

GUIDE: SCM & ASSET MANAGEMENT

Pulling your hair out with your current SCM or asset management system mangling merges? There's a number of alternatives out there, **Ed Fear** discovers...

You hardly need us to tell you that SCM and asset management – lumped together here because of the common overlapping areas – aren't the sexiest of subjects. You're not going to get Katie Price and Kerry Katona having a public spat as to whether Hansoft or Perforce is better – largely

because both names are two-syllable words, admittedly – but even in the game field it's not as sexy as volumetric cloud renderers or global radiosity lightmappers.

Nevertheless, that doesn't mean they're any less important; quite the opposite in fact. With the fidelity

increase that's accompanied the jump to high definition, assets are now orders of magnitude bigger than in previous generations. As we approach measuring a game's development data footprint in terabytes – probably not an overexaggeration with games like *Mass Effect 2* and *Final Fantasy XIII* – making

sure that assets can be added, modified and shoveled around without taking valuable hours to execute is absolutely vital, as are the project management and bug-tracking features when dealing with spiralling amounts of content. Here are four of the most popular solutions.

ALIENBRAIN



DEVELOPER
Avid

CLIENTS
Lionhead, Capcom, Ninja Theory, Blizzard

PLATFORMS
Windows, OS X, Linux

PRICE
From \$12,000

CONTACT
info@alienbrain.com



Alienbrain was designed especially for visual assets

www.alienbrain.com

'Asset Management for Artists' is the claim that Alienbrain hangs its lapel on, priding itself on a user interface designed especially for the more visually minded. But rather than being some sort of slight on the mental faculties of artists, what it

really means is that high-quality thumbnail previews are available for all assets, including 3D models and scenes, while programmers aren't left out – there's integration support for Microsoft Visual Studio too. Naturally, it works remotely as well as on-site.

HANSOFT




DEVELOPER
Hansoft

CLIENTS
Crytek, BioWare, Harmonix, Ubisoft

PLATFORMS
Windows (Linux/OSX via WINE)

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
solutions@hansoft.se




Hansoft mixes agile project planning with QA and bug tracking to great effect

www.hansoft.se

Emerging to tackle the dominance of Perforce in the industry, Hansoft took a decidedly game-focused approach and won over a huge number of people when it embraced agile planning just as much of the industry also did. The latest version is 6.0,

released just a few weeks ago, which focuses on improving the usability of existing features and workflows rather than introducing any major new ones. But with a client list like that, perhaps evolution is better than revolution for now.

SUBVERSION



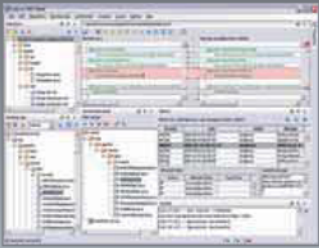
DEVELOPER
N/A (now Apache Incubator project)

CLIENTS
Various

PLATFORMS
Everything

PRICE
Free (open-source)

CONTACT
N/A



SVN clients are useful for getting a visual representation of your project (here: Synchro SVN)

subversion.apache.org

As one of the most popular source control standards out there, Subversion has certainly seen a lot of use over the past few years. Perhaps not entirely suited to contemporary triple-A game development – some say that it might be a bit flaky when

dealing with huge asset banks – and somewhat superseded by the more advanced GIT, it's still used amongst a variety of smaller-scale projects across the world. Most importantly, it's free, and there's clients for almost every platform under the sun.

PERFORCE



DEVELOPER
Perforce

CLIENTS
Sony Online Entertainment, Epic

PLATFORMS
Windows, Unix, Mac OS X

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
Via website



Perforce is still the heavyweight in the SCM field

www.perforce.com

Perforce has been the big daddy in games development for quite some time, and continues to court some of the biggest names in the field. The latest version, 2009.2, added 'shelving' – the ability to cache modified files on the server without

checking them in as the latest version – and increased offline access, allowing users to queue up actions such as editing files, adding new ones and deleting others, and have them execute when an internet connection is available.