

Technology News

Opus and Concerto for Mac OS X

In late June, Toon Boom Animation released OPUS and Concerto for Mac OS X. These are the most advanced solutions for the production of traditional and digital animation, providing customers with an integrated production workflow, powerful 3D scene planning, sophisticated effects, compositing tools and seamless 2D/3D integration. The customer release of OPUS and Concerto for Mac OS X is scheduled for September 2004. "The combination of Mac OS X and the Power Mac G5 offers the most advanced graphics architecture and performance for digital animation production on a personal computer," says Ron Okamoto, Apple's Vice-President of Worldwide Developer Relations. "Toon Boom provides high-quality, innovative solutions to animation producers and we are happy to have OPUS and Concerto on Mac OS X." OPUS and Concerto join Toon Boom Studio among Toon Boom's highly acclaimed Mac OS X offerings.



User Tips are regularly added online to the USAnimation Opus User Group in the Opus Support section of the website (www.toonboom.com/support/forums/USAnimation/) and in the Toon Boom Studio User Forum (www.toonboom.com/support/forums/toonBoomStudio/). Our FAQs also offer a wealth of information.

Check out also the USAnimation Opus Tutorials. To assist you in your quest for more USAnimation Opus production techniques, you will find two tutorials on the Opus Support web site. In the

Expressions tutorial, you have the opportunity to learn how to build a motion blur using Expressions and Fade Modules. You'll also take a look at the nuts and bolts of pegs and motion paths.

In the Recreating the Monster tutorial, you get to practice several techniques to build the effects on a scary monster. In this tutorial, you'll get the chance to draw masks in the 3D Sceneplanning Frame View window; use Cutter, Color Override, Glow, and Refract Modules; as well as learn how to use the function (graph) editors.

Both tutorials include sample material. We have provided both rough and final versions of the scenes in the sample material. You can use the rough versions to follow the exercises and steps in the tutorials. You can look at the final versions of the scenes to see how we put them together.

You'll find these documents in the Tutorials section of the Opus Support web site (www.toonboom.com/support/USAnimation/tutorials/). You need a valid support contract to access the tutorials.



Get exposure to an audience of skilled professionals.

Place an electronic ad on Toon Boom's web site (www.toonboom.com) and it will be seen by thousands of decision-makers in the animation industry. Put a banner on our web site as a great opportunity to reach your clients directly.

Here are the suggested options:

Option 1: Placement of a 195x195 pixel graphic banner ad in rotation in the upper right menu of various key sections of the Toon Boom site.
Period: 3 months / Minimum impression: 500,000
Price: **\$3,500** USD / CPM: \$7.00 USD

Option 2: Placement of a 50x200 pixel graphic banner ad in rotation in the top identification of various key sections of the Toon Boom site.
Period: 3 months / Minimum impression: 500,000
Price: **\$2,500** USD / CPM: \$5.00 USD

On a monthly average, we get 50,000 unique visitors, with 450,000 loaded pages.

Write to webmaster@toonboom.com to place your ad. **Act fast as space is limited!**

Commercial Corner



Jamination Productions, Inc. in Columbus, Ohio recently used USAnimation to complete a project for Geffen Records. Jamination created a six part animation series for the Geffen band New Found Glory's web site. "We used USAnimation to paint and composite all of the scenes," says Ryan Hawkins, Jamination's Ink and Paint Director. "USAnimation helped us complete the project ahead of schedule and on budget." A new episode was added to the web site each week culminating in the final episode on May 18th, when the band's newest CD was released. *Catalyst*, the name of the animation series and the CD, told a story based on the band's CD cover. A snake-like record executive picks a young kid and sends him on the road to stardom. Each episode takes the kid from one stop on that road to another. In one episode, the kid has body piercings and tattoos added all over his body. In one of the last episodes, The Spa-O-Matic, tries various clothes on the kid, from country and western outfits to hip hop styles. The final episode reveals the changed kid as he hits the stage. The whole series can be viewed at <http://www.newfoundglory.com>.



helped us produce a spot that showed students that reading can be fun." *Reading Is Cool*, a series of three animated episodes, featuring the NHL franchise San Jose Sharks and their mascot, S.J. Sharkie, was one of five nominees in the Public Service Announcements category. The public service announcements ran during the Sharks home games and on Fox Television in the Bay Area. "Once again, USAnimation paid off for us!" said Jamination President Phil Harbath. "The new Opus version has really made our life easier."

Each episode features S.J. Sharkie and Sharks TV Color Analyst Drew Remenda stopping characters representing rival NHL teams from stealing all of the books in San Jose. Each episode also included an animated version of a Sharks player who aided S. J. Sharkie and Drew in their task. Pellack and Associate Producer Jennifer Franklin also received Emmys for *Reading Is Cool*. For over 11 years Jamination Productions, Inc. has created traditional and 3D animation from their studio in Columbus, Ohio. Jamination's client list includes the New York Yankees, Geffen Records, Fox Sports Net and the Anaheim Mighty Ducks.

Image courtesy of Jamination Productions

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Digital Animation Made Easy and Efficient

Concerto

On April 19, 2004, Toon Boom Animation announced the launch of Concerto, the ideal animation solution for paperless, digital reuse or cutout animation production. Concerto offers studios increased productivity, raises animation quality and eliminates file management issues so common to the normal Flash™ pipeline.

Concerto is a significant time-saving solution because it enables studios to work in one single, integrated pipeline, create less drawings due to high level of reuse, and rely on a robust file management system. All this translates into performance efficiencies in the management of assets and

workflow, as well as providing greater creative control throughout the process. Concerto adds the following key features to the OPUS feature set: advanced keyframing, sound scrubbing and the ability to draw directly in 3D sceneplanning.

During its Beta cycle, Concerto was implemented in several prestigious studios around the world, including Mercury Filmworks. Mercury experienced excellent results using Concerto for the production of *Mischief City*, a series of 13:30 episodes. *Mischief City* Technical Director Christian Laroque states that, "The integration of the animation tools into the larger OPUS framework

offers a consolidated production pipeline and seamless end-to-end management of our digital assets." Using Concerto, "It's easier to track, store, and control the animation elements throughout each stage of the workflow allowing more time to create higher quality animation."

With the asset library, they have also been able to reuse a lot of the animation they are building, which is also greasing their production wheels. Once the Animation Director approves content, it goes into the library where animators can access it. "Adding to production efficiency as we get to later episodes," explains Clint Eland, President and Executive Producer at Mercury, "We wind up doing less drawing and less animation."



Save 20%!

Attention SIGGRAPH 2004 Attendees!

You can purchase a retail copy of Toon Boom Studio at \$299 USD

Just buy it online and enter the promo code SIGGANIMAG04 to take advantage of this great discount! Act fast: this offer ends August 31, 2004.

Customer news

OUR TOOLS, YOUR DREAMS. Since the beginning of 2004, Toon Boom has launched several new products, training and consulting services as well as a new web site, where all of our offerings can be found. The team has been on the road extensively, meeting customers and attending animation shows, such as MIFA 2004. It is obvious that **Concerto**, our latest animation solution to produce digital animation, offers clear benefits to studios that embark on paperless and cutout animation productions. Several major productions are done on Toon Boom's advanced solutions, including *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *Fatherhood*, *The SpongeBob Squarepants Movie*, *Curious George* and *Proud Family*. On the Toon Boom Studio side, more and more schools worldwide are adopting this great tool to teach their students the basics of animation, as part of 2D and 3D animation programs. In addition to **Toon Boom Studio version 2.5**, Toon Boom has announced the release of **Opus** and **Concerto for Mac**. As the operating system of choice for creative professionals developing high-quality visual content, Mac OS X is the ideal platform for Toon Boom to develop solutions that serve the needs of creative minds in the animation community. Stay tooned, more news and product announcements are coming!



Image courtesy of King Camera

Heading for an imminent UK (region2) release is the DVD, Paul McCartney: *The Music and Animation Collection*, produced by ex-Beatle Paul McCartney and containing a brand new film, Tuesday, entirely assembled at leading Soho-based, digital animation bureau, **King Camera**. Based on the celebrated work of US-based illustrator David Weisner and recreating the highly wrought style of early Disney, **Chris King** and experienced and talented Digital Artist and Composer **Tim Barter** worked with Geoff Dunbar and Sir Paul McCartney for nearly two years at King Camera to create a unique, rich and highly illustrative aesthetic for Tuesday.

This partnership was so successful that, one BAFTA nomination later, when it was time to create even more animation for the DVD release, King

Camera was the only contender. "With Tuesday, we had to incorporate extensive use of textures, automatic tones and highlights, mist, sparkle, ripples, light and focal effects, colour timing changes and multi-planning, sometimes for as many as eighty

characters in one scene, all with separate peg moves! Coupled with the freedom to create and digitally animate many of the scenes from scratch, USAnimation was an ideal tool, allowing us to easily integrate all aspects of the production, make real-time changes and produce a unique aesthetic look for both film and DVD extras", shared Tim Barter.

Italian animation studio **Lanterna Magica**, along with studios **Enarmonia** and **Melazeta**, will be producing Gino the Chicken, a 52-episode series, with their Concerto animation solution. Co-produced with the Italian state television, RAI, the series is scheduled for delivery in January 2006. This installation is the first, completely digital solution of its kind in Italy. Production on the series is being shared among three studios, each responsible for the complete produc-



Image courtesy of Lanterna Magica

tion of 26 episodes. Concerto, along with its digital animation and workflow features, will be instrumental in the success of the project. "When we saw that Concerto could outperform Flash in terms of productivity and quality, we decided to stop the production and switch to Concerto," stated Michele Buri, Production Manager at Lanterna Magica. The studio and its partners received hands-on Concerto training from Toon Boom. During the intense training sessions, the studios had the opportunity to learn about Concerto's features and efficiencies while working on material from their production. "We are very happy with the results so far," says Buri, "And the training has proven to be extremely useful in getting us up-to-speed as quickly and smoothly as possible."

The General Organization of Cinema in the Syrian Arab Republic and **Tiger Production** have concluded an agreement to produce the first completely Syrian-made cartoon feature. The movie will be produced at tiger Production studios using Opus and Concerto. Animated in a completely paperless production environment, the 75-minute production is scheduled for delivery during the first quarter of 2005.



Image courtesy of Jellyman Productions



Image courtesy of Jellyman Productions

ANIMAX, a leading animation and multimedia production studio, produced *Catching Kringle*, a 35 mm animated short for **Jellyman Productions**. The holiday-themed short features the voices of Danny DeVito and JohnRhys-Davies with a cameo by Larry King. The 15-minute long film was animated using USAnimation. "USAnimation's vector-based platform minimized file sizes and necessary bandwidth while still enabling us to generate film quality animation," shared Adam Himoff, Producer at Jellyman Productions. "USAnimation's broad range of photo-realistic effects enabled us to enhance the cinematic look that we aimed to achieve with *Catching Kringle*. (...) USAnimation cut our render times down to a fraction of what they might have been using alternative software platforms and allowed us to vectorize, paint, composite and render from standard desktop systems." *Catching Kringle* had its world premiere at Animafest in

Zagreb, Croatia last June 14-17, 2004 and has received Special Recognition from the Animafest Selection Committee for being a high quality family entertainment film that is "The best example of how art and marketing can stand side by side."

Last December, MTVAsia and Sony launched the MTV Start > Play contest. Contestants had to design a 30-second animated short using sound clips provided by MTV. The winners were chosen through the website. For the grand prize, the winners were promised a Sony VAIO Notebook, a Sony Handycam, and the chance to design an MTV station ID that will be aired across Asia! The big winners were brothers **Benjo** and **Jay Camay** using Toon Boom Studio! "Almost all of the contestants who submitted an animation used Flash," according to Benjo, "But we brothers wanted to produce better output so we opted to use Toon Boom Studio." It took them two weeks to complete their project, which included the time they needed to learn the program! They scanned and vectorized drawings they drew by hand in Toon Boom Studio and then made extensive use of the 3D sceneplanning camera and pegs.

Check out their winning animation here: <http://www.mtv.com/Onair/Shows/StartPlay/index.html>. They also did the MTV ID in Toon Boom Studio, which was aired across MTVAsia. And they are currently participating in the NontzeFlash 2004 Animation Festival: <http://www.nontzeberri.com/nontzeflash/index-e.asp>. Congratulations, Benjo and Jay!



Awards

Toon Boom Studio has won the prize for Best Original Commercial Qt Application and the overall prize in Trolltech's Qt/Mac Application Developer Contest. An excited and impressed jury concluded that: "This is an absolute amazingly good program for creating animations. Even with little artistic ability it is easy to make a small animation, as well as using the sophisticated camera features in the examples demonstrated. The documentation is well put together, the interface intuitive, and the implementation stable. Over all a very nice solution!"

Schools on Board

The philosopher Rousseau reportedly told, "God is calling you. Go to Annecy." For the second consecutive year, **Vancouver Film School (VFS)** 2D animation students are experiencing a slightly different call to this medieval lakeside town nestled in the French Alps. Graduates Adam Yaniv and Aron Steinke were selected to screen their respective films, *Downhill* and *Palo Alto 1879*. They are following last year's Annecy nominee, VFS student Steve Dorchester, who was selected for his film, *The Key*. Steinke, whose nomination was sponsored by the French Consulate of British Columbia, employed the latest version of USAnimation to complete a project described by VFS 2D department head Joseph Gilland as "An animated painting rather than just another cartoon." For VFS students, as well as Gilland and fellow 3D department head Larry Bafia, **Annecy** was an opportunity to connect with the worldwide classical animation community. "Annecy clarifies why we choose the



At the latest **FRAMES 2004**, Asia's biggest convention on the business of entertainment, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry honored **Joan Voegesang**, President and CEO of **Toon Boom Animation**, with the **Life Time Achievement Award** for being instrumental in the development of the Indian animation industry. Congratulations!



art and industry of animation as our livelihood," says VFS 2D Program Manager Anne Denman-Wilde.

Members of the St. Dunstan Elementary School Animation Club in Mississauga, Ontario, have had a number of successes using Toon Boom Studio, winning several school board and province-wide animation competitions. Students in the club, run by Barbara-Anne Krampert, are in Grades 5 to 8. The boys and girls work throughout the year to develop their animation and software skills. On the day of the competition, each team works to create a storyboard and animation based on the specifics of the challenge. This year, the

Junior team won Gold at the Board Skills Challenge and at the province-wide Ontario Skills Challenge. The Intermediate team won Gold at the Board Skills Challenge. According to Barbara-Anne, "The quick rendering of Toon Boom Studio makes it so easy to use and gets the kids so pumped for developing their ideas." Toon Boom Studio has also found its way into the regular class schedule. "Two years ago," recounts Barbara-Anne, "I had a student who created terrific animations and even used them for his science and physical education assignments... There is such a wide range for applying the program to activities and to the curriculum."

Congratulations, teams! We look forward to seeing more of your work in the future!

Junior Team: Garrett Graham, Justine Chin Cheong, Daniel Carter and Jacqueline Wong.
Intermediate Team: Midori Depante, Benjamin Paraschuk, Andrew Carter and Valerie Mascarenhas.