may not seem too far from becoming true. With this in mind Philip Pelletier and Verne Lindner, co-founders of LA's Swankytown Productions, embarked upon the task of making "New Testament." The result is a hysterical and extremely well made satire of the excessive and, many times, ridiculous nature of today's commercial advertising.

* * *

D.Film:

I guess one of my first thoughts was: "If the primary motivation behind 'New Testament' was to just fulfill some personal desire to see it done, then this guy really knows all that is good!" So, what was the primary motivation? To finalize an idea that you hatched yourself, or is it based on something or done for some occasion or event?

Phillip:

I wanted to make a social commentary on the relentless barrage of commercial crap we are inundated with every day. My motivation was to create a cautionary yet hilarious tale of capitalism run amok, full of music, special-effects, and mayhem. When I saw the Nike ad with John Lennon's "Revolution" soundtrack, and the Mercedes ad with Janis Joplin's song, that really did it.

D.Film:

Tell me about Swankytown and yourselves. What kinds of stuff do you guys do professionally? Are you working on any big personal or professional projects now? "New Testament" has some really incredible production values. How did you acquire these skills? And what's up with that damn jingle? It's indelibly burned in to my brain. ;-)

Phillip:

I originally went to film school at Bard College, but I dropped out when I realized I couldn't afford to actually make a film. I bought a guitar for \$350 instead and went to Berklee College of Music, thinking that music was more practical. I went on to compose music for film and television. Producing music sessions was a really good preparation for directing, in that you have to work with talent, deal with technical equipment, watch the clock, and handle groupies. As for "that damn jingle" as you call it, that ditty was scientifically designed to burn into human brains by me in my diabolical musical laboratory. And it doesn't go away. Ever!

Verne:

I started out as a calligrapher-go figure...A few I got interested in computer graphics and got friends to sneak me into facilities at night and on the weekends so I could learn on my own. My first professional gig was morphing a pineapple into a can of Fanta. I've also worked on Hollywood films, such as Sylvester Stallone's "Daylight" and Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Eraser". Recently I've worked on some indie projects that came to us from people who had seen "New Testament". I like showing filmmakers who don't think they can afford effects all the things we can do here and still retain some semblance of a budget.

Phillip:

Swankytown was founded by combining our different abilities and backgrounds into one company. With Verne's artwork, design and FX, and my directing, editing, and music, we're kind of like the old Max Sennet Studios, only with better equipment. We recently completed a TV promo for the LA Int'l Short Film Festival airing on the Independent Film Channel. We wrote the fully animated spot together, Verne drew, animated, and digitally painted the scenes. I edited, composed original music, did the sound design, recorded the voice-over, and mixed the audio. I also just finished producing original music & sound design for 20th Century Fox's re-release of "Planet Of The Apes" in THX.

We're currently finishing a feature script for a sci-fi comedy that we'll shoot next year. Like "New Testament" it will be chock-full of special-effects, music, and swankyness.

D.Film:

What production and post-production hardware and software did you use and how did you use it?

Phillip:

I shot the film on a 16mm Aaton camera, processed the negative at Fotokem labs, and telecined the negative to D2 digital videotape & beta SP simultaneously. Live action footage was then digitized from beta SP into the Media 100 editing system at 300 kilobytes per frame and edited on a Macintosh 9500 with 160 megs of ram, Pathlight Technologies scsi accelerators & Imageraid software & a 20 gig La Cie SSA Array.

Effects shots were taken to POP in Santa Monica, where I transferred them from D2 into a DDR (Digital Disk Recorder), and outputted frame by frame as a pict file sequence on to Jaz cartridges.

Verne:

I imported the pict into Photoshop, After Effects & Elastic Reality, where I added the effects and animation. We use alot of 3rd party plug-ins & Ultimatte for bluescreen work. I drew the Main Title by hand & added texture digitally. I also made the parchment & did the calligraphy on the background behind the Main Title and drew the Holy Ghost & the Popes who morph into #1's. So the work was actually a combination of organic & digital elements. I outputted back to pict.

Phillip:

These pict were then brought back into the Media 100, and integrated into the final piece, which was then scored with original music composed in my studio via MIDI (music instrument digital interface). Master Tracks Pro sequencing software, Roland D50, JV1080, S550, EMU E4 Turbo, Proteus I & II, Midiverb II, Midi Timepiece AV, Sony A7 DAT recorder, and a Yamaha Pro Mix 01 digital mixing board were used to create the music soundtrack. The live elements (i.e.-the 7 piece brass section and live strings on the Main Title theme, the singers on the "New Testament Jingle", and the rapper on the end credit song "Prophit"), were recorded in outside studios, and sub-mixed down to DAT. I then sampled the DAT submixes into the E4 Turbo sampler, added the midi elements to the music cues, and mixed each track through the Pro Mix 01 to DAT. I then digitized the completed music cues from DAT into the Media 100 & digitally mixed the 8 tracks of music, dialog and sound design elements to a 48k stereo aiff file.

D.Film:

You have a bunch of on-screen talent in there. Are these your friends, associates or did you have to hire some of them?

Phillip:

I cast for actors in Dramalogue, offering screen credit, meals (good ones), and a videotape copy. I received 300 headshots, all of which wanted to read for the part of Jesus, (let's face it, he always gets the most lines). I taped all 3 days of auditions, and reviewed the tapes afterwards. Nobody had been able to really nail the part. I went through casting books at USC and AFI. I put up notices at theaters, acting schools, and improv groups. All I needed was a guy who looked exactly like Jesus, had tremendous presence, comedic ability, could dance hip-hop, and rap. That's not too much to ask is it? I started to panic. What if I couldn't find Jesus? I looked for him everywhere. I started going up to longhaired strangers at the gym, on the street. Many thought I was strange. Most of them came to audition. But still nothing. In desperation I took an ad out in the "Recycler" - a used stuff paper that actually has a section for actors wanted, right next to stereo equipment for sale, and used cars. Who knew? The day the ad came out, actor Steven Milling showed up at my door, auditioned, and I hired him on the spot. So I can honestly say I found Jesus in the Recycler.

D.Film:

About the budget: What was the final cost and how does it itemize?

Phillip:

The completed film's budget was \$1,700. We shot 16mm film for 2 days on the soundstage, (which was free as I was part of an LA City College film workshop) and 2 days/ nights of exteriors (also free w/out permits). The crew was free since I worked for them on their films. I was a meticulous producer in carefully arranging way in advance as many donations as I could, which included costumes, film stock, food, lights, dollies, blue screens, flats, props, paint, even a crane. The DP and I stayed up all night before we shot the crucifixion scene building a video tap for his Eclair from \$50 in parts from Pacific Radio. It worked great, which was a good thing since the camera was mounted on the moving crane 150ft in the air. The only things we really had to pay for was most of the film processing, telecine, and DDR. I made sure to "happen by" the post facilities to negotiate my indie film price on Friday afternoon at happy hour. It helped alot.

For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the

INSIDE ERIC ROSNER'S "THE ADVENTURES OF WATERBONG!"

By Steve Baker

Eric Rosner's "The Adventures of WaterBong!" was an unexpected hit of Low Res's 1996 shows. At the Low Res screenings at the Burning Man festival in the Nevada's Black Rock desert, a crowd of close to 300 gathered around Low Res's specially constructed drive-in movie screen chanting "Waterbong! Waterbong!" and threatening a riot unless all three episodes were shown. Since that time Mr. Rosner has created two new episodes of the Waterbong series which will be shown at this year's D.FILM Festival. He's also rumored to be hard at work on a "prequel" probing the dark mystery of the cute water pipe's true origins. We sent our own Steve Baker to bring back more details.

* * *

MTV Networks animator Eric Rosner has created a series of animated shorts that chronicle the misadventures of a soft spoken but determined pot pipe known as Waterbong. This animated saga is appropriately called "The Adventures of Waterbong!" In different episodes our hero, Waterbong, is called into service by the President of the United States as well as Hollywood luminaries. He must also thwart villains that range from South American Dons to the Turkish authorities. Each episode of the series has a distinct visual style reminiscent of 60's TV and is under five minutes in length.

Using his Powermac 8500, Rosner creates all of the characters, elements and objects with Adobe Illustrator 6.0. From there he imports the elements into Adobe Photoshop 4.0 where they are converted to high contrast bitmap images using the mask option in the tool bar. Then the images are imported into Adobe AfterEffects where they are animated and composited. In AfterEffects the final composite animations will have up to 40 layers in order to accommodate all of the elements. Rosner uses Macromedia's SoundEdit16 to record and create the character voices and sound effects. The opening and closing 3D logo effects Rosner were created using Specular Infini-D. To output to video Rosner saves the final animation as a QuickTime movie and uses a VideoVision card to output and convert the file to video.

While Rosner swears by digital technology, he finds scripting and storyboarding to be the most fundamental and rewarding part of the creative process. Not only is Waterbong rewarding for Rosner to make, it's also been extremely inexpensive. The only item Rosner actually budgeted was the intro music which was done by a friend for about sixty dollars.

If you'd like to join the Waterbong fan club and get a shot at some of the primo Waterbong merchandise - pins, t-shirts, pajamas and moustache mugs - drop a line to TaoWB@aol.com, or stop by the brand new Waterbong Web Site at: <http://www.waterbong.net/>

For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the [D.FILM Glossary](#).

INSIDE CHRIS ROMANO'S "DREAMBOY"

By Steven Vargas

How well has DREAMBOY done since it got the exposure at D.FILM? Dreamboy has done well, I suppose. It all depends on what definition you're going by. DREAMBOY made it to MTV as a direct result of the Manhattan D.FILM screening. DREAMBOY was seen in some major U.S. cities in 1997 because of D.FILM, by hundreds of people. Spike and Mike are also planning on showing the cartoons, but the time it takes for them to put everything together, and because of their size, DREAMBOY won't hit the screen via Spike and Mike until almost a year after D.FILM first screened it. What else? I've been approached at the festival and received fan e-mail from girls around the United States who saw DREAMBOY on television. . . that's kinda cool. It's always cool when girls pay attention to you. If that's your barometer, I could be doing much worse. I'm not rich, though. . . no one has come offering me shows on Comedy Central or anything like that!

Could you give some background to the piece for those who haven't seen it yet? What better way to unleash one's depravity than through the flapping lips of a cutie, right?!? Well, meet DREAMBOY! The little guy's subconsciously driven, victim of the absurd, and more than happy to talk about it! Anything can happen to this bouncing smiley, and sooner or later, it will! If the world is his oyster, the pearl inside is most likely a rich shade of brown.

I made this first run of DREAMBOY cartoons because I was bored. I had the equipment at my disposal, I had years and years of dream text sitting around my loft, and I wanted to make my own cartoons. . . DREAMBOY just fell into place. DREAMBOY basically acts out moments of my dream diaries. There's lots of surrealist absurdity and strange fetishes. You'll see.

Would you like to take the concept of DREAMBOY, since it did make an impression on the audiences, and build on it? Make a series of different philosophical and psychological profile pieces? I'm currently putting together what could be called the fourth DREAMBOY episode, if you consider the group shown at D.FILM as the first episode. It's called DREAMBOY AND BRIMSTONE. Episode two, called tentatively DREAMBOY FEELS ILL needs some reanimating and dialog addition. Episode three, DREAMBOY PROBES URANUS, has been scratched. . . storywise, it's just a complete nightmare. The one important thing I've learned about putting these cartoons together is I have absolutely no editing talents. When it comes to editing moving images, I completely suck.

This fourth episode, though, is the first one I feel good about. That first group was completely off the cuff and rudimentary. This one, this new cartoon, which runs under four minutes, has a lot of effort put into it. A lot more art direction and "production value," as they call it. There's no toilet bowl humor in this one—depending on who you are, that'll make you either happy or sad. He does cuss once, though, and there's an interracial shower scene! Oh, and Satan makes a guest appearance.

To answer your second question, I'm not particularly interested in figuring out my subconscious drives. . . I'm more than willing to exploit them for the sake of cheap entertainment, but anything outside of that, well, I find boring. Jung is boring. . . but excerpts from his warped mental patients are always a pleasure to read.

My first year of dreams are collected together in a book called DECEMBER 22. It's basically 200 pages of dream stories without any interpretation. People who've read the book have certainly formed their own opinions and profiles of me as an individual, but I have no desire to help them in their efforts. Who cares what I think it means?

What did you use to create "Dreamboy?" (hardware/software/writings/inspirations) DREAMBOY was animated on an SGI R10000 Solid Impact, using Prisms and Houdini software from Sidefx, Inc. It's a pretty amazing package. . . Sony used Houdini for their work on the movie CONTACT, and I understand that Disney animated the Hydra monster in HERCULES in Prisms, though that's just hearsay on my end.

Like I mentioned, I have about six [Kung Fu Smilie] years of dream text lying around in one form or another. The character design for DREAMBOY and all the other characters (there are a lot of other characters, two of whom show up in DREAMBOY AND BRIMSTONE) were done YEARS ago, in Fontographer on the Macintosh. . . I made a stupid "smilie" font when I was in graduate school. . . back then e-mail smilies were a huge deal. Prisms can read the EPS files from Fontographer, so I just built little models off of those PostScript documents. But inspiration. . . it was the stupid first SOUTH PARK tape. . . it made its way through my office back in 1996. I saw how crude it was and said to myself, "If they can do it, I can."

What was the first system you used to create digital artwork? What was the piece you created? I don't believe there's such a classification as "digital artwork." There's nothing that makes it exclusive. . . or anything different from painting, photography, writing, or video. It's a means to an end. DREAMBOY could be drawn, but for that to happen, it would need a crew of people churning out drawings. I'm only one guy, and the most economical way to get from point A to point B is via the computer. If I thought there was an easier way to do it, I'd go that route. I don't owe anything to SGI.

It all boils down to content. Story and content, whichever form it may take. . . everything else is secondary. [SV: Chris doesn't really answer the question here, but, man, does he get on a roll!! This is exciting, he's poignant.]

Where do you see the art of digital filmmaking going in the next five years? What do I really think? I think there are going to be 5000 cable channels in the next 10 years, and broadcasters will be willing to show virtually anything to fill up the static. More and more people will be able to show work which approaches the lowest common denominator, and the gems will get lost within a sea of mediocrity.

Look at public access. . . when video cameras became widely available, everyone thought there was going to be a new age of content made by viewers, but that well of talent has taken the form of amateur porn videos. The internet is a breeding ground for freaks, Trekkies, hardcore porn, and images of people's pets. . . why should the accessibility of digital equipment cater to a more aesthetically mature audience?

In five years I expect to see more pornography, bad actors paying homage to Spock in their den, and lots of excruciating experimental films by students interested in "deconstructing narrative." I expect things to be the same as they are now, only a lot more of it.

What was your first big project as a professional (if you like to call yourself that, I don't usually)? I worked on a MORTAL KOMBAT cartoon the the MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS Movie! WooHoo!

Any advice? My advice to anyone who wants to make anything - writing, cartoons, paintings, and everything else - is simple. To quote my friend Chow Emrich, "Better things happen when you try." It's that simple. I made a cartoon and people sent me money for the rights to show it. The odds are much better than playing the lottery, I think. "Just do it," and all that.

[SV: I'd like to thank Chris for the time to answer many questions and to help me temper my use to the term "Digital Media." One last, great quote from Chris Romano.]

What's so special about "digital media?" It sure ain't more entertaining than Bugs Bunny cartoons. When something inherently digital passes Porky Pig on the entertainment scale, I'll shut my mouth. My [Rim Shot] PlayStation sometimes comes close, but even TOMB RAIDER and SOUL BLADE get boring after a while. Porky Pig is eternal.

www.dreamboy.com

For an explanation of terms and phrases used in this article, check out the [D.FILM Glossary](#).

D.FILM: DIGITAL VIDEO GLOSSARY

- Access Time** The time it takes for the hard drive head (read/write mechanism) to move to the right place on the hard drive, and for the hard drive to rotate to the correct position. This is a standard measurement of hard drive performance.
- Alpha Channel** In computer graphics, each pixel has three channels of color information -- red, green, and blue -- in various bit depths. In 24-bit displays, there are 8 bits per color per pixel, but when the card has a 32-bit bus, the additional 8 bits are used as an alpha channel to convey non-visible, or transparency information for compositing purposes. White alpha pixels define opaque color pixels, black alpha pixels define transparent pixels, gray levels in between define partial transparency.
- Artifact** Basically, this refers to stray pixels that show up in an image. This can be caused by a number of things, including over-compression.
- Aspect Ratio** In film and television, this refers to the ratio of the size of the screen: horizontal size divided by its vertical size. The aspect ratio of most desktop computer video NTSC systems is 4:3.
- AVI** Audio/Video Interleave
AVI is the dominant file format for video on PCs - it's the file format used by Video for Windows, which is one of the three main video technologies for computers (with QuickTime and MPEG). Basically, AVI works by interleaving alternating chunks of video and audio.
- Component Video** A video signal where the individual colors RGB - Red, Green and Blue (plus the luminance or brightness channel) are divided into separate channels. This creates a much higher quality image. Common in broadcast video equipment.
- Composite Video** A video signal where the chrominance (color), luminance (brightness) and sync information are mixed into one signal. This is what most consumer video equipment uses.
- Compression** Compression is a central element in working with digital film, both in digitizing audio and video onto the computer, where sound and images are compressed so that they can be processed

fast enough by the computer's CPU and to minimize the amount of disc space the finished video and audio files take up. Compression is also essential for video on the web, to minimize the amount of bandwidth necessary to download a file.

Compression Ratio	The size of the original image divided by the size of the image following compression.
Codec	Compression/Decompression Algorithm. Acodec is the algorithm a compression standard (such as JPEG or Cinepak) uses to compress and decompress data. Common codes include those for converting analog video signals into compressed video files (such as MPEG) or analog sound signals into digitized sound (such as RealAudio).
CPU	Central Processing Unit. Basically a computer's "brain", ie, the main microprocessor, motherboard and system RAM.
Digitize	The process of converting analog information to digital.
Dropout	A common problem with video where metal particles flake off the tape, usually due to age or mishandling, causing stray noise in the image, streaking and sync problems.
EDL	Edit Decision List. A computer generated list of inpoints and outpoints and effects. An EDL can be created in a less expensive offline studio, or even on a home computer using software like Premiere and then used to control a final edit in a more expensive, higher quality online editing suite.
Fast and Wide Drive Array	An external (or internal) storage device where several drives are linked to work simultaneously, thereby increasing throughput and access time. The most reliable (though definitely not the cheapest) way to edit full-screen, 30 fps video on your computer.
FPS	Frames per second.
Key Frame	In some compression schemes, frames are designated "key frames". Since the majority of what's in a frame will not change from frame to frame, this compares following frames with the keyframe and will only change the areas of the frame which are actually different, thereby saving space.
LTC	Longitudinal Time Code. A type of SMPTE time code which is recorded on an existing videotape track (ie audio) as opposed to VITC, which is recorded between frames and therefore can be read when the deck is holding on a certain frame.
Luminance	Refers to the level of brightness in a video image.
MPEG	Moving Pictures Experts Group. MPEG is a standard for compressing sound and moving images. The MPEG-1 standard streams video and sound data at 150 kilobytes per second, the same rate as a single-speed CD-ROM drive. It works by setting key frames of video and changing only the areas that differ between frames.
NuBus	NuBus was the standard interface for internal Macintosh cards (specifically video and audio cards). The new Macs all use Intel's superior PCI standard, so you'll only find NuBus slots on older Macs. If you're planning to buy a video or audio card and have an older Mac be sure to check what kind of slots you have. NuBus was originally designed by Texas Instruments.
NTSC	National Television Standards Committee. The video standard for North and Central America and Japan, as opposed to Europe's PAL and France's SECAM. It's vertical resolution is 525 lines and has a frame rate of around 30 (29.97) FPS.
PAL	Phase Alteration Line. The video standard for most of Europe. It has a higher vertical resolution (625 lines) but a lower frame rate (25fps) than NTSC.
PCI	Peripheral Component Interconnect. PCI is the predominant interface for internal cards on Pentium systems (including Apple's PowerPC's).
QuickTime	Developed by Apple Computer, QuickTime is becoming the standard video technology for both Macs and PC's. QuickTime playback files have the extension .mov.
RGB	See Component Video
SCSI	Small Computer System Interface. SCSI (pronounced "scuzzy") is the interface that allows you to add a chain of multiple external devices to your Mac.
SECAM	Système Electronique Pour Couleur Avec Memoire. The video standard used in France, Russia and parts of Eastern Europe and Africa. It has the same vertical resolution and frame rate as PAL, but its color is FM modulated.
SMPTE Time Code	Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers A standard which assigns a numeric value to every frame of video, allowing inpoints and outpoints to be set when editing, etc.
Throughput	This is the sustained rate of information your drive can deliver.
Time Code	See SMPTE
Vectorscope	An oscilloscope that visually shows the levels of hue and saturation in a video image. These levels can then be adjusted to ensure colors match.
Video Board	The internal board through which video and audio are digitized.

- Video for Windows** Video for Windows (VFW) is the video technology that is part of Windows 95. VFW files have the extension .avi.
- Virtual Memory** A memory management system which temporarily transfers memory held in RAM to the hard disc.
- VITC** Vertical Interval Time Code. A type of SMPTE time code which is recorded between frames and therefore can be read when the deck is holding on a certain frame.
- WAV** WAV is Windows standard for audio files. WAV files have the extension .wav.
- Window Dub** A dub of a video tape with a window running along the bottom of the frame showing time code. Used for off-line editing and logging.

BOOKS ON DIGITAL FILM, ANIMATION, + GENERAL FILMMAKING

If you can recommend a good book that's missing from this list let us know.

Digital Film/Video

- **"Digital Images"**
Adele Greenberg and Seth Greenberg
McGraw Hill ISBN# 0-07-88213-4
- ☐ A good basic overview of digital media including hardware, software, file formats, color concepts, etc
- ☐ **"How to Digitize Video"**
Nels Johnson with Fred Gault and Mark Florence
John Wiley and Sons, ISBN# 0-471-01440-0
- ☐ Published back in 1994, the information in this book is already pretty dated. However it is a good review of the basic concepts of video and digitizing, with equal time given to Mac and Windows.
- ☐ **"Publishing Digital Video"**
Jan Ozer
AP Professional/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich ISBN# 0-12-531942-8
- ☐ Another pretty good overview of digital video but slanted towards professional DV and publishing on the web.
- ☐ **"Digital Video: An Introduction to MPEG-2"**
Barry Haskell, Atul Puri and Arun N. Netravali
Chapman and Hall ISBN# 0-412-08411-2

We'd only recommend this book if you're an engineer and fascinated by the minutiae of MPEG compression.

Computer Animation

- **"Art of 3-D Computer Animation and Imaging"**
Isaac Victor Kerlow
Van Nostrand Reinhold ISBN# 0-442-01896-7
- ☐ The author was Founding Chairman of the Department of Computer Graphics and Interactive Media at Pratt. This book discusses all the major concepts involved in 3-D modeling and animation. Recommended for anyone trying to learn computer animation.
- ☐ **"Digital Cinematography"** Ben De Leew AP Professional/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich ISBN# 0-12-208875-1
- ☐ A basic, simplified introduction to computer animation.

"Learn 3D Design on the Macintosh" (comes with CD demo of Infini-D) Michelle Szabo Wiley Computing Publishing ISBN# 0-471-14927-6

Software

- **"Adobe AfterEffects for Macintosh, Classroom in a Book"** Adobe Press ISBN# 1-568-306-73
- ☐ Adobe After Effects, being touted as the "Photoshop of Video," has established itself as an invaluable design tool for broadcast, film, and digital delivery. This book provides a comprehensive tutorial to help users turn their Macs into post-production suites. The included CD-ROM allows users to practice using the tools and features of Adobe After Effects and includes extra film clips.
- ☐ **"DeBabelizer: The Authorized Edition"** Lise Despres and Paul Vachier Adobe Press/Hayden ISBN# 1568303246
- ☐ Long one of the most powerful image manipulation tools available, DeBabelizer also has the reputation of being one of the most frustrating due to a confusing manual and a lack of clear documentation explaining how you could get it to do what you want. DeBabelizer: The Authorized Edition, shows you how to use DeBabelizer to it's fullest, including optimizing graphics, advanced control over color palettes and automating work with batching and scripting.
- ☐ **"Adobe Premiere (Mac) - Classroom in a Book"** Adobe Press ISBN# 1-56830-119-7
- ☐ Much like an expanded version of the Premiere manual, but broken down into easy to digest chunks. Although the best way to learn Premiere is to just start shooting and editing as much as possible, we'd highly recommend this book if you're interested in truly mastering the software.
- ☐ **"Premiere with a Passion"** Peachpit Press ISBN# 1-56609-165-9

- This is another great book on Premiere, presented in the clear, informative style Peachpit is known for.

- **"Infini-D Revealed"** By Brendan Donohoe & Adam Lavine Hayden Books ISBN# 1-56930-222-3

This book covers 3D modeling, animation and rendering with Infini-D, and includes a CD demo of the software.

Film Production

- **"Filmmaker's Handbook"** Edward Pincus and Steven Ascher Plume ISBN# 0-452-25526-0
- The definitive filmmaking handbook.
- **"Film Directing: Cinematic Motion"**
Steven D. Katz Micheal Wiese Productions ISBN# 0-941188-14-0
- If you're interested in learning traditional filmmaking techniques, this book is an excellent study on setting up movement within a shot. Highly recommended.
- **"Film Directing: Shot by Shot"** Steven D. Katz Micheal Wiese Productions
- This book breaks down the process of directing a film literally "shot by shot" with excellent, well thought out explanations of all the different elements needed to create a shot, from visualisation to continuity to staging. Highly recommended to anyone serious about learning the craft of filmmaking.
- **"Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting"** Syd Field Dell ISBN# 0-440-57647-4

The standard screenwriting book assigned in most film schools.

Miscellaneous

- **"Designing Business"** Clement Mok Adobe Press ISBN# 1-56830-282-7
- There's nothing dealing specifically with digital filmmaking in here, but it's a pretty amazing book discussing design and media in the digital age.
- **"Graphix New Media 1"** Graphix ISBN# 1-888001-06-2

A book on new media design leaning heavily towards work done for the web, but with some Quicktime work included as well.

DIGITAL FILM RESOURCES. LOS ANGELES, USA.

General

- **Super 8 Sound Blvd.** 2805 W. Magnolia Blvd. Burbank, CA 91505
(tel) 818-848-5522 (fax) 818-848-5956
When Oliver Stone shoots Super 8 footage for his films, this is where he goes to have it processed. Super 8 Sound has everything you could need for shooting in Super 8, including a Super 8 telecine.

Classes

- **Silicon Studio** 1417 2nd Street Santa Monica CA 90401 (tel) 800-S-STUDIO (fax) 310-917-5030 (web) <http://www.studiosgi.com>
Silicon Studio is a state of the art Silicon Graphics funded facility teaching classes in computer modeling and animation, editing and compositing, 2D imaging and painting and studio technology.
- **American Film Institute (AFI)** 201 N. Western Ave LA CA 90027 (tel) 213-856-7681 or 213-856-7600 (fax) 213-467-4578 Courses in a wide range of topics, ranging from non-linear editing to 3D animation, taught by industry vets.
- **Graphix Zone** 42 Corporate Park Suite 200 Irvine CA 92614 (tel) 714-833-3838 (fax) 714-833-3838

Rentals

- **Cinema Rentals** 6456 Wilkinson Ave - N.Hollywood (tel) 818-760-3966 Digital/Hi-8 Cameras

Photo/Motion Picture/Computer Supplies

- **New Media Hollywood** 1433 N. Cole Pl. Hollywood, CA 90028 (tel) 800-957-6334
- **The PC Specialists** (tel) 310-672-4607 (fax) 310-674-7753
- **Pocket Pal/Ikonographics**(tel) 818-761-6644 Film production software for Newtons and Wizards

Organizations

- **ACM SIGGRAPH** Aliza Corson PO Box 9399 Marina del Rey, CA 90295(email) los_angeles_chapter@siggraph.org(web) http://www.siggraph.org/chapters/los_angeles/
- **Motion Picture Editors Guild (MPEG)** 7715 Sunset Blvd Suite 200 LA CA 90046 (tel) 213-876-4770 (fax) 213-876-0861 (web) <http://www.editorsguild.com>
- **Association of Independent Commercial Editors (AICE West)**Filmcore849 N. Seward StreetHollywood, CA 90038(tel) 213-464-7303(fax) 213-463-4626
- **Women in Film**6464 Sunset Blvd Suite 550Hollywood, CA 90028(tel) 213-463-6040(fax) 213-463-0963

Miscellaneous

- **The World Wide Web Store (Books)**14541 Ventura Blvd. - Sherman Oaks(tel) 818-905-6787
- **Samuel French Theater and Film Book Shop**7623 Sunset Blvd(tel) 213-876-0570
- **Opamp Technical Books**1033 N. Sycamore Ave - Hollywood(tel) 213-464-4322
- **FLAX Art Supplies**10852 Lindbrook Drive - LA(tel) 310-208-35298507 S. La Cienega - Inglewood(tel) 310-216-6300
- **BMI (Music Clearances)**
(tel) 310-659-9109

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DIGITAL FILM RESOURCES. SAN FRANCISCO, USA.

General

- **Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC)** 2727 Mariposa St. 2nd floor (On the Southwest corner of Mariposa and Bryant) San Francisco, CA. 94110 (tel) 415-861-3282 (fax) 415-861-4316 (email) bavc@bavc.org (web) <http://www.bavc.org>
"BAVC is the nation's largest media arts center dedicated to promoting the use of video and new technologies in the nonprofit sector. BAVC encourages hands-on technical training on state-of-the-art equipment and acts as a shared resource of equipment and information for community-based organizations and artists." -BAVC Overview
BAVC provides a wide range of services, programs and subsidized equipment access to independent producers and artists, as well as nonprofit organizations. Production packages are available as are a large host of post production services and resources. BAVC also offers training courses, workshops and classes for beginners to professional video and multimedia producers.
Production packages include SVHS and Betacam SP field production equipment and field lighting equipment. Post production equipment includes state-of-the-art editing packages. On-line, off-line and non-linear systems are available including Avid Media Composer and Media 100 XS. Other post production services include equipment and software for compositing, motion graphics, video compression, and audio recording and editing.
BAVC also provides a large and varied schedule of training courses, workshops and classes. Subjects include video producing, engineering, technology and videography. The courses and workshops for digital video production cover a wide variety of topics including compositing and computer graphics. Classes are offered for on-line, off-line and nonlinear editing. Also Web, internet and multimedia production and authoring workshops are available. Many other services are available to BVAC clients including video preservation and closed captioning services, grants management and internship opportunities. For more information on The Bay Area Video Coalition visit their web page at: <http://www.bavc.org>
- **Film Arts Foundation (FAF)** 346 Ninth Street 2nd floor (Between Bryant and Harrison) San Francisco, CA. 94103 (tel) 415-552-8760 (fax) 415-552-0882 (email) bavc@filmarts@best.com
"Film Arts Foundation, The largest regional membership organization of its kind in the country, provides essential services to film and videomakers of every style, genre and level of experience." -FAF Brochure
FAF provides services, workshops, screenings and subsidized equipment access for film and videomakers. Production and postproduction services are available at subsidized rates to independent filmmakers and artists. FAF also offers a wide selection of workshops and classes for filmmakers and videomakers.
FAF's available field camera packages include 16mm, super 8 and basic video cameras. Field lighting and audio kits are also available. FAF has editing facilities for film and video including an Avid Media Composer 400 nonlinear editing system. FAF also has equipment for animation, sound transfer and film to tape transfer. 16mm and Super 8 Projection equipment and editing equipment is available for rent by the day. Workshops and classes are offered by FAF. These courses include workshops with well known filmmakers about their work and techniques. There are also classes on film and video production, lighting and nonlinear video editing. There are several classes on how to write screenplays and treatments. Also classes are offered on budgeting, directing, and production management. In addition to these services FAF offers screenings of independent works, a resource library, a video tape library and project sponsorship opportunities.
- **International Center for Digital Arts (ICDA)** 2180 Bryant Street #105 San Francisco, CA. 94110 (tel) 415-643-9020
"We provide low cost access to technology and Macintosh training for artists, activities, and persons seeking a creative livelihood in the burgeoning field of digital media." -ICDA schedule
ICDA offers a wide selection of workshops and classes for Macintosh design applications. Graphic design and layout workshops offered by ICDA include Photoshop, Illustrator and QuarkXpress. Web design and authoring workshops include HTML, JAVA and using audio applications like SoundEdit 16 and Netscape plug-ins like Shockwave and Real Audio. There are also classes in multimedia authoring with Director and digital video, nonlinear editing with Premiere.
- **Artist's Television Access** 992 Valencia Street San Francisco, CA (tel) 415-824-3890
ATA is a Mission District media center with a goal of providing artists equal access to video and media tools. They offer a wide range of classes including desktop video and film production for women. They also screen video works every night in their main room - call the above number for schedule info.

Classes

- **Center for Electronic Art** 250 4th Street San Francisco, CA 94103 (tel) 415-512-9300 Courses in computer graphics production, including 2D, 3D modeling and animation.
- **Multimedia Studies Program** San Francisco State University 425 Market Street San Francisco, CA 94105 (tel) 415-904-7700
With over 80 classes dealing with Multimedia, SFSU boasts one of the largest programs of its kind in the world.
- **Computer Arts Institute** 310 Townsend Street #230 San Francisco, CA 94107 (tel) 415-546-5242 More than 50 courses in computer graphics production.

- **San Francisco Art Institute** 800 Chestnut Street San Francisco, CA 94133 (tel) 415-771-7020 Courses on film, video and multimedia design and computer graphics including 3D animation.
- **UC Santa Cruz Extension** 740 Front Street Suite 155 Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (tel) 408-427-6620 (fax) 408-427-6608 Courses on video and multimedia production and design.
- **Photo and Motion Picture Supplies** Adolph Gasser Downtown Store
181 Second Street (tel) 415-495-3852 or 800-994-2773 (fax) 415-543-2615 (hrs) Monday - Saturday, 9am - 6pm Gasser's retail store has the full range of pro and consumer video gear, lighting, motion picture and desktop video equipment.
- **Photographers Supply** 576 Folsom Street (Between 1st and 2nd)
(tel) 415-495-8640 (hrs) Monday - Friday, 9am - 5:30pm :: Saturday, 10am - 5pm :: Sunday, 11am - 4pm
The best place in SF for Super8 stock and developing, Photographers Supply has a full range of film stocks at low prices as well as lighting and photo gear.
- **Snader and Associates Digital Resources** 475 Gate Five Road Suite 235 Sausalito, CA 94965 (tel) 415-332-7070 (fax) 415-331-1643 Snader's sells everything from high-end SGI workstations and AVID's to software from Adobe and Xaos tools.

Rentals

- **Rocket Rentals** 51 Federal Street (tel) 415-495-2297 (pager) 415-560-7080
- **Adolph Gasser Pro Rentals** 750 Bryant Street (tel) 415-543.3888 (fax) 415-543-3438
- **Steady Systems** 731 Bryant Street (tel) 415-227-0200 (fax) 415-227-0204
- **East Bay Media Center** 2054 University Avenue, Berkeley (tel) 510-241-9199
- **VMI** 211 Weddell Drive, Sunnyvale (tel) 408-362-1330

Dubs/Conversions

- **Dub Express** 80 Carolina Street (tel) 415-255-9888
- **Fast Forward** 1025 Sansome (tel) 415-989-6245
- **Media Pro** 3739 Balboa Street (@ 39th Ave) (tel) 415-751-8323

Organizations

- **SIGGRAPH - Silicon Valley Chapter** Alesh Jancarik PO Box 1205 Mountain View, CA 94042-1205 (email) silicon_valley_chapter@siggraph.org (web) <http://www.best.com/~siggraph>
- **SIGGRAPH - San Francisco Chapter** Richard Cox P.O. Box 1495 El Cerrito, CA 94530-4495 (email) san_francisco_chapter@siggraph.org (web) <http://www.best.com/~siggraph/>
- **Frameline** 346 Ninth Street San Francisco, CA 94103-3890 (tel) 415-703-8650 (fax) 415-861-1404
Frameline presents the annual San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and serves as a resource for Gay and Lesbian media arts.
- **Media Alliance** 814 Mission Street #205 San Francisco, CA 94103 (tel) 415-546-6334
Bay Area networking organization for editors, producers and writers working in film, video, radio and TV.

Miscellaneous

- **Fry's Electronics** Palo Alto, CA (tel) 415-496-6000 Fry's is the nerd superstore - carrying everything from computers and computer supplies to software to jolt cola. There's really no place like it on earth.
- **Creative Software Distributors** 3001 Bridgeway Avenue Sausalito, CA 94965 (tel) 415-331-7500 (fax) 415-332-7037 Creative Software is a distributor specializing in software for film and multimedia production.
- **Stacey's Bookstore** 581 Market Street (between 2nd and 3rd) San Francisco, CA 94105 (tel) 415-421-4687 South of Market bookstore with a large section devoted to computer books. Stacey's is a favorite of geeks from nearby South Park.
- **Caffe Centro** (tel) 415-882-1500

Ask them why they always run out of granola by 9 am.

In streaming tv

THIS WEEK'S FEATURE: THE WEDDING

The academy award-winning director of "Europa Europa", Agnieszka Holland is originally from Poland. She received an Oscar nomination for "Angry Harvest" in 1996, a Golden Globe Award for "Europa, Europa" in 1991 and awards at Cannes (80), Gdansk, Berlin (81) and Montreal (85, 87). "The Wedding" was created for SKYY's independent film series.

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(Quicktime 4, streaming)
ARCHIVES

DEC 27 99: DISTRIBUTING 'THE LAST BROADCAST'

"Distributing The Last Broadcast" is a documentary about 3 indie filmmakers who organized the first satellite broadcast of a feature film. It's a reminder that even in an age of massive entertainment conglomerates, a few individuals with vision can do extraordinary things . By Lance Weiler and Stefan Avalos.

[More info on The Last Broadcast.](#)

[* PLAY \(Quicktime 4, streaming\)](#)

DEC 20 99: SHAKEN NOT STIRRED

"Shaken, Not Stirred" is a comedy about the perils of modern romance. Director David Veloz began his career as a writer on Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers". Last year he directed his first film, the critically acclaimed "Permanent Midnight" starring Ben Stiller and Elizabeth Hurley. He recently signed a 3 picture deal with Fine Line.

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Live Nude Girls! intense anime cut-up "**Japan-O-Rama**" winner of ID Magazine's annual Design Review.

Mark Edgington's tale of lost love "**Anna in the Sky**".

Joshua Tunick's mini-dv documentary "**Naked Pavement**" about New York photographer Spencer Tunick, best known for his photographs of hundreds of nudes on the streets of New York.

Raquel Coelho's story of amazon warrior women "**The Tapir**"

Staceyjoy Elkin and Mark Hofschneider's anaglyph 3D computer generated short "**Azimuth**", which was created entirely with a \$20 piece of shareware downloaded from the net.

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