

Toonboom news

ToonBoom's newsletter for funny faces with serious minds and ideas!



SIGGRAPH '99

Toon Boom Technologies will be at Booth # 659 at Siggraph 99 showcasing the latest versions of USAnimation and TicTacToon, its vector-based 2D animation software packages. «We are proud of all that we have achieved this year» says Joan Vogelesang, Executive VP and Chief Operating Officer at Toon Boom. «We've increased our profitability while containing costs, released several new versions of our software on time and continue to provide excellent customer support. In short, we are a financially solid company with leading edge technology that is in great demand by a large number of animation studios worldwide».

Some of the highlights during Siggraph this year include demonstrations of USAnimation 5.0's real-time scene planning and playback features, TicTacToon 2.3 and the new PC based stand-alone modules for line testing and paperless animation which are currently in development.

This year Toon Boom has invited some of its world-renowned partners to come and present their projects at its booth. There will be presentations by Jerry Mills, Manager of Digital Technology at Klasky Csupo; Jason Porter, Producer at Wild Brain and Matt Ducharme, Lead Animator at Fable Vision at the following times:

Fable Vision: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 11:30 am
Wild Brain: Tuesday and Wednesday at 2:00 pm
Klasky Csupo: Tuesday and Wednesday at 5:00 pm

We will also be hosting two cocktail parties for our clients and partners on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings beginning at 6:00 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Technology News

TicTacToon Version 2.3

TicTacToon 2.3 has just been released. This version of TicTacToon, has several new features including support for IRIX 6.5 and the Wacom Intuos tablets, modifiable aspect ratios, bulk export of drawings with timing from Animation to Exposure Sheet and vice versa, load/unload levels from Scene Planning, additional painting tools and modes, improved color map support, and undo/redo in Paint.



Line test module

The Toon Boom Line Test Module was developed after an extensive study of existing products on the market. It will incorporate all the best features of products currently available and add exciting new ones to make animators' job easier. The Toon Boom Line Test Module allows users to change the timing and play back the animation at any frame rate. It runs on PC with the help of a Windows compliant camera.

Paperless module

The Paperless Module is a leading-edge software that will give users the ability to draw and animate directly on the computer using a pressure sensitive graphic tablet similar to the one used in TicTacToon. It offers a complete set of artwork creation tools, both bitmap and vector-based and runs on PC's.

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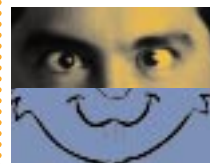
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Technology News

USAnimation 5.0



USAnimation 5.0 with its new 3D Camera, is leading-edge technology in 2D animation software. The software's unique real-time scene planning and playback features surpass anything else that's currently available on the market.

The 3D Camera, or the software's new Scene Planning module, which can be used at any time after scanning, allows users to treat elements in a 3D environment. The user can visually position elements, create new trajectories for the animation and the camera, and then let the software calculate the speed and perspective changes for each element separately. Once this is done, the user can play back the scene in real time, with all its elements (animation, backgrounds, overlays, etc.), without having to first render. USAnimation 5.0 is the only system that offers the possibility to work simultaneously with multiple aspect ratios (35mm film, HDTV, video, etc.) as well as offering multiple views (side, top and stage views) for better scene planning. The software runs on both Windows NT and SGI/IRIX workstations.

One can only imagine the advantages this system will offer to production studios everywhere. Animation cycles can be reused by simply re-positioning the animated character within a new scene; complicated camera moves, such as multiplane zooms, can be tested without waiting for the rendered results; perspective mistakes can be corrected without having to redraw or re-plan. USAnimation v5.0 will not only save a studio time and energy, it will also help increase the quality of its productions considerably.



Client News

Congratulations to «Kirikou and the Sorceress» and «The Blue Shoe»



Kirikou and the Sorceress, a 70-minute film produced entirely on the TicTacToon software, recently won the Grand Prix for best animated feature at Annecy 99. Kirikou and the Sorceress is a coproduction between ODEC Kid Cartoons (Belgium), Les Armateurs (France), and Monipoly (Luxembourg), with the collaboration of broadcasters France 3 and RTBF. According to Mr. Philippe Verduyts, Production Manager at ODEC Kid Cartoons «using TicTacToon has allowed the studio to be resolution-independent, resulting in very high quality images».

FableVision Studios, based in Boston, Massachusetts, crafts innovative animated stories for broadcast, corporate, museum and animation festival audiences. The studio has used TicTacToon to produce such short films as Living Forever and The Blue Shoe, which recently won the Broadcast Design Association's International Design Award in the «Experimental Technology, Animation» category.

FableVision uses Toon Boom's TicTacToon multiplane animation system in a completely paperless environment. «We like TicTacToon because it allows us to stay completely paperless; staying digital from line test to final compositing», says Gary Goldberger, Director of Animation. FableVision is dedicated to artfully combining technology, media and storytelling by creating «stories that matter, stories that move.»

New studio opening in Asia



VirtualMagic Animation and ImagineAsia recently announced their joint venture in opening VirtualMagic Asia, a new studio in Manila, Philippines. The collaboration between the two companies will result in a full service digital studio adding 2D digital ink-&-paint and compositing services to the 3D services offered by ImagineAsia, including 3D Modeling, Animation and Motion Capture.

VirtualMagic Asia will be equipped with 15 seats of USAnimation software with the intent of increasing the number of seats as projects require. «We are very pleased with the new NT version of USAnimation and with Toon Boom's progress in developing the software for this platform» said Don Spielvogel, VirtualMagic Animation President. «We are delighted with the speed and efficiency of the paint and render functions in this version», he added.

Production is booming at Mercury filmworks



With 25 USAnimation workstations running in double shifts to meet deadlines, the studio is currently in production on two television series for Studio B. Established in 1998, Mercury Filmworks is a fully equipped digital animation facility located in Vancouver's historic Gastown employing over forty digital effects artists in a leading edge, multi-platform environment. Clients include Studio B, Nelvana, Fox, Teletoon, the Sony ANIMAX Network, Harvey Entertainment Co., Wild Brain, Purple Moon, Pearson Entertainment, Fun Bag Animation, Bardel Animation, Curious Pictures, Sony Wonders and DECODE Entertainment.

«When we started Mercury Filmworks, we wanted to come out of the gate with a first class facility geared to the producer. We rigorously tested several different digital paint production systems and by far USAnimation came out on top» said Clint Eland, CEO of Mercury Filmworks. «It was the clear choice then and I feel that the improvements we've seen this year make it the clear choice now. They have the best raster to vector technology. The software is feature quality, flexible, and the vector manipulations are fast and streamlined.» He added: «USAnimation is the clear winner when it comes to workflow methodology. Their modular system is relevant to the traditionalists, flexible for large-scale projects, and easy to support on the SGI platform, all at the same time.» «USAnimation allows us to work the way we need to without compromising performance or power.»

Customer Testimonials

Toon Boom Technologies recently interviewed several clients to determine their views regarding USAnimation software. Andrea Romero, Executive Producer at VirtualMagic Animation, stated the following:

On USAnimation Features

«USAnimation has an amazing data-base management system which helps users keep track of all the elements in multiple projects. It also allows studios to take on many projects simultaneously as well as to take on long form projects and manage them without any problems of locating information and communicating with clients. Clients feel secure that the studio is on top of the job.»

«The Paint Program is efficient and fast. The tools are easy to use. The software is, for lack of a better term, «idiot proof». As a result, it is easy for a studio to switch people from other tasks onto using the software.»

On Resolution Independence

«Resolution independence offers long-range benefits to people who are working on projects that they may want to see on digital and high definition television in the future.»

«With USAnimation, all you would need to do is take that show and re-composit it without having to actually go back and rescan, repaint or really do any work except re-composit, which is something that can be done essentially in the background. I think, in terms of the future for studios, that is a feature that's invaluable.»


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