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Industrial Light & Magic Releases Proprietary Extended Dynamic Range Image File Format OpenEXR to Open Source Community

San Rafael, Calif. – January 22, 2003– Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), a division of Lucas Digital Ltd. LLC, today announced the launch of OpenEXR (www.openexr.net), its previously proprietary extended dynamic range image file format, to the open source community. Recognizing the need for a file format that could serve as the industry standard, ILM went through considerable effort to prepare OpenEXR for the public.

"Historically, the visual effects community and the motion picture industry have benefited from the creation of standards," said Jim Morris, President of Lucas Digital. "OpenEXR is yet another step in this direction. By creating better standards in image file format, we hope that effects practitioners and software developers will have a more consistent and flexible base to build upon."

OpenEXR is a 16-bit, floating-point file format with much greater dynamic range than existing 8- and 10-bit file formats and is fully compatible with Nvidia's new GeForce FX and Quadro FX 3D graphics solutions. Its lossless data compression achieves compression ratios of 2:1 for scanned film images.

"OpenEXR allows for a representable dynamic range that is significantly higher than previous file formats," explains Cliff Plumer, Chief Technology Officer at ILM. "The OpenEXR file format is a better digital representation of film because it has a dynamic range of over 30 f-stops without loss of precision, and an additional 10 f-stops at the low end with minimal loss of precision. Most of the previous 8-bit file formats only have the dynamic range of around 7 to 10 f-stops and cannot accurately reproduce images with extreme contrast."

ILM originally implemented its own extended dynamic range file format EXR in the summer of 2000. EXR was battle tested on "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," "Men in Black II," "Gangs of New York" and "Signs" with fantastic success. Currently the file format is being used on "Dreamcatcher," "The Hulk," "Van Helsing," "Peter Pan," "Timeline" and "Pirates of the Caribbean."

Industrial Light & Magic is a division of Lucas Digital Ltd. LLC, which also includes Skywalker Sound. Formed in 1993, Lucas Digital Ltd. is dedicated to serving the digital needs of the entertainment industry for visual effects, commercial production and audio post-production.

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