News

Chief's Installer Pro 5.10
The African Chief has a new version of his shareware installer for Win32. It includes a new IDE and Project Manager for easy construction of installation routines, plus built-in LZSS and ZIP compression engines, support for BDE installation, self-extracting EXEs from installation projects, a batch language, multilingual support, unzip, version checking, custom banners, bitmaps and DLLs, start menu icons and an uninstaller. Visit

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http://ourworld.compuserve.com/
   homepages/African_Chief/
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for details of getting a trial copy.

PerfectSizeVCL
From Perfect Design Software this is a form sizing control that will automatically size your Delphi and C++Builder forms to fit any screen resolution. Drop the component on a form and the rest is handled automatically: controls and fonts are kept in proper scale and proportion regardless of the user's screen resolution. The UK price is £70 plus VAT from Grey Matter, visit www.greymatter.co.uk or call +44 (0)1364 655111.

Borland User Group
Meetings of our favourite UK user group this month kick off on August 3rd in Huddersfield: Clive Hetherington on domain-specific classes and OO. On August 17th in Hammersmith, London the topics include: GIS in 20 minutes, the WIN32 API and accessing low-level system information, writing NT services and graphics case studies. For more information visit www.richplum.co.uk or call +44 (0)1980 630032.

Delphi 5 Migration Training
Enterprise Logistics (newly appointed an Inprise Authorised Education Centre for Delphi Training) are amongst the training companies offering classes on migrating to Delphi 5. The first two-day course is on August 18th and 19th. Visit www.EnterpriseL. com for more details or call +44 (0)1454 417057.

BUPack 1.1
BUPack from BuyPin Software has over 230 components and full online help. It includes a registry viewer, lots of dialogs (tip of the day, find, browse for folder, etc), utilities (patcher, cabfile support, ras32, etc), components to create interactive multimedia apps (image animations, joystick, etc), experts, a tool to quickly find the function you need, multiline palette, new toolbar, hint viewer and a lot of snippets. The cost is from £70 plus VAT from Grey Matter, visit www.greymatter.co.uk or call +44 (0)1364 655111.

HIT 1.01
Huge Integer Tools is a set of multi-precision arithmetic tools for Delphi 4. The developers say that, with HIT, you will be able to efficiently implement algorithms that require very big integers: factorisation, primality testing, public key cryptography, etc. HIT is free for any non-commercial use. Visit Torry's Delphi Pages at www. torry.ru/vcl/math/hit.zip to download HIT.

Inprise Appoints New Senior Staff
Inprise Corporation recently announced the appointments of Stephanie Schweighofer-Jones as Vice President of Marketing, Hobart McK Birmingham as Chief Administrative Officer, and management consultant Nancy Hauge as Interim Vice President of Human Resources.

Schweighofer-Jones comes to Inprise from Logitech, and before then Groupe Bull. Birmingham, a lawyer by background, joined Inprise in 1997 and moves from his previous position as Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary. Nancy Hauge is seconded from consultants 54th St Partners (previous experience includes a spell at Noah's Bagels...).

It is disappointing to see that these folk have, as far as I can see, not an ounce of experience with software development tools between them in their former incarnations. Is it too much to ask for people who might actually understand the products their employer is creating? I guess it is. Sorry.

TVICPORT 3.0
From EnTech in Taiwan, this component allows you to access I/O ports on Windows 95, 98 and NT. New in this version is advanced LPT support (with access to any pin on any LPT port), access to IDE hard drive manufacturer information (serial number, geometry, etc) and the product now works reliably in 'soft' mode under NT. The package includes a DLL, Delphi component, and OCX. Also available is TVicHW32 for memory access and interrupts.

TVICPORT costs £30 plus VAT from Grey Matter, visit www.greymatter.co. uk or call +44 (0)1364 655111.

From The Editor...

Delphi 5 Is Here...

Delphi 5 is upon us, with lots of new and improved goodies. Brian Long and Dave Jewell have been sweating over late beta copies to give us their considered opinions.

So where's the review then? On your companion disk, of course: the full in-depth 10 page review as published in this month's issue of *Developers Review*. You will also find it on the *Developers Review* website, in the *Reviews Online* section. This way, as readers of *The Delphi Magazine*, you see the full review, but get your full quota of techie articles in this issue too!

To view the article you will need the Acrobat Reader, which is included on your Delphi CD, our *Collection* series of back issue CDs, most magazine cover CDs, or from www.adobe.com for free.

Just to whet your appetite, here's a few tasters.

The Delphi development team have acknowledged that Delphi 4 went out the door too quick and did not have the level of stability that we have come to expect. As a result, many users opted out of that version entirely and stayed with 3. So, this time around, stability and quality is number one priority, we are assured. But that doesn't mean there are not lots of interesting new things too. However, one pre-announced feature that isn't there is support for creation of Java bytecode.

The IDE has had a number of tweaks. The Object Inspector sports property and event categories. You can also save entire Delphi desktop layouts, so you can have different arrangements of the various windows for different projects or tasks. The Object Browser is revamped. Editor enhancements include a Visual Studio keystroke mapping option, for those crossing over from Microsoft territory.

We have a new VCL version number of 5, which includes a number of changes and fixes (the latter includes newly correct animation of the main form when minimising or restoring). Control Panel applet projects can be created using `TAppletModules`. A raft of new container classes have also been added.

Frames provide a much easier way of re-using groups of components (compound components) than was previously available. Similar in concept to form inheritance, the feature allows you to group a number of components on a form together into one frame, which can then be reused elsewhere, with changes to the original reflected in the other instances. Excellent!

Project to-do lists are included to help you manage your work and ensure you don't forget anything. Much better than a hastily scribbled Post-It note carelessly stuck onto the project's lever arch file.

Debugging options are improved, with options to display the state of the floating point or MMX unit on the processor, plus more ease-of-use improvements such as breakpoint groups.

In the COM field we have the option to create Active Server objects for ASP programming, plus other fixes and enhancements.

CORBA users unfortunately still have no IDL to Pascal translator, but we understand that such an animal will be downloadable from the Inprise website at some point and that further CORBA enhancement is in the pipeline.

ADO support is a big plus on the database side, but as we went to press it was uncertain whether this would be limited to the Enterprise version only (what used to be the Client/Server Edition): we certainly lent our voice to the requests that it should be in the Professional version too. As you will know from Guy Smith-Ferrier's article, ADO provides a very useful alternative to the BDE (which seems to have had little work on it for this new release of Delphi).

The Data Module Designer is vastly improved, now making it a true visual design tool: very nice it is too.

Also on the database front, we have a set of InterBase Express components for direct (non-BDE) access to InterBase. They are actually upgraded and enhanced versions of the Free IB components.

I'm running out of space now, but also enhanced are MIDAS, web app creation, team development (using a new built-in TeamSource capability for those who don't want to purchase a separate product), application localisation features, bundling of Resource Workshop for resource creation, and more. Phew!

So what do we think? Brian Long says 'I think Delphi 5 is a cracker of a product, with lots of new, fun things in it.' Dave Jewell is usually more circumspect, but he's 'especially delighted to hear that stability is the key emphasis' and 'particularly enthusiastic about the new native ADO components... the host of Office Automation components... and the new frames facility.' He comments 'I can certainly see plenty of compelling reasons for an upgrade' and 'in terms of ease of use and programmer productivity, Delphi remains head and shoulders above Microsoft's resolutely non-visual Visual C++... [and] Visual Basic'.

Well, there is lots more in the review, so get that disk out now!

...And Might Be On Linux!

One final nugget of information is that Inprise have been carrying out a survey on their website to see if developers would like a Linux version of Delphi. Coupled with the information that they are actively seeking to hire Linux experts, I'd say that it looks like we have an interesting time ahead.

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