

Product Review to be Published in Mountain Astrologer
in January 2005 by Hank Friedman

Digital Time Capsule 2D Professional Version

by Doug Kellogg, Loren Carpenter, and Dusty Park
<http://www.astrology3d.com> <http://www.astrology3d.com/>
Price \$150 (and includes two years of free upgrades)

And now for something completely different. After reviewing astrology programs that focus primarily on an array of techniques and a variety of printouts, it is refreshing to explore an astrology program of another ilk.

DTC runs on a Windows 98, 2000, or XP computer with a 1.5 Ghz processor or higher, that has a fast video card, e.g. an nVidia GeForce 2 or higher or Radeon 9000 or higher. Note: the video card performance is crucial. DTC also offers a less graphical mode for slower video cards. It requires an active internet connection, both to access the online time-change atlas when entering charts, and to see any of the interpretive text (available by subscription only).

The DTC is the evolution of the 70's program written by Doug Kellogg called AstroStar I & II sold by Astrolabe. The animated version was 1st programmed on SGI Indigo computers running Unix in 1994 because PC's did not have the graphics power to do the animation and calculations at the same time. The graphics of the DTC were programmed by Loren Carpenter, 2 time Oscar winner and senior scientist at Pixar and who is credited with creating the worlds first fractal landscapes for Lucasfilm movies like Star Wars. The Digital Time Capsule 2D is first and foremost a visual program. It is geared to being watched and navigated, almost like a flight simulator.

The authors have pioneered many of the program's animation features long before others did. You can watch transiting, progressed, or directed planets move around a birth chart or a composite chart in beautiful color, controlling the speed of movement, step size (e.g. one hour, a day, etc.), time and place, and the direction (forward or backward in time) by pressing specific keys or clicking on onscreen buttons.

The software's use of "hotkeys", i.e. specific keystrokes such as Alt-I, Control-P, etc., allows you to quickly and easily control almost every aspect of the program. As you become proficient in employing these shortcuts, you will be able to effectively view charts in many different ways, change aspect orbs and transit speeds on the fly, and switch to different people's charts effortlessly. It will be almost like conducting an astrological orchestra.

For example, you can switch to displaying only one transiting planet, or to transiting midpoints, or even to watching the transiting or progressed Ascendant and Midheaven move around a natal chart. You can also view aspects or midpoints between one person's natal chart and another's progressed chart just as effortlessly.

You can learn how to use DTC by reading the manual, looking at the pop up Tool Tips that appear when you place your cursor over a button, bar, chart, or table; and by pressing the F1 key at any time, which shows you a listing of the hotkeys and their effects.

The main screen of DTC shows colored bars on the left side of the screen, a chart wheel in the center of the screen, a table of planetary positions (for both natal and transiting planets) in the lower right of the screen, and hexagonal control areas on the right of the screen and elsewhere. (see Figure One: DTC's Main Screen)

The colored bars indicate the strength of a variety of themes for a natal or predictive chart: confidence & vitality (yellow), action & forced action (red), harmony, fluency & communication (light blue), and spirituality (indigo); plus two pairs of bars (one superimposed upon the other indicating hard and easy) for love & relationships (red and pink) and career & money (greens). Clicking on any of the bars toggles on and off the types of aspect lines measured for that bar. For example, as I click on the red (action) bar, it turns off and on all of the hard aspects (squares, semisquares, sesquares, and oppositions).

As planets move through the birth chart (the transiting planets displayed adjacent to the natal planets, very slightly closer to the center of the wheel), you can watch the interaspect lines form and disappear, which causes the corresponding colored bars to rise and fall, enabling you to assess which themes are strong or weak at any moment in time. The strongest theme is also emphasized by an animated display of background images of atoms or concentric rings having the same color as the highest bar (either can be turned off).

During the animation, you can watch the phase of the transiting (or progressed) Moon actually change, and you can also see interaspects grow stronger, because DTC very nicely increases the brightness of each aspect line as it approaches exactness, and optionally shifts from a dashed line to a solid line at exactness. If you would rather see all of the aspect lines as equally bright, you just press a key to turn off this feature.

In addition to being able to animate transit, progressed or directed

to natal biwheels, DTC can also display any predictive wheel, e.g. a secondary progressed chart, by itself, which you can then animate and watch change over time. You can relocate charts, create antiscia charts, use precession corrected transits, and switch to the Sidereal zodiac (using the default Lahiri or a user customized ayanamsa).

DTC is astrologically quite sophisticated in the number of options the user can select from, including 11 house systems (including Azimuth), harmonic charts (1st to 13th), 9 coordinate systems (including Heliocentric, Altitude, and R.A.), 5 types of directions (including 1/2 Solar Arcs, Vertical Arcs, and Ascendant Arcs), 5 types of progressions (including converse), animate transiting midpoints and show transits to midpoints, view interspect lines to and from single planets, and calculate Davidson charts as well as multiple composite charts. You can also hide any of the screen elements, e.g. natal or transiting planets, bars, person's name, etc., and edit the colors of the planets, aspect lines, etc.

At any point in watching an animation, you can save the onscreen image as a graphic file to view later or send to someone via email. In DTC, you can open any number of birth charts at once (e.g. from those previously saved to a file), and toggle between them with the "T" key. DTC can also be set to run as an astro-clock, i.e. showing the continually updating realtime movements of the planets around a birth chart.

A very powerful feature of DTC is its ability to save and reload projects. Essentially projects are sets of charts (natal, event, transit-to-natal biwheels, etc.) that you create during a session – by retrieving charts from file and entering new charts. You can then save all of the open charts at any time during a session as a project. When you reload a project, every chart that was open when you saved the project will reopen.

Perhaps an example of a project is in order. You could create a project for yourself and your partner, with both of your natal charts, your composite chart, and three biwheels: transits around your chart, transits around your partners' chart, and transits around the composite chart. By saving this set of charts as a project, any time you want to assess planetary influences on your relationship, you would simply reload this project. What a great feature!

A similarly excellent capacity of DTC is the ability to save and reload styles. Styles are screen settings that you create by selecting the colors, objects displayed, etc. that you want. You can have different styles for different types of work, and reload them when needed. For

example, sometime you might want a white background and customized colors for the planets, while at other times use a dark background and turn off most of the screen elements.

Another wonderful feature is the ability to set "bookmarks". You can save any chart or set of charts to a specific person's chart, to go back to in the future. For example, you can bookmark charts of important dates in your life, and whenever you open your chart again, all of these charts will be instantly available too.

One of my favorite features, called Macros, allows you to move the planets forward to any of 29 specific events such as the next (or most recent) Solar or Lunar Return, Solar or Lunar Ingresses, Solar or Lunar demi- returns, a variety of Sun/Moon natal and progressed angles, Lunations, and more. You can also move charts to any specific date and time. (Astrologers comfortable with reverse Polish notation and programming can inspect the macros that come with DTC and design their own, and contact the authors via email for assistance.)

Another visually stunning feature is the animated Transit Graph. Like most other graphic ephemeride, you can see the transiting (or progressed or directed) planets crossing the positions of natal planets (whose positions are depicted as horizontal lines at their place in the Zodiac). What makes this version unique is the truly beautiful use of color and its wonderful interactive design. As you watch the planets move in the Transit Graph, you can pause it, have it move backwards or forwards in time, change its rate of movement, or the span of time displayed onscreen (from one month to 500 years) by pressing keys as you watch the screen. You can also change the harmonic, from 1 to 127, turn on or off some of the planets, change aspect orbs, move to a different date, and more. (See Figure Two: The Transit Graph.)

Digital Time Capsule 2D Professional Version is both very entertaining and an amazingly powerful astrological tool. While it will take a bit of time learning to use it optimally, the effort will be completely worthwhile. DTC enables you to interact with the animated displays with incredible ease and agility, and to navigate time while seeing how the changing planetary energies affect you. A sumptuous feast for your eyes and mind!