

Top Software Products of 2003

Miguel Encarnação
The imedia Academy

Alias Sketchbook Pro

Alias Sketchbook Pro is Alias | Wavefront's software tool that converts a Tablet PC into a digital sketchbook. Working with an electronic pen, the software lets users switch brushes electronically change sketching tools and colors, zoom, manipulate image layers, and integrate digital sketches into Microsoft Windows XP. The software works with Maya and StudioTools software and reportedly has an intuitive gesture-driven user interface.

Raindrop Geomagic Studio 5 and Qualify 5

The Raindrop Geomagic Studio 5 is reverse-engineering and custom-design software and the Geomagic Qualify 5 is computer-aided inspection software. Studio 5 includes features such as improved handling of ordered data and large data sets, support for precision polygon alignment and editing, an auto surface function that converts polygon models to NURBS patches in one step, and a customizable GUI. Qualify 5 supports features (hole, slot, square hole, and rectangular hole) that enable feature-based alignment, direct feature comparison and reporting, and sheet-metal part dimensioning. For more information about these products visit <http://www.geomagic.com>.

MojoWorld 2.0

Pandromeda's MojoWorld 2.0 software product line includes the MojoWorld generator, generator demo, transporter pro, and transporter. The 3D graphics software models and renders fractal planets—including the size of planet Earth by default. The company states that these planets can be imaged at any distance, resolution, or field of view. Users can lay down camera flight paths in real time for animations and render out QuickTime VR cubic panoramas. For more information visit <http://www.pandromeda.com>.

Acuitiv 3.2 Visualization Software

Acuitiv's (formerly Virtual Vantage) version 3.2 of its visualization software has various enhancements, including support for Windows 2000 and Plot 3D function files. The software now lets designers group sub-geometries within the original model, while also offering an improved 3D graphics user interface and navigation. The interface is reportedly intuitive and accessible in the 3D world, so that users don't need to exit the 3D environment to change parameters or view-points. The software works with a laptop, CAVE, and most other immersive environments. For more information visit <http://www.acuitiv.com>.

Wondertouch ParticleIllusion 3.0

Wondertouch's particleIllusion 3.0 is a particle effects software package. The product features Forces for influencing particles after they're created; super emitters for the automatic creation of emitters; rendering engine enhancements such as high-quality motion blur, field rendering, and improved alpha channel creation; area matter masking for using images or sequences as a mask for particle creation; property graph improvements; color options that let users simulate displacement effects in real time; a library manager; and thumbnail previews. For more information visit <http://www.wondertouch.com>.

PCI Geomatics Geomatica 9

Geomatica 9 is the latest version of PCI Geomatics' geospatial software. The product is integrated to provide a seamless environment for remote sensing, GIS, photogrammetry, and cartographic processing. Enhancements include GIS capabilities, hyperspectral tools, and hyperspectral data compression technology designed by the Canadian Space Agency. The software aids users by providing ease of movement of spatial information between highly integrated applications. For more information visit <http://www.pcigeomatics.com>.

NXN Alienbrain

NXN alienbrain is an asset management system for entertainment and computer graphics projects. It reportedly differs from traditional asset management systems by managing an entire team's data from concept to completion. The software scales from five to 150 users and supports mixed environments with Windows, Macintosh, and Unix systems. For more information visit <http://www.nxn-software.com>.

Ngrain Software Suite

Ngrain's suite of software—Transformer, Knowledge Module, and Mobilizer—reportedly enables accurate digital representations, dynamic updates, and interactive 3D graphics on most computer platforms without the need for hardware acceleration. Transformer lets users develop existing content for multiple applications by converting it into a compressed, interactive format. Knowledge Module lets users enhance the interactivity of applications—such as online training and documentation—with animation and other 3D content. Mobilizer lets users manipulate, assemble, and disassemble 3D models, irrespective of complexity, on desktops, laptops, and tablet PCs. For more information visit <http://www.ngrain.com>.