

Darkstar usability: Week of 8/31/09

Akash did not write anything up as he has been working on other project related tasks and has not worked with Darkstar yet.

John

SwordWorld is a decent tutorial for getting started, but only if you know what you are doing ahead of time. It felt like the Hello series of tutorials covered the bare basics and then SwordWorld hit you with "and this is how everything else works."

In terms of code readability, working primarily a C/Python and not Java, I had a difficult time simply reading the SwordWorld source files. Mainly the code felt unusually dense while the comments were disproportionately large. I understand the need for large amounts of comments to explain things in a tutorial, I just feel that end of line comments could do a better job than huge block comments at the top of each function.

The python api was simple enough to get working, but getting it to play nice with our engine (Panda3d) took some time, mainly because the required information about integrating the api that made the python api work (the Twisted Internet module) was in an obscure section of the Panda3d manual.

Lastly, programming on the server feels stiff and clunky, likely because I have not gotten into the swing of how Darkstar is organized, but it is still my first impression nonetheless.

Rick

Here are two comments on Darkstar as I use it so far.

1. Too few complete and easy-running game examples for starters. I found an example called "Project Snowman" but that's the only one.

2. There seems some annoying strange exceptions of warning on the server side every time I boot it on. I guess we lack some source files when we download the source code from the official website. The warning says, "invoking disconnected callback on listener." with couple lines of the reasons. The server can be still running but I think there should be something wrong.

Strictly to say, I've not used it that much, so I couldn't tell you other problems on it.

Lynne

The version I used is 0.9.10. So far the server is stable and it worked pretty well as local host on my computer that I can boot it successfully every time but it showed some warning messages like listeners node failed. However, those nodes failures didn't affect the connection through the client to the server.

Ya-ching

I'll focus on the tutorial of server-side because I haven't explored the full function of Darkstar server.

Pros:

1. Easy to set up, only need to install JVM, and then unzip the downloaded Darkstar file.
2. Clear folder system, easy to understand.

Cons:

1. There are not enough runnable example code.
2. It would be great to have a some short sample code in API. The API including a lot of detail, which is good. With some shout sample code, it would be more understandable for user to explore the function of darkstar.