RealiView v4.0 Release Notes

2nd January 1995

Introduction

RealiView is FreeWare! It can be freely distributed in an unmodified form, so you can show your RealiMations on computers without having to buy or install the full RealiMation application.

RealiView lets you fly through 3D scenes, and run simulations. These simulations are defined in RealiBases. To create your own RealiBases you must use the RealiMation Space Time Editor (STE), which can be purchased separately. A free demonstration copy is available from our Web site, or by contacting Datapath directly. See the feedback section below for more information.

The help file supplied with RealiView gives much more information on RealiMation. We recommend that you take a look at this.

IMPORTANT: RealiView only works with Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51. There is a separate DOS viewer for use with Windows 3.1 and DOS.

This package consists of the viewer package called "RealiView". This is just one of the components of the RealiMation Virtual Reality, Simulation, and Game Development system. More details of this software is given below.

You may be interested in RealiSave, the RealiMation screen savers. These are available separately (and are also free!) and you can use them to get some great 3D screen saver effects. If you use the RealiMation STE, then you can even customise your own 3D screen saver!

What is RealiMation?

RealiMation is a toolkit for people to create their own Virtual Reality, Simulation, and Game applications (VRSG). Part of the toolkit is the RealiMation Space Time Editor (STE), which is a powerful application in its own right and can be used independently of the software development kit.

There is a demonstration copy of RealiMation available, consisting of just the STE. It is fully functional - none of the features of the full editor have been disabled. However, it has been limited to only work for 45 days. This time period should give you ample time to evaluate the product and determine if it will meet your application requirements.

Key features of RealiMation:

- Portable cross-platform API for developing your own applications.
- Entire scene descriptions - including motion etc - are encapsulated in a single database called a RealiBase. RealiBases are platform and hardware independent.
- The concept of time and motion is built into the RealiBase.
- Terrain following (i.e enabling vehicles to move naturally over irregular surfaces)
- Level of detail control
- Flexible scene optimisation for getting the best out of your renderers.
- Renderer independence. RealiMation is NOT a renderer, but uses various graphics engines to achieve speed and realism. The demo copy comes with OpenGL and RenderWare (from Criterion). Other renderers are in development. You can swap renderers on the fly within the program - even when a RealiMation is in full swing!
- Full support for multi-screen and multi-CPU VRSG applications, via the API.
- A 32 bit Windows 95/NT hosted editor application (i.e this demo), to enable the creation of RealiBases. The editor is itself just an application of the API, so anything it can do, other applications can also do.
- *And much much more!* There is an amazing amount of functionality built into RealiMation.

We recommend you download the demonstration version from our website (details below), or contact Datapath directly for your free (plus media costs) copy of the RealiMation STE Demo).

The RealiMation Space Time Editor

The editor is _not_ a 3D modeller in the same way as packages like 3D Studio or TrueSpace. It is designed to be used in conjunction with such programs, as shown by its powerful import facilities.

The purpose of the RealiMation STE is to act as a gathering point for 3D data generated by other applications. You can then manipulate this data into a form suitable for high speed 3D display. Along the way, richness can be added to the data by applying motions, hotlinks, materials, model articulation, textures, and much more.

Although RealiMation is not a modeller, it does have some extremely powerful and easy to use model manipulation facilities. Objects can be picked, dragged, and moved around interactively. Faces can also be moved, textured, smoothed, and edited in a number of ways.

Hotlinks

A very useful new feature is the ability to execute "Hotlinks". Hotlinks are files, executables, or WWW pages. They are activated either by flying into the placement with the link, or by moving the cursor over an object and hitting the space bar, which is a shortcut to Options | Execute hotlink. You should note that if using the flying method, you MUST have the solid camera switched on.

The status bar at the bottom of the main window will show the hotlink text of the object currently underneath the cursor.

RealiMation interprets the hotlink string as follows:
- If the link is a RealiBase file, that file is loaded.
- If the link is an executable, that program is run. E.g You could attach "WinFile.EXE", and run File Manager on activation.
- If the link is some kind of document, the Windows application associated with that document is executed, and the file loaded. For example, "readme.txt" will cause Notepad to run up, with the contents of the file "readme.txt".
- If the links specifies an HTML page - ie. it begins with "http:", then your Web Browser is sent hunting for this page. You need to specify the pathname of your WWW browser to RealiView, using Options | Set Web Browser.

The possible applications of this feature are numerous. You could create a 3D program manager, for example - using only the editor and RealiView. It is the RealiBase that defines the program manager!

Another application is to link different RealiBases together. For example, the interior of an office might be loaded when you fly through the door from the outside. You might even make a RealiBase browser, which is itself a RealiBase.

Changing Display Drivers

As a package, RealiMation is display driver independent. This means that it can use a variety of other rendering engines to draw 3D scenes e.g. OpenGL and Criterion's Renderware.

By default, RealiView uses the Renderware driver. You can change this by selecting the Customise | Display Driver option, and choosing another driver from the list.

Using with Portable Computers

When you are using RealiView with laptop computers, you may find that when playing back a RealiView, the frame rate rapidly drops after just a few seconds, but goes back to full speed when you move the mouse. This is because the PC's power saving features are kicking in. You should disable power saving on your computer if this is a problem for you.

Redistributing RealiView

Users are free to redistribute RealiView in an unmodified form.

If you recieved RealiView on a CD, just copy the contents of the Viewer\DISK1 directory onto one floppy, and the Viewer\DISK2 directory onto another.

If you recieved RealiView on floppy disks, then just copy the floppies.

Label the floppies "RealiView, (c) Datapath Ltd, Disk 1 of 2", and "RealiView, (c) Datapath Ltd, Disk 2 of 2".

Feedback

To enable Datapath to meet your needs, your feedback is vital. We are interested not only in bugs, but in your suggestions for the way things work, or for features that you really need and do not seem to be available.

We regret to say that, since RealiView is free, Datapath cannot offer any technical support on the product. <u>We will not accept phone calls about RealiView</u>. Our technical staff, however, always eager to be helpful, will look at email questions submitted to the address below. Again, due to the free nature of the software, a response cannot be guaranteed.

For more information on RealiMation, contact Datapath Ltd using the various means below:
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Licensing Notes

RealiView is intended for free distribution. It must not be sold, rented, or leased in whole or in part to any party.