

Technology News

A quantum leap forward in animation technology

Toon Boom Technologies is proud to announce the launch of the new **USAnimation® version 6**, named **OPUS™**. USAnimation™ OPUS™ is a symphony of pure technological delight. Far ahead of everything that's been done in 2D animation software, this mind-blowing production system will let you blast through production stages, heat up the scene and ignite your own creative renaissance.

USAnimation™ OPUS™ is a quantum leap forward in animation technology. XSheet, Camera, Paint, Scene Planning functions all merge into one universal Stage Module. Opus™'s innovative user interface lets you configure your layouts to suit your own workflow preferences, putting you firmly in the conductor's seat. The unification of the main production modules into a single workspace, as well as the following added functionalities, will inject your productions with even greater creative possibilities, quality, speed, and productivity:

a) User Interface

- Configurable user interface. Create different window layouts for your tasks, save and reload them to suit your working preferences and needs.

b) Effects & Compositing Network

- Easy panning and zooming of the Network View window.
- Automatic connection of Network Modules, as well as reordering of cables.
- Full drag & drop and drag & drop for creation of Group modules.
- Visualize data in tree views.

c) Ink & Paint

- Visualize line texture while you paint.
- Instant update of all View windows when changes are made to drawings.
- Ability to re-touch vector drawings.

- Painting with textures and gradients, creating richer look in painted drawings.

d) Exposure Sheet

- Automatically build the timing in your exposure sheet with simple click & drag.
- Use Expression Columns to create values for an effect based on mathematical operations.
- Control the velocity values with Bezier or Ease function curves. You can even control the values in other columns with these functions.
- Copy and paste cells with drag & drop.
- Automatically visualize and update Groups and Hierarchies.

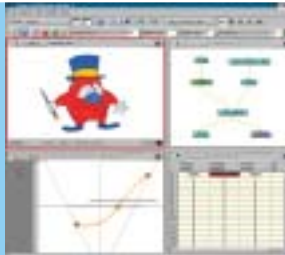
e) Vector Renaissance

- Work with our next generation of vector technology, which allows more functionality and increases quality of the work.
- Support for textured line art directly inside the vector drawings, which means you may work with grayscale scans with increasing frequency to preserve the distinct line quality of your drawings.
- Support for gradients in line art and color art.
- Updates to the vector model ensure smaller-sized files and smoother vector lines.

Production deadlines and tight budgets have become the norm in the animation production industry. With this reality in mind, USAnimation™ OPUS™ was designed to increase productivity and streamline workflow to make the most sense for you business-wise, creativity-wise and efficiency-wise. Here is a glimpse of the benefits you will enjoy in OPUS™:

a) Adaptable User-Interface

- Configure your layout to suit your workflow, tasks, and preferences.
- Customize your workspace so that you can select and position different views and tools showing only the information that you need.
- Save multiple layouts of the Stage Module window for different tasks



you might perform. Each user can have his/her own layouts that will reflect his/her set of tasks.

b) Interconnected Views of Scene Data

- Connect all views of your scene data so that any change you make is instantly updated in all other view windows.

c) Additional benefits

- Vector-based line textures displayed in the Drawing View window, so you can enjoy the benefits of vector technology (resolution independence and small file size) while maintaining the distinct quality of your lines.
- Text-based scene data that you can manually edit or automatically build with re-usable scripts.
- Expression columns that allow you to simply modify and reuse exposure sheet data to build complex effects or movements.
- Tabbed windows that let you place any number of views within each window, and reorganize views by simply dragging and dropping them in a new window.
- Drag & drop repositioning of network modules.

USAnimation™ OPUS™ includes **Stage V6** (X-Sheet, Paint, Scene Planning, Drawing and Camera), **Manager V6**, **Scan V6**, **BatchRender V6**, **Transfer V5.3**, **Canvas V5.3** and **FlashRender V5.3**. Stage runs on Windows 2K, XP and Linux RH 7.3. ■

Commercial Corner



SecondSun was formed in 2002 by the amalgamation of: 1) Delaney & Friends Cartoon Productions, a 2D animation company; 2) Brainchild Studios, a 3D animation company; and 3) Furious Entertainment, a developer of interactive games. Their commercial division recently completed two animated commercials using USAnimation to combine 2D and 3D animation. The first commercial was for the agricultural products company, Syngenta, featuring their canola seed treatment *Helix*. *Helix* featured a 2-D animated character named *Cam Canola*, superimposed over a 3-D animated farm and realistic-looking canola field. Cam whirls into frame looking like a 'dust devil', then stops to reveal he is a cartoon character addressing two live action farmers, also composited over the 3-D set. The second spot was for Spinmaster Toys's new *Candy Bubbles* product. In the *Candy Bubbles* spot for Spinmaster Toys, a realistically animated 3-D bubble floats down from 'bubble heaven' and pops open



User Tips

User tips are regularly added to the USAnimation User Group in the Support section of the USAnimation website (www.usanimation.com/support) and in the User Forum on the Toon Boom Studio website (<http://www.toonboomstudio.com/support>). Our FAQs also offer a wealth of information.

to reveal a 2-D animated cartoon character who blows 'real' edible fruit flavored bubbles to a group of live action kids to eat. "The use of USAnimation allowed us to integrate the 2D character into the 3D environment with ease", says SecondSun's President Chris Delaney.

Founded in 1992, **Renegade Animation, Inc.** has produced commercials for clients such as Mattel, General Mills, Target, Atari, Campbell's Soup, General Foods, Dow, Esso/Japan, Apple Computer,

Pepsi, Carls Jr., Cartoon Network, Nike, Midas and McDonald's. Renegade has also produced computer game animation for Disney Interactive, Humongous Entertainment, Mission Control, DreamWorks and Microsoft. Renegade recently completed *Pullin' the Plug*, a 15 second commercial for J. Walter Thompson Toys, to promote the Spongebob Squarepants Cheese Nips. In the commercial, Spongebob and his friends find a plug at the bottom of the ocean and Spongebob can't resist the urge to yank on it. He pulls the plug and WOOSH! All the water drains out of the ocean and he and his friends dry up and turn into cheese nips! Renegade delivered the cleaned-up animation and effects on paper to Virtual Magic, which then took care of the scanning, painting and compositing in USAnimation.

Holy Cow! Animation (HCA), Philippines, was tapped to develop the first full 2D anime-inspired TVC by Harrison Communications, Philippines for a leading telecommunications company, Globe Telecom. The Globe Telecom ad consists of three young characters and a "Charlie's Angels" – like boss using new features of a mobile phone through dynamic action and slick FC Anime. The anime style required meticulous color styling and complex shadows and highlights.

Holy Cow scanned, painted and composited all the animation with USAnimation. Some shots of the TVC involved 2D characters projected on a big screen. Since the screen had to be concave, they created it first in 3D and composited the 3D and 2D together in USAnimation. Holy Cow also took advantage use of USAnimation for many color, shadow, and flickering effects. "We used USAnimation's palette management tools extensively for color changes requested by the clients. This allowed us a great deal of flexibility throughout production. Any color changes made to a palette would update across all the scenes and we



were back on track", shared Dani F. Montano, Animation Director at HCA. Besides TVCs, Holy Cow! plans to utilize USAnimation to meet the requirements of its forthcoming animated series for a London based company. ■

toonboom news

A quantum leap of algorithmic proportion

Toon Boom Technologies feels like celebrating. Several major events are unfolding, bringing Toon Boom Technologies to a unique and unchallenged position in the marketplace. Let's start with the launch of the new **USAnimation® version 6** named **OPUS™** – represents the ultimate animation production solution that combines flexibility and productivity to serve your specific needs. Committed to its customers, Toon Boom Technologies has dedicated significant resources to develop USAnimation OPUS™, the market-leader in 2D animation software technology. Throughout March and April, we are taking an around-the-world tour to spread the word on OPUS™, and share with you the great virtues of this new release.

We are also quite pleased to announce the beginning of a new line of consulting services. Based on its extensive technical expertise and field-proven experience, Toon Boom Technologies offers its major studios the development of made-to-measure solutions designed specifically to meet the needs of customers' specific production workflows.

We continue to participate in tradeshows, including **MacWorld** in San Francisco, **NATPE** in New Orleans, **MIP-TV** in Cannes and **FlashForward 2003** in San Francisco. At **FFSF**, the Toon Boom Team and **Broken Saints** are presenting *Broken Saints Ascend to Animation Heights* with **Toon Boom Studio** session on March 28. Be sure to check out the details in the FlashForward 2003 program!

In the past few months, the Toon Boom Studio team successfully managed to set up a worldwide network of distributors and resellers in more than 30 countries. Toon Boom Studio,

our award-winning 2D animation software, is now available in every continent. Along with our Animation Curriculum, this amazing product is also getting deeper in the school world as it gains recognition as the perfect teaching tool for students learning animation.

The Toon Boom team has also launched a new corporate web site, which includes a discussion forum on the animation industry. We invite you to contribute to the various themes, which are:

- Share ideas how animation can change the world
- Tips to be successful in the animation industry
- What's the worst/best piece of animation advice you've been given?
- Where does your inspiration come from?
- What would be your three wishes for the future of the animation industry?
- Post any opportunity for international animation partnerships/jobs

Finally, we launched our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey to rate the quality level of our USAnimation



support. The Toon Boom Team is dedicated to improve its level of service and deliver the most reliable and efficient support to its customers. We look forward to your input.

As always, we keep movin' and shakin' at Toon Boom Technologies! We hope you're grooving too! ■

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Customer news

Amberwood Entertainment Corporation is committed to producing high-quality children's animation with worldwide appeal. Amberwood is currently in production on their sixth cycle of the immensely popular show *Hoze & Houndz* for the Family Channel, as well as its first cycle of *The Secret World of Benjamin Bear*, a heart-warming series for young viewers. In addition to these series, Amberwood has several projects, including an animated sitcom in pre-production for Teletoon, featuring the voice and animated persona of Leslie Nielsen as a bumbling super-hero. "The power and scalability of USAnimation will allow us to achieve total creative control during series productions, as well as enabling us to experiment with exciting production techniques in development. The software will



Image courtesy of Amberwood Entertainment Corporation.

produce some fantastic and compelling animations! In 2002, the **English Animation Studio** at NFB used USAnimation to produce *Elbow Room*, the latest addition to the *ShowPeace* series. Used in conflict-resolution training in the classroom and the workplace, *Elbow Room* helps participant resolve conflicts before they escalate. They also used USAnimation to produce the *Talespinners Collection*, an exceptional and vibrant series of short animated films for children aged 5 - 9. Each film is based on an acclaimed cross-cultural children's story that engages young viewers with appealing characters and dynamic storylines. The **Animation and Youth Studio of the French Program** is also in production on *Noel Noel*, a half-hour Special scheduled to air Christmas 2003. *Noel Noel* tells the story of a successful businessman who is the only supplier of toys and accessories for Christmas. Even though everything seems to be perfect, this powerful man hides a painful secret. "USAnimation was critical to us in this production, for the line texture quality, the multi-plane camera moves and the fast inking and painting process," shares Dominic Tremblay, the USAnimation

increase our efficiency and reliability by providing our suppliers with the same file structures, creating a seamless production process," shared Mark Edwards, Producer at Amberwood.

From the East Coast to the West Coast, the **National Film Board of Canada** has been putting USAnimation through its paces to

artist working on the project. Produced by the **Pacific Centre Studio** for use in the educational system as part of a Science and Body Awareness Program from kindergarten to grade 3, *Little Armadillos* tells the story of average human beings who have approximately five million mites each living on their bodies. Little Armadillos are a little grossed out but completely fascinated by knowledge of these "little armadillos" and by the fact that they are important to our survival, both as individuals and as a species. Deb Dawson



Image courtesy of National Film Board of Canada.



Image courtesy of NFB Productions.

animated this short film about this host of bugs, based on a song for children written by John Forest and sung for the film by Long John Baldry. The basic animation was hand-drawn and then USAnimation was used for all of the processes that followed, including the scanning. "We were very happy with the ease and speed with which we were able to complete the project with USAnimation," commented George Johnson, Producer.

Fine Animation is one of the leading and most established animation companies in Malaysia, with a full-fledged animation studio and team. Established in 1997, to ride the animation wave in Malaysia, they have done many projects using USAnimation. In Q3 - 2001, they released a full-length animated feature about a Malaysian legend called *Putih*. This first locally produced animated movie was a local box office hit. USAnimation also played an important role in the production of their animated series *Yokies*, *Frooties*, *Alif*, *Abang Sidi dan Kenyalang* and they are currently working on several projects, including tele-movies, using the software. They decided to use USAnimation as the key-stone in their production process because of the "crisp" images generated by the software and the striking effects.



Image courtesy of NFB Productions.

Cromosoma is also working on a new series of episodes of the *New Adventures of The Triplets (39x26)*, using USAnimation. The first 65 episodes of the series, which won the INTE prize for Latin Animation last year, have been broadcasted in 139 different countries. 102 of these countries have renewed their rights or pre-purchased the new episodes. In the *New Adventures*, The Triplets are back with their usual pranks in different fairy tales, but this time, *The Bored Witch* also sends them into

settings where they meet very famous people... Similar to the last episodes of the first series, traditional animation is mixed with 3D, but the Triplets will surprise audiences with their fresh, new look, thanks to USAnimation's special features.

Based in Montreal, **Wheel Studios** used Toon Boom Studio to complete an animated music video for the song *Alright* by the band Pilate. The working process was loose and



Image courtesy of CartoonNetwork.

Customer news



Image courtesy of Wheel Studios.

the tasks were divided up so that everyone in the group could get their hands in all steps in the creative process. Toon Boom Studio was used to vectorize drawings, create artwork,

and help composite and animate the drawing elements to ultimately get an untypical Flash look. "The benefits of using Toon Boom Studio were numerous. It helped quicken the

workflow. We were able to send light vector files to one another over the net, as each person did not always work in the same space," shared Darren Pasemko. The Sceneplanning mode helped to add an extra dynamic to the video. They knew that the video was going to be a mix of limited animation and the Sceneplanning mode helped give depth to the scenes. The camera moves also functioned to keep sync with the flow of the music.

HGN Productions was founded by animator Haroldo Guimaraes in 1989. This animation studio specializes in 2D and 3D animation and is the only studio in South America that produces work for the Walt Disney Company. Indeed, they have produced several episodes for Walt Disney Television including *Gummy bears*, *Bonkers*, *Goof Troop* and *Aladdin*. They are also active in the areas of TV commercials, specials and institutional videos. Their goal is to develop the animation field in Brazil by training new talent and using new technologies in order to offer a high quality animated product for both domestic and international markets. ■

Schools on Board

The Special Computer Animation School for kids operates in the **Authorized APTECH Computer Training Center at Saratov State Technical University, Russia**. At the school, students use Toon Boom Studio and USAnimation to develop and produce their animations. After initial presentations in August 2002, more than 100 young computer professionals presented their new projects on December 27, 2002. The APTECH Saratov Center is organizing a multi-regional competition for students in computer graphics and animation, "Digital Wind 2003", in April 2003. "Digital Wind 2002" received over 250 submissions in computer animation.

The Animation Department of the **Hungarian University of Craft and Design** has chosen Toon Boom Studio to give extensive animation training to their students. This new training program is planned to

grow as more faculty members and classes will be dedicated to Toon Boom Studio starting next session. The Animation Department is equipped with PC stations, scanners and Wacom tablets. While following the traditional animation method, Toon Boom Studio gives the students the opportunity to learn paperless animation and advanced 2D animation techniques. ■

Erratum:

In the October 2002 issue, on page 2 under New customers, we incorrectly congratulated Warner Brothers Feature Film division for their release of the *PowerPuff Girls* movie. This blockbuster movie was not produced by them, but by Cartoon Network Studios with VirtualMagic using USAnimation. It was distributed by the WB distribution arm, which is not WB feature films.