

Demo Version "Envisage 3D" Only

The Grand Tour

Welcome to Envisage 3D, the software suite for three dimensional computer animation on IBM compatible personal computers.

Envisage 3D is ideally suited for all aspects of three dimensional modeling and animation. Its visually oriented interface makes it easy to build three dimensional models and choreograph their motion. Its blinding speed lets you accomplish tasks quickly that might otherwise require a workstation class computer.

If you own other graphically oriented software packages, they can be used with Envisage 3D to enhance the creative process. If you have Autodesk Animator or Autodesk Animator Pro then there is good news for you. The animation files created with Envisage 3D can be loaded directly into Autodesk Animator without any need for conversion. Envisage 3D dramatically increases the animation creating power of either of these packages.

There is equally good news for users of programs supporting DXF and Autodesk 3D Studio type models. Models from such packages can easily be imported then modified and animated as though they had been originally created in Envisage 3D.

The structure of this manual

Readers of this manual will have widely different backgrounds. You could be a beginner to the world of personal computers, perhaps with a strong background in graphics art and design who needs the power of a computer to tackle a new range of challenges.

Alternatively, you may be an expert with CAD programs, but you need a way to visualize your creations, and generate animations to bring them to life.

Perhaps you are an expert with computers, but think that you have no graphic skills.

In all these cases and many more, you will find that Envisage 3D will let you easily accomplish more than you ever thought was possible.

Because you may come from such widely varied backgrounds, this manual faces a daunting task. It must describe a program that for all its inherent simplicity still has a lot of detail. The manual must describe ideas that may not be familiar to all of you.

The first time you use a program of a new type, such as a word processor, a painting or drawing program, a CAD program, or a database program, you will find yourself immersed in a strange and different world. Some of the skills that you have learned with other packages will carry over, but much will be new. Before you can do anything you must know everything! Or so it seems. After a while, through a process like osmosis, you will have absorbed the philosophy of a new type of program and you will wonder why you had any difficulty at all.

So it is with three dimensional animation. There are a lot of concepts that you will have to master that are different from any that you have ever encountered. This manual will teach you everything that you need to know to be a successful and productive animator.

How you use this manual is up to you. A logical progression from front to back will suit many people. However, you may find that after you have gone a short way through, that you want to jump straight to a particular topic. That is OK too.

Only one thing is strongly recommended is that you do most of your reading while sitting in front of your computer while Envisage3D is actually running! You will learn much more quickly, if you try things out as you read about them.

Getting started

The first thing you must do is to install Envisage3D on your computer.

The first step in installing any program is to look for the latest instructions. They will be in the form of a small booklet detailing full installation procedures and any changes that have been made since the manual was printed.

This manual was written with the assumption that you have a 486 class computer with an SVGA display card and color monitor, a mouse, eight megabytes or more of memory and a hard drive with ten or twenty megabytes of free space. It is very likely that you will still be able to use Envisage3D if your system is based on a 386 class computer with less memory or storage. However, you may not be able to build such complicated models and your animations may take longer to generate. See the installation and troubleshooting booklet for more details.

Some of the most important installation information may also be placed on the labels of the distribution disks themselves, so don't forget to look at them.

Locate the first disk. Place it in your computer. Type the letter that corresponds to the disk drive, usually A or B, and type a colon (:) and press the Enter key.

Now type INSTALL and press the Enter key.

The installation process is largely automatic. You will be asked a few questions, and you will be requested to insert the other distribution disks at the appropriate time.

Check in the installation booklet to see if there are any other things to do. You will probably want to customize your .i.AUTOEXEC.BAT:1-;AUTOEXEC.BAT batch and perhaps a few other files described in that booklet. These customizations can make using Envisage3D much more flexible.

When you have completed the installation, run Envisage 3D. The installation should have set the current drive to where Envisage 3D was installed. If it did not or you have since changed drives, type the letter that corresponds to that drive, usually C then type a colon (:) and press the Enterkey. Selecting Envisage 3D's directory as the current directory may be done by typing CD \EVI and pressing Enter.

When you are in the correct directory, type EVI and press Enter. The welcome screen of Envisage 3D will be displayed and you can enter the exciting world of three dimensional computer animation.

The modules

Although Envisage 3D can be viewed as a single application, it is organized in several parts called modules. Each module has a characteristic screen appearance, it may have its own set of menus and controls, and it performs a particular function.

The modules are:

Animation module: this controls many of the aspects of an animation, especially those connected with arranging things in space. It also serves as the home base from which other modules are started.

Keyframer module: this controls the time behavior of an animation.

Modeler module: this is used to construct the basic shapes of the objects that are used to make an animation. It is not included in the demo version.

Viewer module: this is used to look at a single image. Images can be generated by Envisage 3D, they are also used to apply color to three dimensional objects.

Player module: this displays an animation on the screen

Recorder module: this takes individual images and combines them into a single animation file.

Dismantler module: this creates an image file from each frame in an animation.