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toonboomnews



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Get Your LightTable Upgrade!

Take advantage of the new and improved capabilities
to create your drawings on site or remotely.

www.toonboom.com

User Tips

When creating cutter or texture effects, you might have transparency problems because the default matte for background pixmap elements is black, or transparent. You can create an opaque matte for images in Canvas, but this can be quite time consuming when you have a lot of frames, like with live footage.

To create white mattes for numerous pixmap images, you can use a single setting in the Camera module to apply the white matte to all of the pixmap images in an element. Just set the Color Alpha Composite Operation value to White in the Composite module *Module Editor* and *USAnimation*® will add a white matte to all of your background element pixmaps. If you need to have the composited image before the final composite operation, you can add an intermediary Composite module and create the alpha operation in this module, before the final Composite module.

Here are some useful tips for new Linux users:

1. You must perform all mandatory updates before installing *USAnimation*® on Linux v7.0. These are described on page 28 of the *Installing USAnimation v5.3 on Linux v7.0 manual*, which is found on the *USAnimation CDROM* under *manuals/Install_Linux.pdf*.
2. For best results with *USAnimation*®, make sure that you use a recommended video card and driver. On Linux, only nVidia cards are currently supported by *USAnimation*®.
3. Two types of nVidia video drivers are available for Linux 7.0: uniprocessor (*up*) and multiprocessor (*smp*). You must install the type of driver that corresponds to the kernel you are using. A computer with two processors will generally use the *smp* driver. If you are not sure how many processors are installed in your computer, type `cat /proc/cpuinfo` in a shell. This will provide you with the list of processors on your system. When installing a driver that's inappropriate for your kernel, you will receive this error message: `modprobe: Can't locate module NVdriver`

May Animation Bring Relief

In the aftermath of the recent dramatic events in the United States, Toon Boom Technologies would like to express its deepest sympathies to the families who lost loved-ones. We all feel touched by this tragedy and share the grief and sorrow with so many who have

been touched. We truly hope that the good creative minds of this planet will be able to come up with animated images that will help all of us move on, stronger than ever before. Let images of fun, kindness and beauty encourage healing and bring smiles to people around the world!

With love and care from the Toon Boom Team

Technology News

USAnimation® 5.3 SP#1 is out

There are a number of performance-enhancing bug fixes in this Service Pack. They include:

Scales value: In the constant peg editor, the Scale values are now converted when you click the "Scales in fields" check box.

Sceneplanning Control Window: It is now possible to enter a frame number up to six digits long in the current frame field.

Accurate camera_info at 90 degrees for SDK: Improved camera_info for all angles, including 90 degrees, in the export Xsheet.

Drawing positioning: The positioning of drawings is offset by half a pixel when you use an odd number "x resolution" output.

Improved pixmap rotate blending: There is improved blending quality in pixmap rotate when you use the `USA_FORCE_OLD_ROTATE` option, especially on Linux.

Read Image Module output: The Read Image Module will now output its camera-info even if you set the scale to 0.0.

Scene Locking: The Scene Locking issues are now fixed and you can use this feature on all platforms.

USA pixmap resize function: In the Camera SDK, you can now use the API routine "pixmap resize function" on all platforms including Linux.

Transfer B: A new version of the Transfer B package can be installed over *USAnimation*® v5.3 SP#1.

Extended support for 3D animation

Toon Boom Technologies is proud to announce its partnership with Electric Rain to extend its support for 3D animation, making Toon Boom the only 2D animation software company to offer toonshader solutions for all of the major 3D software. Electric Rain is the industry leading developer and supplier of 3D to vector solutions with Swift 3D™ MAX, Swift 3D™ LW and Swift 3D™ XSI. These new plug-ins feature a special edition that outputs in the *USAnimation*® format, allowing *USAnimation*® users to import 3D animation created with 3D Studio MAX®, LightWave® or XSI™ into the 2D world. The vector rendering technology of these 3 plug-ins exports 3D scenes with supreme accuracy, while staying true to colors, lighting schemes, camera views and animations. They are able to handle models and objects containing over 200,000 polygons, including complex intersecting and self-intersecting objects.

LightTable upgrade!!

Toon Boom Technologies is pleased to announce the launch of the **LightTable** module upgrade! This release includes new and improved vector drawing and repainting tools, the ability to build and export *USAnimation*® Paint files and exposure sheets, support for bitmap, SWF and Illustrator files, as well as audio files, support for multiple sounds at playback, and the ability to edit and automatically lip sync sounds files.

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.

Focus on the UK and Ireland

In the past two years, Toon Boom Technologies has significantly increased its presence in the United Kingdom and Ireland, thanks to the great work and professionalism of Pixelution Ltd., the Toon Boom Reseller for both countries. In addition to King Camera, we are proud to welcome several new members to the Toon Boom family, including Big AL, Boulder Media, Light Image Animation, Pearly Oyster, Unit 9 and the University of Teesside.

Here are the profiles of some of our newest family members, who you can also count on as potential business partners!

Big AL, which was started by Will Dowson and Alan Bowen twelve months ago, has offices in London and Cornwall. Last month the company completed a pilot of its new pre-school, animated TV series "Music Monsters" and is finalizing negotiations with UK and overseas broadcasters for the series. In addition to in-house production, the company also offers full coloring and compositing services for animation producers at its facility in Truro, which also includes broadcast edit facilities.

Boulder Media is a digital animation studio based in Dublin, Ireland. They have a paperless production process, using Wacom drawing tablets. They recently installed **USAnimation**® as their main production tool and have several in-house projects underway with this Toon Boom software. **USAnimation**® has opened up a lot of new possibilities for Boulder, and has helped them raise the productivity and quality of their productions.

Pearly Oyster Productions is an award-winning animation production company run by Emma Calder and Ged Haney. The company produces a variety of work, including animation/short films, series, commercials, titles, animation soundtracks and script writing. They have also been involved with training, running

workshops all over the country. Since buying **USAnimation**®, Pearly Oyster Productions have been using **USAnimation**® for a wide variety of projects, conventional, unconventional and peculiar. Director Emma Calder is particularly keen to unearth the artistic potential of the system and has been conducting various tests, including the manipulation of drawings created with a spirograph set from the 1960's. She is very excited about the ease with which drawings can be manipulated in **USAnimation**®.

London based new media company **unit9** is a versatile team of creative designers and programmers. They deliver integrated solutions spanning the digital channels from broadcast and Web, to character design, animation, games and Websites. Using **USAnimation**®, they design, direct and produce animated music videos, at the same time defining and implementing a coordinated Web strategy. Their team of game developers produces innovative solutions using Shockwave and Flash technologies as well as in-house proprietary software. With their online brand development and brand integration skills, they are in the business of making integrated commercial campaigns offering a comprehensive range of services.

Schools on Board

VanArts offers intensive 48 week certificate programs in both classical and computer animation. Students have the option of completing both years of study to earn a diploma in commercial animation. The VanArts computer labs are equipped with Windows NT workstations, fully loaded with the latest in graphics functionality and performance, such as the **USAnimation**® software. VanArts has in place a distinctive learning environment with one-on-one teaching and small class sizes. Students film their work on digital line-testers, which are networked to computer viewing stations next to their light tables. As they proceed through each exercise, students may study and evaluate their filmed animation sequences or a library of motion-study files, then refer to them closely as they rework each drawing. This creates maximum interaction between the students, their work and the instructors, giving them the best possible environment in which to learn.

www.vanarts.com

Located in an animation industry hot spot, Brooks College in Long Beach CA is very excited to teach **USAnimation**® to its talented students. The curriculum in the Animation Department stresses the 12 principals of animation and the 10 elements of style. The facilities include a classroom of 25 light tables with two video lunch box syncs for pencil tests and a specialized computer lab just for the animation students with a video-editing suite attached in addition to eight other PC and Mac labs. Powerful **USAnimation**® software is the perfect medium to execute the creativity of the students and demonstrate understanding of the principles and elements of animation.

www.brookscollege.com

Awards

Toon Boom's newly released software **Toon Boom Studio v1.0** has already gained important media recognition. Since it was released in June, **Toon Boom Studio** has been granted 5 awards:



- Animation Magazine Seal of Excellence Award (August 2001)
- Macworld New York Best of Show Award (August 2001)
- Digit Magazine Best Buy Award (August 2001)
- ZDNet Best Buy Award (September 2001)
- MacAddict People's Award (October 2001)

... And this is only the beginning - there are many more reviews to come!



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Commercial Corner



© Duck Soup Studios



Duck Soup Studios has selected **USAnimation®** as their sole 2D ink and paint software for commercial production. The most recent commercials with the agency **Ogilvy & Mather** were created for Kraft Foods Inc.'s Fruity Pebbles and Cocoa Pebbles. In Fruity Pebbles "Survival of the Fruitiest," they had a complex scene of a waterfall composed of many different levels, both painted and inked on cel. There were levels for characters, tones and highlights as well as different

lip syncs for both :30 sec and :15 sec versions. Using Paint's sophisticated palette system and matte retrieval functions in Camera, they were able to build not only a scene that looked great, but one that was flexible and allowed for the re-exposure of the :15 sec animation.

Trix "Pop Star", produced by **Calabash Animation** for General Mills, Inc. through Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising, is set at a boy band concert. Fans are presenting the boys with bowls and boxes of Trix cereal. The Rabbit disguises himself as a member of the band in hopes that he'll get some too. He dances onto the stage. Just as he is deliciously close to tasting



© Calabash Animation



his prize, he trips over a speaker. He lands in the arms of the crowd, who immediately confiscates the cereal upon learning his true nature.

This 30-second spot utilized many of the features of Sceneplanning and Camera of **USAnimation® V5**. The opening shot needed to feel like a large cavernous space of a rock concert. The multiplane effects were helpful in achieving this. The video monitor walls, crowds, special effects, and legal breakfast were all done in Maya and combined seamlessly with the 2D animation in **USAnimation®**.

Customer News



© Calabash Animation

Toon Boom Technologies is proud to announce that several of its customers are rockin' and rollin' with productions for the small and big screen. Here is a glimpse of what's happening for your eyes' delight!

Calabash Animation was contracted by director John Hancock of Film Acres to produce some traditional and computer animation for his upcoming feature film, *Suspended Animation*. *Suspended Animation* is a thriller about an animator who narrowly survives a snowmobile mishap, which changes the style of his work. Calabash provides the animation that is the character's work before and after his brush with death. Produced using many wonderful effects in **USAnimation®**, the end scene had 28 layers of backgrounds, which were pulled together using the multiplane effects of Sceneplanning to create a dimensional space. Textures were used in **USAnimation®** to give a feel of fur and textiles. Watch for *Suspended Animation* at a theatre near you!



© Reelworks Animation Studio

Reelworks Animation Studio has created several animated segments that will be included in programming for the new comedic series, *Let's Bowl*, which airs on Comedy Central. The segments feature a character created by the studio and lovingly named, "Pinny". Pinny is a bowling pin, of course - the kind of pin that'd enjoy the opportunity to get 'liquored-up and fight'. Thom Waters, Reelworks digital ink and paint artist, was able to use **USAnimation®** to integrate a variety of media formats to achieve artistic goals. "The producers wanted to create a low-brow yet sophisticated integration of graphics and animation. Because of the short turn-around, we had to be able to seamlessly integrate elements created in several software applications, including Photoshop and After Effects. The flexibility of **USAnimation** allowed us to do just that and make the deadline."



© Wild Brain, Inc.

Wild Brain, Inc. completed the animated open, close and lifts for Cartoon Network's *The Chuck Jones Show*, using **USAnimation®**. Wild Brain director George Evelyn pays homage to this genius of classic character animation in the title sequence for this weekly series, which highlights Jones' best cartoons. "The brief from Cartoon Network was to portray Chuck Jones as the creative genius behind all these fabulous cartoons. We decided to tell our :30 story while revealing the process of animation, from rough pencil drawings to finished ink-and-paint, thus reminding our audience that there's a human hand working behind the scenes to bring these characters to life. At the finale, we show that it's been Chuck's hand doing the drawing," says Evelyn. "Our methodology called for a convincing replication of a real pencil test, while at the same time being clear enough for the average TV viewer to understand what's happening. The resulting 'pseudo-rough' rendition of the characters might have been extremely difficult to run through a regular production schedule, but, lucky for us, **USAnimation's** digital ink-and-paint program is flexible enough to handle just about any art direction."

Customer Testimonial

As Toon Boom released USAnimation® for the Linux platform only recently, we thought it would be interesting to share with you some first impressions and comments. Here is what Will Dowson at Big AI Productions, one of our U.K. customers, had to say about it:

"The first thing that you notice using USAnimation under Linux is the immense speed gain. This can be truly appreciated when transferring data, opening files and exporting scenes.

The increased speed of data transfer also allows for far greater playback performance through the Sceneplanning and Playback modules. Speeds of up to 60 frames/second are achievable, whilst poor old NT struggles along at around 5 frames/second.

You are no longer required to close down say, the Sceneplanning module in order to check the final rendered frames within the Playback module. The opening of applications is also a great deal quicker with each available instantaneously.

To use a cliché, the system has a feel of unlimited power. While the change to Linux does mean a learning curve, when the system is in place and understood, it proves to be very stable in operation. Also due to the Linux operating system, each machine can be accessed and configured remotely, a great boon to system administrators! The entire Linux system has a great feeling of integration. In use the speed of exchange of data between the server and workstations coupled with the remote access between machines gives the feel of working with a single very high-powered system".