

APOGEE

PEAK OF FLIGHT

NEWSLETTER

RockSim 5 Preview Information

By Tim Van Milligan

This is a little different article than the last one. I thought I'd answer a reader's question.

>From: Bill Woods

>Subject: Apogee Components Rocketry E-Zine

>Date: Tue, Apr 18, 2000

> Good job. I liked the first issue.

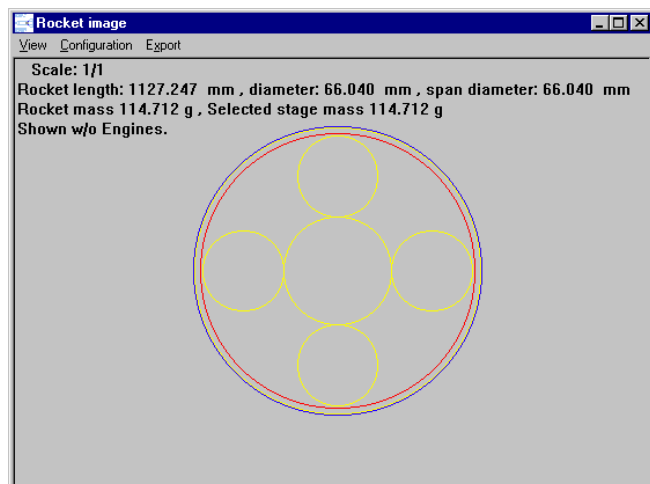
>

> Any plans to release a new version of RockSim? If so what

> kind on cool new features in it going to have?

In March, I did a presentation about RockSim at NARCON in Dallas. The people that attended the conference got a glimpse of what the programmer (Paul Fossey) was working on.

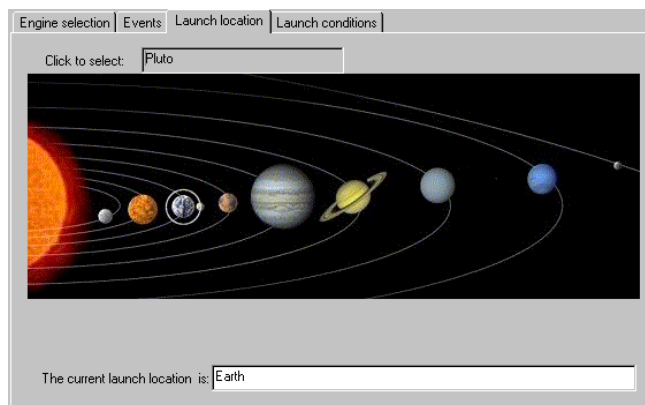
Note: I do this same presentation at every NARCON, and I always try to give the attendee's something really neat to see -- so don't miss next year's NARCON.



Basically, Paul did nearly an entire rewrite of RockSim. We wanted to separate out the calculations from the visual and display part of the program. The reason for this was to clean up the program, and to make it easier to port the program to other operating systems. It may still take a while to get the program into other systems, but at least now it can be done with much less headaches.

Anyhow... this job of rewriting the program has taken a very very long time; which is why there hasn't been a new version of RockSim in over a year.

A lot of the other new features also came as suggestions



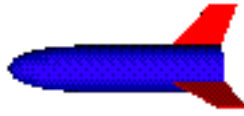
from RockSim users. So keep those suggestions coming!

First: Through-the-wall fin tabs. Lots of users requested this feature.

Second: Unlimited Cluster Arrangements. In the last versions of the program, you were limited to a maximum of 6 motors in a cluster -- and all of the motors had to be the same diameter. Now, you'll get to intermix the motor sizes, and change the configuration of the motor pattern. It is really only limited by the imagination of the designer. You'll also have the option of setting the ignition times of each of the individual motors in the cluster; in case you like to air-start motors.



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Third: Ability to simulate launches from different planets in our solar system. This one is just for fun, but it does have a lot of applications for education. It may also bring back those nostalgic days when you were a kid and always wondered how high your rocket would fly if you launched it on the surface of the moon.

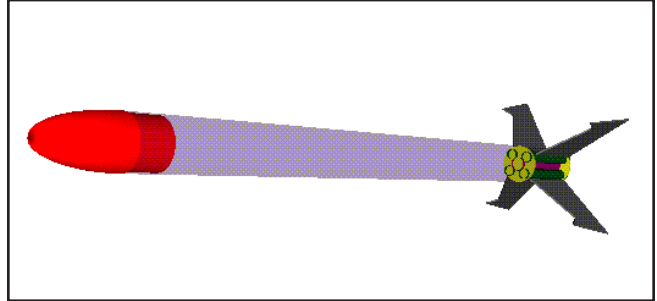
Fourth: The biggest new feature is that you will now be able to display the model in 3-D. Rotating it to any view-angle too! This one is going to blow you away. You'll also be able to export the image as a .jpg file, so you'll have a easier way to post your designs on your own web pages. If you remember, please add a link from your site to the Apogee site, so that your visitors can download the demo of the program, and view your great designs.

What is the status of the next version? Well, Paul is still working on it. Then we have to goto a beta-test stage. It is going to be at least four months (or more). But it is at a stage where we are starting to get really excited about it.

What it won't have...

Like version 4.0, it won't have the ability for tube fins, ring tails, or strap-ons. We had to cut off the features somewhere, and these are very, very, very complicated configurations. We just don't know what it will do to the CP location or the Cd of the rocket.

Should you buy RockSim v4.0 now, or wait until v5.0 comes out?



Easy: Buy now!

RockSim is a ton of fun to use, and you'll be missing out on a lot of enjoyment the longer you put off the purchase of the software. You won't have to buy the full version all over again after version 5.0 comes out; you'll only pay a small upgrade fee. It is well worth buying v4.0 now! And, v5.0 will be able to open all the designs you created in v4.0, so you won't be wasting any effort either. Just think how excitement you'll have to open up the designs and seeing what they look like in 3-D.

If you don't have RockSim, you can download a FREE demo version from the Apogee Components web site: <http://www.apogeerockets.com> The demo version of the program can do nearly everything the real version can do except saving and printing. Give it a try; it won't cost you anything to download and try it out.

About the Author:

Tim Van Milligan is the owner of Apogee Components (<http://www.apogeerockets.com>) and the curator of the rocketry education web site: <http://www.apogeerockets.com/education>. He is also the author of the books: "Model Rocket Design and Construction," "69 Simple Science Fair Projects with Model Rockets: Aeronautics" and publisher of the FREE e-zine newsletter about model rockets. You can subscribe to the e-zine at the Apogee Components web site, or sending an email to: ezine@apogeerockets.com with "SUBSCRIBE" as the subject line of the message.

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