



THIS ISSUE'S WINNER

# SpacePilot

It's rare to find a piece of equipment that changes the entire way you work, but this is such a device

## DETAILS

**PRICE**  
 £375 / \$685\* / €545\*  
\*Currency conversion (includes VAT)

**PLATFORM**  
 Windows

**MINIMUM SYSTEM**  
 • Windows 2000/XP  
 • Pentium III  
 • 20MB HD  
 • USB 1.1 or 2

**MAIN FEATURES**  
 • 3D controller with six degrees of freedom  
 • Six programmable buttons  
 • LCD info screen  
 • Many instant function buttons  
 • Drivers for over a hundred applications  
 • Fully reprogrammable  
 • Optical detectors for long life and high sensitivity

**MANUFACTURER**  
 3Dconnexion

**WEBSITE**  
[www.3dconnexion.com](http://www.3dconnexion.com)

**CONTACT**  
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The SpacePilot is the latest in a series of devices from mouse-manufacturer Logitech's professional division, 3Dconnexion. It's been primarily designed for controlling 3D applications, and it comes with drivers for a vast number of programs.

The unit consists of a floating puck that sits atop a slim-line base. At the rear of the base there's an LCD screen and, surrounding the puck, there are a host of control buttons.

The circular puck moves in X, Y and Z axes, and can be rotated in all three axes as well. This provides six degrees of movement, enabling any object to be positioned or viewed. It uses optical sensors and has a very light touch. However, the sensitivity can be turned down, allowing you to learn the device without your slightest movement sending your geometry spiralling off into space.

The drivers automatically configure so that when you launch or switch to the appropriate application, the SpacePilot is reprogrammed via the USB port. For instance, in Default mode (in *3ds Max*), the Puck controls the camera, enabling you to navigate with your left hand while you edit with a mouse in your right.

There are six pre-programmed function buttons, and a Config button that can be used to access additional sets of button options. You can assign as many banks of controls to these buttons as you like, defining any macros that you require. The button functions are displayed in the large,

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easy-to-read LCD screen above them. There are a set of four modifier buttons ([Esc], [Shift], [Ctrl] and [Alt]), which can be used in conjunction with the six primary buttons to extend functionality.

There's also a Fit button, which (in a 3D application) automatically resizes the view to fit the current selection. Just above that are four buttons that instantly move the camera to one of the four primary views (left, right, top, and front), as well as an additional button that can be used to lock off the 3D controls. Last but not least, the Dorm and +/- buttons are used to adjust the puck's sensitivity.

The SpacePilot provides an immediate and obvious increase in productivity, ensuring that you spend minimal time

navigating and more time editing. 3Dconnexion has increased its functionality further by providing drivers for applications as diverse and unlikely as *Excel*, *Word*, *Acrobat* and more. In some of these applications, its functionality seems somewhat dubious. For example, within

Word any serious user will have two hands on the keyboard.

The SpacePilot is expensive, but it will more than pay for itself in time saved and overall convenience if you're a daily computer user.

## VERDICT

- PROS**
- Versatile
  - Increases productivity
  - Time-saving
  - Works with all software

- CONS**
- A slight learning curve

<b>RANGE OF FEATURES</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>9</b>