Inaria

Released: 2009 (Pending)
For: iPhone
Engine: Custom
Dev Platform: Visual Studio, Xcode

The original PC version of *Inaria* was a challenge to myself. Could I write a fully-functional RPG in the style of the older *Ultima* games in a single work-week (forty hours)? The answer turned out to be yes – and the resulting game was dubbed "fun" by just about everyone who played it. After seeing how few RPGs were available for the iPhone, I thought a port of *Inaria* might do well.

Inaria Editor

Released: 2009 (Internal)
For: PC
Engine: Custom
Dev Platform: Visual Studio

When I decided to port *Inaria* to the iPhone I now also had the opportunity to improve the world editor. In the original *Inaria* I ended up having to do a lot of map-hacking by hand to include things like map links because I didn't have time to code the editor to support them. The new version of the editor supports practically everything – painting terrain (with four different brush sizes), placing items and NPCs and creating links between maps.

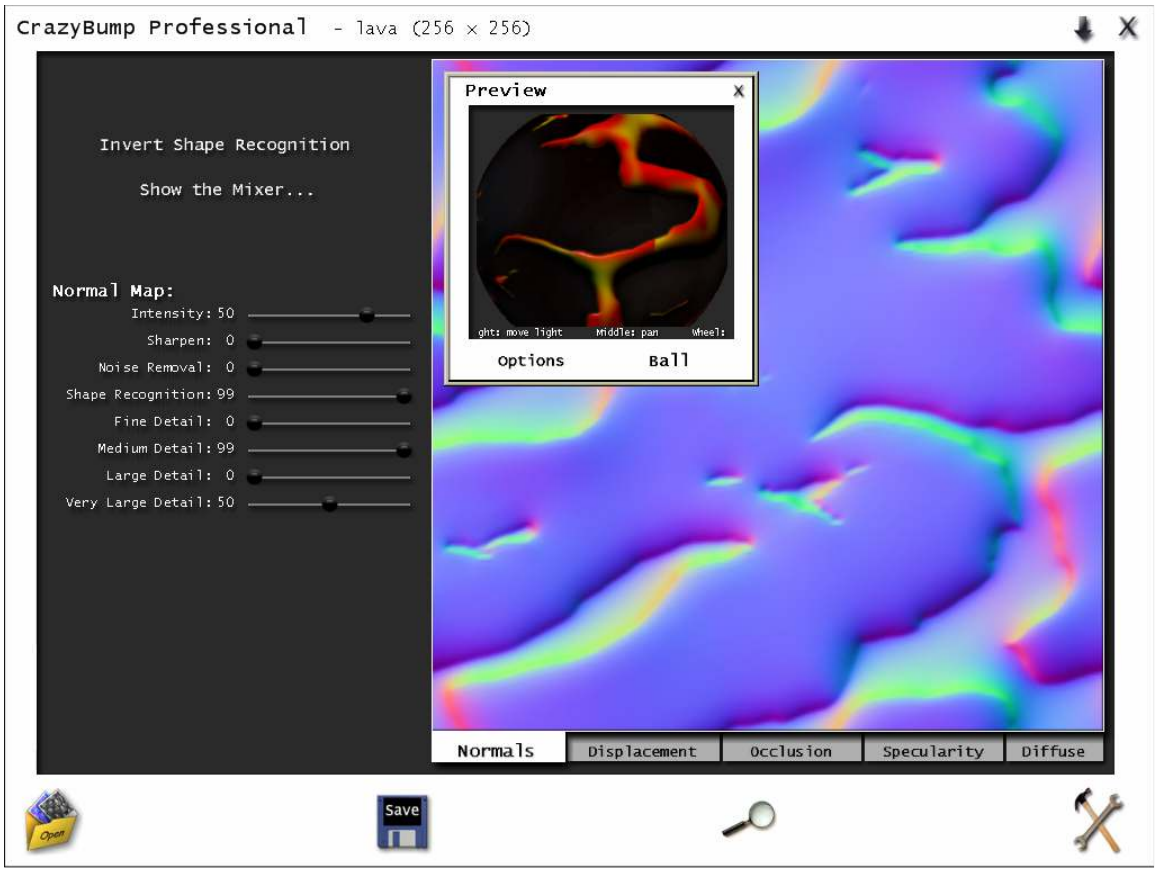
The editor is a Visual Studio project written in C++. I use SVN to allow me to edit content on the PC and then have it immediately available for the Mac/iPhone build.

CrazyBump

Company: CrazyBump Software
Released: 2009
For: Mac
Engine: Custom, based on Qt 4.5
Dev Platform: Visual Studio, Xcode

CrazyBump is a very popular tool for artists to quickly make bumpmaps out of their other artwork. Unfortunately, the original author wrote it C# using .NET. He's had many requests for a Macintosh-compatible version, so he contacted me about providing the graphic user interface for one.

I used the Qt 4.5 GUI platform because it is cross-platform between Windows and OS X. Even though I was required to create many custom controls from scratch that Qt 4.5 didn't natively support, I was able to complete the project in just under two months.



The Sims: Castaway Stories

Company: Aspyr Media, Inc.
Released: 2008
For: PC
Engine: Sims 2
Dev Platform: Visual Studio 2003

The “Stories” series was an attempt to add more story and structure to games based on the *Sims 2* engine. As a result, the game plays a lot more like a traditional point-and-click adventure game, although the classic Sims elements still exist.

The designers found both the size of the lots and the camera controls of the original *Sims 2* engine too limiting, so I was responsible for both increasing the lot size and creating a completely scriptable camera system with three different tracks – a camera movement track and two “effect” tracks that ran simultaneously.

The story also required a massive amount of text that had to be localized into almost twenty languages. I provided programming support for this effort both in the game and the installation program, which also had to be upgraded to support the Windows Vista Game Explorer.

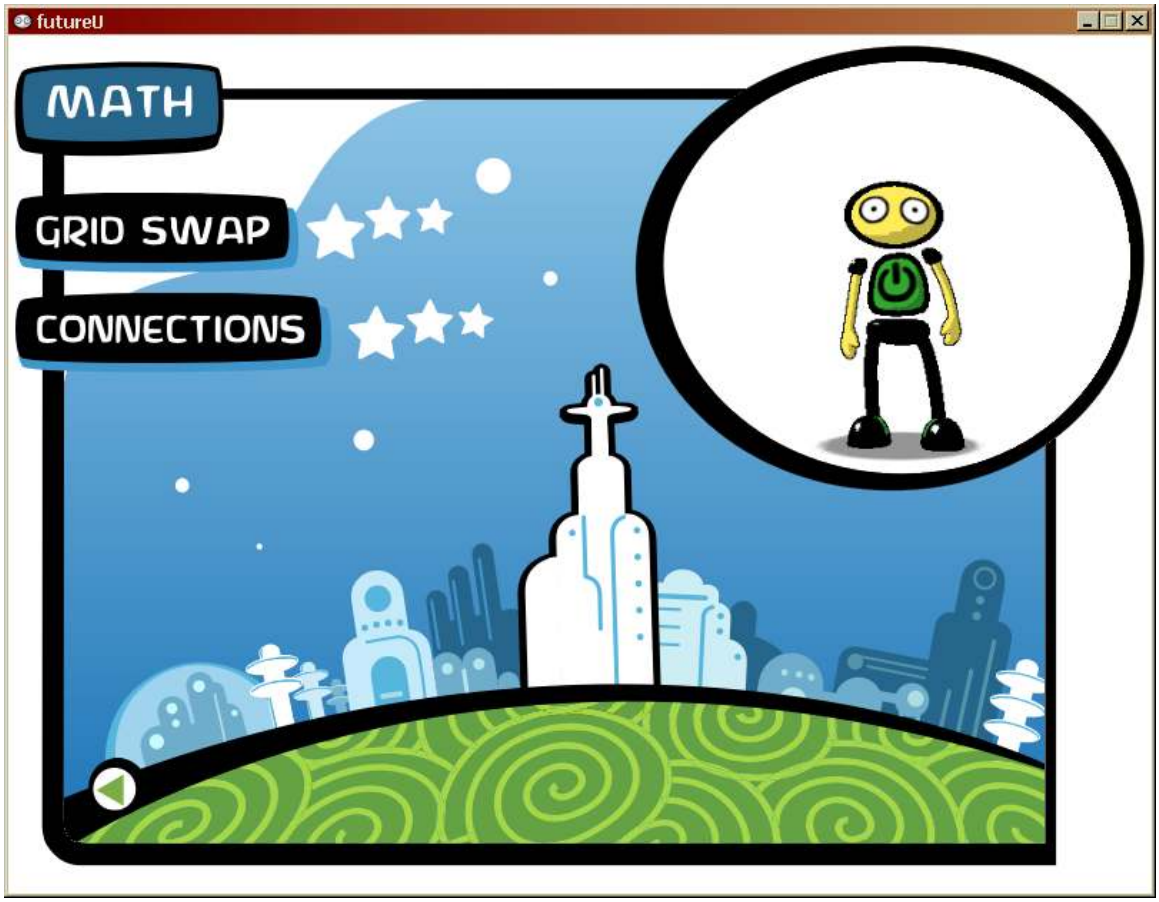
futureU

Company: Aspyr Media, Inc.
Released: 2008
For: PC
Engine: Custom, based on Scaleform
Dev Platform: Visual Studio 2005

futureU is a SAT preparation game based on the Scaleform engine. This allowed the designers to create their minigames using Adobe Flash and import them directly to the game.

But the designers wanted something a bit flashier. They also wanted a toon-shaded, 3D animated character that the player could customize, and I provided the programming support for this feature. Since Scaleform provides no 3D capabilities, I wrote a Direct3D-based renderer from scratch and incorporated it into the Scaleform engine. We used Adobe's FBX format to store the model and animation data.

Towards the end of the project the load times were getting long because of the number of animations involved. I found a way to combine all of the animations into one file and compress it, thus greatly decreasing the load times.

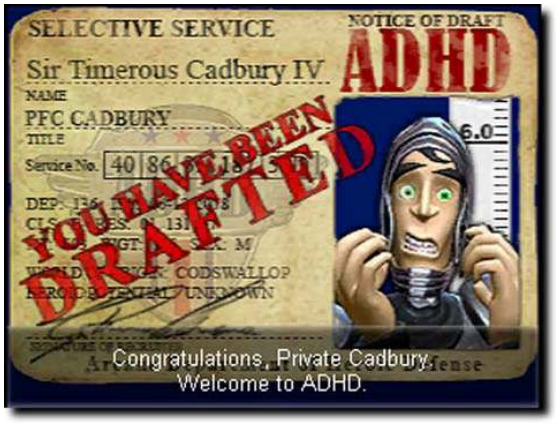


Hit & Myth

Company: Gizmondo Studios Texas
Released: 2005
For: Gizmondo (Windows CE-based handheld device)
Engine: Zarria
Dev Platform: Visual Studio 6

The Gizmondo was a Windows CE-based handheld device that featured an nVidia GoForce 4500 graphics processor, so it was capable of 3D graphics most devices of its type was not. *Hit & Myth* was a fully 3D fast action shoot-em-up game presented from an overhead perspective.

I was responsible for pretty much everything but the main 3D engine and world editor. I wrote the font renderer, the GUI, the conversation system (which I created an editor for, see below), the cinematic system, the save/load system, the AI system, the minimap, and the spellcasting system. I was also responsible for providing programming support for localization of the game into five languages.



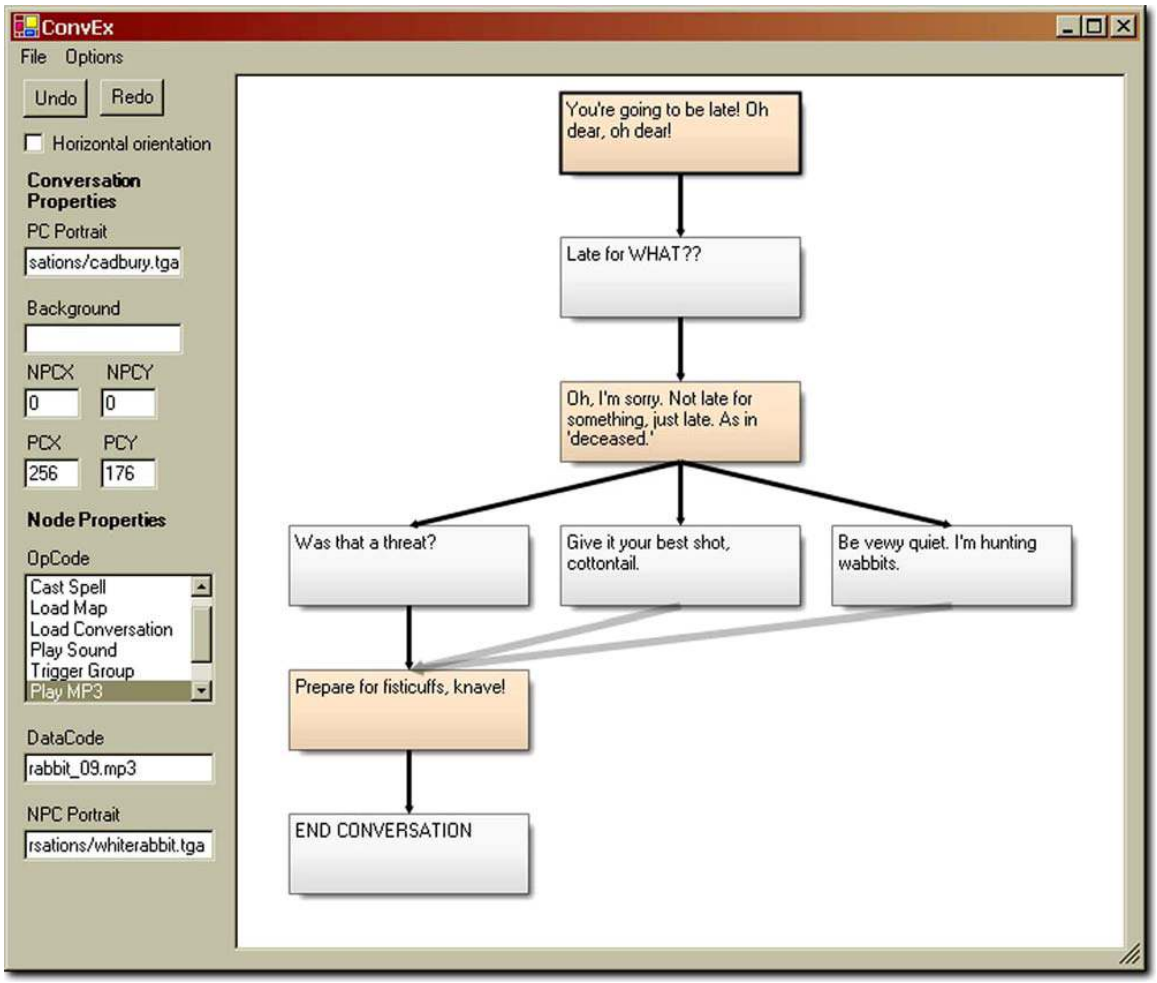
ConvEx

Company: Gizmondo Studios Texas
Released: Internal
For: PC
Engine: .NET
Dev Platform: Visual Studio 2003

ConvEx was a conversation editor I wrote for the Hit & Myth project. Initially conversations were created using simple text files, but I firmly believe that the better the tools the designers have, the better the resulting game is. I used C# in order to complete the project quickly.

The editor allows the designers to create text nodes that they link together in a visual manner to create conversations. It also allows designers to do things like play sound files or cast spells when certain conversation nodes are hit.

The conversation editor really came into its own when we were doing localization.



Planitia

Company: Personal Project
Released: 2008
For: PC
Engine: Custom
Dev Platform: Visual Studio 2005

Planitia is a real-time strategy game based on the old *Populous* and *Powermonger* games by Bullfrog. It's been the project I've been working on in my spare time for about the last two years. It started as a simple terrain renderer and just grew from there.

At this point, the game features procedural generation of the terrain of the game levels, animated units, physics to allow the units to be thrown around the terrain by the god powers, and fourplayer multiplayer over a LAN. I deliberately used as few third-party APIs as possible so I'd have to learn how to program everything myself; the only two APIs I'm using are Direct3D for the graphics and FMOD for the sound support.

The game can be downloaded from http://www.viridiangames.com/blog/my-games .