

## NOTATIONWARE - IT'S ALL IN THE CARDS

by

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It's all in the cards. HyperCards, SuperCards, MetaCards, XCards. They hold all kinds of data: science, math, accounting, art, movies, music, languages, and of course, Labanotation. Notationware is software containing notation. It's all in the cards.

XTalk, the collective term for dialects related to HyperTalk, is based on scripting. XTalk developers place scripts in objects such as buttons, text fields, cards or backgrounds to make things happen.

Scripting is a subset of programming, but scriptors aren't necessarily programmers. HyperCard<sup>1</sup> has provided a simple, intuitive user interface that anyone can use productively. Through its version 2.4.1, Apple Computer has supported the software construction tool that empowered even non-programmers to create software. HyperCard can connect to the internet, open graphics, text files and QuickTime movies. (It can even turn a home's lights on and off.) America Online<sup>2</sup> has several HyperCard stacks featuring Labanotation in its libraries. Some of these have been "colorized"<sup>3</sup>.

Tremendous excitement was exhibited by HyperCardians<sup>4</sup> concerning the planned marriage of their favorite program to QuickTime Interactive. HyperCard 3.0, as a QT editor, was to become cross-platform. Although the latest version of HC and its Player remain available, the program will not, apparently, be developed further. Since Apple Computer seems to be in the process of cleaning out its old technology, the wedding may not take place. The bride has been abandoned.<sup>5</sup>

What, then, are the alternatives? Contenders include:

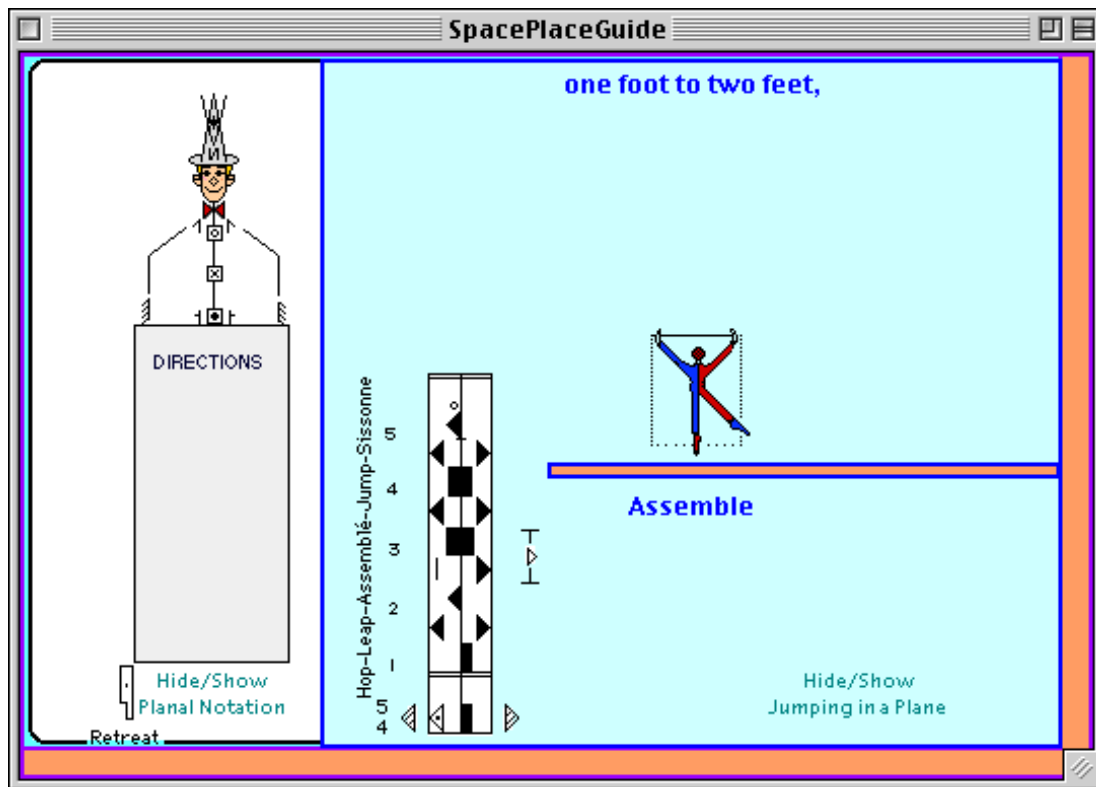
- CodeWarrior (by Metrowerks, its cross-platform compilers support C, C++, and Java)
- Director (Most people who have Director are professionals. It is much more complicated than either HC or MC)
- HyperSense (by Thoughtful Software, has been advertized as a QT editor)
- iShell (Like QuickTime, Tribeworks iShell has no UNIX - especially Linux - support. )
- MetaCard (which is cross-platform, imports HyperCard stacks and translates them to Windows and Unix formats )
- OpenCard (by Royal Software, converts HyperCard stacks to image maps)
- RealBasic (from REAL Software, Inc., converts Visual Basic stacks to Macintosh format)

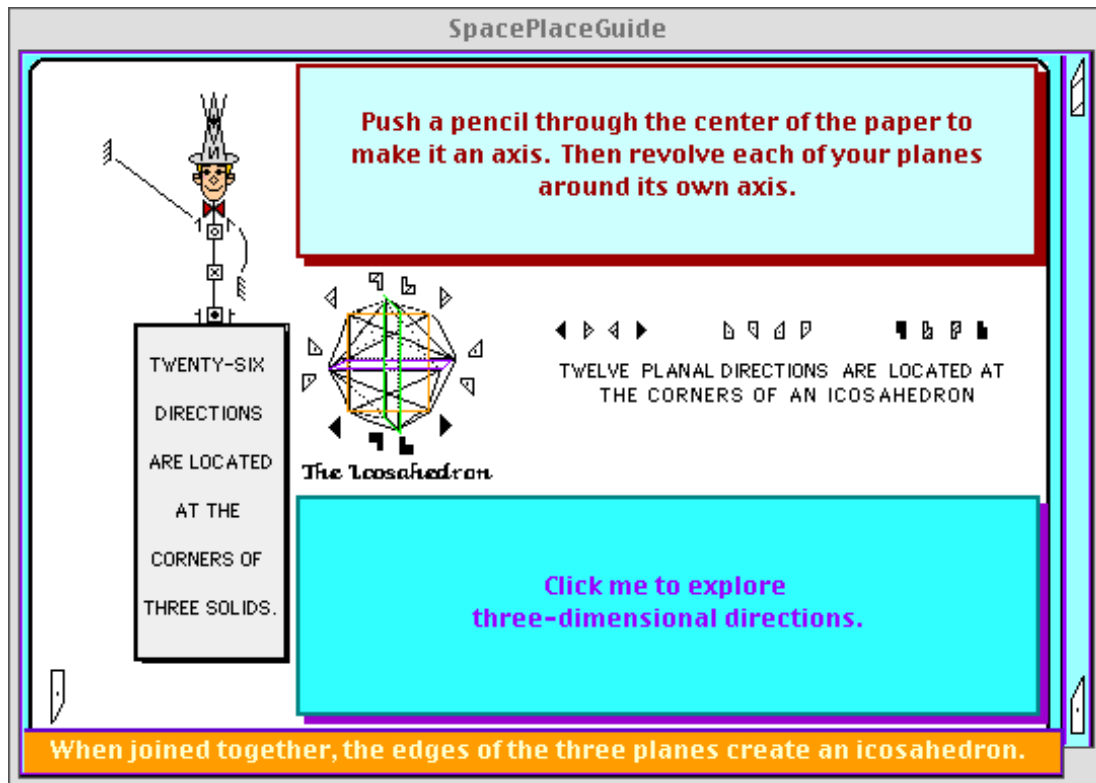
- Serf (resembles RealBasic more than HC although it has stack objects and runs on xtalk)
- SuperCard (by InkWell, allows developers to take advantage of the Mac OS' Appearance Manager, speech recognition, and QTVR)

After rerecording a twenty-year-old score in LabanWriter - of a courante created forty-eight years ago for Louis Horst's Pre Classic Dance Forms course at Juilliard - I copied it to HyperCard and also to MetaCard. HyperCard's soundChannels provided the music composed by Beatrice Hellebrandt during the Bennington days. If no accompanist is available, the channels become considerably convenient. Readers preferring a LabanWriter score may also use HyperCard's accompaniment. Each theme is shown - and heard - on its own card. Lacking soundChannels, the MetaCard<sup>6</sup> version relies on files such as QuickTime or WAV.

Since it opens in Unix and Windows as well as in Macintosh, MetaCard seems to be the best alternative to HyperCard. In MetaCard, even "The Scherzofrenic Trio" (from "Adventures of NotationMan",) can "read" Labanotation in a PC. It's all in the cards. HyperCards, SuperCards, MetaCards, XCards. They hold all kinds of data: even Labanotation. It's all in the cards.

ILLUSTRATIONS:





ENDNOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> Company and product names mentioned herein are trademarks of their respective companies.
- <sup>2</sup> America Online's HyperCard chats, which, led by AFA Jacque (Jacqueline Landman Gay), have been frequented by developer/experts who have influenced recent notationware.
- <sup>3</sup> Although HyperCard lacks native color functionality, its Color Tools XCMDs allow users to add color to stacks.
- <sup>4</sup> HyperCard list members often refer to themselves, and all enthusiastic HyperCard users, as HyperCardians.
- <sup>5</sup> On the internet, HyperCard is still very active. The newsgroup is fair, and the list is busy. HyperCard runs well on all existing Macintosh models, and will run on OS X as-is.
- <sup>6</sup> MetaCard loads the whole stack into RAM when it opens but it uses a HyperTalk-like language that is almost 100% compatible. Several MetaCard engines are needed - one for each platform.

## SOURCES:

Dan Winkler, Scott Kamins, and Jeanne DeVoto. HYPERTALK 2.2 THE BOOK, 2nd Edition, Random House, 1994.

Personal email and letters to the HyperCard List from subscriber/experts - especially: Jacqueline Landman Gay of HyperActive Software, Richard Gaskin of Fourth World, and Scott Raney, president of MetaCard, Inc.

## ABBREVIATIONS:

HC: HyperCard  
OS: Operating System  
PC: Personal Computer (as opposed to a Macintosh)  
QTi: QuickTime Interactive  
QTVR: QuickTime Virtual Reality  
ROM: Read Only Memory  
XCMDs: External Commands