

GREETING THE DIGITAL AGE

QuickKeys helps electronic greeting card company keep the world in touch



It's your birthday. Your co-workers pat you on the back, your boss takes you to lunch, and your significant other buys you that little something you've been wanting for months. But what really makes your day is an animated moose—complete with party hat—that tap dances across your computer screen, croons “Happy Birthday,” and wishes you a great day, by name. It's an E-greetings® Mail from Greet Street, and you're on the front lines of the digital revolution.

From the Greet Street web site at <http://www.greetst.com>, you can browse, buy and send personalized greeting cards—the traditional paper kind now, and the animated electronic variety in the near future. The San Francisco-based company's creative team stepped up to the gargantuan task of translating its massive inventory of paper cards into animated E-greetings Mail with the help of QuickKeys from CE Software.

Create Customized Macros in Any Application

QuickKeys is a macro-making utility that allows you to assign hotkeys and configure customized toolbars to trigger all the multi-step, repetitive tasks you perform on your Mac. You can

define sequences on the fly, in any application, without having to know complicated scripting commands or esoteric programming language. Plus, a powerful batch processor lets you run your shortcuts on an unlimited number of files—automatically—with a keystroke. Just define the sequence once, put all the files to be processed in a folder, hit the hotkey, and that's it. QuickKeys does your work for you.

“Creating hundreds of Macromedia Director animation cells from Photoshop layers requires a lot of repetitive steps,” explained Michael Lollar, an animator at Greet Street. “I've set up a QuickKeys sequence that performs the bulk of the work in a fraction of the time it used to take me.”

QuickKeys at Work in Design and Animation

Lollar begins by creating each cell of the animation by hand and then scans them into Photoshop. A 20-second animated greeting can contain up to 50 cells, which are stacked in layers in a Photoshop file. Separated, each layer becomes an animation frame to be used in Macromedia Director.

As if the whole process of creating, tweaking and shrinking cells down to their final size isn't time-consuming enough, each layer has to be saved separately before it is imported into Director. That's where QuickKeys comes in. Lollar has set up a sequence that selects one of the layers, copies it, opens a new file, pastes the layer into that new file and saves it. All Lollar has to do is type in the name of the file and hit return.



QuickKeys Saves Hours, Weeks Worth of Work

By hand, it might take half an hour of repetitive, mind-numbing work to save out 40 Photoshop layers. QuickKeys does it in five minutes. Multiply that by the 80 or so animated greetings the Greet Street team has created so far, and the time and money savings start talking. That's nearly 40 hours saved on one project alone—the equivalent a whole work week!

And QuickKeys is flexible, too. Since it works with any application run on a Mac, QuickKeys will flow seamlessly from one project to the next. You can modify existing sequences to make them work for new projects and throw them away when you're done. Plus, QuickKeys is designed to make sharing sequences with other users easy and convenient. Just build them, export them and send them.

Greet Street's creative director, Joe Lin, envisions putting QuickKeys on every Mac desktop in this 30-seat network. For the moment, though, the creative team is busy defining and testing sequences that will eventually become standard operating procedure for everybody in the office.

Powerful Features and Batch Processor Make Life a Little Easier

"Programming macros on the fly is so fast and easy," said Jason Hart, a graphic designer at Greet Street. "I come across many repetitive tasks all the time, like changing the attributes of a series

of files and then printing them, or opening a series of files, waiting for me to perform a specific operation to each and then automatically saving them to another folder with a different name. It's in these instances that I find QuickKeys most useful."



Two of the thousands of greeting cards available from Greet Street web site catalog.

Hart also relies on QuickKeys' customizable toolbars to launch the applications he uses most—Illustrator, Photoshop and Debabelizer. "I have set up a QuickKeys sequence that works with Debabelizer to flatten and index colors for me." Hart also uses QuickKeys' "Mounty" and "Choosy" features to mount and dismount other servers, hard drives and printers on the network. No passwords to remember, no Chooser to choose. Just hit the hotkey and everything you need appears on your desktop instantaneously.

"QuickKeys has really melded into the way we work around here," Lin says. "It saves our designers and animators a lot of time, not to mention the frustration that comes with having to do the same thing over and over. The bottom line is that QuickKeys helps our designers and animators do what they're paid to do—create great stuff."

Find Out More

For more information on how QuickKeys automates the graphic design and production worlds, call CE Software at 800-523-7638 or visit us on the World Wide Web at <http://www.cesoft.com>.

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