

## Flash Forward

Monday, 18 August 2008

Seems like it's about time for my quasi-monthly update.

Right now I'm doing some work for a design group here in San Francisco who shall remain unnamed until it's actually official that I'm working for them -- I'm sort of on as a consultant for now with the great hopes (at least on my end) that this will turn into a full-time gig. The precise nature of what I'm doing for them must also remain somewhat hushhush for the moment, but suffice to say that I'm looking into techniques for building realtime 3d worlds in a somewhat more ...controlled manner than the ones I usually build.

As a result, I'm looking into several new methodologies for doing 3d that I hadn't previously considered. For example, did you know that Director grew up while we were all paying attention to flash? It's all spiffy and high-powered in the 3d realm now. Funny thing, though, apparently no one cared about versions 5-10, so now all of a sudden on version 11 all of the tutorials I find are either written this year or in 1997. There's some significant power, here, though, so much so that I'm considering writing some vj tools in director, which could be nice because it outputs directly to an executable file.

Flash, however, is also keeping up nicely. Check out what these guys are doing with 3d in flash, check out that "99" demo, especially if you're into oldschool demoscene stuff, it's totally a stylistic nod there, and then remind yourself when you're seeing the scrolling ball text that you're watching a flash animation, not a pre-rendered video. And this, Away3d, is only one of three major 3D engines for flash that I've found. It's my feeling that flash is in the process of taking a huge motion towards... something. I think that it may be becoming a significant contributor to the ways in which we visualize information.

I know I'm excited enough that I'm trying to get over my somewhat ambivalent relationship with Actionscript3 (I'm fine with 2, but 3 is very different in some ways that I never liked) just to try to get in on this kind of visual processing power. Even if we wind up not using any of these products for the project I'm working on, I'm very interested to have a command of them for the future.