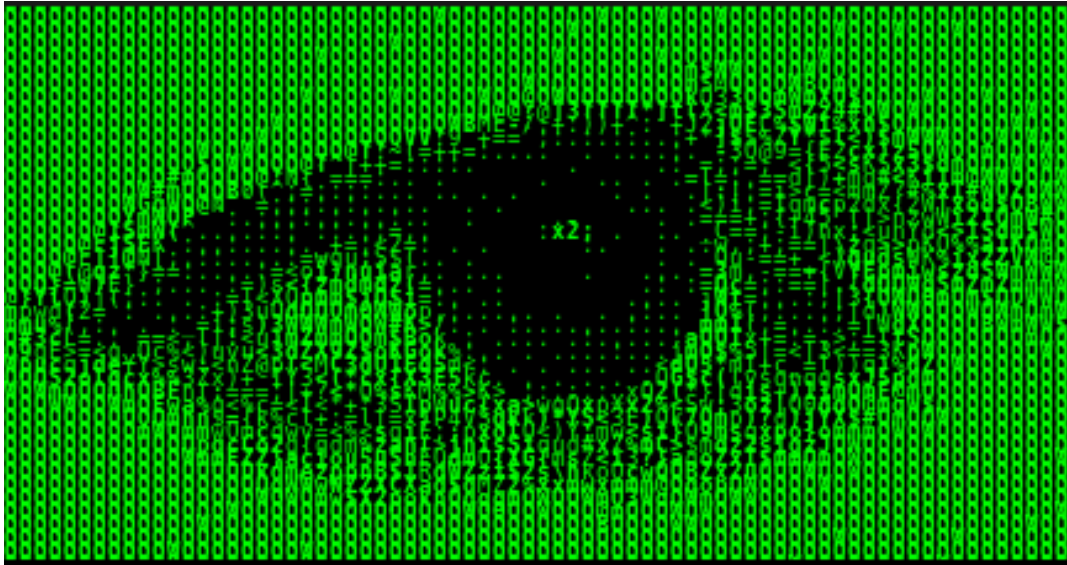


Hascii Cam

Jaromil's Journal of Musings

2000



HasciiCam is a software released in 2000 with the intention to provide all GNU/Linux users with a tool to stream live ascii-video on the web: a video made of letters, resembling the original picture thanks to the variety of characters density.

Originally based on the AALib¹ implementation by Jan Hubicka, it added to it the possibility to render live video from a webcam, letting more artists elaborate the result in a large number of real-time installations and performances.

The resulting video can also be rendered into an HTML page with an automatic refresh that, when uploaded on a web server, can let anyone watch the ascii-video stream using a simple browser without any plugins.

Since its first release HasciiCam has been employed by a number of artists for performances, installations and net-based artworks, widely appreciated for its aesthetics as well for the simplicity of its code, following the GNU and BSD traditions of software development. Among the contributors to its code are Gerd Knorr, Thomas Pfau, Josto Chinelli, August Black, Martin Guy, Erich Berger, Alessandro Preite Martinez.

The source code is available on [ftp.dyne.org/hasciicam](ftp://ftp.dyne.org/hasciicam)²

0.1 Group Exhibitions

- (2007) Streamfest, Lecce
- (2003) Otokultivator, Vis island (Croatia)
- (2001) Digital is not Analog Metagallery³

¹<http://aa-project.sourceforge.net/aalib/>

²<ftp://ftp.dyne.org/tbt>

³<http://www.d-i-n-a.net/en/metagallery/index.html>



0.2 Critics, essays, publications

“Live ASCII Streaming of Video” by Drazen Pantic (2001)

Major step forward towards live ASCII streaming has been made by Jaromil and the group around dyne.org: their product, Hasciicam... “makes it possible to have live ASCII video on the web. It captures video from a tv card and renders it into ASCII, formatting the output into an html page with a refresh tag or in a live ASCII window or in a simple text file as well, giving the possibility to anybody that has a bttv card, a linux box and a cheap modem line to show a live ASCII-video feed that can be browsable without any need for plugin, java etc. Hasciicam’s source code is released under the Gnu Public License.”

NTK.net “TRACKING” sufficiently advanced technology : the gathering

Seems like only yesterday that we clustered around the office SGI, revelling in CHRIS PIRAZZI’s amazing 1995 live video->ascii art convertor. Well, now you too can pray that such fripperies don’t lead your company to inevitable stagnation and collapse, when you too compile your own copy of HASCIICAM for Video4Linux. Features include dumping in VT100 friendly spools (for live telecasts via telnet) or automatic HTML generation for counterintuitively large Webcam uploads. Now it’s just a matter of selling banner-ad space on your “Am I Naked In This Text Dump Or Not” Website, and you’ll have it all. <http://ascii.dyne.org/>

Slashdot “The ASCII Cam” posted by Griffjon and Hemos (2001)

“The folks over at Dyne.org have hacked together a method to take live camera feed and turn it into ascii-character video on Linux. You can get the latest release, or see screenshots from a live stream. Y’know, this kinda ascii could be good random noise input for a cipher.” read here all the discussion⁴, Slashdot is an extremely popular forum for geeks and computer hackers.

To reply some comments: in fact the HasciiCam software has been adopted to generate random seeds from a WebCam pointed on a Lava Lamp, among the laboratories using this technology there was also Sun in California - thanks for noticing :)

“Babylon by Bus” by Armin Medosh (2006)

Jaromil started to work on a software that would allow everybody to create a radio station on the internet, which would become MuSE (<http://muse.dyne.org/>). He also created a command line VJ tool called FreeJ (<http://freej.dyne.org/>); and he wrote a software which transcoded live video into ascii-video, called Hasciicam (<http://ascii.dyne.org/>).

“Hacking for Art’s Sake” by Martin Howse (2007)

Quality ASCII rendering can also be found in the mix, and it’s worth noting that nearly all Free Software artists, including Jaromil with his superb Hasciicam app, have flirted with ASCII, a suitable marker for a low-tech DIY aesthetic.

⁴<http://slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=01/01/26/1617217>

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