

= Virtual Theatre =

The Virtual Theatre is a computer game engine designed by Revolution Software to produce adventure games for computer platforms . The engine allowed their team to script events , and move animated sprites against a drawn background with moving elements using a point @-@ and @-@ click style interface . Upon its first release , it rivaled competing engines like LucasArts ' SCUMM and Sierra 's Creative Interpreter , due to its then high level of artificial intelligence . The engine was first proposed in 1989 , while the first game to use it , Lure of the Temptress , was released in 1992 , followed by Beneath a Steel Sky (1994) , Broken Sword : The Shadow of the Templars (1996) and Broken Sword II : The Smoking Mirror (1997) .

It allowed in @-@ game characters to wander around the gameworld independently of each other , performing " everyday life " actions , which was not previously possible , and all characters and objects occupied space , and consequently , non @-@ player characters had to side @-@ step the player 's protagonist and any other object they came across , as well as the player had to side step them , achieving a more realistic game world than previous engines were unable to provide , though non @-@ player characters could unwittingly block a path as the player was traversing the game scene . Non @-@ player characters performed much simpler tasks with each release due to size constraints .

Two games (Broken Sword : The Shadow of the Templars and Broken Sword II : The Smoking Mirror) that use a Virtual Theatre variant engine can now be played on modern hardware using ScummVM , which as a result allows the engine to run on platforms where the titles were not officially released . In 2012 , it was confirmed that the engine will be revived as " Virtual Theatre 7 " for the upcoming fifth Broken Sword titled Broken Sword : The Serpent 's Curse (2013) .

= = Development = =

Charles Cecil and Tony Warriner had worked together at Artic Computing , an English video game development company . In 1990 , they decided that they would set up their own video game development company , together with David Sykes and Noirin Carmody . For their debut adventure game , Lure of the Temptress , released in 1992 for Amiga , Atari ST and PC , Cecil , Warriner , Sykes and Dan Marchant created the concept of the game engine titled Virtual Theatre , which Warriner wrote .

For Beneath a Steel Sky , released in 1994 for Amiga , and PC , Revolution used an updated version of Virtual Theatre , Virtual Theatre 2 @.@ 0 , written by Warriner and Sykes . However , because the game was six times the size of Lure of the Temptress , non @-@ player characters had to perform much simpler tasks than in its predecessor . Broken Sword : The Shadow of the Templars , released in 1996 for PC , Mac and PlayStation , and its sequel , Broken Sword II : The Smoking Mirror , released in 1997 for PC and PlayStation , also used modified versions of the Virtual Theatre engine . The engine got various updates since then . For Broken Sword : The Serpent 's Curse a brand new engine (VT7) was developed in order to deal with multiple platforms and , in particular screen resolution (The system is built on C + + and OpenGL , and a custom scripting language to implement the game itself) .

= = Features = =

Traditionally in adventure game engines , non @-@ player characters were static awaiting the player to interact with them to trigger an event . However , Virtual Theatre allowed non @-@ player characters to traverse the world in seemingly random patterns , interacting with their environment . Upon the engine 's first release , it rivaled competing engines such as LucasArts ' SCUMM engine , and Sierra 's Creative Interpreter , due to its then high level of artificial intelligence .

Another advantage of the engine is that it is a cross @-@ platform engine . It was also faster on the Amiga than the C code that was used by many USA programmers at that time . Compared to the Sierra titles , the engine became in this respect more sophisticated , a reason why Revolution did

the conversion of King 's Quest VI to the Amiga .

All of the in @-@ game objects (including non @-@ player characters) in Virtual Theatre occupied space , which was a unique feature for an engine at the time . Consequently , non @-@ player characters had to side @-@ step the player 's protagonist and any other object they came across , as well as the player had to side step them . When a non @-@ player character bypassed the protagonist , he or she uttered a comment (like " Excuse me , Sir ") . As the result , the engine achieved a more realistic game world than previous engines were able to provide , though non @-@ player characters could unwittingly block a path as the player was traversing the game scene . This was remedied with the release of Broken Sword : The Shadow of the Templars , where the protagonist , if found his way blocked by another character , could simply walk through him .

Two games (Broken Sword : The Shadow of the Templars and Broken Sword II : The Smoking Mirror) that use a Virtual Theatre variant engine can now be played on modern hardware using ScummVM . Consequently , those games using the engine may run on the platforms the titles were not officially released on .