



Mensa International Journal, December 2000
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"Smart Software"

As a software producer, what should you aim for? Flashy buttons, bloated code and tons of features that won't be used?

I would rather go for immediacy, vibrancy, ease of use combined with advanced and powerful features and tight, nearly bug-less code that works on most PCs. I guess that, now that I have ruled out 98% of the current, commercial programs, you wonder what sort of program I am going to discuss today.

You've read about it before in this column. I was pretty clear that I found it awesome.

Well, now that ZBrush from Pixologic has moved up into version 1.03, it has also matured and grown. Many small bugs are gone, many new features have been added, and it feels like a new program.

Have you ever given a kid finger-paints and a large piece of paper? Notice how naturally everything comes: mixing colors, using broad strokes and layers of paint, painting your kitchen table a delicious brown-yellow color?

Imagine that the kid was given bright metallic colors, along with brushes with textures, tools that could stretch, mutilate and smooth the paint and even 3D-tools...

Now -- wouldn't you want to test it too?

Go to www.pixologic.com and download the save-disabled trial. Don't read the manual. Forget about the help screens. Just start it – and start playing.

In a short while you will realize you can't live without this program, and you will soon cough up \$292.50 (which is 50% off the normal price of \$585). Don't forget to let your kids test it too! I made the background image of www.smartsoftware.org with ZBrush -- it isn't great art, but I had a lot of fun while making it! ;)