



PRESS RELEASE

THE FOUNDRY'S OCULA PLUG-INS REMOVE HEADACHES FROM 3D-STEREO

- New toolsets provide pixel-level control over left and right eyes -

London, May 1st, 2008. Leading visual effects software developer The Foundry (www.thefoundry.co.uk) has announced the development of Ocula, a unique collection of plug-ins providing a powerful armoury of tools that solve common problems with 3D stereoscopic imagery, boost productivity in post production, and ultimately help to deliver a more rewarding 3D-stereo viewing experience.

The new plug-ins, previewed at NAB 2008, are designed to take the headache out of 3D stereo post production by automatically replicating key processes on left and right channels, and to remove headaches from the final viewing experience by providing tools that help artists to polish and refine 3D-stereo material.

The Ocula tools are based on brand new disparity-mapping algorithms, created by The Foundry's Academy Award-winning R&D team. Disparity maps track and correlate the differences in positional space and movement between corresponding pixels in the left and right cameras, and then deliver pixel-level control over images. Knowing where disparities occur, Ocula tools apply corrections by warping, stretching and squeezing only those areas of an image that require treatment. Image manipulation using disparity maps is different to the X, Y or Z-axis shifting of images, where only whole image planes are being shifted.

Ocula plug-ins allow artists to apply a multitude of adjustments to stereo image pairs. All corrections can be made to the left and right eye channels either together or separately, and the results of these corrections ultimately help to minimise or eliminate discomfort from the 3D viewing experience.

Users can correct horizontal alignment issues with Ocula's Interocular Distance Shifter. Using disparity map data, a new 'virtual' view is created between the original left and right eye positions, with the result being that objects of different fore, mid and background depths are resolved more accurately for the viewer. This is different to an X-axis shift where only the image plane is moved.

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Ocula's Vertical Aligner will automatically attempt to vertically align corresponding image features in each view, to minimize or eliminate the effect known as 'key-stoning'. This is not a single Y-shift for the whole image – with disparity mapping the correction varies across the entire image.

A key feature of Ocula plug-ins is the dramatic reduction in the amount of manual labour required when artists undertake rotoscoping work, paint effects or other operations dependent on image locality. Many position-dependent image manipulations can now be applied to just one eye with paint strokes, keyframed roto masks, and the like being automatically generated for the other eye, substantially improving productivity.

"Our new Ocula tools are designed to make the post production of 3D-stereoscopic imagery easier and much more efficient than before," said Dr Bill Collis, CEO, The Foundry. "Along with boosting productivity, and enabling precise manipulation of 3D stereoscopic imagery, Ocula plug-ins will ultimately help artists to refine footage to new levels. This means fewer headaches in post, and fewer headaches at the cinema."

Nuke 5 is currently the only visual effects compositing system with an embedded 3D stereoscopic workflow, where left and right eye channels can be manipulated separately or together. Ocula plug-ins will be available for the next point release of Nuke, version 5.1, expected to be July 2008.

Nuke is available on Linux, Windows, and Mac platforms, and Nuke delivers unparalleled speed, an efficient multi-channel scanline rendering engine, and powerful feature set unrivalled in the desktop market. Nuke 5 is available for existing customers with valid maintenance at no extra cost, and can be downloaded now from The Foundry website www.thefoundry.co.uk.

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About The Foundry

The Foundry is a world-leading innovator of visual effects and image processing technologies that boost productivity in motion picture and video post production. On February 10th 2007, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded a Sci-Tech Award® to The Foundry's development team for the Furnace image processing suite. The company now holds a trio of Academy Award® winning products including the high-end compositing system Nuke, and keying application Keylight.

The Foundry's products support a wide range of host platforms including After Effects, Autodesk® Media and Entertainment Systems, Avid DS, Baselight, Film Master, Fusion, Nuke, Scratch and Shake. The company has also driven OpenFX, an open standard for visual effects plug-ins, now broadly adopted by host and plug-in developers such as Autodesk®, Assimilate, FilmLight, Digital Vision, eyeon Software Inc, Grass Valley, Soluciones Graficas por Ordenador (S.G.O.), Photron and others. Customers include: Digital Domain, The Moving Picture Company, Sony Pictures Imageworks, Warner Bros and Weta Digital Ltd.

The Foundry is headquartered in London, and has offices in Los Angeles. For more information please visit The Foundry's website at www.thefoundry.co.uk, or call +44 20 7434 0449.

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Further Information & Images:

For further information please visit www.thefoundry.co.uk, or contact:

Ron Prince	Prince PR	T: +44 (0)1225 789 200	E: ronny@princepr.com
Nicki Morris	The Foundry	T: +44 (0)20 7434 0449	E: nicki@thefoundry.co.uk