

Microsoft Windows 95 Game SDK

Fact Sheet

April 1995

What It Is

The Microsoft® Windows® 95 Game Software Developers Kit (SDK) beta includes the tools, sample code, documentation and game subsystem application programming interfaces (APIs) needed to develop faster, higher-resolution, higher-performance games for the Windows 95 platform than are possible under MS-DOS®.

Key Benefits

For developers, royalty-free licenses make developing for Windows 95 more cost-effective, while device and feature independence make it faster and easier. Additionally, Windows 95 has built-in ease-of-use features, resulting in lower support costs.

For consumers, Windows 95's high-performance and ease-of-use features enable easy and consistent installation, a richer game experience (higher-quality sound, responsiveness, resolution and richer graphics) and scalability to provide superior performance as they upgrade their hardware.

Windows 95 Game Subsystem

The Windows 95 game subsystem is included with the Game SDK. This is a new component of Windows 95 designed specifically to enable world-class, high-performance game play on Windows. The game subsystem is royalty-free and game developers will distribute it with their games before the subsystem's inclusion in a future Windows operating system release. A new set of Game APIs in the game subsystem includes the following:

- **DirectDraw API** provides hardware-accelerated display performance. It supports Blt, transparent Blt and page flipping. It composes and moves Blts approximately 70 frames a second at 640 x 480 pixels x 256 colors on a 486/66 system.
- **DirectSound API** provides high-fidelity, low-latency mixing and playback of up to eight audio streams at four times the speed possible today. It allows volume, frequency and pan control of each stream. Typical latency to start sound playback will be less than 50ms, compared to approximately 200ms under current WAV drivers.
- **DirectPlay API** provides simple multiplayer game connectivity. It provides connectivity via WinSock or modem. DirectPlay is based on a simple send-receive-reply model. It provides functionality such as the ability to open a connection, create a player, and send messages between players.
- **DirectInput API** provides digital joystick support and control. The analog joystick driver will ship as part of Windows 95. Support for digital joysticks will be accomplished by a minidriver model. Individual vendors will write drivers.

Additional Features That Make Windows 95 a Great Game Platform

In addition to the functionality of the Windows 95 game subsystem, Windows 95 includes a range of features that makes it a great platform for games developers. Those features include the following:

- **AutoPlay** support for automatic startup of CD-based titles
- **Plug and Play** support for automatic hardware configuration
 - **Legacy device detection** support for configuring legacy hardware

Game Developers Supporting the Windows 95 Game SDK

Top game-industry companies announced their intent to support Windows 95 as a game platform including 3DLabs Inc., 47-Tek, Acclaim Entertainment Inc., Accolade Inc., Activision Inc., Advanced Micro Devices Inc., Alliance Semiconductor Corp., ATI Technologies Inc., Brooktree Corp., Cirrus Logic, Creative Labs Inc., Crystal River Engineering, Deep River Publishing, Interactive Magic, Matrox Graphics Inc., MicroProse Software, Mindscape Inc., S3 Inc., Spectrum Holobyte Inc., Viacom New Media, Virtual i-O Inc., Worlds Inc. and Yamaha System Technology.

Availability

The Windows 95 Game SDK beta is scheduled to be available at the Windows Game Developers Seminar, April 26 in Santa Clara, Calif., immediately following the Computer Game Developers Conference.

The final release of the SDK is scheduled for the second half of 1995.

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