

Game

Programming

By Jeff Lindsay
Staff Writer

The majority of programmers have called **C** and **C++** the best programming languages, especially game programmers. Why? C and C++ are extremely fast and have been the standard for programming games for many years.

While some game developers use other "game specific" languages and the ever-growing popular language, Java, most stick to C/C++. Java, though, is becoming more widespread and is expected to become more popular than C/C++ in the following years. That doesn't mean you'll see more in-store games programmed in Java, since the big time developers all seem quite reliant on C/C++. **But it's the small time developers that will be the future's big time developers**, and there's one language that many small developers are learning before C/C++, Java, and the others: **Visual Basic**.

Visual Basic has always been given the wave of the hand when it comes to games because of its speed. The code written in VB is not what's executed. It's interpreted before executing, which drastically slows down performance. Also, unlike C/C++, **VB has many built in functions** that are always needed to run VB programs **called Run-Time files**.

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Digital Holiday Shopping

Online shoppers spent \$9.8 billion in the eight week period from 1 November-to Christmas.

Breaking that down, Visa USA reported cardholders spent 2+ as much online as the year before. America Online reported a whopping 84% increase from the year before...it sounds like those banners are working after all!



e invitations

As an alternative to phone calls and mailing out invitations, why not do it digitally :-).

The steps are easy: Choose an online service, register with them, choose a title for your party, fill in a few details, pick a graphic, enter your guests email addresses, decide whether you want your guests to see the guest list or not, and hit the Send Button. **URLs:**

<http://www.theplunge.com>
<http://invites.yahoo.com>
<http://invites.bluemountain.com>
<http://www.evite.com>

What's in a Name?



This publication premiered in November of 1995, one year after I applied for the trademark, Digital Times. Coincidence?

DIGITAL LAUNDRY

Welcome to a new age of 'Smartcard' Laundry Room Convenience!

The cover of my brochure stated that "Your new state-of-the-art electronic laundry room is quick and easy." Of course it costs more, and I have to use a credit card in order to add value to my laundry room 'smart-card'. Plus, I no longer have the flexibility of opening the lid of the washing machine after the 'cycle' has begun. Drying has one advantage, as I can electronically reprogram the temperature from hot for linens to cool for permanent press within my 45 min. cycle.

Digitally Weird

Dieters who receive email guidance regarding weight-loss shed more pounds than those who didn't get the extra help, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity.

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These files usually make games bigger than they need to be because the majority of the functions in those files aren't used.

These two attributes of **VB** have made it very unattractive for games which require as much speed as possible... until recently that is. You've always been given the ability to use API in VB. API, or Application Programming Interface, calls to the operating system, for example, can give you the same functions VB has at an impressively higher speed. But taking this one step further, Microsoft not too long ago released powerful APIs in DirectX, consisting of APIs for 2D and 3D graphics, sound, music, input, and networking. Using DirectX in VB gives performance relatively close to C/C++. What does this mean? **Many VB programmers can stay with VB to make games!**

Thanks Jeff! This 2-Part article will be continued in February

Talking Browser for the Blind

IBM's Home Page Reader -- which works with Netscape's browser and the Window's operating system, [how twisted is that?] gives blind people access to the Net by reading the HTML tags used for programming web pages.

Using IBM's ViaVoice text-to-speech software, the program **reads the text on a page in a male voice and reads the links in a female voice.** "To a blind person, what's important is the information, not the formatting," Paul Luther, marketing programs manager for of IBM's special needs systems, said.

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Complain and Resolve

Washington

The Internet Fraud Complaint Center, located at: URL:

<http://www.ifccfbi.gov>

has an annual budget of \$12 million and was created by The Justice Dept. to combat fraud on the Internet. Fraud experts at the Federal Bureau of Investigation will work closely with Justice investigators.

This effort is somewhat mirroring the Federal Trade Commissions project where fraud complaints are pooled with other information about deceptive commercial practices.

The information contained in Digital Times is a combination of original editorial content and information pulled from wire services, research and various online resources.

Digital Sound Morpher for KIDS!

I want one

Wow! this cool translucent blue gizmo is about the size of a remote control and plugs into the microphone port of a computer. This tech-age product for *recording sounds* and voices is only \$49.95.

What's really cool is that the morpher comes with *built-in sounds and filters*, too. A child could record her father's voice and then change it from husky to squeaky! Sounds like fun, doesn't it?

This s/w comes with animated art files that users can alter, such as KidPix.

Product with a long name:
Intel Play Computer Sound Morpher

<http://www.digitaltimes.com>

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a "for ecommerce publication reporting on the development and/or availability of interactive products and services." Int'l Class 16

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January 2001 Issue
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