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A blog by Bill Desowitz

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VES Launches VFX Reference Platform

The Visual Effects Society (VES) has released The VFX Reference Platform, a set of tools and library versions to be used as a common target platform for building software for the industry. The purpose is to minimize incompatibilities between different software packages, ease the support burden for Linux-based pipelines, and encourage further adoption of Linux by software vendors. The Reference Platform is updated annually by a group of software vendors in collaboration with the VES technology committee.

The Calendar Year 2014 (CY2014) Reference Platform is the first-of-its-kind and represents the closest collaboration yet between software solutions providers to converge on a common platform. The CY2015 Platform developed for 2015 software releases has now been published in draft form and feedback is invited from software vendors and customer studios. The final version will be published in August and announced at SIGGRAPH in Vancouver.

"By working with industry software providers, we've identified major library versions that are updated annually that can be shared between all major apps. This is a huge step forward for software distribution for VFX on Linux," said Jeffrey A. Okun, VES board chair. "We're proud that the VES Technology Committee, under the leadership of Rob Bredow and Nick Cannon, has successfully addressed this critical challenge and developed a much-needed solution."

The VES worked in collaboration with leading VFX companies and application providers to develop the platform, which provides a forum to coordinate major platform upgrades, easing the transition to new technologies, while increasing reliable interoperability and lowering costs for vendors and customers.

"For the past year, the VES has been collaborating with Autodesk and other software vendors to create a reference Linux platform to address the endemic hassle of 'version-itis.' We're thrilled the VES is taking the lead to rally both the visual effects community and vendors on the Linux platform to organize this working group and benefit all of our customers," added Chris Vienneau, Autodesk Media & Entertainment director of product management.

"The VFX Reference Platform initiative aims to prune superfluous technical variety so we can all focus on stuff that matters. Tweak applauds all of the effort that goes into this indispensable project," said Seth Rosenthal, Tweak Software.

The Reference Platforms along with further supporting information, including how to contribute feedback, are available on http://vfxplatform.com.

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