



# Pro-creation

Corel has given birth to its latest package, Click & Create. Panicos Georgiades and Gabriel Jacobs take a peek.

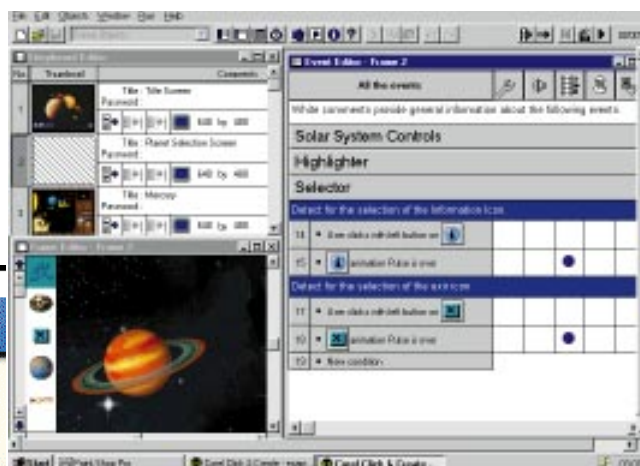
**H**ow many multimedia authoring packages can you name? Five? Ten? Twenty? You may be surprised to learn that there are more than 50 for the various platforms but they are not all called authoring packages. Some call themselves presentation packages, while others are full-blown programming languages. A newly-released package from Corel, Click & Create, joins this large and growing group.

Click & Create is sold as a powerful multimedia authoring tool, at a suggested price of £495 (not cheap by any means). Despite being targeted more at developers than home users Click & Create is not, in our opinion, as powerful as Director or Toolbook although we recognise that much

here depends on your particular needs. Anyway, the package does have the Corel badge and offers a number of interesting facilities and resources.

You can use it to develop CD-ROM titles and corporate presentations, although it's wildly overpriced if all you want to use it for

**Click & Create: storybook, frame and event editors**



is presentations. It can also be used to create screensavers and (very successfully) games.

As for that price tag, Corel is offering a special price of £199 if you want to change from your current authoring system (this is what's generally known in the software business as a "competitive upgrade").

Click & Create works under Windows 3.x and 95/NT. It comes in both 16-bit and 32-bit versions and includes support for DirectX and WinG. A Mac runtime player has been scheduled for release as a free add-on and should be available by the time you read this.

The package includes many features and facilities. There are button, animation, picture and morphing editors. There's ODBC (Open DataBase Connectivity) support and specialised game-editing tools.

Applications can be saved as EXE files (or as screensaver SCR files) and you can distribute your applications free-of-charge, although you need to include the product's logo on your packaging.

The two modes supported are frame mode for slides in a presentation or pages in a book, and timeline mode, as in a movie

where events happen at a specific time. There are editors for these, as well as a storyboard and event editor. This latter is really the powerhouse of the package. You build up events and when they occur you can trigger actions: play video, CD audio and so on. By using the events editor and menus and dialogue boxes, the program does away with the need for a programming language.

The support for media is extensive and equivalent to that found in any package at the top of the range. If you don't have enough of your own media there's Liberia,



A multimedia music title, compiled using Click & Create

consisting of repackaged bits from the clipart that comes with Corel Draw. It's very large and probably better than that offered by any other multimedia package available. There's an extra CD-ROM with 210 fonts, 1,100 images, 250 video/animation files, 1,400 sound effects, 200 transitions and more. The MIDI files were done by our friend Ian Waugh and they're very good. Although 30-days' free technical support is less than you get with other packages, you do not have to pay for the telephone call because it's on a freefone line.

Only time will tell whether or not this product can make a significant dent in the large market shares currently held by Director, Toolbook and their ilk. There's bound to be a shake-out soon — even the potential of the multimedia authoring tool market isn't infinite. We wouldn't dare hazard a guess at who will be the eventual the winners.

You can find more details about Click & Create on the internet at <http://www.corel.com/click&create>

## Going Dutch or going Greek?

**Q.** "I live in the Netherlands and bought a six-speed Vertos CD-ROM drive locally. Although it has now broken, it's still under warranty. But I have a big problem because the dealer has gone bankrupt. I've searched (in the Netherlands) for Vertos but it doesn't seem to exist.

Via the internet I have managed to track down Vertos's home page in Greece and

have mailed the company several times, so far with no result. Really, when you buy something in good faith and want to invoke the warranty you should be able to find the company responsible.

I've read in your magazine that Seagate and Sony will repair equipment if a dealer isn't able to. Shouldn't this be standard procedure for all products?"

**Guido Schonkeren**  
<csg807@wing.rug.nl>

**A.** We publish your letter because, indirectly, it raises two important issues relating to the current state of multimedia hardware.

The first is that the market forces which cause dealers to go bust are, in the end, very much in favour of the consumer. For some time now we have seen falling prices as competition intensifies. If multimedia is to reach its true potential, this competition must continue and many dealers will go bust in the process (it's a fact of life) but it also means that the survivors will be forced to offer less in the way of after-sales service and that is very worrying.

The second issue is that because prices are falling so consistently and so rapidly, we're almost moving into throw-away multimedia hardware. So it would hardly have been worth sending your CD-ROM drive abroad for repair or replacement. Here in the UK, you can now obtain drives from around £35. You should take into account the fact that when you send equipment away for repair, you will

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Click & Create can be used to author multimedia, games and screensavers

be without it for perhaps several weeks. It gets close to the point where you might well consider throwing it away and buying new.

In your particular situation, however, you haven't extracted the right information from the net: Vertos isn't a Greek company; the Greeks haven't really manufactured anything since the Parthenon!

Vertos CD-ROM drives are made by Elitegroup Computer Systems in Taiwan. We have no Netherlands address but in the UK they're at Unit 10, Victory Business Centre, Worton Road, Isleworth TW7 6DB (telephone +44 181 847 3332). If you contact the company, giving the serial number of your drive, it should be able to tell you where to get it repaired or replaced.

Perhaps it's about time we had a European Consumer Protection body?

### Making Movies

**Q.** "I am keen to try video editing on my PC: nothing professional, just VHS film of my family growing up, our holidays and so on. I want to transfer the video from my camcorder to my PC, edit it, inserting titles and transition effects and then dump it onto VHS tape as a finished product.

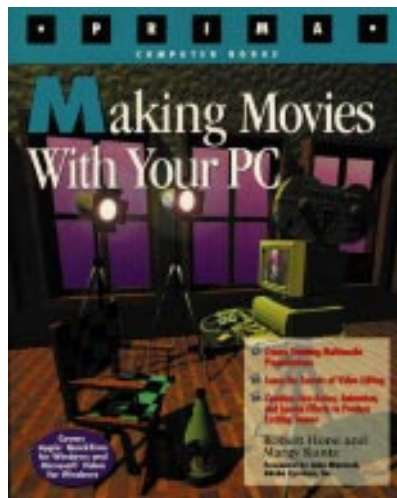
I have only seen one advertisement for a complete package, the FAST Electronics F60, which includes hardware and software. However, I am reluctant to commit myself before knowing firstly, whether there are other ready-made solutions and secondly, whether I couldn't construct a purpose-built set-up using a multimedia card and separate software. Many of the multimedia cards I have seen advertised seem to support video capture but not transfer to tape. Any suggestions?"

David Challes

<101713.2007@compuserve.com>

**A.** We receive many queries on this subject. Yes, you're right: you do need to get a card that supports video output as well as input. But the F60 is not your only option.

Miro DC1, DC20, Reveal VE500P and the new Diamond Crunch It 2000 (as well as others) have video output and are bundled with video-editing software (mostly Adobe Premiere LE or Ulead Media Studio). Some of these cards start at just over £350. There's not really a lot of difference between them and most use the same types of chip. The Reveal VE500P (also named Video Artist), offers a complete package including a book, called *Making Movies with your PC* (ISBN 1-55958-389-4).



However, it's important to take a number of other things into consideration. You need a good hard disk with lots of space and a high and constant transfer rate, especially since you'll be playing back to record the result to video. A transfer rate of over 2Mb/sec (actual figures, not manufacturer's specifications, so take care) is required for a good recording with no deterioration. For VHS quality you can capture at 352 x 288 pixels at 25fps compressed at 4:1.

For this level of performance, an audio-visual drive would be preferable. It gives smoother capture and playback. Two Gigabyte drives can now be had for just under £400. (See next month's column for more on audio-visual hard disks).

If you have a machine that has a PCI motherboard, you will achieve better results (i.e. you'll capture more data per second) with a PCI capture card, as opposed to an ISA card.

### Fungus Illuminatus

**Q.** "I tried to use the *Illuminatus* demo on the PCW CD-ROM, but it won't run because it wants CTL3D.DLL. Where I can get this?

Secondly, do you think we might ever see a review of expert systems in PCW? Perhaps this is too specialised but I would like to produce an illustrated guide to species identification for a group of fungi. It looks as though *Illuminatus* might be suitable and quite inexpensive. I want to do run-time versions but not allow people to readily copy my information.

It has been suggested to me that you can do just about everything you need to with a Windows help file (although I'd imagine there's not much security). I am not a programmer. Indeed, my attempts at

programming in the past have been most unsuccessful!"

Christopher Walker

<walker@globalnet.co.uk>

**A.** In answer to the first part of your question, CTL3D.DLL can be found on the PCW cover-mounted CD-ROM in the directory which holds the Video for Windows 1.1e files. You can copy it to your Windows\System directory and decompress it using:

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Expand CTL3D.DL_ CTL3D.DLL
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Better still, just install Video for Windows which you need to do anyway to run the video files on our CD-ROM.

Expert systems are not our speciality, so we'll pass on your request to our features editor. But with respect to your illustrated guide to fungi, *Illuminatus* is a simple program to use and doesn't require a distribution licence. It's cheap, and most of your data gets embedded in the application so it's not easy to copy. But do bear in mind that no information is safe once it's in electronic form: however much you encode it, once it's on the screen, all someone has to do is press the Print Screen key and it's copied to the Windows clipboard.

The other point to consider is whether you want a text-search facility and how much data your application will hold. If you're dealing with many hundreds of species, a Windows database program (Access, Paradox, dBase, or Approach) may do the job better and more easily than a multimedia authoring tool. With the coming of multimedia authoring tools, database programs seem to have suffered something of a decline (in these types of applications), which is a pity because very often they're exactly what you need.

We assume, in suggesting this, that you have only text and pictures — no video or sound. We also assume that you'll have no hotwords that link to other topics and no pictures with hotspots that lead to other pictures or text. Authoring tools such as *Illuminatus* and other multimedia authoring software are built specifically to take account of such things.

### •PCW Contacts

If you have any queries, or interesting multimedia-related topics to discuss, we'll be pleased to hear from you. You can contact us at:

**g.c.jacobs@swansea.ac.uk**  
or **panicos@diap.pipex.com**

Corel 01703 814142