InsideADRIFT
the newsletter of the ADRIFT community

Issue 15	April 2004

Contents

Issue Details: March 2004

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Issue 16 due out 15 May 2004

News and announcements

Next release on the way soon

Campbell Wild has been going through the bugs/enhancement list and from the hints he has dropped, we seem to be on the verge of receiving release 44 of ADRIFT 4. Although the latest release has been pretty stable there have been some problems where multiple tasks/characters were wiped inexplicably.

Quite a few bugs and minor annoyances on the list now have next release by them, so it will be nice to see some more rough edges knocked off.

Competition news roundup

Woodfish's One-Hour Game Competition was really the competitive highlight of the month in the world of ADRIFT with sixteen entries vying for the crown.

One Hour Competition: the results

Woodfish has announced the result of this event, with the winner being *"Vagabond"* written by Scott Meridian (a.k.a. Captain Obvious). In what was a rather tight contest, decided on the average marks received by each game, the gap between the first and fifth placed games was just 0.4.

There is more information later on in this newsletter, with a brief interview with the organizer Woodfish. Everyone seems to be agreed that this was a highly successful event and that many of the games have the potential to be developed into fuller releases for the future.

InsideADRIFT Spring Competition 2004

H. Lee Parten (sfzapgun) became the first entrant to the competition when he entered *Sommeril*. Initially this game was targeted at the Annual IF Competition but, after a short discussion he decided to enter the ADRIFT Spring Competition instead. With DavidW committed to an entry, Milestyle hopeful of entering, and Mystery battling a bug attack to enter, it could be an interesting event.

Editorial

Glad to say that things have been a bit quieter this month, so no blood on the carpet.

It has been a difficult month in terms of thinking of things for the newsletter, but I would thank Jason Guest for sending his two part article which looks at how his use of ADRIFT ties in with his early influences in IF. I am pleased to say that my roots are similar, except I started out with a BBC Model B computer, the older brother of his Electron. Jason's article also reminds us of the remorseless march of resource hungry computers.

With the travails of the forum it has been a chance to play with actually writing something – don't panic, you are unlikely to see a result from my dabbling! It is though quite fun to do some work with ADRIFT, rather than my normal fiddling.

Contact

Send any suggestions, requests or comments concerning InsideADRIFT to editor@insideadrift.org.uk

Find the newsletter at: http://www.insideadrift.org.uk/

InsideADRIFT merchandise

You can now purchase an exciting InsideADRIFT mug, if you so desire.

The store is really not fully operational, if you are interested look at www.cafepress.com/insideadrift

With judging taking place from 18 April to 2 May there is still plenty of time to make a game to enter in this competition, and with up to $100 in prize money some incentive to have a go. Further details can be found on the newsletter website at http://www.insideadrift.org.uk/comp_spr_04.html

InsideADRIFT Summer Minicomp 2004

Still very much in the distance, particularly with the range of competitions that we have had recently, the Summer Minicomp in August will take shape in the next month or two.

At the moment I was thinking of a kind of UberMinicomp, with perhaps three different minicomps in one. Something along the lines of a three hour comp, a five room comp, and a comp with certain required elements. Each event would have a winner, as well as there being an overall winner. This is just an idea that came to me as I typed, but I like the idea of giving people scope to work within their own limits.

Wider IF community events

*The **XYZZY Awards 2003** had their prize presentation ceremony IFmud at 13:30 EST on Saturday 28th February. Unfortunately the community's hopes for "To Hell in a Hamper" where not fulfilled as Jason Guest (The Amazing Poodle Boy) didn't pick up an award despite five nominations.*

The awards were dominated by "Slouching Towards Bedlam", by Daniel Ravipinto and Star Foster which picked up four of the ten awards on offer. No one else picked up more than one award, with Adam Cadre and Emily Short picking up their customary awards.

I know that Jason was a little disappointed to not win an award, but getting the recognition in an IF community wide awards is very important. In many ways I would put the achievement up alongside that of Hanadorobou's "The PK Girl" picking up sixth place in the 2002 IF Competition as they represent high water marks in the progress of ADRIFT.

The above can to some extent be proved by the fact that the game has since been reviewed twice, one by Emily Short and then by J. Robinson Wheeler in the latest issue of SPAG.

Drifters birthdays

April 2004

1 Echo (19)

2 KFAdrift (43); Deadman (41)

3 sfzapgun (39)

7 WebMonster (15)

8 TedEBearNC (43)

9 JamesBaldwin (34)

11 ToddWat (37); Slayerized (18)

14 kICkAdEviL (21)

15 Onierosv7point0 (17)

17 Leaflander (51)

18 Spring Comp

22 Boredom Man (29)

25 wolf (24)

27 flea (15)

Forum news

Another very up and down month for us as Campbell's server was down several times leaving a group of frustrated 'drifters to wander cyberspace looking for each other. Certainly, in my opinion, things have reached the stage where something has to be done as it must be putting people off ADRIFT. While it is understandable that Campbell likes the control that having the forum hosted on his own PC gives him, this is fine when it isn't impersonating the proverbial tarts knickers.

The forum has always been the very hub of our community, but recently nearly every day there has been the site of the server not found message . This is surely reaching a situation where Campbell might think about using some of the money he has received from ADRIFT registrations for the greater good of all, or he might be able to find someone with enough space.

Campbell says that he has been having problems with the IP address changing, but hopes to have it cured real soon. I am sure we all have our fingers and toes crossed that it will be.

STOP PRESS: Campbell has acknowledged that is things do not sort themselves out soon he will start to look for an alternative hosting solution.

At least many people have discovered Mystery's ADRIFT Network Forum which acts as a fallback when we cannot get to the real thing. Trouble is at the moment most of the forum content there is us drifters bemoaning the fact that the main forum is down.

This month the forum, when it has been accessible, has been a much more pleasurable place to inhabit. There has been plenty discussion, but it has been lively and civilized.

Drifters toolbox

PowerBullet Presenter reviewed by KF

I am often on the lookout for unusual free software and PowerBullet fits the bill as it allows you to create a slide show which is converted to Flash on web pages. This is an ideal tool for those wanting to create a tutorial or demonstration of a technique. With it's full control of fonts, the ability to include graduated fills, use of graphics and animation, along with simple drag and drop editing.

Events Diary

April 18, 2004
InsideADRIFT Spring Competition 2004: entries due in
This is a competition for new ADRIFT games, there is no limit on th game size except that it should be less than 400kb OR if larger it should be hosted elsewhere and a link supplied. Judging will take place in the 2 week period to 2 May 2004.

May 02, 2004
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May 15, 2004
InsideADRIFT Issue 16 out today
The May/June Issue of InsideADRIFT should be out today.

22-19 August 2004
InsideADRIFT Summer Minicomp 2004 (Provisional)
Provisionally there will be a Summer Minicomp in August. Entries in 22 Aug, judging ending 29 Aug.
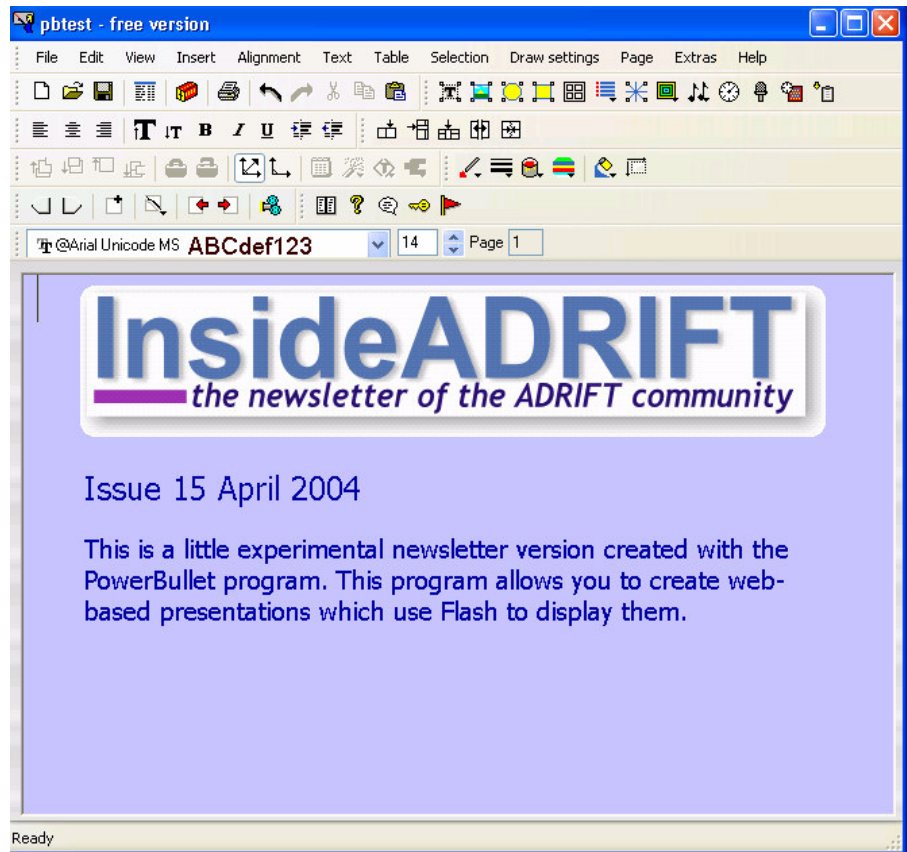
The feature list from the web site is displayed below:

- Drag and drop images (PNG, JPEG or GIF) straight into the location you want them. Transparency in GIF and PNG supported.
- Bring in images from your scanner or camera (TWAIN acquire). Drag and drop sound (MP3 or WAV) files. One for each page.
- Create new pages with a click of the mouse. Navigation buttons are automatically generated, or auto-advance feature can be used.
- Preview your work in a web browser. Clicking the Export button brings up a preview in a separate browser window.
- Good support for text: copy and paste formatted text from MS Word, HTML etc. Mix up formatting within a single word.
- Create animations for any display element by simply selecting from a drop-down list and specifying the start time.
- Create new animations without any limit on length or complexity. Automatically generates a web page that hosts your slideshow

I consider PowerBullet Presenter to be a valuable addition to any software collection. As it is free, with no ads or restrictions it is difficult to see a reason for not keeping it in mind.

For more information check out the website at http://www.powerbullet.com

The (big) idea by KF

Why should I write reviews?

This seems to be quite a hot topic this month. Funnily enough it ties in with the compliant against those who do write a review without perhaps knowing a system well enough.

I do think that when you play a game downloaded from the ADRIFT adventure pages it is a courtesy to make some remark back on those pages. Just putting a rating is a bit unfair as it doesn't give the author a chance to respond. This would tend to be anything from a sentence to two or three paragraphs, and not a really detailed review.

To write a proper view I believe requires the writer to understand their responsibilities to the IF community. A review written by someone that is more based on reputation or personality issues is a disservice to all. The reviewer must also have a good grasp of the features of the system they are playing on. It would be unfair to spend a review criticizing a game for an inherent failing in the system or for something readily changed by the player.

When all of this is said I would put the reviewing of

"At Home with the Underdogs" by J. J. Guest

Part 1: A Life among also-ran IF

At the recent XYZZY awards, after failing to win a single one of the five awards I was nominated for, somebody (I think it was J. Robinson Wheeler) was seen to shout "Go the ADRIFT underdog!" Whilst I appreciated the support, which was heartfelt, it made me smile, because when I look back on my life in the world of Interactive Fiction, I've always been at home with the underdogs.

My first contact with Interactive Fiction was back in 1983 when my parents bought me and my siblings an Acorn Electron. The Electron was effectively a baby version of the BBC Micro, a popular home computer found in homes and schools all over Britain and mainland Europe. It featured the 6502 processor, 32K or RAM and 32K of ROM. To put this in perspective, 1K is roughly a thousand bytes. 1 Megabyte is roughly a million bytes. My current computer (soon to be upgraded) has 512MB of RAM, roughly 16,000 times that of the Electron. Another thing that may come as a surprise to younger readers is that the Electron, in common with most home computers at the time, had no hard drive for storage. When you turned the computer off at the end of a session (or, heaven forbid, there was a powercut), that was it, everything you'd been working on would be gone. Unless, of course, you'd saved it on tape. That's right, cassette tape, those dusty things your parent keep a box of in the trunk of their car with handwritten labels saying "Supertramp" and "Queen - Greatest Hits." A typical game, recorded on one of these tapes took fifteen minutes to load, if it loaded at all. More often you would get a message saying "error, rewind tape."

Even among these dinosaurs the Electron was an underdog. Users of its big brother, the BBC Micro, or Beeb, looked down their noses at lowly Electron users. Even more aloof were the owners of the ZX Spectrum, which had a whopping 48K of RAM. Just don't mention the one-colour graphics. The Commodore 64 and AMIGA were in a different league altogether. I can still remember people whispering in school corridors when one particular boy walked past, "He's got an Ameeeega!"

As an Electron (or "Elk") owner my experience of IF was rather different from that of other people my age. My first experience of the legendary Zork, for example, was last year. That's right, last year, 2003. The Infocom classics were never available for my computer, it simply didn't have enough memory to run them. Amiga owners would talk about such classics as Leather Godesses of Phobos and Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or

competition games in the same light as for the adventures page. A competition reviewer will not really be able to review as in depth, and in something like the IF Comp is unlikely to have an in depth knowledge of all of the systems. This leads me back to a responsibility of the game author to try to cover any non standard areas of the game or system in a way that will aid those less familiar with it.

As writers for ADRIFT it really isn't going to gain any friends if we just say *"that's how it works, tough"* when a player points out a problem they had.

If Jason has whetted your appetite for this early IF then you can find some of it at http://www.if-legends.org/~adventure/Topologika_Ltd.html

The second part of this article will be published in the May/June issue of the newsletter.

Tail of it, but I could only listen in awe. Even games by Level 9 and Magnetic Scrolls, Infocom's UK equivalents, were denied us. But that isn't to say that there weren't some good games out there for the Elk. They were just different. A few loyal companies produced games that would push the capabilities of the little machine to the limit, even using screen memory to store information that wouldn't fit in normal RAM. This meant that the games often had two bands of what looked like noise at top and bottom of screen; this was actually stored game code.

Probably the most well known producer of games for the Elk and the Beeb were Acornsoft, which later resurfaced as Topologika. They produced such games as Philosopher's Quest (or Brand X), an early cave crawl along the same lines as Zork, Acheton, and the excellent Doom trilogy, a series of games based on the planet Doomawangara, and featuring incredibly complex puzzles involving time travel and alternative dimensions. The Doom trilogy also suffered from a preponderance of bad puns and instant-death rooms, faults which were a lot more forgivable then than now. These games survive and are currently still available on the IF Archive, converted by the original authors into z-code. In the Electron-only market, the next biggest names were Epic, and later Robico. Epic Adventures were the bee's knees in the world of the Electron. Well-crafted, with clever puzzles longer than average descriptions and upwards of 200 locations each, they were for a ong time the front runners in the Electron market. According to Merlin, Electron User magazine's resident Adventure game reviewer: "I think having now tried all three of the Epic adventures, that they must be the yardstick by which all future adventures for the Electron should be judged." I still have fond memories of playing Kingdom of Klein, Castle Frankenstein and The Quest for the Holy Grail, though I don't think I actually completed any of them. Robico were most famous (as famous as it's possible to be in the world of 8-bit text adventures) for its James Bond-like Rick Hanson trilogy, "The Saga of a Spy" as they were collectively known. According to Merlin: "RICK HANSON is nothing less than brilliant and Robico must now join Epic as being the software houses for adventures on the Electron. I look forward to spending time on the follow-up version, RICK HANSON II, which from initial impressions seems to be every bit as good." Rick Hnson was good, I completed it, and I'm considering playing the other two on my trusty Electron emulator. But oddly enough, the games I remember most fondly from my mis-spent youth weren't the timeless classics I've mentioned above. They were the underdog's underdogs - home grown games written largely by teenagers like myself using ADRIFT's spiritual ancestors, Graphic Adventure Creator and The Quill.

4th One Hour Comp

Results

1st Vagabond 6

2nd ARGH'S Great Escape 5.89

3rd Topaz 5.7

(Goblin Hunt 5.67;Wreckage 5.6; An Evening with the Evil Chicken of Doom 4.89; Get Treasure For Trabula 4.56; Agent 4-F From Mars 4.4; Cruel and Hilarious Punishment 3.7; Cat in the Tree 3.6; ADRIFT Maze 3.5; Undefined 3.3; Woof 3; Ice Cream 2.9; Shred' Em 2.8; Quest For Spam 1.56)

Each game is followed by the average mark received judged out of 10

Interview: Woodfish questioned by KF

Just thought I'd ask the organizer of the Fourth ADRIFT One-Hour Game Competition for a few reflections on the event just past.

How do you think it went? Certainly seems possible to get in entries for such a competition, indeed the last two such competitions have had almost as many entries as that monolith the Annual IF Competition.

I thought it was a very good competition. It's a nice feeling when there are lots of people involved in an event, and everyone is looking forward to playing the games, and seeing who the winner is. And its certainly helpful for people like me who never seem to be able to finish writing a game, but this is an excuse to try something quick and experimental. Plus a real bonus is being able to read all those comments about something you've written.

I'm sure you know that I feel this format is a little to speedy for an old lump like me. Do you see any changes to format and rules in the future?

After four one-hour games competitions, I think that its time for a change in the rules. Maybe, as was suggested on the forum, a two-hour competition, or a weekend comp? Possibly then some of the, uh, forum "elders" might be able to produce something *cough kf*...

Yes, well er, you never know, now back to the questions!

So Scott Meridian won the event with "Vagabond" this time, but what did you and those judging think of the overall standard of the games this time around.

I think Vagabond was a worthy game to win the competition. Lots of people voted, and there was a real mixture of scores. Overall, I think that people have come to expect more from one-hour games now we've had a few competitions, and this does reflect in the standard of entries received. In general, a very good response from everyone!

Thanks for answering the questions and well done again on another great competition.

ADRIFT recent releases

This will hopefully be a new regular feature, bringing you the details of recently released games, as described by their authors on release. The details listed here are as posted on the ADRIFT adventures page on Campbell's site

The Fourth One-Hour Game Competition (4th1hrcomp.zip 84 Kb) By **Various**, released 02-03-04

All sixteen entries of the Fourth One-Hour Game Competition (run by Woodfish), complete with a judging form. Have fun playing them! The Competition was won by Scott Meridian with Vagabond.

Monsters (Release 2) (monsters_r2.zip 20 Kb) By **Daniel Hiebert (Tech)**, released 22-02-04

Monsters exist! Under the bed, in the closet, down the darkened hall. With Courageous Pooky the bear and your Sissy's aid, you'll defeat and escape from their slimy, tentacled clutches. Release 2 features a new bonus monster to vanquish.

From the Demos Page

ADRIFT Maze (adriftmaze.taf 2 Kb) By Mystery, released 02-03-04

This is a 37 Room maze, complete with monsters that randomly move to hamper your progress. Viewed in the generator, the MAP displays the word ADRIFT. UPDATED from the Feb/March one hour comp.

I also asked the victorious Scott Meridian/Captain Obvious for his reactions and thoughts on his victory.

We have a fair number of talented authors in the ADRIFT community and it was great to see so many participate in this competition. To tell you the truth, it was intimidating and I was a bit hesitant at first to try my hand at the mini-comp, but the results have given me a boost of motivation and I plan on releasing a full size game in the near future. Currently, I'm expanding my minicomp game, but I also have a few other games simmering on the back burner. I don't want to say too much about them right now because it seems that that would just doom them to a fate of perpetual uncompletion. All I can say is that one is fantasy and the other is another sci-fi game. Hopefully I'll have one ready for the Spring Comp but if its not finished by then, I'll save it for the Annual IF comp.

… and completing a whistle stop trip through the competition Mystery said ..

Um, I thought there was a good turnout. It was nice to see so many interested in taking part. Some of the games displayed ambitious idead, and I hope to see them develop their works into large IF projects.

Competitions – who needs 'em? Part 1

A response from DavidW

I did a short "Big Idea" item last month on what the role of competitions was in the ADRIFT community. DavidW fleshes it out with his views here.

As it is quite a long article I have split it into two parts, so you'll have to wait for next month for the conclusion.

Are competitions a good idea? And, more importantly, do we need them even if they are?

On one hand, competitions are good for Adrift – they get people to write lots of games (see the third and fourth One Hour Game Competitions for proof), they produce some pretty decent efforts and they also get quite a few people to write games who otherwise never seem to bother.

On the other hand, it could also be argued that they're bad – people tend to work on their competition games at the expense of

Question/input demo (inputdemo.zip 2 Kb) By KF, released 29-02-04

Demo of a question being asked, with a numbered list of options. An input is then taken and used. Makes use of variables and the ALR within V3.90 limitations without text variables.

Rechargable Lantern w/ turn counter (rechargablelantern.taf 3 Kb) By reelyor, released 24-02-04

Rechargable Lantern Demo I had a need to create a lantern that could be utilized by turning it on and subsequently recharged by winding a small crank on a built in generator. However, after a certain period of time, the power would fade and go out unless the player recharged it. To do so necessitated my using a "turn counter", which is also incorporated. The length of time can be modifed by changing the "turns" required in the event "Lantern" and in the initial setup of the variable "LanternLight." I suggest that the event be called to occur 3 turns less that the variable is set for a nice action of the whole effect. I have further included the changing description of the room, and the presence/absence of an object in the room. Oh yeah... you can also turn the lantern off and everything resets. Hope this can help someone else, too. If there are any suggestions, please let me know. Roy reelyor@msn.com

their larger efforts (competition games generally tend to be smaller than most other games as they're written within strict limits) and their larger efforts seldom get completed. After all, a game which takes an hour to write is far easier to finish than a game which takes a month or two months or a year… How many full size games, you could ask, have been left unfinished as a result of the writer taking time out to write a small competition game and then never being able to get the full size game finished once the competition game is out of the way? Probably quite a few.

And then there's the fact that a fair few games written for competitions are downright awful. Of course, the same could be said, truthfully, about a fair few of the games not written for comps.

Personally, I like competitions. One reason is for the feedback they generate. Feedback is, and always has been, and probably always will be, a major problem in the Adrift community. Most times you release a game and you never really know what people think about it. You might get a review after a while, you might even get two or three if you're really lucky, but considering the size of the community and how many people regularly post on the forum, the amount of feedback you get on any game you might write (which is, after all, one of the main reasons the forum is there) is quite poor. The forum sees maybe a couple hundred posts a week from several dozen people, yet of these perhaps 1 in every 10 (if that) ever provide feedback on the games written. Disappointing, and hardly an encouragement for people to write games. After all, we're not doing it for the money, are we?

Feedback for competition games tends to be a little more forthcoming. People seem to feel they have an obligation to at least scribble a few comments about the games they've played and some even go as far as writing full length reviews which give you good pointers on what you're doing right and wrong in the game-making process. More often than not, you get more feedback from a single comp game than from two or three non-comp games. Games entered in the IFComp (the biggie as far as comps are concerned) are likely to garner at least three times the reviews and feedback as a game written at any other time; while the feedback won't always be glowing, most will at least be helpful. And sometimes, negative comments are as useful as positive ones. Someone pointing out what you're doing wrong so you can improve your game-making techniques in the future is every bit as valuable as someone heaping praise upon you. And negative comments now that you act on mean there's a better chance of getting praise heaped on you the next time.

Failed game intros

Lab of Horrors

This was the most recent game that I started, but it really headed along a well worn track of being non-interactive and derivative. Nevertheless I do like the intro.

You are at the same time excited and fearful of your job as a junior laboratory technician in the genetic research department of U-Gene Inc. Everything is pretty high tech, but you are worried that Ruby Clarke, your boss and the head of genetic research, is just a bit too dedicated to the science.

Dr Clarke is well on the way to producing a machine that can rewrite an animals DNA at the lowest level. This seemed a really great development, the prospect of curing genetic defects was nearing reality, but you were beginning to wonder whether the benefits were outweighed by the possible harm that could be done.

Your main concern was that Dr Clarke was looking into ways to add in extra variations, that is options like blue hair, which do not currently exist in nature. Although just a junior member of the team, you have been a bit outspoken in your opposition, and have actually handed in your resignation letter.

This was where the intro ended, and was the start of where you found out just how far your boss is prepared to go to keep her experiments secret for the moment.

Do you have a game that has hit the rails, but you would like to share with the community? If so, send it in to me.

Another reason I like competitions? The sheer thrill of it. Writing games tends to be, for the most part, a long and arduous process. You plot out your game, you write your game, you have you game tested, you amend your game, you release your game. True, you might enjoy the actual writing process but after you've played it through half a dozen times to get rid of errors, bugs and guess the verb problems, you're probably pretty glad to see the back of it. Entering it in a competition and pitting yourself against other entrants tends to be interesting and, dare I say it, exciting. Maybe even worth writing the games in the first place. And while there's no guarantee that you're going to win, it's always well worth following the progress of the comp as it winds its way towards the deadline date just to see what happens.

To be continued . . .

Game reviews

Sorry folks, after last weeks bumper bundle of four reviews, this month things are thin to the point of being non existent. Hope the other sections make up for it in some degree.

Reference

Despite it being quite a big subject, I have included the whole of the charactesr section from the manual in this issue.

Manual pages 28: Characters

Characters are independent people or animals within your game. The Player can interact with these characters by having conversations with them, and they can wander around interacting with objects and running tasks.

To add a character, either select Add > Character from the menus, or click on the 😃 icon. This will bring up the Add a character dialog box.

Character Details

The Details tab displays the following window:

You must give each character a name. You can additionally give them a description, which consists of a prefix and an alias. This is another way that the character can be referenced, much in the same way as the alias for objects. Again, as with objects, any number of aliases can be supplied.
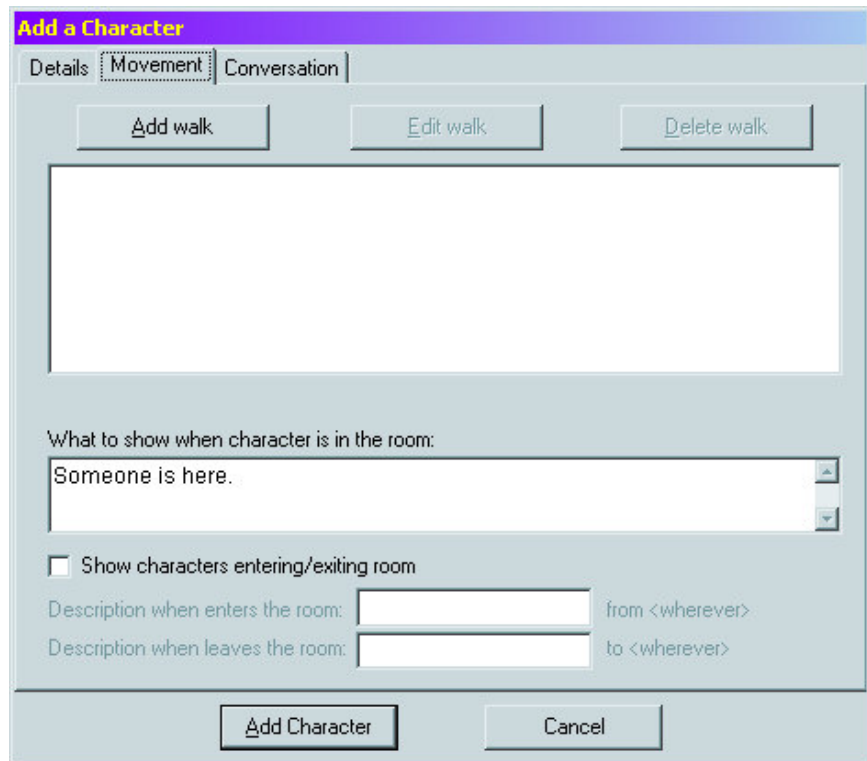
You can give the character a description, which appears when the player examines the character. You can give a different description depending on whether a certaintask has been completed. Just select the task from the pull down menu, and enter the alternative description.

The Gender of the character must be supplied. This would normally be Male or Female, but for monsters and some animals, you might want to specify it as "Unknown". This means that it could be referred to as "it" in the game, rather than "he" or "she".

You must also specify in which room the character should start off, from the last pull down menu.

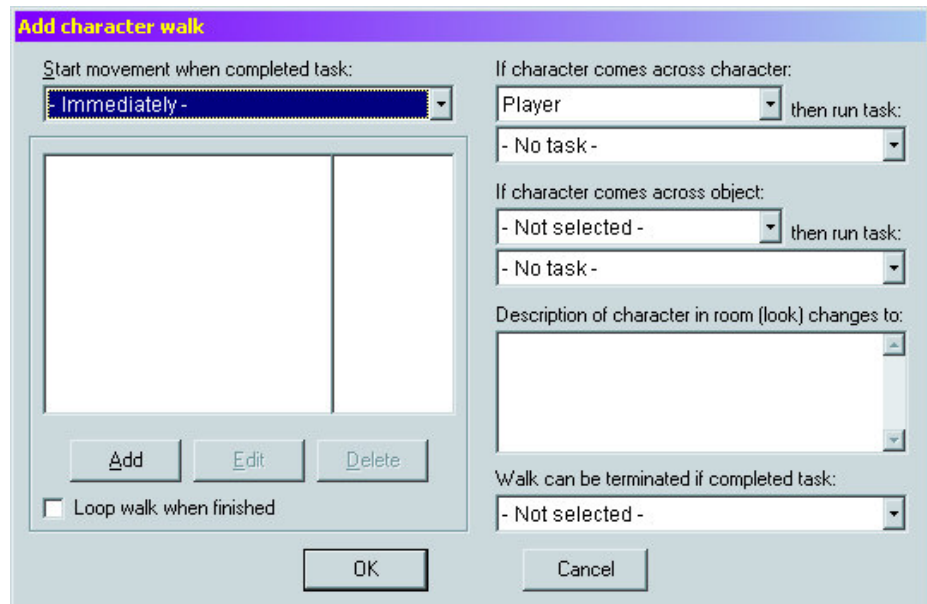**Movement**

The Movement tab displays the following window:

Add a Character

Details | Movement | Conversation

Add walk | Edit walk | Delete walk

What to show when character is in the room:

Someone is here.

☐ Show characters entering/exiting room

Description when enters the room: [   ] from <wherever>

Description when leaves the room: [   ] to <wherever>

Add Character | Cancel

Character movement can easily be created by adding a series of walks.

If you want to be notified when a character enters or exits the room that the Player is currently in, check the check box. This will enable the two description boxes at the bottom of the screen. You can modify what it says when the character moves. You would typically put "enters" and "exits" in these boxes so it displays "<Character> enters from the east.", but you may want to change this for the different ways a character can move, such as "run", "shuffle", "trot" etc.

Usually you will want to display a message to say if the character is in the current room. You can modify this by changing the relevant message. This message appears when the player types "look", or moves into a room.

Any number of walks can be created. To add a walk, click on the Add walk button.

This brings up the following dialog box.

You can select a task to start the walk. As soon as that task executes, the character will begin the defined walk.

You create walks by adding a sequence of movements. A movement consists of a destination and a length of time. To create the walk, click on the Add button. This will bring up a dialog box where you can select these. You can move the character to Hidden, Follow Player, a particular room, or to a roomgroup. If the character moves to Follow Player, they will move to the same room as the Player. If the character moves to a roomgroup, they will move to an adjacent room within the roomgroup -–if none are available, they will move to a random room within the group. This is a good way to create a random wandering character.

You must also specify how long the character should stay at that location before moving onto the next step of the walk. For a fast moving character, this might just be 1.

Continue to build up locations to make a complete walk. If you want the character to endlessly loop in that walk, select the Loop walk when finished checkbox. You probably want to ensure that your start and end rooms match up before doing this, otherwise the character will "jump" from one room to the next.

You can run a task if the character comes across another character or the Player, by selecting from the If character comes across character dropdown menu. If this is the Player, and you move into the same room as that character, this will also execute.

You can also run a task if the character comes across a particular object on their walk, by selecting from the If character comes
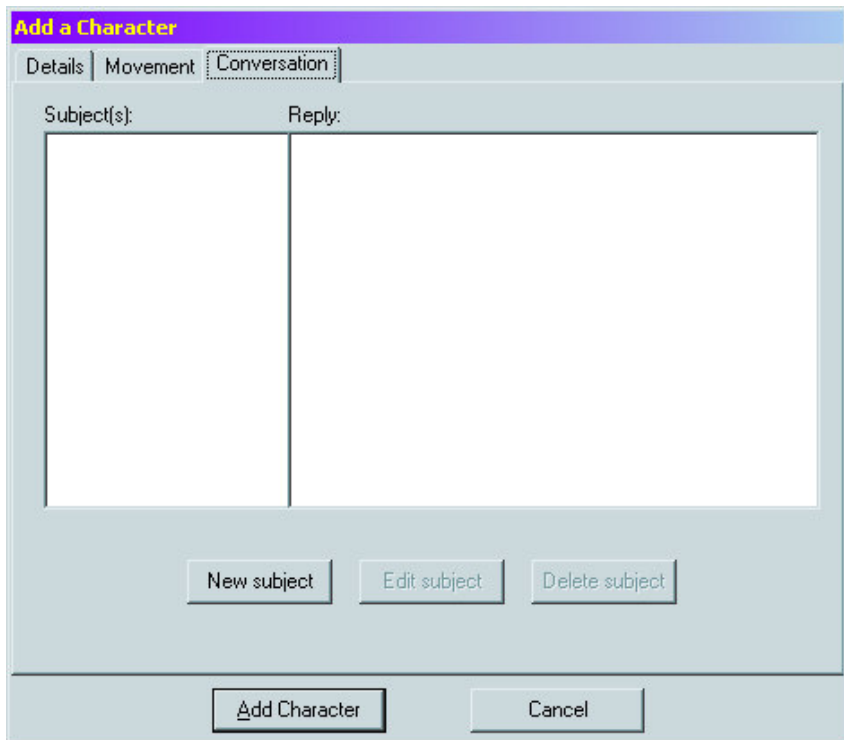
across object dropdown menu.

You can update the standard description of the character in a room by adding text to the Description of character in room (look) changes to textbox. This new description will appear any time you view the room the character is in, and supersedes the original text.

Finally, you can terminate a walk by selecting a task from the Walk can be terminated if completed task dropdown menu.

Conversations

The Character Conversation tab displays the following window:

Conversations are created simply by adding a subject and a reply. You can enter any number of subjects.

Clicking on New subject brings up the following dialog box:

Add Conversation with

Subject(s):

Reply to the above:

but if task | - no task selected - | is complete, then show:

OK   Cancel

The subject is the word that you want to ask the character about in the game. The player would need to type "ask <character> about <subject>". You can enter any number of words in the Subject(s) box, separated by a comma. So for example, if the subject is "fast car, Porsche", then the character would respond to "fast car" and "Porsche", but not "fast" or "car".

You can also add a reply to anything by entering an asterix "*" in the subject box. This means that the character will reply to anything you ask them about, unless you have defined other subjects that correctly match what the player types.

You can give two different replies to any subject, depending on whether or not a particular task has been completed. Simply select which task you want the reply to depend on from the pull down list, and enter your replies in the text boxes.