



GM TECH

ISSUE 01

Interview with Simon Donkers & Benetonmovie

- How did you find Game Maker ?

- How to plan any game -

- Latest Game Reviews -

- Examples / Tutorials -



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WELCOME

Welcome Readers!

Written by rup13

Hello and welcome readers! I'd like to introduce you to our first ever issue which hopes to be a huge success. First of all we are a magazine which strongly focuses on showcasing games made in Game Maker, but we cover other issues such as planning, community quotes and lots more. We have articles freshly developed to fulfil your reading hunger for such material. Also we have a showcase of the latest and greatest games and tools made in Game Maker, while also showcasing the ones which we fill deserve a full page review. For more on these reviews, check out page 11,12,13. We have the latest news straight from the developers as we analyse and review their latest productions and find out just what you would want to know. This issue contains reviews from games such as (list them here). We have of course the GMC Tutorial Battle, a head to head clash between two tutorials for the hot spot in our eyes. This issue it is a gruesome battle between **GML Tutorial** by General_Leo and **D&D and their GML equivalents** by Ablach Blackrat (Blackrat Studios). Find out more on page 15. Anyway check out what more we have to offer and happy reading.

GM NEWS

GM NEWS

Written by rup13

One of the biggest pieces of news that can be given at the moment would be the release of the new version of Game Maker. However, due to several delays, the release date for even the beta version is left unknown. Once promised for the end of October, now half way through November we are still waiting without barely any knowledge of what's going on. However there has been one post at the Game Maker Community to notify us that there has been a delay and that it is now expected for the beginning of December. This means an early Christmas present for many of you who have been waiting for the release. If the beta does appear for the start of December, we can only hope that the completed version will be out in time for Christmas itself, or for the New Year. I am sure that if it were out around the start of January, it would be a great way to kick start a year, which could be filled with many great and breathtaking things. Keep your eyes open for more information on estimated release dates.

You can advertise her and in other places of the magazine by sending me a PM (gamez93) - <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?act=Msg&CODE=4&MID=12594>

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Quotes that I though should be here

Written by gamez93

I couldn't of said it better

Take into consideration how much dumber you sound by posting a whole topic about it. - <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=251801> - **Post**

I wonder what the question is

Im Really Bored And Have A Question - **Title**

If you are going to trick us spell it right

HEY DO YOU WANT TO BECOME RICH - CLIK HERE - **Signature**

Then stop listening

I'm Sick Of Hearing "it Cant Be Done" - **Title**

No lets not

Big Game - lets all make a huge game - **Title**

Please don't say it, please

I Just Need To Say Something - **Title**

What a great one liner

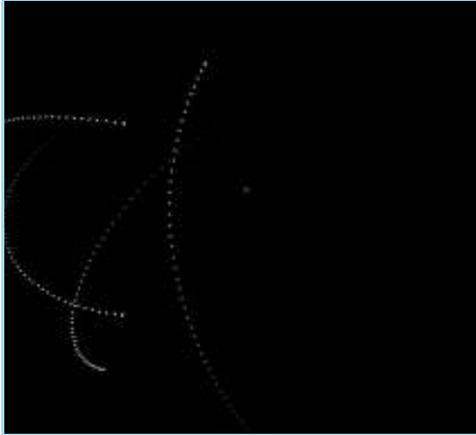
It's called Game maker, not Clone maker. - **Post**

QUICK WORD SEARCH

T	H	X	C	R	P	R	S
J	J	I	E	G	N	R	P
L	A	K	X	G	A	H	V
V	A	G	I	M	C	U	M
M	M	S	R	E	K	H	K
T	E	E	T	G	R	F	J
D	V	M	M	X	A	J	Q
O	G	A	M	E	M	D	E

DESIGN
GAME
GM TECH
MAKER
MARK
OVERMARS

PREVIEW – AVOID ORBIT



Game Info:

Title: Avoid Orbit

By: Drogen

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=250972>

Rating:

Graphics: 2/5 | **Sound:** 0/5 | **Gameplay:** 4/5 | **Replay Value:** 3/5
Overall: 2/5

Written by gmjab

Preview:

Before I looked at this game I thought that it would be a game where I have to control a planet and avoid planet orbits, but then to my surprise, it had nothing to do with planets and their orbits. Avoid Orbit is more like a snake game, but you don't control the snake. Basically the goal of the game is to avoid these orbit lines for as long as you can with the cursor. At first you might think the game is easy but after some time it gets really hard because the tail of the orbits get longer. The graphics are very basic, in fact all you can see is white dots and your cursor. It's a very quiet game, in fact there is no sound at all so that might be an improvement to later versions. During the game I found no bugs or glitches so the game play was very smooth.

After I played it, I didn't feel like playing it again for fun, I felt like playing it because I wanted to see how far my score could go. So there is a bit of replay value in this game. But other than that it's a good game in the making.

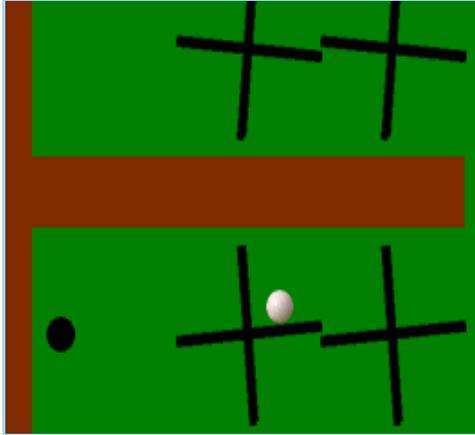
A comment given about this game by **UnionJack** was:

"This is pretty good... fix that ending though... also the code for the white dots is pretty simple... on the topic of the ending: It shouldn't simply close. there should be object wrapping (or an option for object wrapping)"

So as you can see this game has some room for improvement. **Drogen** has made a list of future changes like: new enemies, a menu, pickups and some game options. Some improvements I'd suggest are:

- Motion blur on the orbits
- Possibly controlling the cursor with the arrow keys
- A GUI of some kind
- Maybe some sound effects

PREVIEW – MOG'S CRAZY GOLF



Game Info:

Title: Mog's Crazy Golf

By: mog13

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=250955>

Rating:

Graphics: 2/5 | **Sound:** 2/5 | **Gameplay:** 3/5 | **Replay Value:** 3/5
Overall: 2/5

Written by gmjab

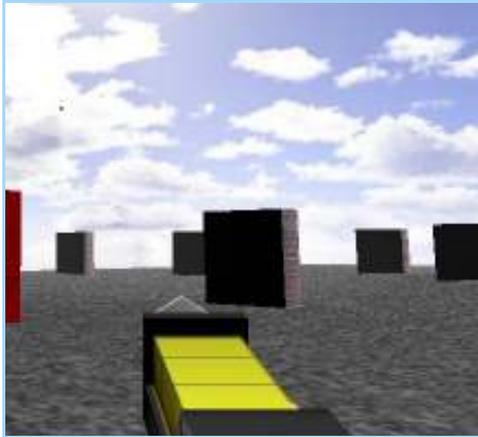
Preview:

I had recently played a crazy golf game a few days ago, so when I saw this I had to download it. Mog's Crazy Golf is basically like any other crazy golf game, but it's got a few little twists to it like moving boxes and obstacles similar to a turntable. These obstacles make the game heaps funnier but also in some cases annoying because of some bugs in the game play. The graphics were extremely basic and not too attractive but this is a work in progress and it can always be improved later on. It's got some fitting sound to the game except for the menu but I can tell these sounds came from a resource pack of some kind since I've heard them in other games.

Mog's Crazy Golf has 7 Levels, so there isn't a lot to do yet, but I have to admit that it's got a bit of replay value since I found myself playing the game 3 times till the last level. The game has a few bugs that should be corrected since they can be annoying. During the game I felt that the ball physics had something wrong with it but I'm not too sure what it was, all I knew is that it didn't always feel like a golf ball. This game has tons of room for improvement but I think it will become a very good game in some time. Since this is a WIP I'll offer some suggestions:

- Add more Levels
- Add more obstacles
- Upgrade the graphics and sound
- Make the swing less powerful when swinging
- Add Features like gardens on the outsides or other nature
- Add Angled walls

PREVIEW – FPS DEMO



Game Info:

Title: FPS Demo

By: FredFredrickson

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=235811>

Rating:

Overall engine rating: 4/5

Written by gmjab

Preview:

Everything FredFredrickson has designed has always been a one of a kind, so the same goes for this FPS engine. This FPS demo has almost all the basics a FPS game could have as well as some good other features like trampolines and a Skybox. This upcoming game looks like it may be a game in which you verse other players online in a shootout. FredFredrickson is planning on making it online so that is my guess on what this game might be in the future. The FPS engine is very smooth in its collisions and while playing I didn't notice any bugs, it also didn't lag on my PC at any stage. The engine has some basic sound effects for walking and shooting, I also noticed a great use of lighting effects when you shoot close to a wall. This is a great example of what 3D games can be achieved in game maker and I recommend this engine for everyone to take a look at if they are intending making a 3D FPS game. For the engine I give it a good 4/5.

Got a quality game that you've finished / are working on that uses 39dll for multiplayer? Want to make it better?

Make it Reflect-enabled (<http://www.reflectgames.com/dev.php>), and get people in the game, quickly and easily! Send a PM to FredFredrickson (<http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?act=Msg&CODE=4&MID=15789>) for more details!

HOW DID YOU FIND GM?

How did you discover Game Maker?

Written by rup13

Google is one of the world's major search engines which returns millions of results by the second. Amongst those results, links to Game Maker always come out on top when searching for 'easy game making' or 'program games'. This is how I came about Game Maker in early 2004 along with many other people located around the world. As the months went by, Game Maker became more and more popular flooding the official forums and raising the members registered counter. When asked, the amount of people who quoted that the reason they had found Game Maker was through a simple Google search one day. It sometimes feels unbelievable to know that in one month; more than one hundred people were searching Google and happened to come across a one man creation which has changed the way of how we think about amateur game development. However Google was not the only location which Game Maker was found by people. Those who live in the Netherlands, location to the home of the famous Mark Overmars creator of Game Maker, have experienced lectures and seminars about Game Maker at schools and universities, some lead by Mark himself at the Utrecht University where he is a full professor. He uses Game Maker in the course on game design so people local to this university will have heard of the course perhaps or be currently taking it. Game Maker has also been involved in a number of events ranging from summer camps to competitions and has expanded its name for itself. Games made in Game Maker which have been sold or made it onto such websites as GameHippo have boosted its reputation as one of the best novice game creation tools. Resources have become available for teachers to view and incorporate Game Maker into teaching or school clubs. There have also been such reports as people setting up their own Game Maker club to teach the basics and give out assignments. Now where we are in Autumn 2006, Game Maker is a widely used tool throughout the world that is popular with both young and older people, those who are at school and those who already have paid jobs, those who use it as a hobbyist's tool and others who work to create such works of art which can be found for purchase online. One factor that gets people interested in Game Maker is the phrase that can also be found on the main website, that you can create amazing games without a line of code. This is true to a degree as there is a good Drag and Drop system that allows games to be put together without even having to learn the built in programming language. When people have been told through word of mouth, it almost seems unbelievable that you can create games just by clicking and typing a few numbers and words. This has brought a large number of people to the main website who want to put this to the test and have joined in with the largely increasing community available. One major website called GameDev.net, which run the 4 Elements competition, found themselves with a winner, beating all other entries from every possible language you could imagine, with his game made in Game Maker. Imagine the amount of publicity that could have been caused by this, a free and easy to use game development tool, with an interface that you don't even have to touch code to make something, beating an entry made in one of the most well known languages like C++. The links to Game Maker increased and as we found out in a topic at the Game Maker Community (GMC) which discussed how people found Game Maker, we realised how many different possible locations there were which contained reference to this amazing tool. After the book, written by Mark Overmars and ex-games industrial worker Jacob Habgood, even more recognition to the program was given. The book appeared on bookshelves and on various book websites. Game Maker is still evolving.

HOW DID YOU FIND GM? (continued)

How did you discover Game Maker?

Written by rup13

In the topic at the GMC entitled "How did you discover Gamemaker?" there are many different posts showing the various ways the current registered members came to find about Game Maker.

Someone on the Nintendo forum had made a game. I looked at the game and thought "Wouldn't it be nice if I could do that too". Luckily his site had a link to game-maker.

- **Red Boriz**

At a computer camp, someone had loaded Game Maker 4.2 (or 4.1, can't remember) on one of the computers. I opened it up, and couldn't figure it out. Probably a month later found the site, and tried again, w/ 4.3.

- **matthewbott**

I just had a sudden urge to make games so i started searching... and out of me and my friend i am the one who is good at computers, and wouldn't just go to Google and type a stupid search like "game maker" because that's just a very simple search and if you didn't know about Game Maker, you would think that you would get some crappy search results.... anyways, i was searching for stuff like "computer game creation tool" and things like that, but then in the end it was kind of weird that the search "game maker" won out of both of us.... so i would have never have existed here if it weren't for my friend.

- **Jonfletc**

As you can see not everyone found it directly from Google or even on the internet. Game Maker is probably even more popular than some people realise. Help make Game Maker even more popular by supporting it all you can, even if it is just by registering. For those new to the Game Maker Community or Game Maker itself, visit the following links to find them.

Game Maker Website – <http://www.gamemaker.nl/>

Game Maker Community – <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/>

You can check out the GMC topic regarding the different ways people found Game Maker by following this link: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=90783>



<http://www.gamemaker.nl/download.html>

GAME PLANNING ARTICLE

The Short Game Planning Document
Written by rup13

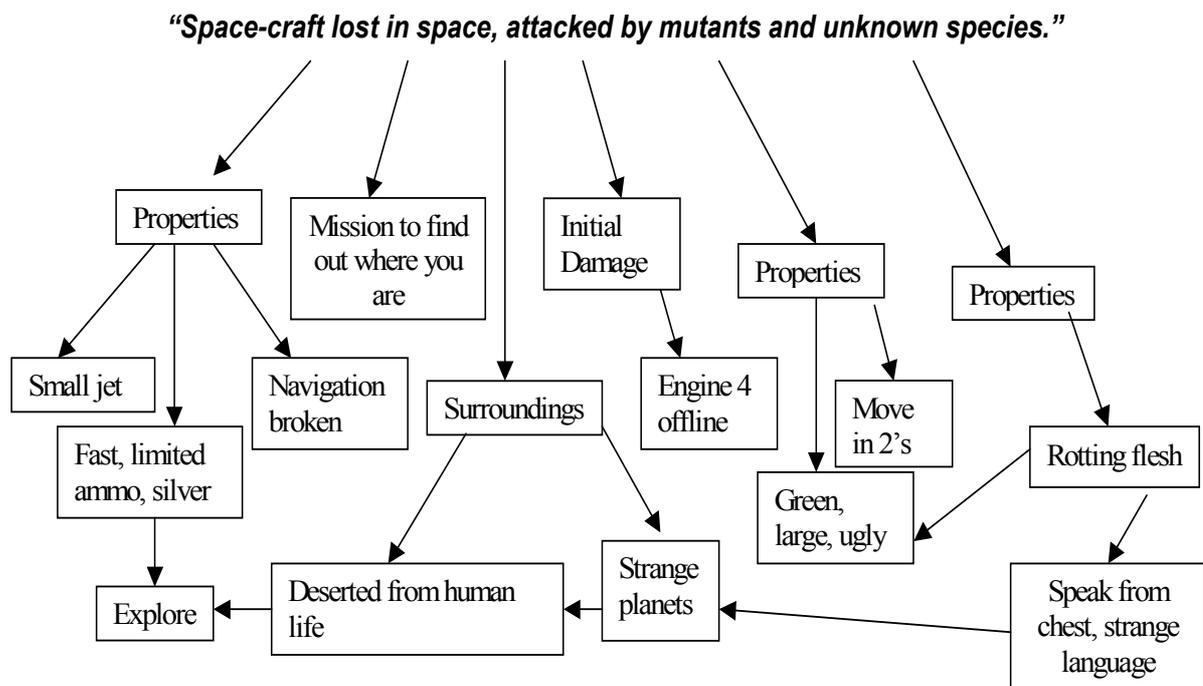
When you are asked to plan your game, many people normally think of writing a design document straight away. Don't. This article is here to help you work your way into planning your game slowly from scratch. When presented with a blank document or even a design document template and asked to plan a game, many people don't even know where to start. A good number of people only have a few vague ideas and never know how to expand on their 'big idea' and make it so they can visualise it in their heads. Once you have a good structure of ideas, and a solid picture of the game's genre, scenery and other important information, you can start your design document. However what you'll learn about here is creating your 'Short Game Planning Document'. This starts you off with your first, basic idea which hasn't been thought out and helps you expand on it to give you more ideas and a better introduction to the sections required to be planned in the game design document.

Starting off

Like all great games, they need to start somewhere, and that starting place is a simple prompt or idea. This stage is called **generating ideas** which is used to gather more ideas from that simple prompt or idea. For example, consider this prompt which I have come up with my latest Space Invaders clone:

"Space-craft lost in space, attacked by mutants and unknown species."

From this alone, you couldn't jump straight in and write your design document. You simply don't have enough information to fill out the game description or any other required information. This is where the generating ideas stage comes in. By studying the prompt/idea, you attempt to expand on it and create new ideas which can be expanded again, to give you a bigger selection of possible ideas. You look at each word which has significant meaning and think about objects, colours, surroundings, actions etc which could match the corresponding word. For example take a look at my generating ideas stage for the prompt given above:



Now I have a spider diagram of lots more ideas which I could put forward to planning and designing my game.

GAME PLANNING ARTICLE (continued)

Creating the document

Take a piece of paper, word document or even a blank MS Paint canvas and create a title of Short Game Planning Document. Then type your prompt or initial idea just under the title. If you don't have something like I had to use, just put your little ideas into a sentence that makes sense which you could expand on. Then like the example I gave you above, start on your diagram. You have no limit of how much you write about each significant word in your prompt. It is an advantage to write more as you'll find yourself coming up with ideas for character appearances and actions and other relevant ideas.

Finalising your document

Now you have lots of ideas written down, it is good to summarise them all in a short summary. This helps when it comes to writing the game description in your design document and gives you a head start on thinking what actually could happen in the game. If you used MS Paint for your previous work, save it and then open a notepad document for your summary, making sure you save both pieces of work in a folder for your design work on the computer. Otherwise if you used one of the other two methods just create this in a new paragraph under your previous work.

Take all the ideas you have gathered and write a short summary paragraph giving an idea of what the potential player would experience and encounter when playing your game. Also include short descriptions of any characters you've identified which have been expanded from just the key words you have used in your diagram. For an example of this, consider my space invaders clone I used in the first section, here is a sample paragraph I would write for my diagram I created:

Lost in space, the small space fighter jet drifted through space, one of the engines damaged from a previous encounter of a herd of unknown species with strange properties. The mission is to find out where the jet is located and to fix engine 4 and the navigation system. Also after maintenance, another mission is to navigate the jet back to Earth. Also using a limited amount of ammo onboard, you have to prepare yourself for any other incoming attack from the unknown. You have to be careful around the planets circling the jet, as they are not like the ones in the Milky Way, but are filled with dread and mystery. There seems like no other human life forms anywhere near, and the mutants that swarm the planets, do not welcome humans, let alone peace. They are paired and travel that way, almost like a conga of couples. They speak in languages the human tongue cannot pronounce and speak from the very green and decaying chests that emit the horrid sound of only what could be described as their conversation. Only way is to find a place to restock ammo and find pieces to help fix the navigation and engine. However the planets do not look inviting and the owners are far from the kind of life forms willing to let you pass without a fight.

Using the ideas gathered in the diagram, I have expanded on them and made them into a summary paragraph almost introducing the setting and current situation to the player. However this is only meant to be a summary so not much detail about actual specific characters or properties is introduced. This is meant to be an exercise to help bring you slowly into what you must write in your design document as you must describe what happens during the game from the player's eyes without actually telling them what you would click or press etc.

Conclusion

I hope this article has been of some use and helped you work your way into planning easier. Now your next stage is to start on a design document which will require such writing as what you practiced in the previous section. Don't be afraid to keep coming back and adding to your diagram or summary paragraph as it all helps in the long run, and you can easily add more detail to your proper design document. Happy game designing.

REVIEW – PUNCH! 1.2



Game Info:

Title: Punch! 1.2

By: smaksak

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=246201>

Rating:

Graphics: 4/5 | **Sound:** 4/5 | **Gameplay:** 4/5 | **Replay Value:** 4/5

Overall: 4/5

Written by gmjab

Review:

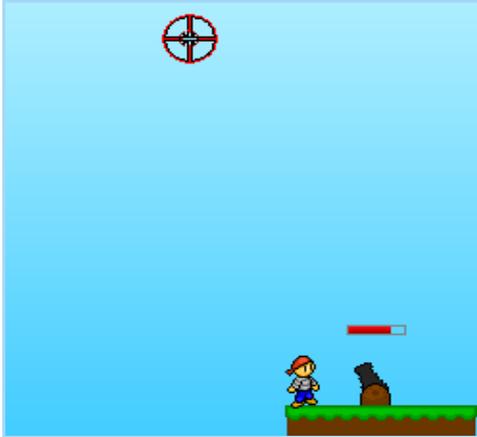
Punch is one of the first GM games of its kind, yes its a boxing game and a very well done one at that. Punch is a multi player boxing game which all you have to do is fight each other to win. There is not really a goal to this game besides wining a boxing round, so this could be a improvement point. I found the graphics where quite well done and I noticed it has blood particle effects when punching your opponent, Punch has a nice well done menu system with tool tips and it even lets you choose your players color, name and life. One point about the menu is that as you move your mouse closer to the buttons, the buttons fade in. This is very nice and I haven't seen another game do that yet. Punch had some quite fitting music and sound FX for the menu and game. I did find the controls of Punch a bit confusing at first but you can used to it after some time. When starting a game I didn't see the point of the block objects that you have to jump over, but then again, these blocks would be useful when trying to hide/run from your opponent.

Once you play the game you will at least come back to it once, I came back and played it a further 4 times. During the game I found no bugs at all so this another great point about this game. I'm sure that this game maybe the first of many new boxing games that may come out eventually, but I have to say that this is a one of a kind and should not be over looked by anyone. There are not very many improvements I can offer to this game but I would like to see the following:

- Punch force effect
- Nicer game GUI
- Single player mode to verse a computer
- Making it a online game

Control customizing

REVIEW – CANNONBALL



Game Info:

Title: CannonBall

By: not_patrick

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=250964>

Rating:

Graphics: 3/5 | **Sound:** 5/5 | **Gameplay:** 5/5 | **Replay Value:** 3/5
Overall: 4/5

Written by gmjab

Review:

When I saw CannonBall, I thought that it would some really bad game, but I actually have to admit that it's pretty good. CannonBall is a great game where you have to shoot the cannon balls at the targets to gain a higher score and when you complete all the targets it gives your total score and hit accuracy, it also gives you the option to submit your score to the online high score board. The graphics could be better at some points, like when the cannon ball hits the target, but for an arcade type game I think they are quite fine the way they are. I also noticed a nice graphic effect when firing a cannonball, I also like the way the water moves around the tiny island. The sound for Cannonball was very good. CannonBall had menu music, game music and sound effects that suited that game very well and also I found that the music actually attracted me to play the game more. Now when playing the game I couldn't understand what that little dude that is next to the cannon is for, so I just blasted him away for fun every now and then. I found no bugs although I did find the game easy to cheat by leaving the cursor in one position and waiting for the target to move by. I also liked how the target moves and slowly gets faster to make the game harder.

Overall I think this game is quite fun and I played it quite a few times after I downloaded it, but After I mastered the game its not as fun anymore. Some improvements I would like to see in this game are:

- Different movments besides moving in a circle
- More levels and possibly different styled targets (EG: Ducks, Balloons)

Different places to play it in like the jungle or the beach.

REVIEW – HUNTER'S ISLAND, PART 1



Game Info:

Title: Hunter's Island, Part 1: The Cavalier's Challenge
By: TurquoiseStar / JakeX
Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=250787>

Rating:

Graphics: 5/5 | **Sound:** 5/5 | **Gameplay:** 4/5 | **Replay Value:** 4/5
Overall: 4/5

Written by gmjab

Review:

Hunter's Island is quite a big game and it's in 2 parts. In Hunter's Island you play Martin, an orphaned 18 yr old boy who received a invitation to take the "Cavalier's Challenge" which seemed to be signed by a person that lived back in the 16th century. Your job as Martin is to cross the remote Coralberry Island, and arrive at the top of the central Cloud Mountain before nightfall, collecting a set of ten mystical treasures along the way. Hunter's Island was quite fun to play and it had many platformer features. The graphics were quite good and suited both the game and music. It had many graphical effects such as when shooting trees some leaves fell off. The sound for Hunter Island was great and there was a sound for mostly every thing you could do in the game. The gameplay was very good and the only problem I had was when crossing bridges that fall, I'd find it hard to jump quickly enough when crossing, but I don't think that it is an issue. Hunter Island is kind of like a RPG + platformer + adventure game all in one single fun game. I found this game had some good replay value since I came back and played it a further 8 or more times after downloading it. Hunter Island has many enemies and can get quite hard at stages, there were also some good pickups along the way and you can even upgrade your weapons.

Here is a nice comment give by **gmXpert2000**:

"Wow, I've been waiting to play this for so long

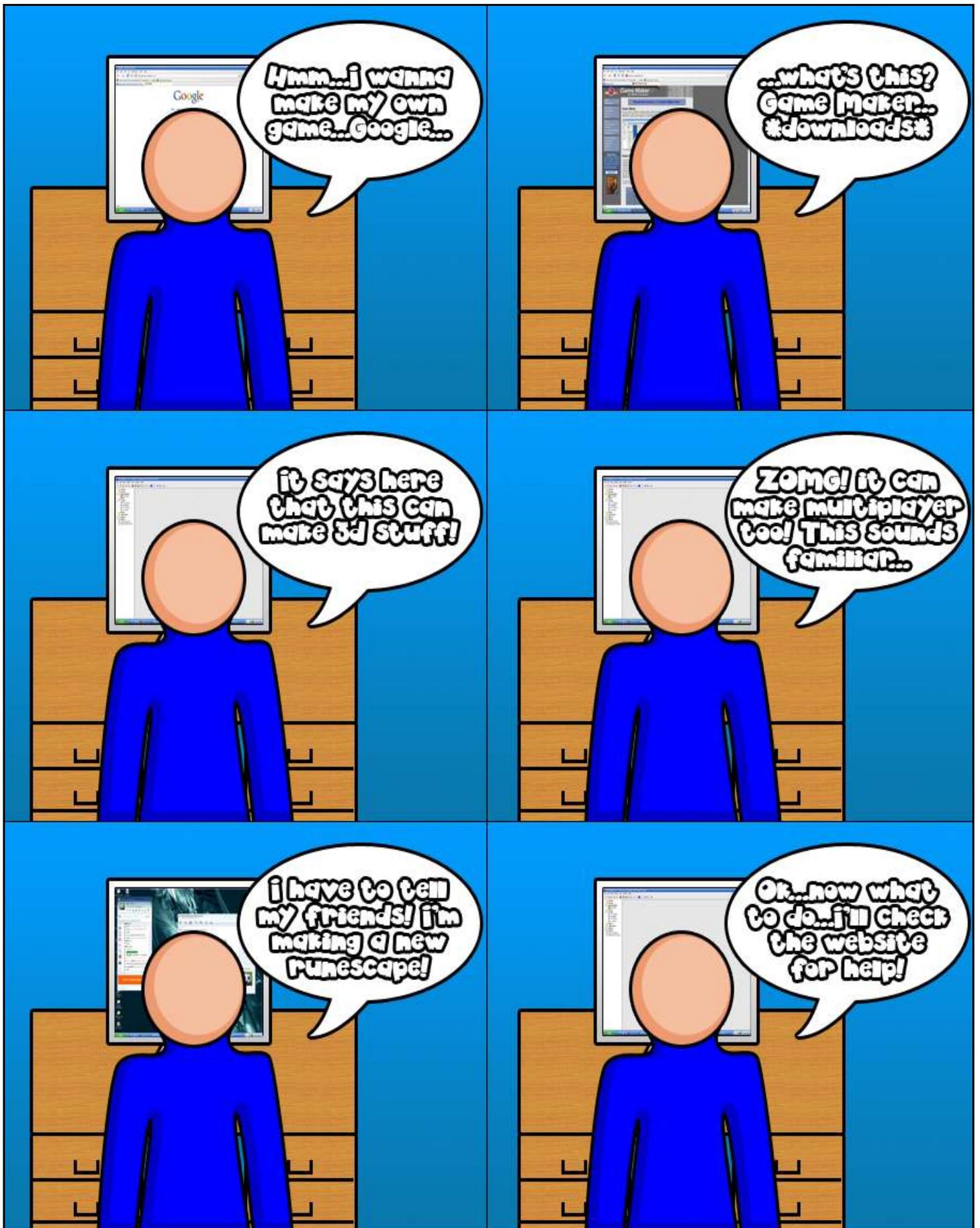
I like the game, a lot. It has a nice feel to it and a good flow. I like the powerups, and the enemies. I could tell you had influences from Sonic and Megaman, They were good, though. The boss battles were also cool. And I loved the graphics, and the effects, like leaves coming off the trees when you shoot past them, and the layered backgrounds. The only things:

-The bosses were a bit weak. I shot them like 15 times (rapidly, by hitting S over and over) and they died rather quickly (in about a min or less).

-I thought my voice clips were going to be in there? I died but I didn't hear anything.

Other than that, it's great."

An improvement could be, more pickups but that is all I can think of since it already has so much to offer. This game is so action packed that I give this game a 4/5 and I think it should be apart of some of the best GM games around, so go on and give it a try.



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CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

GM TUTORIALS – HEAD 2 HEAD

Tutorial Info:

Title: D&D and their GML equivalents

By: Ablach Blackrat (Blackrat Studios)

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=177879>

Written by rup13/ Medieval

This 'tutorial' goes through lots of the D&D icons found in Game Maker and gives the appropriate GML code which can be used to replace the D&D icon. Some pieces of code are longer than others; some require such things as arrays to be used.

Tutorial Info:

Title: GML Tutorial

By: General_Leo

Topic: <http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=151003>

Written by rup13/ Medieval

This tutorial offers a kick start to learning GML the fast way. It doesn't waste any time before jumping in and giving you the knowledge you wanted to learn. It is divided into sections starting with the basic setup of GML leading to smart codes.

Have you ever wondered what the best way is to get into GML? Well here we have the Head 2 Head between two documents we have found which make GML learning easier and put them up against each other to see who comes out on top. Our competitors include 'D&D and their GML equivalents' by Ablach Blackrat (Blackrat Studios) and 'GML Tutorial' by General_Leo. Let the battle begin.

Ablach Blackrat (Blackrat Studios)	General_Leo
<p>Good points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Shows code which matches the action of the D&D icon.· Clear pictures and titles so the D&D icons can be easily recognised from the ones in Game Maker.· Quite easy to get into once you have mastered D&D. <p>Bad points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Only shows GML code for D&D icons, lots more functions have to be learnt using another source.· Sometimes exact code doesn't exist for a D&D icon so an alternative has to be given to give a close similarity of it. <p>Score: 8/10</p>	<p>Good points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Starts simple with the difficulty level rising throughout the tutorial.· Nice and organised.· Good order of learning, possible to be able to read through entire document and understand having learnt things needed in a previous section. <p>Bad points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Some stages can seem rushed and possible to be confusing towards a beginner.· At some stages, it is not clearly indicated where code should be placed. <p>Score: 7.5/10</p>

A close call but Ablach Blackrat wins overall. To wrap it up, if you are a beginner who has just learnt how to use D&D, we recommend using Ablach Blackrat's tutorial to get started with GML as you'll be presented with material that you already recognise. Once completed, move onto General_Leo's tutorial to strengthen your GML knowledge and to learn some things that you did not pick up in the first tutorial. Well done to Ablach Blackrat for winning our Head 2 Head.

INTERVIEWS

Simon Donkers (<http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showuser=168>)

Simon Donkers is a well known on the GMc, he has been register since 6-October 03, and has posted quite a bit on the forums since then - he is the creator of Bacteria which was first released in late 2004, which then went open source in 2005, so here is a interview with him about him.

[1] Please tell us a bit about you?

I'm Simon Donkers, 21 years old. I live in the Netherlands and study Applied Science at Fontys University. I develop commercial sites and games on freelance basis. I maintain various websites such as SimonDonkers.com (<http://www.simondonkers.com>) with a portfolio of my freeware games and lots of Game Maker resources, Game Maker.info (<http://gamemaker.info>), a joint project with Johannes Stoop to built a Game Maker portal website (<http://www.game-maker.nl>) and The Dutch Game Maker Community where I'm one of the admins.

[2] How did you find Game Maker, and did you find it easy to start off with?

I started using Game Maker in 5 HAVO (Upper General Secondary Education) at the computer science class and found it really easy to start off with, especially as I knew some other programming languages already. Within a few weeks I knew more about the program then my teacher. I started building up a portfolio of games and resources and eventually a game of mine (Bacteria 2) started getting media attention. This caused a snowball effect resulting into me getting several job offers to develop freelance commercial projects for various companies. Currently I'm giving master classes in Game Maker for several organisations.

[3] If you could turn around and be another GM user for the day, and run there game company whom would it be and why?

I'm pretty happy being myself.

[4] Is there any other GM programs/games out there that you have downloaded and still use?

I have several GM games that I still play through every so often. I really like Pug Fugly's 'Ambush in Sector 9' and it's rumoured successor. Darthlupi's Legend of Shadow and The Cleaner similarly are wonderful timekillers. But the list is enormous. I've got a directory filled with GM classics and every so often I go through them and get hooked yet again by the magic of these games. I just looked through it and played Ball Fall a bit and broke my record. If only I would have more time to actually play games.

[5] What is it like being a member on the GMC forums?

I hardly ever visit the GMC anymore, let alone post there. I just occasionally look through the community forum for interesting announcements. I simply don't have the time any more to be active there.

[6] Is there any games/programs that you are working on or planning – if so could you give us a detailed insight to what is going to happen etc – and please post some concept up or even in game graphics.

I'm afraid I can not tell anything about commercial projects. But a very interesting project of mine is Game Maker.info (<http://gamemaker.info>). With this ever expanding site I try to built a portal and offer services for Game Maker users to enjoy. This multilingual site was recently expanded with Game Maker Isometric City in collaboration with DreamIsle (CabnChubby) as well as a GML parser and hotlinkable D&D icons. Many more services are approaching fast and we are constantly looking for partners to feature there content on our portal.

[7] What would you say to anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps and create a good program like yours?

Go and do it. Try everything out. Don't give up. Try out new things. Don't go remake Pacman or Breakout but try out your crazy ideas. As Darthlupi once said, 'With Game Maker the only limitation is my imagination' and he has quite an imagination . Game Maker can do a whole lot of things so don't hold your creativity back.

[8] What is the next step for you? - are you sticking with GM or moving onto another programming language.

I am currently doing a whole lot of things in a whole lot of programming languages. I'm spending a lot of time in building a portfolio in PHP, MySQL, HTML, CSS, JS and AJAX. I'm also writing several programs in Matlab and Labview for various projects. I don't drop one programming language in favor of an other but I pick the language most suitable for each project. So I'll still keep using Game Maker even though my time is getting more limited.



INTERVIEWS

benetonmovie (<http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showuser=13643>)

Benetonmovie is a known on the GMC after his creation of the Beneton Movie GIF, which has reached over 145,000 downloads - and his topic has massive 211 post since he first posted it in July this year. He has been register since 6-October 03, so here is a interview with him about him.

[1] So basically please tell us a bit about you?

For those who don't know, my name is Benoît Rouleau. I am 15 years old and I'm living in Canada, Québec. Sorry for my poor English. Here we mainly speak French. Outside computers I enjoy writing, making movies, talking to my friends, and watching movies. I don't like school. About my movies, they're short films that I make with some friends using my Sony camcorder. I like video editing as well, but I'm not professional at all. Unfortunately the films are in French, so most of you will probably not be interested. If you are curious, here is the official website: www.benetonfilms.com. As I said I like to write too, but not only that, I like to create characters and stuff. I think I'm a pretty creative person. I have created Octave, a cool extraterrestrial character. In fact, he is so ordinary, but that's why he's so charming. Ok, I'm boring.

[2] So how did you find Game Maker, and did you find it easy to start off with?

How did I find Game Maker? That's a long story. When I was about 5 or 6 years old I always wanted to "create my own computer games". It was my big dream, but I didn't know it would be that easy. I was imagining myself in the future, making some very simple games (I only had an old Windows 95) and I thought it was going to be so hard.

I was 8 years old when my father, who was working in the computers, called me from his job and suggested me a program. He told me the website by phone, and said it was called... Microsoft Paint. Oops, I mean Game Maker. If I remember correctly, I was very excited. I downloaded the program with high hopes, but I knew it would require some learning. The file finally finished downloading; I installed Game Maker 1.2 (it was back in 1999), and opened it. I wanted to understand how it worked, but couldn't. I was very sad because it looked so amazing and I didn't even get drag & drop. I had to wait until my father came back that day for him to read the manual and explain the basics to me. Then everything went on. In 4 years, I have made lots of games, and lost most of them too. The ones that remain can be found on my ZB Games website, also in French (www.freewebs.com/benoitr007). My first games were experiments, and I tried to learn Game Maker while keeping it fun. I found it pretty easy, but my games were extremely basic. I didn't use coding at all (I started to code 3 years ago, not less). I have always followed the evolution of GM and upgraded to any new version. Version 4 was very hard for me because everything was different and much more complex than before. It took me some time to get used to it, but I have succeeded and continued to create games frequently until 3-4 years ago. I got bored and decided to take a long break. I still used GM during that time, but for other uses. Since then, I have created some games (with actual coding), but rarely. Mostly programs.

It's Back: Beneton Movie GIF 1.1
And better than ever!

<http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=229334>

[3] What would you say to anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps and create a good program like yours?

Thanks. I would say start by making a plan. Make sure you have the necessary abilities and patience to make what you want to do, or whether it is possible to acquire them. I am not very good to motivate people, sorry for that; I am sometimes unmotivated too. I don't have the key for the success or anything like that, but I know that making Beneton Movie GIF was long. It took approximately one year (with breaks, of course). But it is very important to not lose motivation for that, just remember that it's the time needed to create your program. You'll be proud of the result. Another thing that is important is to ask. Ask people how they would like your program to be, what they think you should add. Ask questions to advanced users if you are wondering something. It is free and very helpful (it has been for me).

[4] Making games are tough, making programs which people will keep on using is even tougher – so what made you began working on Beneton Movie Gif? Also what kept you working on it?

I don't remember exactly why I decided to create a GIF animation program, but I'll tell you how "Beneton Software" all started. I wanted to make my own "video" editing software. I knew I couldn't deal with videos in GM, so I tried with images importing only. I called it "Beneton Movie Maker", because I was already using "Beneton" for my films (if you ask me, I'm not sure about the origins of that word). It had the interface of a video editing program, with a timeline and different tracks, "effects", and sounds. But it wasn't good! I learned to code with that project, which I call an experiment more than a project. It was never finished. I think I stopped at version Beta 4. I remember that I got good comments on the Game Maker Community, and I also thought it was good. When I look at it today, I say to myself "Wow, that's how I started." Not more than that. It was extremely badly done in every aspect.

Much later, I had a new idea, which was going to be a game at the beginning. I brainstormed and decided to turn it into a fun program. I am talking about Beneton Movie Recorder, that you can download here (there is no page on my website for it though): www.benetonfilms.com/bmr.zip. I am more proud of it than I am of BMM, but it still had many difficulties that I couldn't fix at that moment. I was beginning to use scripts in GM.

The next program was BMG. What kept me working on it is the fact that I knew that it was the only free program of its kind. There are many popular ones like GIF Movie Gear, or Ulead GIF Animator, but they all cost at least \$20. I knew BMG was different. It's why it is so popular today. I am definitely proud of it.

[5] If you could turn around and be another GM for the day, and run there game company whom would it be and why?

By GM, you mean a GM user, right? I can't really answer that. I don't remember companies very well; the only ones that come into my mind are Vertigo Gaming and Shawn 64. I'd go on the GMC more often if I had the time. Sorry.

[6] Is there any other GM Programs out there that you have downloaded and still use?

No. I have tried some other game/software creators long ago, and I didn't like them.

[7] You have made games and programs in your past but what do you enjoying making the best?

I'd like to say that I enjoy both equally, but when I really think about it, I prefer to make programs. Games are greatly fun too, but I get tired more easily, and I don't know exactly why. Did I create too many games in the past? Did I develop an interest for video games earlier than most people and also got uninterested earlier? Maybe. I don't know. What I like about creating programs is the feeling that I help people in a job. I like to feel helpful. I think it's one of the reasons, among others. Hey, I need a psychologist.

[8] What's the next step for you then, Are you moving onto another programming language are you guys moving on to or are you sticking with Game Maker?

I'll stick with GM for a while, how long isn't determined. I might stop completely in a few days, also. I have been trying to make some things in Visual Basic recently, and for me it's very different than GM. I like it, though, I like it. Many buddies of mine also use VB. I heard that Java was very good too. One of these days, a day when I won't be busy, I must check that out. I'm so busy, or is it just my motivation. I guess I'll just wait and see.

[9] Is there any games/programs that you are working on or planning – if so could you give us a detailed insight to what is going to happen etc – and please post some concept up or even in game graphics.

My biggest project at the moment is BMG 2. You must know that nothing is official yet, and if I really finish this project, it won't be before next summer (but probably later). Posting graphics won't do anything since nothing has really changed yet, but it is going to happen eventually. I have many ideas for this future version; nothing is sure for now, but I can give you some highlights: ability to upload images/animations directly on a public server (also get HTML/forum code), stretchable timeline, ability to have more than 300 frames (faster storage system), saving and loading strips, better interface, and improved CPU usage. Nothing of that is done yet, because I want to plan everything and I am extremely busy with school and other activities. I would like to have suggestions from the users too. If you have any idea, comment, or bug report, please write to benoitr007@hotmail.com (or visit <http://software.benetonfilms.com>). Thank you!

I have also started to work on an image compressor recently, but I guess I am about to abandon that because GM is too slow for getting pixels in the window. It takes around 1-2 minutes to save every pixel of a 300*300 image. My compressor used many ways to diminutive the file size (colour palette, consecutive pixels, changing numbers into letter codes), but was only effective for small images with a few colours (compressed more than PNG without any loss of quality).

That's for programs. Now, games. I have started many games some time ago that I didn't finish. Pac-Sam Fantasy, the sequel to my game Pac-Sam in Space (www.benetonfilms.com/pacsaminspace.zip), was been worked on by my Pizza Friend, kakemot, and myself. It was very great and I'd love to finish it one of these days. It had nice effects, a simple and fun game play, and we had a lot of good ideas. Here is a quick screenshot of the game: www.benetonfilms.com/temp/ps2shot.PNG. Another unfinished game is An Adventure in 360 Degrees, which I might continue when I get time. I wanted to make an addictive game that you only play with the mouse. It was less interesting though. I didn't continue it because I didn't come to what I wanted.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Goodbye Readers!
Written by rup13

Thank you for reading the first issue of GM TECH. This has been a feature packed issue and it has been a pleasure to write with the rest of the staff. We hope you enjoyed reading our magazine and will look forward to future issues from GM TECH. In our next issue we look to cover the latest news and gossip straight from developers themselves, and also showcase the latest and greatest from the GMC. Hopefully once our second issue is released GM7 will have been released officially so we hope to run an article on that, giving you all our tips on the new features available. If you would like to contact us about any of the issues we have spoken about in this issue then please feel free to contact us by sending a PM to **gamez93** (<http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?act=Msg&CODE=4&MID=12594>) on the GMC forums.

Also all the staff who worked on this issue will like to thank you for reading it.
gamez93, rup13, gmjab, -0NL1N3-, Medieval.

Finally I would like to wish all readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Check out **Gm Keyboard Test** by Outbreak

[http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?
showtopic=252504](http://forums.gamemaker.nl/index.php?showtopic=252504)