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## 19 The woman behind the demoscener

Magic, Tue 01 Apr 2008

The woman behind the demoscener

A questionnaire with the wives of Chromag, Polaris and Navis.

Hugi found out what they think about and how they experience their husbands' demoscene hobby.

Idea and questions by Magic of Nah-Kolor

Hugi would like to thank Kristina, Michelle and Lisa for helping out on this article. And of course a thank you to Chromag, Polaris and Navis for being open minded and letting their wives answer the questions.

Just to make sure you won't forget who is who while reading this article:

Kristina belongs to Chromag of Rebels

Michelle belongs to Polaris of Northern Dragons and Hugi Staff

Lisa belongs to Navis of Andromeda Software Development

Hugi:

Hello there Kristina, Michelle and Lisa, let's start with this article! Could you introduce yourself to our readers? Please tell us who your husband is and explain what a normal day looks like for you.

Kristina:

My name is Kristina, I am 30 years old and working as a children's doctor at a hospital. My husband calls himself Chromag and as far as I know he is a member of the group Rebels. I usually wake up at 6:00 am and have to drive to the hospital where I stay until about 5 pm. When I return home from work, I immediately hug my daughter and sometimes also my husband and spend the time playing hide and seek etc... At 7:30 pm when I bring her to bed, I read a bit and sing and she starts to sleep like an angel at once. I then have some food with Chromag and we are watching a nice dvd.



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Michelle:

Hi, I am Michelle and my partner is Polaris of Northern Dragons. A normal day for me is that right now I am on leave because I am expecting twins (at the time you read this they have been born and do very well. Congratulations! -ed) but before this I was in working as a Civic employee in charge of the live main servers. I was in charge of the internet presence, tax systems, budget systems, council applications, HR and Finance for the whole city, Pools and Zoo applications and Fire and Paramedic systems.

Lisa:

My name is Lisa, and I am Mrs Navis (ASD). We have a baby daughter, and we both work full time, so a normal day involves lots of rushing around and exposure to bodily fluids (mostly poo and vomit). We get up, get the baby ready, get the baby to the child minder, get to work, work hard(ish) all day, get home from work, play with the baby, feed the baby, bathe the baby, get her to sleep, eat some dinner, hang out together for a while... and that's about it. We do the baby stuff/cooking/housework between us. I postponed academia for children, so at the moment work in Development at one of the Oxford Colleges. Social life seems to be on hold for the moment, but we like to go to the movies (Horror, mainly) and gigs together. Navis works from home sometimes, but uses his computer for work, for demos, and for relaxation.. I used to call it his "other girlfriend" but have recently promoted it to "mistress".

Hugi:

Your husband is participating in the demoscene. What exactly is your knowledge about this crazy world we call scene?

Kristina:

I know that my husband is doing some music for demos. I usually get bored by the demos pretty fast but the music is ok. Some of it, mostly what he calls demo-music, sucks pretty much though, I think. I know that the demo-people are mostly men who hang in front of their computers most of the time and program or draw or do music. They also meet each other in private (like Timm does with Adrian, Jochen and Sascha for example) (ed. Fishwave, Virgill and smt) or on computer parties. I have seen pictures of those parties so I think it's mostly about boozing, though Timm always tells me it's about meeting the international guys. Also I know that he has won some music-competitions so I know they have competitions at parties, as well.

Michelle:

I follow what the Northern Dragons do and keep an eye on the main information. I do not follow the day to day stuff or download demos. I get to see the ones that Polaris thinks that I will like the best or that shows off some good effect.

Lisa:

Well I know what a demo is, and that demosceners write/watch/review them at parties and in online forums. That they spend long hours alone slaving over a hot computer and then go to parties and let loose by throwing cd's as far as they can. And that Pouet is



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hardwired into Navis's brain.

Hugi:

What do you think of your husband's demoscene creations? Please tell us which ones you like the most and why.

Kristina:

I don't know any of the names and actually I don't know any productions except for chromagic, his music-compilation. He has done some romantic music featuring lyrics by him but I had to promise never to give those away to others. I think he is quite good at what he's doing actually.

Michelle:

I like the demos that they create. There have been times that the idea for a demo came out while eating dinner or just talking and I get to see it all the way from the initial thoughts right to the end product. That is pretty neat to see. My favorite demo is the one Polaris wrote for me way back when during the first month that we were going out. My favorite public demo would most likely be 'trees' because I know the history and the all the work that he did for the demo.

Lisa:

I think they are fabulous and am very very proud of him. Hard to have a favourite - each one is better than the last, and each means something different because it reminds me of what was going on when he was writing it. Lifeforce is amazing, and for me is very 'Navis' - it reflects a lot of his own preoccupations and thoughts. I also love Planet Risk - esp. the blood pumping bit - and Iconoclast. But I have a soft spot for Dreamchild, because it is the demo he was writing when we first got together - it is my voice you hear on the lyrics - and the first one ASD took to Assembly.

Hugi:

Is it ok with you that he spends so much time on his demoscene hobby?

Kristina:

No, he should spend more time on his family and his work, especially on his doctoral thesis. Then again it's a hobby and it indeed is a creative one. I really like the stuff he's doing so I don't really have a problem with it. From time to time, a little reduction wouldn't hurt, though.



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Michelle:

I think it is fine that he spends so much time with the demo scene. With the twins coming we both know that the time he spends on the scene will change but I still want to make sure that this is something that he can keep doing for many years. And the best part of the demo scene is I know where he is most likely to be on any given night

Lisa:

It drives me crazy!! Even though I love Lifeforce, I will always remember it as the demo that he was writing when our daughter was born, and we were struggling with new parenthood. I suppose I did resent it for taking so much of his time from his new family. Because I studied abroad for a while, we have both got used to leisure time alone, so I suppose we are still both learning how to split our time between solitary pursuits like demos, and time together. He belonged to ASD before he belonged to me, so I wouldn't change that, but maybe I should e-mail him more instead of trying to talk to him.

Hugi:

Have you ever been to a demoscene party? If yes what did you think of it? If no, ever thought about it to go to one?

Kristina:

No and I don't intend to ever visit one. I have brought him to last year's Breakpoint and I will probably do likewise in 2008 since we are attending a congress in South Tyrol together right before that party every year so I have spotted the outside area already but it's really not my way of partying. I heard that nowadays even girls are there but I wonder how they like it being crowded with all those smelly ones.

Michelle:

No, I haven't been to a demo scene party. I view them as time for Polaris to be with his friends and that he can enjoy without having to worry about making sure I am having a good time. I view the parties as his time.

Lisa:

No, I haven't and I don't think I would - it would feel as if I was imposing on his territory. I always follow the compo progress online and I love hearing about the party when he gets back.

Hugi:

Did your husband show you some demos? Which ones did you like the most and why?



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Kristina:

Sorry, I don't remember anything from what he has shown me.

Michelle:

As mentioned Polaris shows me the demos that he thinks I would be interested in. The ones I would pick as the best in the show aren't always the ones that win but then again I am coming in as a semi-'outsider' when viewing the prods.

Lisa:

I am very biased - I like ASD demos best! But I have been impressed with various work by other groups - Fairlight and Farbrausch come to mind as the favourites.

Hugi:

What could make the demoscene more attractive for women to participate in it according to you?

Kristina:

As far as I can judge from an outsider's point of view, it is not so much a women / men thing but more about if you like to do creative things with your computer or not. As far as I'm concerned I don't have the time at all to be this creative. Thus the demoscene is not so much of interest. Others may truly think differently..

Michelle:

When I was getting my computer science degree I was around one of 4 women in a class of over 200 guys. I didn't bother me then, which is great because that is what the percent of women I work with now! I think you more have to have the right outlook and interest in something for it to be attractive to you. Women will participate if they are interested no matter how many times they are outnumbered. Most women (especially in computers) aren't quiet little people. I think the biggest drawback is to make a big deal out of a person being a woman and in this field. In my mind just be open and friendly when people ask the newbie questions (no matter if they are male or female). Make learning how to make demos a bit more accessible to everyone. Also have a spot where most questions are answered. Nothing is worse than having to look in 10 places just to find a little answer. So my answer is to make the whole demo scene more attractive to non die hard computer people and women will join if they are interested.

Lisa:

I don't think that anything could be done differently really. The fact is that coding is a solitary activity, and sceners speak online more than they do face to face. Women are more social than men, and are much more about communication - face to face communication.



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So maybe if sceners want to attract more women in, they should get out more

Hugi:

To end this article, what would you like to say to the other participants in this article?

Kristina:

Let your husbands do what they like but don't let it affect your real life.

Michelle:

That even being on the edge of the demoscene can be fun. Some of us might not be in to the coding and the late nights but we do understand the skills and dedication that goes into each demo. I hope that everyone continues to produce great demos and that they keep the scene active and alive for many more years to come.

Lisa:

1. Be inspired by each other.
2. Keep on coding.
3. Get out more, dude.

Magic of Nah-kolor