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toonboomnews



IN THIS ISSUE

Thank You • Technology News

User Tip • Focus on China

Views • Awards

Commercial Corner • Events

Customer Testimonials

Customer Support Member

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Thank You!

Toon Boom Technologies would like to sincerely thank all its customers for the great year we had in 2000. Not only has Toon Boom expanded its presence in overseas markets, but it has also reinforced its position as the industry standard. Toon Boom is dedicated to continually improving the quality of its services and to providing customers with the most efficient and productive solutions. Toon Boom has launched several initiatives since January 2001 to meet these objectives.

Our first project was to provide in-house training to the Sales and Marketing team as well as to our distributors. These amazing work sessions familiarized the Toon Boom team with all aspects of **USAnimation®**'s current and future developments, our role in assisting productions, as well as the importance of quality control throughout the production process.

Secondly, the Customer support team has developed very helpful instruction checklists that give tips and tricks for installation, as well as resolutions to common setup problems. They include: System validation, USAnimation® installation and configuration validation (NT), Standalone installation (NT), Storage configuration (NT), Scan configuration (NT), and Service pack installation. More information sheets are on the way and all of them will be merged with our online FAQ.

Thirdly, Toon Boom has launched a survey to gather comments on customer satisfaction. Your feedback is important to the continual improvement of USAnimation® and the Toon Boom team will address all of your concerns. The survey also gathers information about the services each of our customers offers. We use this data to build a service matrix that our network of users can refer to when researching sub-contracting projects.

Finally, Toon Boom Technologies has a new look and feel with a new corporate logo and Web site. The navigation in the USAnimation® section will be more user-friendly, while a distinct Corporate section will be developed.

Things are moving and shaking at Toon Boom so stay tooned – more good news is on the way!

Toonshader is now available!

Toonshader is a module for the USAnimation® system. Using Toonshader you can render a 3D model into a flat 2D shape complete with line and color art, tones and highlights. Simply put, you can take a 3D model created using Maya™ software, and convert it to 2D for use in USAnimation® – and you do not have to have Maya™ installed on the same computer as USAnimation®.



Image courtesy of Toonami - Cartoon Network

The Toonshader package consists of the two following parts:

- **The Toonshader Exporter:** This Maya™ plug-in allows you to export 3D polygonal models of a scene in Toonshader file format (TS). It converts Maya™ 3D models into Toonshader file format (TS) while maintaining the same field of view and perspective of the original scene. The Maya™ product only needs to be installed on the system, which is converting the 3D models to TS files. Then you can export the files to any location in the world where you are using the Toonshader Interface module.
- **Toonshader:** This is part of the USAnimation® program. It allows you to add variable Edge, Tone, and Highlight effects to the image and then convert the TS files produced in the Toonshader Exporter into USAnimation® PNT files. You import these files into your animation production.

For additional tips, please check out our FAQ and join our Users Group in the Support section of Toon Boom's Web site. For updated Technical Instruction Checklists, visit the Online Manuals section.

Technology News

USAnimation® 5.3  **ready in Spring 2001!**

This latest release of USAnimation® V5.3 includes the following new features:

In the XSheet module:

- You can now access the Velocity Function of a Peg through the Selected menu.
- You can lock the EW and NS Scale columns together to apply proportional scaling to the peg.
- You can now use a 1D Function Editor to edit the EW, NS and FB values of a peg independently.

In the Sceneplanning module:

- You can choose to display the Camera Cone in Free View and Stage View.
- The Coordinate Editor applies all new value changes in one pass.
- You can now control the percentage of fading applied by the Wash Background command.
- You can set steps to begin on either odd or even numbered frames in the Velocity Function Editor.
- You can now configure the default Continuity value of Control Points in the Xsheet.conf file.

In the Camera module:

- You can use the Color Card to generate a solid color region.
- The system now supports rendering in anamorphic.
- You can layer the elements in your scene based on either the order in which the elements connect to the Composite module, or the element's F/B (front/back) positioning in the Sceneplanning module.

User Tip

When doing a movement of an element or camera with version 5.0, you can make sure that the rotation (or scaling) moves at the same speed (velocity) as the center position by ticking on the "Use velocity function" in the Angle's Function Editor of that Peg group. By doing this, the Angle will use the same velocity curve as the main Velocity function of that Peg.

Focus on China

We are glad to announce that Lambert Newmedia is now representing Toon Boom in China. An office will be opened in Shanghai in late March. Toon Boom is proud of its increasing presence in China and is confident that this new local representation will be of great assistance to the network of current users in China. Existing customers include: Animation Services (Nanjing) Limited; China Film Group Corporation (Hua Long); China International TV Corp./Hui Huang Animation Co.; Cuckoo's Nest (SuZhou); Hosem Animation Studio; Huitian International Animation Co.,Ltd.; Hung Yang Animated Cartoon Co., Ltd.; Jade Animation; Morning Sun; Nine Golden Star; Oriental Hongye Animation Art Co., Ltd.; Science Film; TIC Beijing; Hong Ying Animation; Jiangtoon Animation Co., Ltd.; SMEC Animation & Graphics Technology Ltd.; and, China Central Television, Animation Production Department (CCTV).

Here is a brief introduction to the Toon Boom family in China, with profiles of three of our customers. **Jiangtoon Animation Corp. Ltd.**, a large animation company equipped with the most advanced digital technology – **USAnimation®**, creates, produces and distributes animation films and TV series. It has two branch companies in Shanghai and Chengdu. The merger with the well known **Morning Sun Animation Co. Ltd.** elevated Jiangtoon to a new production level. Several series have been done in the last two years for its overseas customers, such as: *Corduroy Bear* for **Nelvana**; *D'Myna Leagues* for **Studio B**; *Kong for BKN*; *Caillou* for **Cinar Group**; and *Sinbad* and *Dino Babies* for **Fred Wolf Films**. Now Jiangtoon is working on the 52-episode series *Heaven Pig* and *The King in Your Heart*.

SMEC has been running two animation studios, located in Shanghai and Taipei, since early 1998. It employs over 200 people, including graphic design and classical animation talents, as well as system administrators and software operators. Using computer animation technology, SMEC is able to produce more than 100 episodes per year to meet the demands of US, Canadian, and European markets. Their short-term goal is to utilize the comparative advantages of the studio's geographical locations to produce

premium cartoon animation series. Their long-term goal is to provide products for children's learning, family interaction, and family entertainment. With one of their studios strategically located in Shanghai, SMEC is well positioned for further expansion into China's animation industry. ISO 9002 certified, SMEC provides the following services: Layout, Key Animation, Clean-up, In-between, Linetest, Digital Ink & Paint, Special Effect, Background (Traditional / Digital) and Composition (NTSC / PAL).

The Animation Production Department of China Central Television specializes in the production of cartoon series, with a capacity to produce 200 minutes per month of animation programming. As one of the most powerful state-owned animation studios in China, it is not only equipped with the large scale animation production system (USAnimation®), it has also established a complete video editing system. Over 200 young and talented professionals are working in this Department. Thanks to an efficient management team that is dedicated to high quality control, CCTV is known to deliver on time. CCTV gained a great reputation for the famous story *The Monkey King* (22' X 52', powered by USAnimation®), and now they are getting ready for their next success with the series *Er Zha*, a well-known Chinese tale.

Views

In the past, an animation episode could be produced with 12,000 drawings, while today it may require around 25,000 and sometimes upwards of 35,000 drawings. Here are some ideas about how digital technology can be used to streamline the production process. The most obvious efficiency gains are seen in the automation of the ink and paint process, which can drastically reduce the amount of time required to complete this labor-intensive task. Digital technology can also provide easy management of complex palettes for all colors, highlights and shadows, allowing automatic updates of all inked and painted drawings. With digital technology, users can also create more complex special effects and camera movements, as well as benefit from the integration of 3D modeling.

Digital technology accelerates tedious tasks and brings the creative team closer to the end-result. It makes the retakes process much faster, and allows to experiment more, thanks to its interactivity tools. Last but not least, digital technology opens the door to the more and more popular asset repurposing. All this to say digital technology makes a lot of business sense!!

Based on the response from our customers, the benefits of the **USAnimation®** software package are so significant that several wouldn't consider any other animation production solution. Since **USAnimation®** offers the highest throughput at every production stage, the savings and the efficiency gains at the end of the day are tremendous. And this is true not only for animated feature films, but also for animated series, commercial spots and Web animations. All things considered, the savings in terms of time, energy and money make it a very sound and smart investment to make.

Awards

Having received the Golden Pixie for Best Ink and Paint High-End Software last year, Toon Boom is proud to congratulate Liquid Animation for receiving the Golden Pixie for Best Presentation of Animation on the Web. Indeed, using **USAnimation®** to render Flash files, they created wonderful animation with lots of good humor and smooth action. As per Peter Plantec, "It's the best full screen presentation I have seen. This is the future of web-delivered animation". Check out the Golden Pixie winner at www.liquidanimation.com!



Commercial Corner

Light Image Animation (UK) were delighted to be commissioned to design and produce the first 2D animated commercial for Wrigley. USAAnimation® was the sole package used to assemble and render the first hand drawn 2D advert for Wrigley. The versatility of the software shortened the production process to enable them to meet the tight deadline.

Praising the USAAnimation® software as a whole, the team truly appreciated the efficiency of the Paint, Scene-planning and Camera modules, to create their vibrant scenes full of effects and action.

Class-Key Chew-Po Commercials has selected USAAnimation® as their number one software to produce its Cocoa Puffs spots. Class-Key Chew-Po Commercials has joined forces with Saatchi & Saatchi, New York, to create two spots for General Mills Inc., Cocoa Puffs cereal as the objective was to produce them with a distinct Klasky Csupo flair. These fun and very timely spots were directed by Bonita Versh, who commented on the Campaign, saying, "I had a lot

of fun using USAAnimation to create these spots as the system offers tremendous efficiency throughout the process, from animatics to compositing.

Some scenes had up to 65 layers, so the Paint module's speed came in very handy. The flexibility USAAnimation offers is unparalleled and allowed us to make immediate changes and send the files overnight for approval. With the combination of 3D compositing in LightWave and 2D compositing in USAAnimation, we were able to meet several technical challenges, thus, creating a very unique 2D-3D look".



Image courtesy of Light Image Animation / Wrigley



Image courtesy of Class-Key Chew-Po Commercials

Customer Testimonials

Placing quality control and training at the top of its priorities, Toon Boom dedicates a significant part of its resources to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction. From the standpoint of technology, USAAnimation® meets the highest production requirements and the regular upgrades are testament to Toon Boom's commitment to provide the best solution on the market. In terms of service, our focus is to make sure users understand all of the advanced features of USAAnimation® so that they can take advantage of them as much as possible. Also, customer support is dedicated to solve issues as soon as they emerge and assist its customers all the way through their productions. Here is what a couple of our customers had to say about it:

"USAAnimation has been the only software that we have found that has been able to support the small studio in the same way that they support a larger one. Toon Boom has helped us bring our vision to life as we preconceive it. We do not have to adapt our vision to the technology. They have created software that keeps our products at the height of production value".

Gary Goldberger, VP/Director,
Fablevision

"Our aim at Toonz Animation India is to do excellent quality animation products

and for this we found that USAAnimation provides us with the right tools. The training and study materials provided by Toon Boom on the software were excellent and helped our digital department on pumping out high quality works. Toon Boom should be specially commended on their customer support. All our queries were immediately looked into and solutions provided. Their online manuals and support gets us fast answers for urgent requirements".

P. Jayakumar, Division Head – Finance & Operations, Toonz Animation India

Events

NASSCOM, Feb. 7-10, Mumbai, India

The launch of USAAnimation® Web Edition at Nasscom 2001, in Mumbai, was a great success for Toon Boom! Several visitors from leading companies like Infosys, as well as many Internet companies and commercial advertisers, expressed great interest in our latest product. This web-enabled application has great potential in the next 6 months, once broadband capacity is in place in India.

Digital Media World, Feb 26-28, Sydney, Australia

Toon Boom, in partnership with Liquid Animation, an esteemed Australian customer, attended DMW and received a lot of attention from Web content production houses, 2D animation houses, schools and magazines. Working closely with Liquid Animation gave us the opportunity to demonstrate to potential customers the value of a successful partnership. We would like to extend our thanks to the Viner family and their amazing team!

Animation Business Marketplace, Feb. 28-March 2, Hollywood, CA, U.S.A.

ABM turned out to be an excellent opportunity to provide thorough product demonstrations and thoughtful presentations to executives and decision-makers in the animation industry. The Opening Night Party gave us the opportunity to meet and chat with industry leaders and the following day was filled with high-level presentations. Erik Mara, Product Specialist for USAAnimation®, gave the first presentation, focusing on a full demo of our powerhouse software. Jacques Bilodeau, President and CEO of Toon Boom, handled the second presentation. He was a guest speaker on a panel titled Procure new tools for the animation production.

