

PRE-PUBLICATION DRAFT

STAGE DIRECTIONS

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TITLE: ESP Vision

Every ten years or so there is a software program that changes the way we use personal computers. The first wave took place over twenty years ago with the advent of word processors and spreadsheets. The next major change came with drafting programs like AutoCAD[®] and graphics/image processing software such as Adobe Photoshop[®] and its suite of related products. ESP Vision is an advanced lighting pre-visualization program that can take your creative design process to the next level, enabling lighting designers to create and run dynamic light cues in the studio before setting foot into a performance venue or beginning a technical rehearsal. This software will get your heart pounding, stimulate your imagination, and make you eager to put your lighting designs on the stage. According to Alan "AJ" Jess, Director of Marketing, "ESP Vision is the most technologically advanced lighting pre-visualization software available on the planet." I tend to agree with him, especially considering the expressions of amazement on the faces of lighting designers in our computer lab once they saw the program in action.

You can easily download the demo version with its built-in library of stage lighting equipment and a ready-made setting. You must pay strict attention to the minimum computer system requirements or the program will not run. I tried to do it with a processor slightly slower than the recommended 2 GB Pentium 4, and although the program loaded, it permitted only a glimpse of its powerful capability. However, with a fast processor and sufficient RAM, ESP Vision is a breathtaking lighting visualization program.

By using ESP Vision to animate, preview, program, modify and save your lighting designs, you will not only save time and money in expensive venue rentals and technical rehearsals, but you will have ample opportunity to animate your creative imagination and achieve the optimal design by seeing the results of specific lighting fixtures, color selection and special effects before you begin to hang your first instrument. You can load your scenery, place your lights and use a virtual console or your computer mouse to set up and run your show while seeing exactly how standard lights, moving lights, groups and cues will appear on stage. It also lets you see pyrotechnics, water, mist, fog, smoke and other special effects.

Each fixture in the ESP Vision lighting inventory has the same photometric, mechanical and electronic parameters as the actual instrument in the real world, such as an ETC Source 4 Par Scroller with accurate color wheel rotation speeds or an HES xSpot with the precise beam angle. You can change lamps, colors, patterns and display multiple video screens. You will see immediate results as you use the program interface to select a

fixture or group of instruments and literally move their beams around the stage to check your angle, focus and coverage.

Navigation is easy with the mouse. You can pan, rotate or zoom in and out of the scene. You adjust ambient light with the numbers on your computer keyboard. Focusing lights is a snap by drawing a box with your mouse around them, and then moving with the arrow keys. There are three views already setup in the demo: Overhead (on the O key), Front of House (F key) and Back of House (B key). You'll want to save your own views by using the CTRL key along with any other key, just like setting a macro in other programs, and you are limited only by the number of keys on your keyboard. Of course, you can always move the mouse to any viewpoint you desire, and you can change your saved camera views at will. There are other macro key commands to highlight one instrument at a time, and save your focus positions.

The program features real-time shadowing on surfaces and in the air. One of the more remarkable features is activated by the F4 key. Two sliders automatically appear and you can adjust particle density in the atmosphere.

There is an additional companion simulation program that gives you a virtual Hog2PC lighting controller, a workhorse console for major concert productions. It gives you a replica board on your video display as an editor along with the ESP Vision simulation window. As you run through the demo cues programmed to show ESP Vision's major features, you can actually control the lighting changes. Or you can program your own cues using the instrument library and patch included with the trial version.

While we may have become accustomed to the compatibility of control devices in the age of DMX, it is useful to know that your off-line editor can be your own or any DMX-512 lighting console. ESP Vision offers an optional VBox providing DMX connectivity. The VBox receives DMX-512 input and transfers data to ESP Vision through a standard USB connection, or multiple VBoxes can be connected through other USB ports.

Elton John's lighting designer, Kevin "Stick" Bye, brings his own Virtuoso or Grand MA console into the ESP Vision facility to program all of his cues. Stick often takes ten days to prepare his lighting design, working freely with plenty of time to optimize his cues for each song in Elton's show. While he works on the look of each cue using ESP Vision's pre-visualization features, the rental house saves wear and tear on the actual fixtures, there is no cost for venue rental, and no hourly costs or mandatory breaks for stagehands. Yet Stick can indulge himself completely in the design process and actually see the results of his creative work on the computer screen in real time with ESP Vision. Then, he packs up his console and takes it to the concert hall, checks a few important cues, and is ready for the show.

This is a superb product for professional lighting designers, and also an excellent teaching method in an academic setting where it might be impossible to hang and run cues for every student lighting projects. With ESP Vision, you can visualize the lighting

design you have created without using a crescent wrench to hang a fixture or running 20-amp cable to dimmer outlets.

Demonstration downloads:

ESP Vision: www.esp-vision.com/demo.htm

HOGPC: www.flyingpig.com

Price and contact information:

ESP Vision costs \$750.00 per universe.

Note: The DMX-512 protocol sends a data stream with information for a maximum of 512 channels. This is one universe. If you want to control more channels, you need a second universe. ESP Vision can be configured to support up to 16 universes, or a whopping 8,192 channels.

ESP Vision is also available bundled with Vectorworks, a powerful drafting, 3-D modeling and rendering software.

ESP Vision's VBox is currently available at the price of \$450.00 per box.

You can purchase ESP Vision by going to www.esp-vision.com

Email: support@esp-vision.com

Minimum system requirements:

Minimum system requirements to run the demo are as follows:

Pentium 4 2.0 gig processor

512 meg RAM

Windows XP, 2000 or 2003 Server

Your video card should have at least 128 meg of VRAM; support Vertex Shader 1.1 or better; support Pixel Shader 1.3 or better.

Note:

The installer will check to make sure you meet the minimum system requirements.

To run the demo, you also need DirectX 9 installed on your computer. To check to see if you do, go to the Start Run menu and enter dxdiag. A popup window will show you the current version of DirectX that you are running. If you do not have DirectX 9.0, you must download the latest version. The Vision demo also uses HOGPC.