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Final Fantasy XVI made me remember my roots... or how I became a Delphi developer

If you have been working with and developing for computers since the mid-80s, Final Fantasy is truly astonishing to see and experience. It made me remember how I ended up becoming a Delphi developer.

By Dr. Holger Flick

Just let me get it out there, Final Fantasy XVI is a treat for the eyes for any software developer that started programming in the 1980s!

What is Final Fantasy?!

As a brief introduction if you do not even have an idea what I am talking about. Final Fantasy XVI is a highly anticipated computer action game by Square Enix that was released last week for Sony Playstation. In my spare time - when I need to relax - I am known to play the one or the other game on the Playstation console.

Holger's journey

I have gotten my first (personal) computer in 1987. Back then, graphics were not the standard. Most of the time you used a text-based console. In my case, MS-DOS 3.2 was pre-installed with English locale only. Weeks after taking my first steps, MS-DOS 3.3 was released and the computer started to reply in German. I was also in the rare position to have a color display with 16 colors. Formally, an EGA card was installed in the system. What a wonderful thing to have colors and not just white, green, or purple. Still, there were few games available and graphics were not really sophisticated. The first game with awesome graphics that comes to mind is *Monkey Island*.

Remember, this was before Windows. First dialog boxes were being used in software like AutoSketch. However, even text-processors that allowed you to import pictures, used text-representations. I am not sure how many Delphi developers still remember Turbo Vision, but it was tough to code with and it was nowhere near the level of today's modern user interfaces.

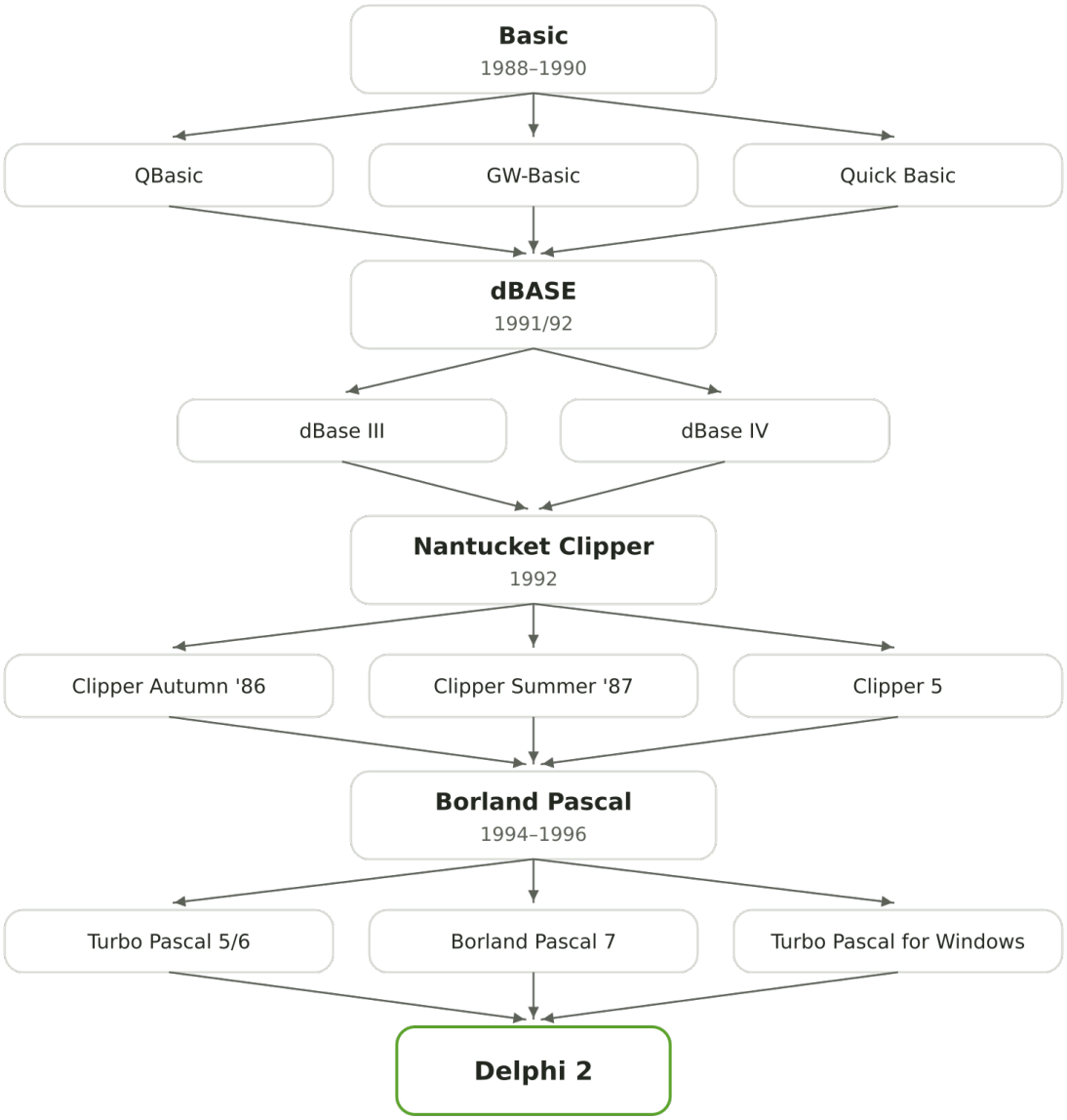
At the same time, you could also invest in an Amiga which had a completely different approach with a graphical user interface. Also, many of my friends had a "Commodore 64" -- referred to as C64. If you were just interested in games and had a TV, you most likely had a Nintendo Entertainment Station -- NES.

I was fascinated by these systems, but because our family has a PC, there was simply neither time nor budget for a second system. Also, my parents had me rather sit in front of a computer that was not limited to playing games -- which the Nintendo or SEGA systems definitely were.

Interestingly, I do not have a single friend or acquaintance that owned one of those "gaming systems" or an Amiga that went into the software development world. Even more so, none of them decided to pick a job focused on computer science either.

As you might have guessed, I did not spend a lot of time gaming back then but started writing my own computer program. To most of your surprise, I am sure, **not in Pascal**!

GW-Basic was the first language handed to me (with a book on my birthday) and this is the sequence of my programming language/software development tools. I say software development tools as dBASE III was not a programming language by design.



My programming language journey: from Basic to dBASE, Clipper, Borland Pascal, and finally Delphi 2

A long journey indeed. Stay tuned for another post about my journey from Delphi 2 to Delphi 11 Alexandria.

Impressions from a console in 2023

These are some snapshots of what "blew me away" visually playing *Final Fantasy XVI*. For the record, I still have not finished the game. Also, these are graphics from a Playstation 5 console. Imagine how far we have come since 1987 when playing games on a professional "Gaming PC"! I hope you are as amazed as I am what is possible with computers these days - and I have not even mentioned the audio and other additions that modern games treat us with...



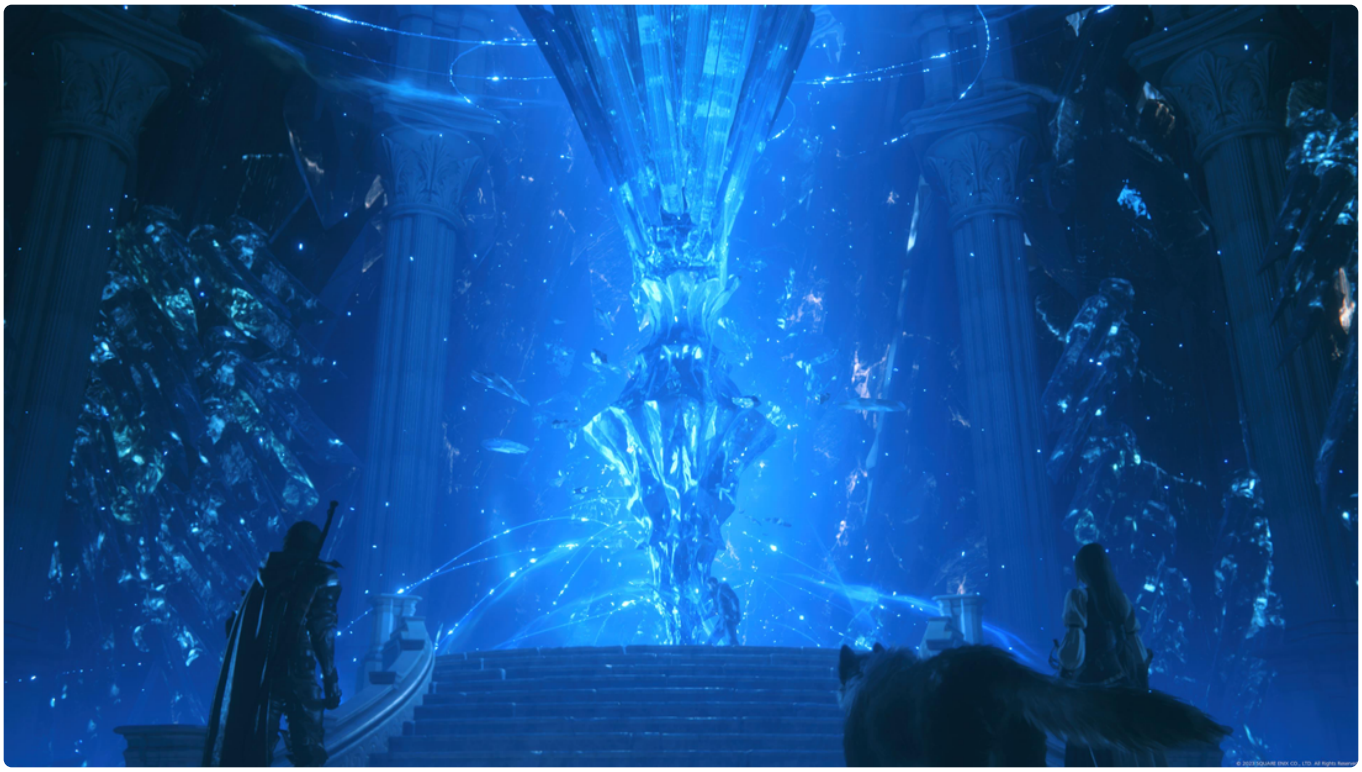


















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