HBGAMES.org

The Ezine!

RPG Maker Special

Plus: win RPG Maker VXAce on Steam!

WELCOME TO HBGAMES

Welcome to issue 15 of the HBGames.org eZine, and this month it's a bit special as we welcome new members to our January contest - which has some great prizes. This issue is an RPG Maker special bumper edition: more content, a longer mag, and hopefully less self-deprecating humour (or attempts at). I hope you enjoy the ride!

If you want to submit content to the eZine you are more than welcome. We cannot guarantee it will be used, and it is liable to editing by ourselves, but anything and everything is very much appreciated. Just PM it to Amy on the forums.

Quick Jump

Throughout this issue you'll see quick jump codes. These are just a simple way to link to posts and threads around the forums without wasting space in the magazine. To use them, simply go to the homepage and enter a quick jump code in the quick jump box below the left hand menu and press the enter key. Simple!

Just look out for this symbol:

QJ 123456

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The eZine

Welcome to HBGames!

We are one of the leading websites for RPG Maker support and game sharing. Starting off as a fansite for then yet to be released *RPG Maker XP*, we grew into something bigger, and you'll now find support for a variety of game engines around the site. Our RPG Maker community however remains second to none in quality (in our opinion). But then we would say that.

We run an active IRC channel (#HBR) twinned with RPG Revolution, and have an active gaming community that is always up for trying new things - Minecraft, Terraria, Starbound, etc.

We try to regularly run decent contests and other events, with nice rewards for your time and effort, and give out awards such as our Game of the Year to games posted around our website.

HBGames is first and foremost a forum. If you don't know how forums work have no fear, it's simple once you get used to it, and we're happy to help. In short, members start topics in one of several categories, and other members create "posts" in reply, offering their thoughts or conversation. Don't worry if you do something wrong or post in the wrong category, that's what the small team of moderators are for, who will simply move it to the correct place.

What you're reading now is one of the extra-forum activities we do: our eZine. Mostly it's just a bit of fun, an online faux magazine, containing articles about game making, helpful tutorials, video game reviews and other useful items. The intention is for it to be a monthly venture when it gets up and running properly.

So what of our RPG Maker forums?

If you visit the forum page and click "RPG Maker Support" (which is also linked in various other place around the site) you'll be taken to boards specifically for it (it being anything from 95 to VX Ace). They've been recently reshuffled to be in a more logical order, and in them you'll find:

General support: for help with any RM engine

Tutorials: useful guides for building games

Scripts: premade coding to extend your functionality

Script support: for help with scripting and to learn RGSS

Resources: graphical and audio assets for your games

In the wider forum you'll find similar sections for a variety of non-RPG Maker engines too, should you wish to move on to something meatier.

The homepage has been tweaked a bit to look a little better, but it's all temporary. There are things coming. **Big things**. They're just taking some time, sorry about that.

Music Fighter   WT

RPG MAKER VX Ace

Reviewed

After RPG Maker VX, which we didn't really like very much, as a site we never really bothered looking into it's little brother. But VX Ace is a different family member. More an estranged son. It's disconnected from VX - it's XP's true successor - and deserves the success it has achieved thus far.

VX Ace was released last year and it has spawned the first official English RPG Maker forums (RPG Maker Web) and various other projects around Degica's website.

Compared to VX...

VX Ace fixes a lot of the silly limitations added to VX. You can use more tilesets, more graphics in general in fact.

- 64 bit OS support built in
- A new version of RGSS3, much faster and better coded
- Multiple tilesets per game (why did VX gimp this?)
- Skill and item damage formulas are editable without scripting
- Traits and on use effects for skills
- Caterpillar script built in (a bit pointless)
- Changeable batte background (again gimped from XP in VX!)
- New font face (also pointless)

VX games can't be opened in VX Ace, which is a bit of a bummer for anybody who... who... who am I kidding? Nobody used VX.
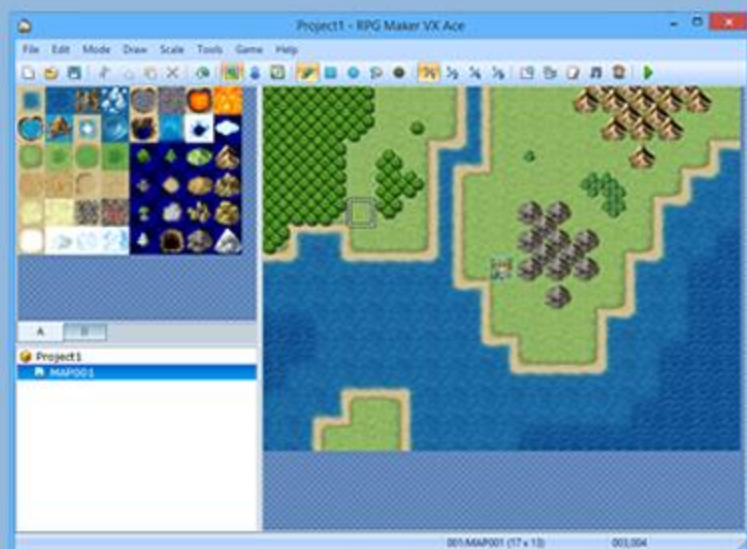
Soundtrack

The soundtrack has been improved, replacing MIDI with OGG. This isn't much use to people who have already been using them, again present since XP, but having higher quality default music is... nice. It does however make the RTP much larger in size, and means music now ought to be switched out if you're not using it.

It's now on disk

RPG Maker VX Ace, following on from Degica reaching out to the English community, is the first RPG Maker title to be released in English in box form, and will eventually be sold in stores. The potential for new users to find it is greatly increased, though the price might put them off.

Even more importantly...

It's now on Steam

VX Ace is the first title to be released on Steam (though XP has now been retrospectively added).

So the audience is growing, it's technically superior, and the developers' English trade team are speaking directly with the users at last. Is it then better than XP? In short,

Should I buy it?

If you're new to RPG Maker, yes. Buy the hell out of it and you won't regret it.

If you're not really interested in scripting you'll love the added functionality in the database.

If you're a parallax mapper VX Ace is a must buy: you can view panoramas directly in the editor, vastly speeding up your map making. Many people are already exploiting how good it is at this.

If you're a mapper...

You'll hate it. Personally, as a scripter and programmer, the only reason I have to use RPG Maker is the map editor. That's all that keeps me there, and it's so good... in XP. In VX Ace you are stuck with the awful VX mapping system with it's 1 and a half layers. Hideous to draw with, confusing to erase mistakes, missing the extra third layer of XP, and various other problems. Manky tileset sizes, stupid limitations all over the place...

If you're a scripter: VX Ace is superior in it's RGSS version. However, I point you to the RGSS switching tutorial later on in this magazine. You'll still have to buy both XP and VX Ace, but the end result *may* be worthwhile. There's also the option of using a seperate RGSS system entirely, which is also covered in the tutorial, pending some releases.

Should I buy it then?

Probably.

So what's this about Degica?

Degica are the company Enterbrain use to market RPG Maker to the English speaking audience, and right now they're doing a pretty good job of it. Marketing games has never been easier, and the support available is... well, I'll stop beating around the bush: it's what we used to be.

And, in truth, we're going to have to get our own asses in gear as a site to continue providing top class support, and to exceed RPG Maker Web as the best place to visit.

Why? Because we can! Because it's fun. And because that's what RPG Maker is all about, really: the community.

Stop ranting about HBGames. What else is new?

DLC. Downloadable content. Degica are forever releasing new resource packs now for RPG Maker. These include some new things, and some old, from console RPG Makers and from their dedicated resource team. These are all available on Steam...

...for a cost. Yes, RPG Making has got expensive. But things are always and only worth what people will pay for them - and pay they are. Just keep an eye out for a Steam sale, as they're often reduced.

Lost Greenlight by *Isumi*

It's cheaper, meaner, leaner and a little bit more seen-er than it's parents, but like anything has it's problems. Some people love it, some people still long for the return of RPG Maker 2000 as an official English release. What can I say, in answer to this review, "everyone's different". Yeah, this review was really worth reading.

Using RGSS3 in RMXP

I had intended this to be an all-encompassing works-for-any-version tutorial, but from trying it out myself, things have changed between editions that are quite important, and with RGSS3 out an RGSS2 tutorial isn't particularly useful. Thus I have rewritten it. You didn't need to know that, but now you do, and knowledge is power. Hurrah!

It is also soon to be redundant - because you don't need to use RGSS3 when you could use something more powerful. Check out this thread for more information: **QJ 913340**

1. Export the RTP into your game folder.

You can do this from the editor. You should be doing this anyway, otherwise your game can only be played by people with the RTP installed, which isn't very handy.

2. Copy the library dll and the excecutable

Create a blank game in VX Ace. Copy and paste RGSS301.dll (in VX Ace, this will be in the game folder) and Game.exe, into your RMXP project. Backup first!

3. Copy the RPG module from the RMXP help file into your game.

To do this you'll need to copy every RPG script from the help file (search!). One of them is broken:

    Script: class MoveCommand

    Move the entire brackets from line 2 to line 3, such that you now have:

    class MoveCommand
      def initialize(code = 0, parameters = [])

4. Replace the Tilemap script

Tilemap in RGSS is made in C, and is tailored to the mapping system - the biggest difference between XP and VX Ace. So you need to source a new one - and we can't use C... we're stuck with Ruby (technically - for this tutorial at least).

Search the web for your favourite Tilemap script. For example, google **Poccil tilemap rmxp**.

5. Replace your windowskin with one for VX Ace.

RGSS3 edits the window class significantly. Alternatively, you can use this Window rewrite: **QJ 110757**

6. Main

Main has been rewritten in RGSS3. Backup your current Main and replace it with:

```
rgss_main {
  Graphics.resize_screen(640, 480)
  Graphics.freeze
  $scene = Scene_Title.new
  $scene.main while $scene != nil
  Graphics.transition(20)
}
```

7. Get the VX Ace font

There's a new font in VX Ace - and you won't be able to run the game without it unless you code it out. You can just copy it from:

(Program Files)\Common Files\Enterbrain\RGSS3\RPGVXAce

The file is titled VL Gothic and can be copied straight into your RMXP game's folder.

8. Test it

And cry when it doesn't work! Yay!

Demo available

QJ 913645

What's new in RGSS3?

1.9

Now uses Ruby 1.9.2

Brings a whole host of differences including more efficient processing.

Rewritten window class

Windows now have a padding property (which is going to mess up all your windows if you didn't switch to Selwyn's rewrite).

New Font class

Outlined text, shadows, and other properties including those in RGSS2.

Movies

Via Graphics.play_movie - Ogg Theora.

Inherited from RGSS2, the default scripts of RGSS3 (not carried across) introduce the methods applied in the old RMXP.org SDK - splitting methods up when they're too big, aliasing, having a Scene_Base, and so on. This won't apply unless *you* apply it however, which would constitute a rewrite of your entire game.

RPG MAKER VX   G Game Maker   C2 CONSTRUCT 2

For handy linking and emphasis, you can now click one of the above logos on the homepage to go straight to a section for that engine. While support is focused for these three, we still have general game making sections too.

MENAGERIE

QJ 913609

Multimedia Fusion 2

Later in the year we will be running another contest, this time the prize being a digital download of *Multimedia Fusion 2*. What the contest is depends on feedback from our RPG Maker contest.

There will be future events too - as long as people want them!

Sailerius

Of our five current "game of the year" games, only one developer has won twice: Sailerius. UWE went out to discover what makes him tick.

Can you give a quick summary of Vacant Sky?

Vacant Sky is a series of character-driven RPGs that started way back on RMXP.net. The original trilogy is set in the modern day and deals with issues such as social isolaton, depression, and struggling to find one's identity.

Where's it going next?

QJ 254645

I'm now working on a (very) distant prequel, titled Vacant Sky: Awakening, which stars the series' primary villain as a young adult. The idea at the heart of the story is to show the conflict from the other side of the chess board and to explore what can drive a person to attempt genocide.

What platforms will it be available on, and for how much?

It's going to be released on pretty much everything with a screen. The currently announced platforms are: PC, Mac, Linux, Windows RT, iOS, Android, Windows Phone, OUYA, PS Vita.

We haven't settled on a prce yet, most likely around $10.

OUYA? How's that going?

One of our earlier titles, The Vestibule, was actually one of the OUYA's launch titles. That was the first full scale test of the Metis engine as well as a chance to familiarize ourselves with the OUYA development process. It went very smoothly so I am confident that our Metis developed titles will find a home on OUYA, including Awakening.

Vacant Sky started on RPG Maker. Why the change?

The original trilogy was in RMXP and it was originally planned to make Awakening in Ace. In fact the first couple of dungeons and most of the battle system were finished before the switch was made.

As convenient as RPG Maker is, and as much as I love the community, there are a few limitations that made it more trouble than it is worth: the mapping system, the maximum resolution of 640x480, the editor not being customizabe, and worst of all, being locked in with PC as the only platform, which is shooting yourself in the foot before you've even started making the game.

What exactly is Metis?

It's our own engine that supports just about every platform under the sun. Perihelion and I have been working pretty hard on it for the last few months. We released a proof of concept game to the OUYA store, titled Vestibule, which was one of the console's launch titles.

How was the process of a Kickstarter campain?

I've got a lot to say about Kickstarter, but I'll try and keep it from turning into a novel!

There's a perception that all you have to do is write a few words, set a goal of $200k, and click submt, but unless you're really lucky that's not how it goes. We spent two months preparing our Kickstarter campaign and I'm pretty sure now that wasn't enough. Everything has to be perfect: a catchy name, concise but appealing description, and lots of art.

There's a science to coming up with rewards, too. The most popular tiers are at $25, $50, and $75, so you need to make those as attractive as possible while still coming up with rewards inbetween. You also need to design it in such a way that it is easy to up-sell people into higher reward tiers by always adding in something else one tier up that's just within reach. We spent a lot of time iterating off our rewards and getting people's feedback on them.

When your project goes live you don't get to rest easy: that's when the hardest part starts. You need to reach out to your audience by soliciting the press on special interest news sites to let them know about your campaign. You have to constantly monitor the campaign responding to questions and feedback and spend as much time as possible reaching out to news outlets that might be interested in your story. It's very difficult and stressful.

You also need a thick skin... by putting yourself out there you open yourself up to a lot of negativity. Some is legitimate, and some just mean spirited. It's going to happen and there's not really much you can do about it. I was especialy surprised about the amount of this that happened within the RM world.

I think two aspects helped the Kickstarter most: the first is our loyal fanbase who were vital and very supportive. We've been releasing games for the past five years or so and have slowly built up an amazing group of fans.

The other was the number of platforms we covered. PC and iPhone games are a dime a dozen, but you don't see many Kickstarters for Windows Phone or Vita games, and so we got a huge amount of support and publicity within those communities - more pledges from Windows Phone supporters than Mac and Linux combined.

How large is your team for Vacant Sky?

The original was made by four people: a battler artist, a composer, a portrait artist, and me doing everything else. There were a few others who helped (including countless testers) but that was the core team. With *Awakening* we're up to a team of nine. Because I need to focus on the much more involved programming aspect I hored a designer to develop the dungeons and quests. Because the story is longer and much more involved we hired an editor to ensure the quality of the writing. We also now have an environmental illustrator and motion designer.

Is it difficult to work as a team so large?

The overhead involved can at times be pretty stressful and time consuming but I couldn't se us making this game with a smaller team; the notion of doing it solo is unthinkable. You need people who share a creative vision and... who can tell you when you're doing something dumb.

The growth was an absolute necessity. Although we could probably have got by with one person doing the art and me doing the story, design and programming again, the scope is so much larger that it wuld have taken us forever and the overall quality of the game is also much higher due to the specialists with specific experience, rather than having a few of us trying to cover each area.

Writing is one of your passions: how was developing Vacant Sky challenging as a writer?

The original game was my first large-scale writing project. I really had no idea what I was getting into. "Oh yeah," I thought to myself, "I'll just write the story to an RPG by myself, how hard can it be?"

I had written short stories before but nothing as long as say a novel. The fact that the story went through so many revisions is testament to how much I have learned over the process. This may sound obvious but the most important thing I learned was the value of writing the entire story before committing anything to the game engine. I didn't do that in the original Vacant Sky. Sure, I had outlines, and a plot summary with characer bios, but I didn't realise how much of that would go out of the window as soon as I started writing. Inconsistencies in theme, setting, and story that didn't show up on outlines made themselves very clear when I actually sat down to write it out.

With *Awakening* I vowed to write out the whole story script before starting on the game and having done that I can't imagine what would have happened if I didn't. Huge problems cropped up with the story that required extensive revision. It wasn't until 2/3 of the way through that I started to discover themes the story was naturally tending toward that I hadn't

intended, but I realised they enriched the story so I went back and intentionally began to cultivate them. Two major characters' roles had to be switched half way through!

One of the other major challenges I encountered in writing the original Vacant Sky was getting into the mind of the protagonist, Auria. Being male I didn't have experiences as a teenage girl to draw upon which presented a huge problem as the story deals heavily with the struggles of social isoation and the difficulty of forming non-superficial emotional connections with other people that come with adolescence.

In the beginning, I really didn't like her or her personality; she was so different from me in so many ways that I just couldn't love her as a person, and I worried that would come across in the way I wrote her.

What I eventually learned to do was to look at her worldview and ask myself "why is it that she thinks this way? Why does she feel this way about so-and-so?" and as I started to ask those questions, I started to understand what kind of person she was, and even though I still didn't agree with her, I was able to respect her point of view and I found myself able to write her in a way I was confident with. The fact that a lot of players were surprised to find out that I'm not a woman was a big compliment and made me feel that I had succeeded in portraying her as a convincing character.

That skill became invaluable later on in fleshing out the story's antagonists. Because Vacant Sky doesn't shy away from asking tough questions about morality, I needed to be able to present a compelling argument for both sides. I hate stories where you have two sides engaged in this big disagreement and the author doesn't even try to make the other side sound convincing. It always leaves me asking how anyone could possibly hold that point of view, and it wrecks my belief in the story.

So, it was important to me that everyone, no matter how repugnant their beliefs might be, had to hold some kernel of truth. It was difficult for me to write characters who had their hearts set on causes I staunchly disagreed with, but the technique I used in writing Auria saved me again there. If I couldn't come up with a plausible argument in favor of their viewpoint, how could I expect anyone to be convinced by it?

I think that's a skill that everyone should learn, not just people who want to be writers. When you take up a point of view that you disagree with and p□ut in a genuine effort to argue in favor of it, you start to discover why it is that people think that way and you might even find holes in your own beliefs.

But all that was really just a practice round for the challenges I'm facing in writing Awakening. This time around, you're not even playing as someone who's (ostensibly) the hero. Your point of view is that of the most reviled person in this world's history. He attempted ethnic cleansing on a global scale and he nearly succeeded. I had to ask myself why anyone would ever try to do that, how they could justify it to themselves, and how I could possibly portray it in a way that was both convincing and sympathetic for the player.

I think that the best stories are those that leave you questioning some aspect of yourself, because something like that stays with you forever and changes you as a person. I think that games, and RPGs in particular, are too afraid to ask important questions. They want players to feel comfortable and so their stories just massage the players' preconceived biases. I think that as game developers, we need to stop being afraid of saying something. If your players feel uncomfortable - good! That's something you should strive toward, not cower from.

Final Fantasy XIII/2

I'll come out and say it: I've never had as much fun playing an RPG as I had when playing XIII/2. The battle system is fast-paced and tactical, requiring split-second planning without any of the tedious micromanagement the series is otherwise known for. They took out all of the boring parts of RPG battles and emphasized the fun. They were probably the only RPGs I've ever played where I actively sought out extra battles just because they were that much fun.

Sailerius's Top Picks

I grew up really loving JRPGs but I've recently started falling out of love with the genre. It's not that I don't like RPGs anymore, but that the genre is stagnating. It seems like most RPGs coming out are tired rehashes with antiquated mechanics and shallow wish fulfillment stories. Seriously, if I see another "retro" fantasy RPG with random encounters, I'm going to throw my chair. It's 2013 now! Let's see something new!

Persona 3 & 4

The unique aesthetic really made the games a joy to play. Character and creativity ooze from every pore of P3 and P4. It was the first JRPG I played in a long time where I felt like I was playing a new game instead of a rehash of something else.

Silent Hill 2

There have been countless RPGs that inspired Vacant Sky, but the most interesting inspirations have been games that weren't RPGs. One major influence was definitely Silent Hill 2. In SH2, the ending you get isn't determined by one choice you make at the end of the game, but by the way you played the game. All the little things you did that you never put much conscious thought into determined what ending you got, and that made the game a more personal experience. I missed the boat on adding something similar to that in the original Vacant Sky, but I hope to implement a similar idea in Awakening.

RPG MAKER
MAKE YOUR OWN ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Win 1 of 2 digital downloads of RPG Maker VX Ace!

January Blues
HBGAMES.ORG CONTEST

It's time to get game making again! This January we will be launching a contest sponsored by RPG Maker. Your task? To make a game. Your prize? One of two copies of RPG Maker VX Ace, amongst other goodies.

The premise is being left deliberately vague in order to strike your creativity. All you have to do is impress us with a game, knowing you're pitted against many others, some new to the site, others veterans with a fight on their hands.

As a bit of fun you can implement the "theme" of *January Blues*... or not! If you want those bonus points, be creative...

In short the contest is largely ambiguous to see what our members can come up with.

Best game will receive a copy of RPG Maker VX Ace.

"Community Champion", the user who helps others out most during the contest, will win the other copy of *Ace*.
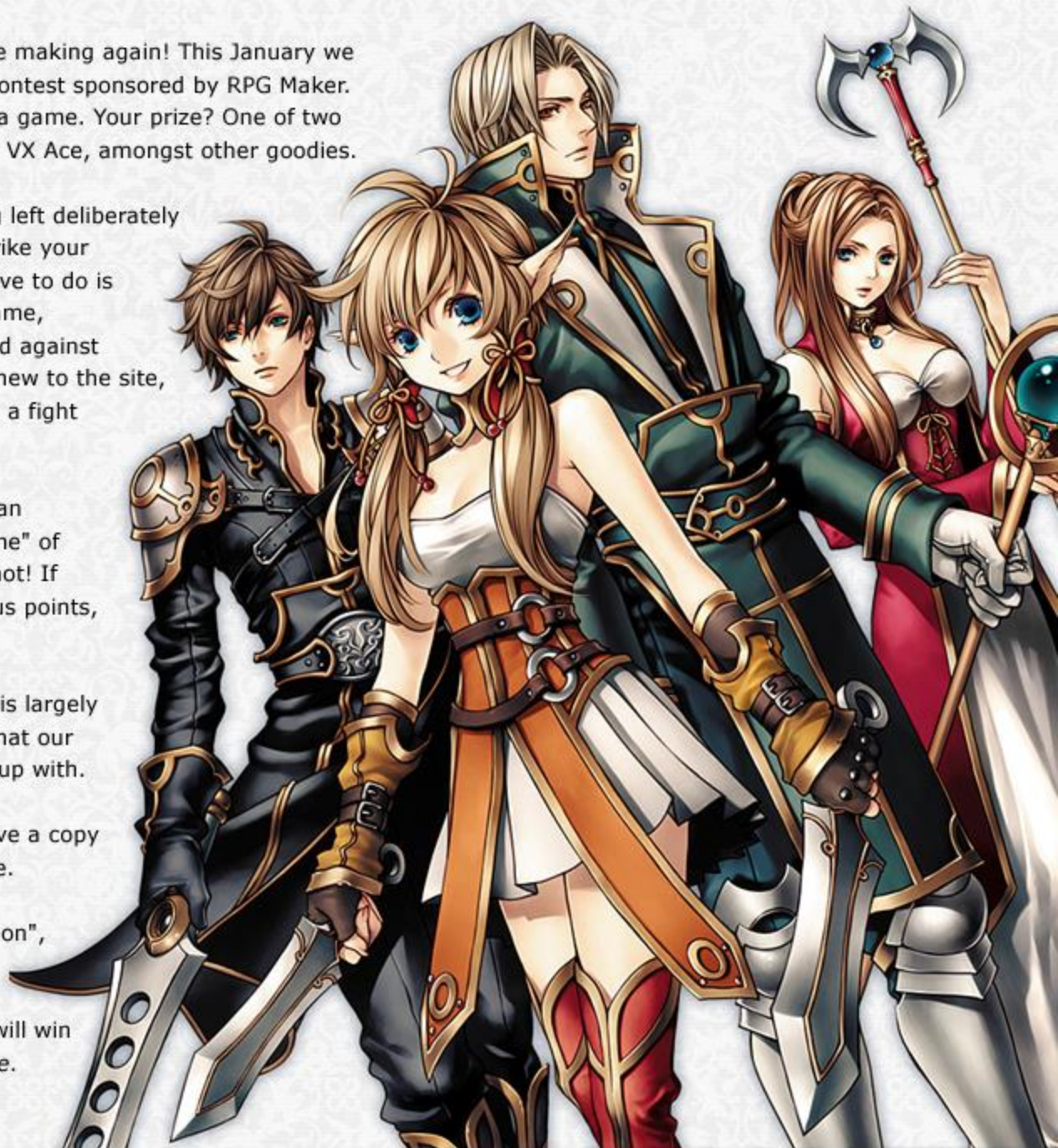
We are, of course, using this opportunity to invite other people to the site, many of which won't know we even exist. The RPG Maker world is much larger than it once was.

Don't be afraid though. Your game still stands as good a chance as any. We're specifically not awarding any bonus points for using other people's resources - only things you made, or at least tweaked, yourself will be marked - so everyone's on a level playing field.

The contest will officially start around January 14th and there will be regular updates in the eZine of how everyone's getting along.

Please note that there will be no cash alternative, and a Steam account will be required (but no purchase necessary) to win. You'll also need to accept your game being publically downloadable, and for us to look through it unencrypted in order to properly judge. You will also need to be using a legal copy of an **RPG Maker** program - though trial editions and lite versions are completely fine! Please note this disqualifies RPG Maker 95, 2000, and 2003 unless the Japanese version was bought.

There's still a lot to sort out, so watch this space, and you'll be updated as soon as possible.

Contest rules and info will be posted here when ready: **QJ** 913244

GAME OF THE YEAR: 2004-7

Because our ORGy awards are a relatively new idea, we never had a Game of the Year in 2004 through 2007 (four years). I thought it'd be nice to celebrate our *whole* life rather than just the now.

We'd like to get some oldies together to discuss our favourite games from these years, if anyone remembers. OK, Amy would, because she's a sucker in need of closure.

You can find out more and discuss with us here: **QJ** 909983

Other Engines...

Sorry guys for the RPG Maker centricity of this issue. The next one will make up for it. We're still a general game making site - specialising in RPGs and RPG Maker but still able to create and discuss some fantastic home brewed games in any engine.

There will be an "any engine" contest later on in the year, and various other features, have no fear.

Oh, and while we're here, a huge thank you to the folk at RPG Maker Web for helping with this contest and providing prizes. You're awesome.

Hopefully we see games of the same standard as 2012's Construct 2 Build and Win contest!

(You should play them, they're great).

G Game Maker

C2 CONSTRUCT 2

Chronicles of Afar
Tale of Three Witches
COMING SOON... HONEST

EPIC GAME

Most of our games are the kind of epic that would make Tolkein cry. A good majority of them are probably down to a universal thought of "I want to make the next *Final Fantasy*" (I know that's how I got here). But is this epic game mentality harming our projects? Is there another way to go? I am reaching but I fa-

You've just downloaded *RPG Maker 2000* and instantly you begin your epic journey. Three heroes discover that the evil lord Sephire is dead set on destroying the known universe, and only you, the poor farmboy, can stop him.

On starts a journey that spans twenty four hours of dungeons, huge landscapes, giant maps with amazing complex systems, card game minigames, side quests, hidden easter eggs: it's a romp that would make *Pratchett* proud.

...except it wouldn't. You are, most likely, a one-man team, even if you think you're a bigger team with spriters and musicians at hand. The person making the bit that counts - the game - is you and you alone most of the time.

Making an epic game is a nice idea. But over the years we have scarcely seen the opposite: a short, well-polished minigame. Not even a minigame perhaps, just a short game, a couple of hours in length, with every moment thought through.

Having a smaller project would allow one to hone the storyline so that every scene has a place and makes sense, put thought and effort into every tile of every map, have a music score that isn't just music but also sound effects and well choreographed, and at the end of it, a game that really would make the legends proud. In short, instead of being Stephen King, we could be Stieg Larsson.

I am taking this approach with *Tale of Three Witches*. Instead of cutscenes involving a few sprites talking to one another, everything will be at least partially animated: people will turn to one another, shrug shoulders, interact: you're not just watching a series of text boxes.

And, from what I have so far, I think I'm adequately performing this. From the feedback I've had, people prefer the completeness of a small project where every part makes sense. But that's just me. Make an epic game if you wish.

I went further and destructed the idea of RPG battles. I turned each battle into a cutscene, where instead of choosing attacks you essentially choose what is said next, like a choose-your-own-adventure that has battle animations. Using a fire spell invokes the cutscene that would show the player using said spell and the repurcussions of it.

This went further in that battles aren't random but are a part of the game. Instead of coming across a bandit on route 66, you instead fight only battles which advance the story - the sort of battles that would appear in a novel which is I think what I wanted to create.

Barmaid:
Mind if I sit down?

I am of course over-egging it; a sprite turning a head is hardly the awesome cutscene I've been describing.

But maybe I'm being elitist. Maybe we should create whatever game we want without worrying about what other people think is best (and yeah, you should). But I have been trying these epic games for years and have never finsihed one.

If we don't scale things down, we run risk of never releasing the game. When I created *Vengeance* it was designed to be 30 hours long, of which I finished ten hours. I then added a tutorial, which turned into a lengthy, ten hour quest, of which I finished half. Then, in a moment of insanity, *Necrile* told me: release it, tonight.

So I did. And it was awful.

The next day, I deleted everything, set up a blank map, and uploaded it. People played it. Over the next couple of months in fact a hundred people played it - which for a game which was started there and then is impressive.

People like epic games. But people prefer completed, playable ones, if only because they couldn't play anything else!

I then committed the Epic Game mistake once more, took the game offline, and started to create an amazing game that people would enjoy for years to come. I obviously never completed it.

In 2010 I released a forum-based client for the game that just let you edit your character sheet... and *people played it*. So I added an inventory, and people continued to play it, despite there not being anything there at all content wise. I added battles, and eventually quests and so on, and at the moment there are 1,200 players.

People will play short games. Short games allow us to strive for high quality in everything we do. We don't need the Epic Game Mentality, and we can fight it.

Most of us are of course making games for fun, and those games will probably never make it out of our bedrooms, so why not make an epic game? Absolutely, that's fine. But a fair few of us are, by the look of our threads, aiming for a public release.

I want to see a series of games which are short, well performed, and look pretty damned good. I'd like to think I'm the one to make that series, but I will probably never finish my new games either, so I'm throwing down the gauntlet:

Make a short game.

Try it. Go on, you know you want to. Use the opportunity to learn how to sprite, script, and map properly. Make everything gorgeous. Make every tile count, use only 20x15 tile maps, and make every battle do something spectacular.

An interesting idea is to make every tile be interactive, to every detail. Plant pots that tell you what they are, windows that let you look out of them to see a panoramic cutscene, and so on. I'm not sure I like the idea as I hate hidden object style games but from reading posts around the RM community a lot of people *expect* it from their games, being let down when they *can't* examine a flower.

This approach was taken by *RuneScape* pretty far. Of course, Epic Game Mentality strikes again, and suddenly it's too much for a single man team to take on, but for small maps in small games it might just be doable.

We had started making a character generator, for which a basic one for RPG Maker XP has now been released and was to be tweaked and announed here, but it turns out RPG Maker VX Ace comes with a much more detailed one built into the editor. That's pretty damned sweet if you ask me.

Regardless, you can see the start of ours here:

QJ   912249

< Base >

< Hair >
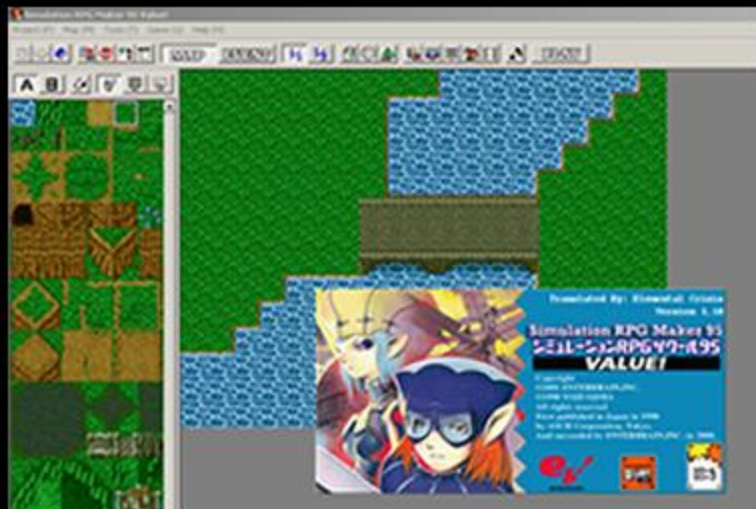
< Body >

< Legs >

< Head >

< Weapon >

< Shield >

RPG MAKER 95
THE FORGOTTEN ENGINE

Without a doubt, the engine which kicked off RPG Maker in the English speaking community was *RPG Maker 2000*. It continues to this day to be extremely popular, so much so that there remain websites dedicated to it, despite there being graphically and technically superior engines in the series.

Yet before *RM2K* there was *95*. RPG Maker 95 was never released in English, but was cracked in much the same way as it's cousins. It never reached the critical mass of 2000 however, despite being a better engine in some aspects.

RM95 was the first in the series to be released for Windows, confusingly, in the year 2000. The title 95 seems to be for the same reasoning as XP and VX - no technical reason, just flashiness.

I, er, downloaded it, for research purposes only of course, and was greeted with the message that *this program woe run on yow PC*. Windows 8 doesn't like it. Compatability mode doesn't help, nor does running as an administrator, and in my limited mental capacity that's as good as death.

It looks like we'll have to do with the *officially supported three*. Degica's website seems to deny they even exist. They never happened. XP, VX, Ace 4 life.

The graphics, from what I've been able to gather (we'll get to that...), look prettier than 2000 and 2003's, but the text boxes seem to be lacking... I...

OK. This review is a little pointless, because in researching it, what I discovered is a sad little fact:

RPG Maker 95 is dead.

It is a dead program. It has ceased to be. It has gone to kingdom come. It is an ex-program. Popped it's cloggs.

HB Archive QJ 913519

SAVED BY THE ORG!

What is HB Archive? Just a hard drive sitting in a cupboard in my room. Pretty unprofessional, but pretty safe.

You supply me with a download link to your game and I downloaded it, scan it and make sure it's OK, and save it to the disk. That's it.

Why is that useful?

I have lost games due to switching PCs often, losing websites, MegaUpload going down, and so many other things. Hell probably half my RM life is now lost.

Your games are kept indefinitely. They don't go down because hosting isn't paid. They don't go down because you lost your laptop on a bus. They don't go down because you botched an update and wiped your PC.

So people can download them from you?

No. It's just a storage service, with retrieval requests, but not in the sense of a website such as MegaUpload. It's a one in one out basis.

How do we retrieve games then?

Your games must have been released to the public, with the expectation that "once they're out there they're out there for good". As such, if anybody asks "what happened to Master of the Wind?" and it's in the archive, it's sent to them (encrypted of course if that's how you sent it out in the first place).

So... In summary?

Basically, it's just somewhere to store your games as a backup and last resort in case All Is Lost. It's happened so many times over the years.

Pretty much any game under 100mb will be accepted, with games over that side accepted providing they have taken all necessary steps to reduce it's size amongst other things. Special permission will definitely be needed above half a gig.

RPG Maker Spotlight

Interesting, good looking, and technically challenging projects from around the site

Enex by Erichermit. Created in RPG Maker 2003, as shown by the middle screenshot here it is technically impressive by it's use of minigames and other systems, using complex events to think outside of the box.

QJ   913531

Nightmare Johnny
by *Red-Cube*

QJ   911483

Good looking retro RPG
Tower of the Spirit World

QJ   910947

QJ   911644

Akatsuki Chronicles

Quick Jump

Throughout this issue you'll see quick jump codes. These are just a simple way to link to posts and threads around the forums without wasting space in the magazine. To use them, simply go to the homepage and enter a quick jump code in the quick jump box below the left hand menu and press the enter key. Simple!

Just look out for
this symbol: **QJ   123456**

Ragarokk Bestiarium is a German card game by Confodere, and I challenge you to find a more beautiful RPG Maker game. Just... look at it! It's another good example of thinking outside the box, too - the screenshot above is based on none other than the default battle system! Streuth!

QJ 912689

QJ 912284

by firgof umbra

* I did not just sincerely use the word streuth. Nope.

Back Issues

Previous editions of the eZine are available at www.hbgames.org

If you enjoyed this issue you might want to read up on previous issues. If you didn't enjoy this issue, you might want to also not enjoy these previous issues.

RMXP.net/.org eZine

The intention is, in the far future, to re-edit these into the newer format in order to fix broken links, missed typos, graphical errors due to the format, and other issues. These issues were created by Lene with help from the community when we were RMXP.org / RMXP.net between 2005 and 2006. There was a long haitus until 2009.

HBGames.org eZine

These issues were created in two waves in 2009-10 and 2013, from where the series has been picked up again for regular release. The early issues are largely conceptual, and the first four were originally released in an unsuccessful format and later re-edited into the new form. They were created by Amy wth help from the community.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

Realistic coastlines
Manic depression and gaming
Mom, I play GTA!

Plus! More bad graphics, more useless tutorials, more pining for the past, and more filling up space with old stuff and "back issues"!

And absolutely no self-deprecating "humour". None whatsever. Nope.