

★ HALL OF FAME ★

BINK VIDEO

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Game development was once described to me as building a house on top of a moving train. In space. With dinosaurs. It's never an easy process, and you have to learn to deal with the unexpected. Storytelling in games is no different.

huge, expansive areas, tell a rich and fleshed out story, and still fit within memory and performance constraints. Using Bink let us solve those challenges. Bink's strong integration with Epic's Unreal Engine 3.0 meant that we could use the technology

Bink's integration with the Unreal Engine came in. By bringing the movies into the engine as texture movies, we could manipulate them with the material shader system. We were able to key out colors, add distortion and alpha masks, with just

their original size, without the players noticing a difference. This allowed us to stream the Binks off the disc, and reinvest that memory overhead back into the game world.

Our use of Bink doesn't stop here—it extends

With a little help from our engineering department, we decided to turn the introduction into a Bink, and strive for a continuous experience from the moment the player starts a game to the time they gain control of their character. Unreal allowed us to do a frame-by-frame capture of our intro, while Bink allowed us to take the result and play it back in high definition with no artifacting. Both technologies worked seamlessly together, and the result was a taking a great intro concept and turning it into a great experience for the user.

Bink didn't stop there, though. With another assist from our engineers, we were able to turn Bink's support of multi-track audio into our one-stop solution for localization. We did this by separating one track for effects and music, and using the remaining tracks to store dialogue tracks for each region we planned to ship in. Instead of having to manage five different videos, we could use one single Bink video to do the work of all of them.

As storytellers, our goal is to keep the player engaged and entertained, while reminding them as little as possible that they're playing a piece of software. Achieving that goal is a different process for each game, and it requires flexible solutions. That's why we use Bink.

— Brian Thomas,
Gearbox Software



Gearbox Software's BORDERLANDS.

Whether it's a last minute re-write, cutting a level, or bending the game engine beyond its imagined limits, there's always a new challenge to conquer. That's what makes flexibility such a comforting thing during development. That's why Gearbox chooses to use Bink.

When developing our latest title, BORDERLANDS, we had some very difficult hurdles to clear. We needed to create

straight out of the box, and hit the ground running.

The largest technical challenge we faced was integrating our female narrator, the Angel, into our UI. We needed a way for her to hack your communication system to deliver her messages. We chose to do this with some highly stylized FMVs, but the effect we were looking for wasn't quite there. This is where

a few clicks. The resulting material could easily be used in UI, or anywhere else in game.

But the work wasn't quite done. We now needed a way to do this without blowing our memory constraints. Bink's toolset allowed us to easily scale, compress, and tweak our FMVs until we found that magical spot where the resulting videos were a fraction of

deep into the game. Our introduction cinematic was created in-engine, and was originally intended to be played that way. As the game neared the end of development, we began to understand that the user's experience was being marred by watching too many loading screens as the game transitioned between the menu, the intro, and the game.