

# 4

## Trainz

When four years "on rails" is a good thing

The king is dead, long live the king. Or at least, Microsoft Train Simulator is dead, long live Trainz. Yes, for once in history, a little guy has beaten the giant from Redmond at, literally, its own game.

Of course, Brisbane-based Auran won't say directly that it was the steadily increasing functionality of Trainz - the world's best model railroad simulator and soon to be best railroad simulator, period - that caused the MTS team to throw up its collective hands and say "enough with the splines and the twice as many objects and the brilliant support for user created content already" and shut up shop. But we know.

Fact was, MTS was a Flight Simulator total conversion that put planes on rails and thought the standard "give 'em a few tracks" methodology would work on railheads. But it took Auran's design philosophy to make this highly specific genre work.

Trainz is a railroad modelling package, not just a game. As Auran CEO Greg Lane says in the boxout, including the modelling as part of the game was what made the original Trainz a success.

This new version will build on the steady foundations laid down by Trainz and Trainz Railroad Simulator 2004. Auran has the whole modelling and prototyping thing down pretty good now, so the company is turning its attention to simulation.

TRS2004 saw the first beefy sim aspects make it into the game, along with steam locomotives. The decidedly "ping pong table in dad's garage" feel of the layouts was replaced with living worlds that needed cargo shipped around them to keep industries operating.

Trainz 2006 takes it to the next level, with even more attention paid to the driving simulator aspect of the package. All the

modelling stuff will still be there, and better, of course, but now the really hardcore train buffs have something to get excited about.

Auran says the split between modelling and simulation is now 50/50. But the modellers haven't been forgotten in the new version - there will be plenty of new stuff for them too.

The ability to create objects for the world other than trains will get a few (anorak-wearing) pulses pounding - it will now be possible to create canals, air routes, and ships.

Much of the new content has been suggested by Trainz's own fan base, a dedicated community spanning the globe (although concentrated in Australia and the US). The nature of TRS 2004, the current edition, is such that it can be modded to add in all kinds of new functionality.

The new version aims to continue to improve support for user-created content. Register your copy of Trainz 2006 (any version of Trainz, actually) and you'll have access to the industry's only first-party supported user content delivery system. That's right, if you create a new loco for Trainz, Auran will let you upload it to its own server and will take care of distribution to thousands of other registered Trainz users. It's a system that's so far unique.

Auran knows that it got something RIGHT with Trainz, so Trainz 2006 is all about adding more to that rightness. The modelling functions of the game will have more sophisticated error checking, as well as maintaining the extremely detailed prototyping capabilities that made previous versions so popular with guys who have half an acre of papier-mâché hills in their specially built back shed.

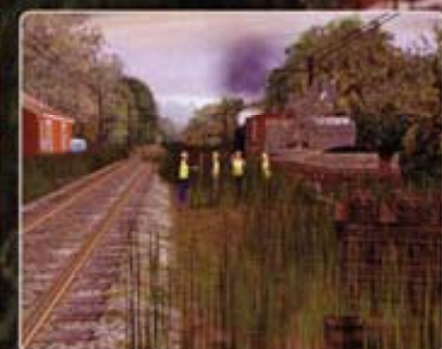
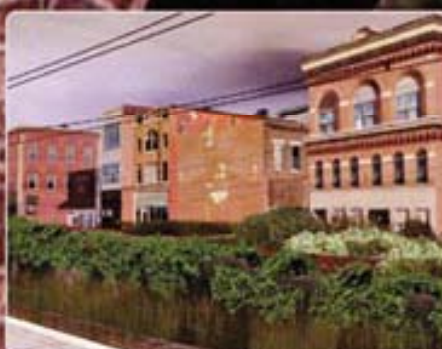
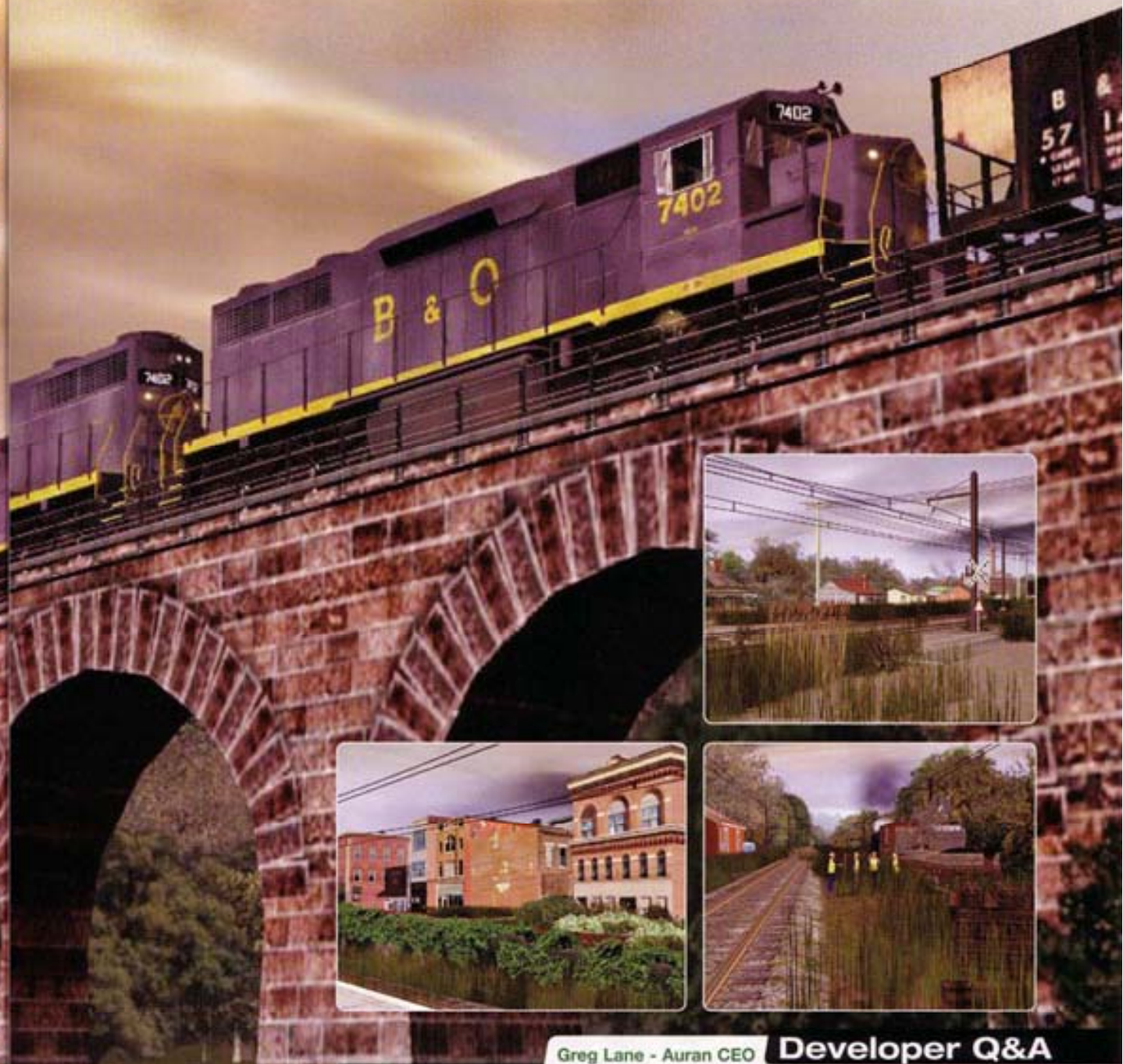
Basically, Trainz is continuing unabated. Auran is hard at work on a number of other projects, including at least one MMORPG, but the plucky little railroad sim that took on the big boys - and won - is clearly here to stay.

Anthony Fordham



**Distributor**  
Auran  
**Developer**  
Auran  
DUE  
TSA  
URL  
www.auran.com/  
trainz

**AT A GLANCE**  
•Now catering for sim-heads and modellers alike, Trainz is continuing to mature into the world's best train simulator.



Greg Lane - Auran CEO **Developer Q&A**

Auran CEO Greg Lane talks of the journey to bring Trainz to where it is today, and what the game means to its many fans.

the global model railroading community. Trainz is THE software for model railroaders, we can now pretty confidently say.

It was definitely a major gamble for Auran to start development on a model railroad simulator, but the most important and significant decision we made in designing the game was to make modelling part of the gameplay. There was no third-party editor or different application that you had to launch - the building was right there in the program.

This is Trainz's fourth major release and we're seeing a continued steady climb in sales. We figure that a large proportion of our users only have Trainz installed, it's their only game. We've had wives email us, thanking us for the program because with Trainz the husband doesn't have to actually build his model layout - they tell us we've saved their house from a huge hole in the wall!

Next, we took that a step further and turned it into a prototyping tool - you can design a layout and Trainz will tell you all the measurements, in whatever system you like. You can even select gauges.

With the new edition of the game we're just getting more hardcore with what we've already done. Our fans have had a taste of what's possible with the software and now we want to take it to the next level - it's more of a simulator now, except with all the good parts of a modelling package rolled in.

It's this aspect of the game that really turned it from a novelty into an indispensable tool for

