The Reaper VIII

Cover Shot By,
Neil Blevins
Checkout his interview

The Total Digital Magazine

..3d Gallery..
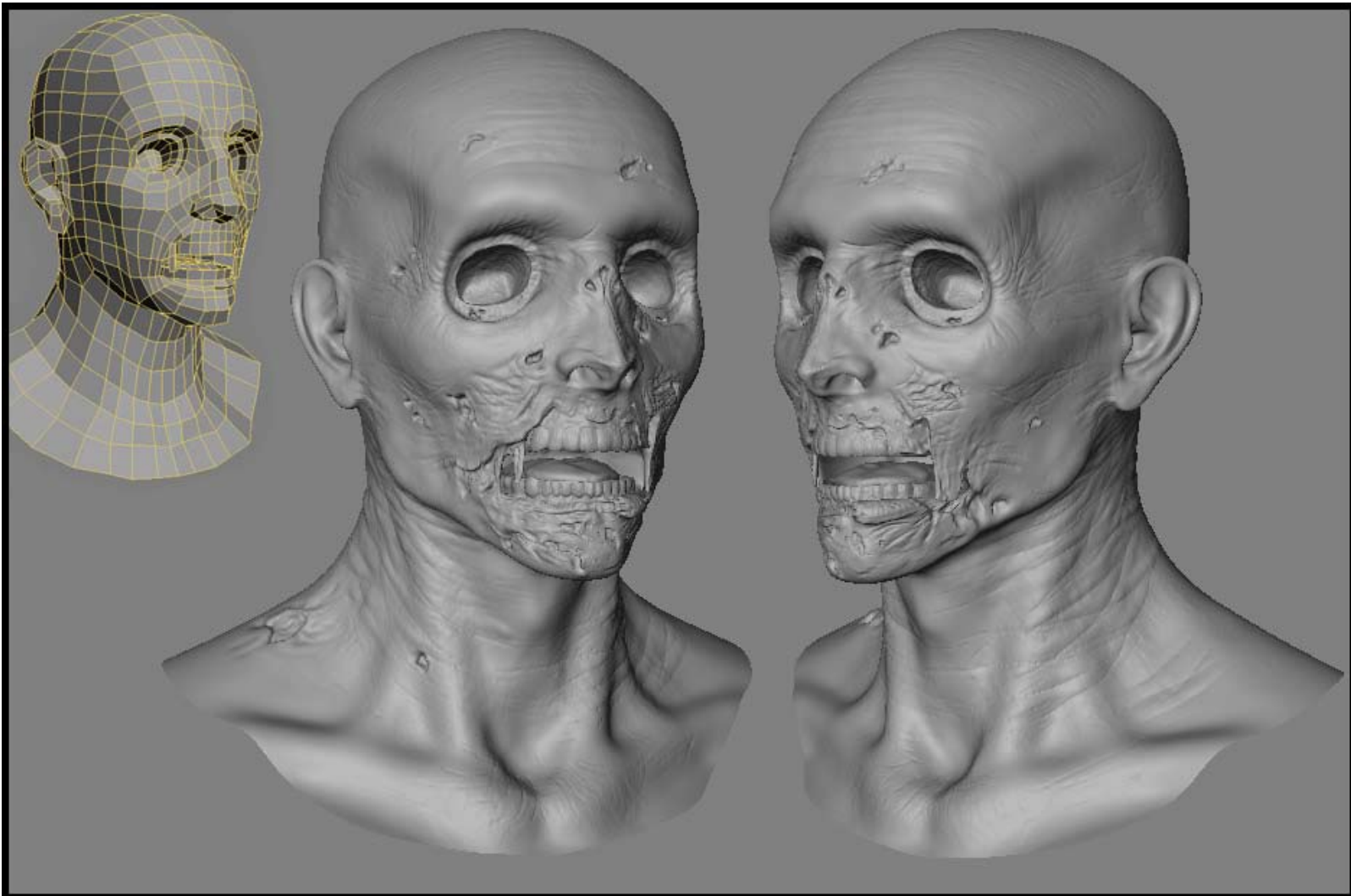
Zombie Sculpt By : Nicolas Collings

Patterlini benoit
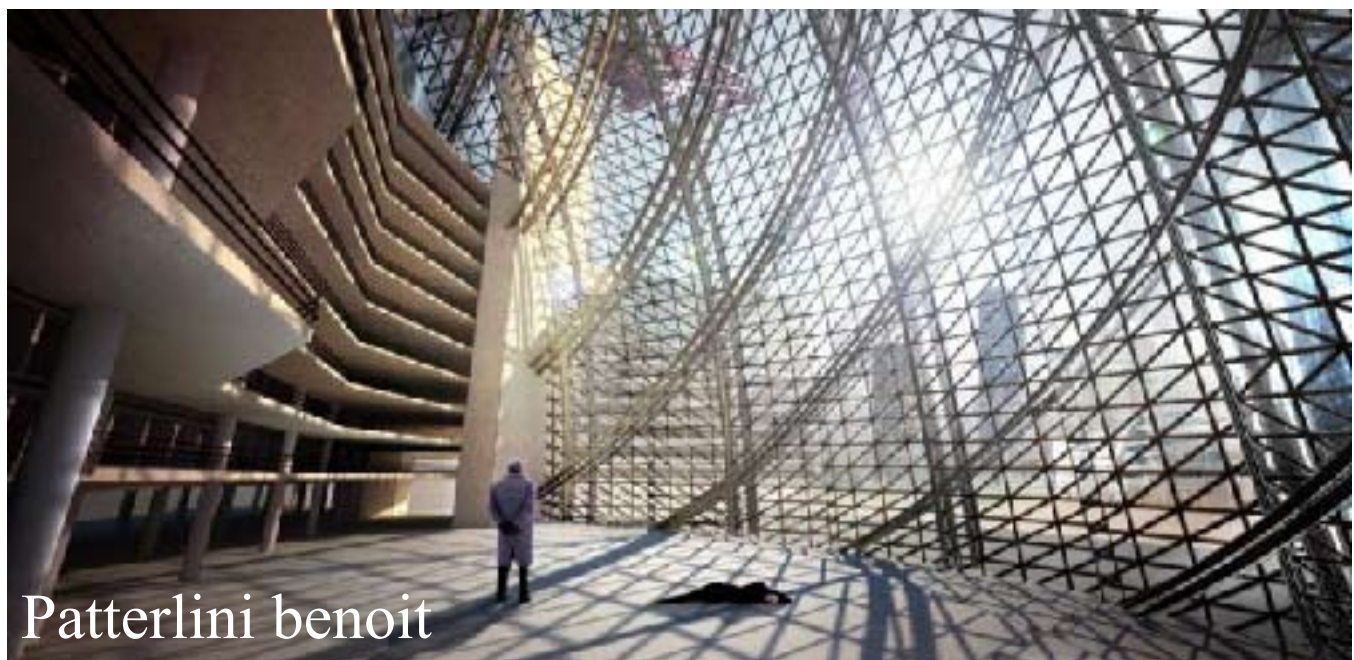
Patterlini benoit

..3d Gallery..

Patterlini benoit

..3d Gallery..

CITIZEN DOG
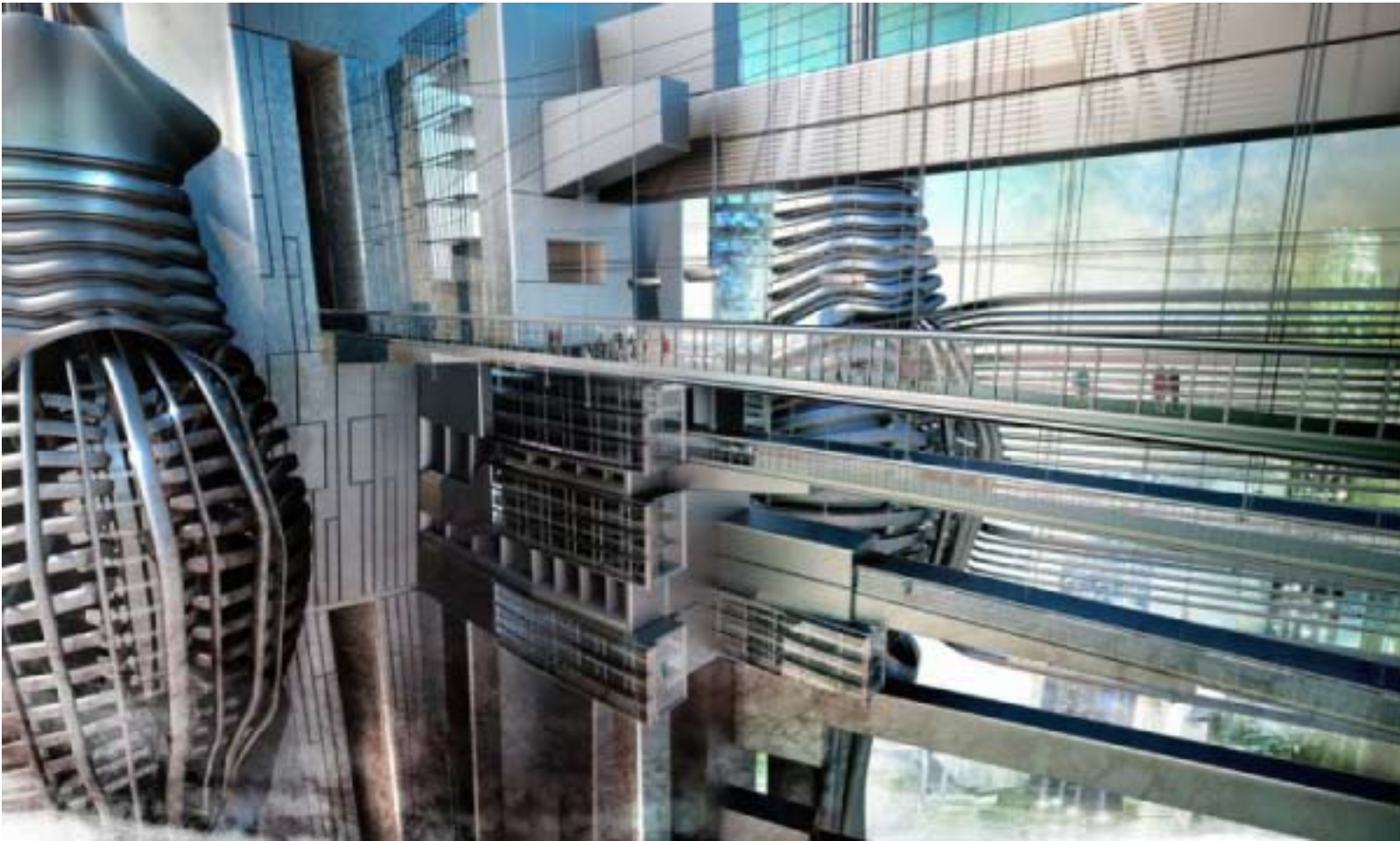
RAYMOND SCATENA

JANJAC

CITIZEN DOG

noart2003 copyright.

Patterlini benoit

..3d Gallery..

Patterlini benoit

..3d Gallery..

André Kutscherauer

André Kutscherauer

André Kutscherauer

Ali Ismail

..3d Gallery..

Ali Ismail

Meta Tags: Are They A Key Factor?

Well, well, well, its another issue of Total D! This month I thought it vital to explain a quick an simple way to create your very own meta tags for your web page as they will help get you listed in the engines! Meta Tags are one of the many key factors when it comes to Seo for your site! You must have them to properly be listed in the main search engines. There are lots of places to do it, but my favorite is by a buddy of mine and he would love for you to check it out and give it a test run! Have a look at www.ranksrus.com under the tools section! Simply put in the requested info and click "Create Tags" also feel free to list your site on www.ranksrus.com for $5.00 which is submitted to over 300 search engines and its well worth it! Now time for some new tips to help you get up onto the search engines fast and free!

This Months Tips:

1. What do search engines like and not like?

2. What is Seo all about?

Lets have a quick chat about what search engines like and do not like. Well there are several things that search engines do not like and here are a couple of them.

A. Trash links: Trash links are links that have no relevancy to your web site. Meaning links from a hotdog site when you do digital video!
B. Complete graphic sites: Graphic sites like a flash site that has no actual text on the page, its all images.
C. Link directories: Now we know they love links, but not a long list of links that are basically trash links that do not help you. They shun these and it hurts you if you are listed on them, so stay clear!

Now lets talk about what they do like! Here are a couple of things that will help you to boost your rankings with ease!

A. Reciprocal links, links that link back and forth between many sites. Search engines think its a relevant site if it does this.
B. Informative text sites, like www.geekssite.com its all text and search engines love to read, especially if you place your URL at the footer and google will read it over and over!
C. Relevant link directories, for instance www.geeksslink.com it is related to digital media so if you link there google says ooooh yummy in my search engine tummy!

Shannon Lilly

Does Google Page Rank Matter?

Well lets think about this for a minute, page rank tells the google spider you are an important site, right?

No not really, lots of sites with low page ranks are number 1 through the net.

Page rank is simply determined by how many relevant and inbound links are pointing to your site.

If its not a relevant link, it is a trash link which can hurt you!

Now that's not to say looking at your google toolbar with the page rank isn't helpful! In fact it is. If you have a good page rank, that means your linking efforts are working correctly. But going by the google toolbar page rank which is not accurate, and fluctuates all the time, is not the best way to discover your page rank. The best way to get your accurate page rank is to visit www.igoseo.com and send them a email about giving you your real page rank. They are happy to do it and its the real page rank! There is not one that goes up and down without warning.

Now the best way to get a high page rank is to get quality links from other sites that have lots of relevant links to it. www.igoseo.com offers a service for that as well and its worth every penny! I jumped from pr 0 to 2 in just 2 weeks! My site is www.geekssite.com

So all in all, page rank by the google toolbar doesn't say a lot for your site, but quality links that are relevant do! I highly recommend www.igoseo.com for site optimization as they really know what they are doing. They can also get you listed with nearly 600 links in just 1 week for a small fee!

Shannon Lilly

Niel Blevin Interview

Please start by providing us with your contact details, website address, and where you like to hang!

Hi, my name is Neil Blevins, you can see my stuff at http://www.neilblevins.com, and I tend to hang out on cgtalk and the autodesk support board.

How did you get into the Digital World, what got you started?

I was a big videogame fan growing up, and decided I wanted to make video games for a living. I did 2d graphics for games by programming in artwork pixel by pixel when I was a teenager, then upgraded to a mouse when they became commercially available. In my search for better paint programs, I found a 3d raytracer called povray, and got hooked on 3d.

What is it about 3d graphics that makes you keep doing it every day?

Making beautiful imagery. I love the final product, and I'm more than happy to use any technique necessary to reach that final piece of work. I enjoy the result first, and the process second.

How is the work environment at Pixar?

It a great place to work. The people are all very positive, I get to work with a lot of talented artists and technicians, and I get to have a life as well as an excellent place to work.

What is your current position at Pixar?

I am a Technical Director, but the name is pretty vague, in general I model, shade, paint and light stuff, with some fx now and then. I tend to do mostly environments.

How does your current job fit you better then any previous jobs or work?

Well, you have the time to really dig into a project or task. You work with a wide range of people who have a wide range of interests and skills, and that can be very inspiring. And it means if you need to tackle any problem, someone is likely to have good advice. And again, the positive enthusiastic atmosphere makes you feel right at home.

What or who is your greatest inspiration?

Probably music, since I'm always listening to it while making art. Bands like Suffocation, Origin, Fear Factory, Meshuggah, artists like Devin Townsend, Steve Vai, Eric Johnson. Also I have a large reference and art book collection, which I use as reference, and it's just nice seeing beautiful imagery, whether its real or from some one's imagination.

Do you have much time to produce your own work other then what Pixar requires??

I never have enough time, but I make time, because it's so important to me. I do 3 "art nights" a week, where I do my own artwork exclusively. Usually 2 nights during the regular work week, and an afternoon on the weekend. Mind you, I don't have kids yet, when that happens, I may have to reduce my personal art time, but we'll see how things go :)

Do you have any advice or tools / plugins that you think our readers could benefit from?

That's a pretty broad question :) Well, I have written a lot of scripts which can be found at http://www.neilblevins.com/soulburnscripts/soulburnscripts.htm, and there's tons of other useful scripts and plugins for max, my favorite search sites are www.scriptspot.com and www.maxplugins.de. As for advice, just love life, love what you do, be passionate about it, and work hard.

Do you plan any career changes soon?

Soon, no, I'm very happy with the projects I'm doing. But at some point I'd like to try my hand at photoreal film fx, videogames, and maybe teaching.

Is life at Pixar really as fun and enjoyable as the special features on there movies make it out to be?

Well, the part they don't show you is the hours of working in front of the computer to make those images happen, because it would be boring to watch. :) But yes, the atmosphere is very friendly and positive.

If one of our readers wanted to get a job in the 3d industry at a studio such as Pixar, what is the best thing to do? Create a killer demo reel? Continually submit apps? Find someone who knows someone, who knows someone?

Well, while knowing someone is always a bonus, it doesn't always work that way. Many people think there's some sort of secret handshake to get a job, and really it's just hard work, a good demo reel, and then submitting it to all the companies out there. I didn't know anyone at Pixar going in, I just submitted a reel and they liked it. So in my opinion, the reel is the most important thing. And get some experience under your belt, don't only apply at the most well known companies, you may not get in the first try. But after a few years of working at other studios, your reel and skill set will improve and you'll eventually reach whatever your dream job is.

Briefly walk us through how you approach each day at Pixar.

In general, show up in the morning, get a pastry and some juice. Check my email to see what the lay of the land is. Work until noon. I make environments primarily, so most of my day revolves around modeling, texturing and painting sets and props. Get lunch, work all afternoon. During the day there may be a walk through with your supervisors or the art directors, looking at your work and giving critiques. Or meetings to discuss the project. Or reviews with the director. I also try and workout at least 3 times a week in our gym, snce I don't want to become fat :)
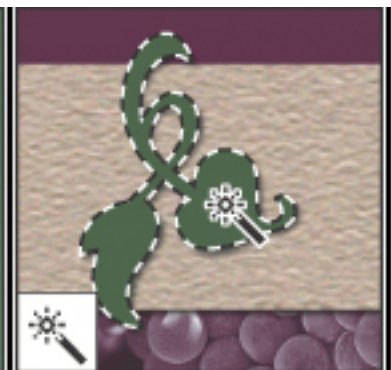
Photoshop Tool Overview

The marquee tools make rectangular, elliptical, single row, and single column selections.

The Move tool moves selections, layers, and guides.

The lasso tools make freehand, polygonal (straight-edged), and magnetic* (snap-to) selections.

The Magic Wand tool selects similarly colored areas.
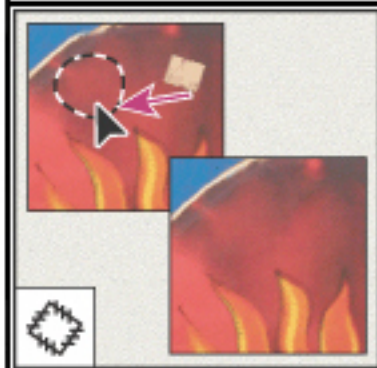
The Crop tool trims images.

The Slice tool creates slices.
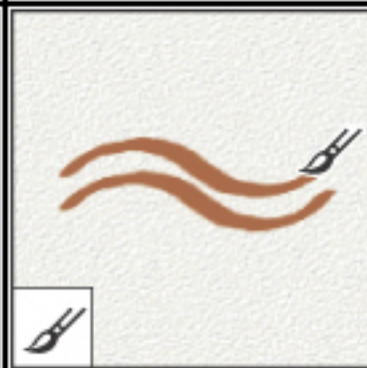
The Slice Select tool selects slices.

The Healing Brush tool* paints with a sample or pattern to repair imperfections in a image.

The Patch tool* repairs imperfections in a selected area of an image using a sample or pattern.

The Color Replacement tool* replaces a selected color with a new color.
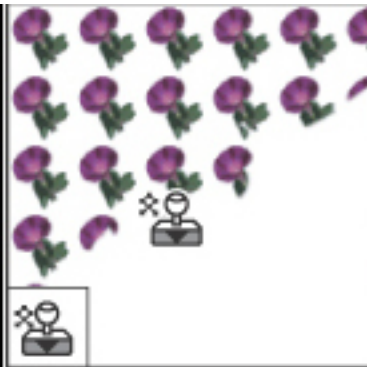
The Brush tool paints brush strokes.

The Pencil tool paints hard-edged strokes.

Photoshop Tool Overview
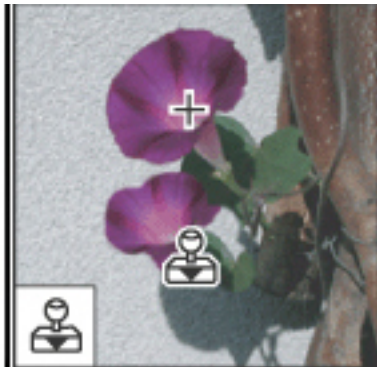
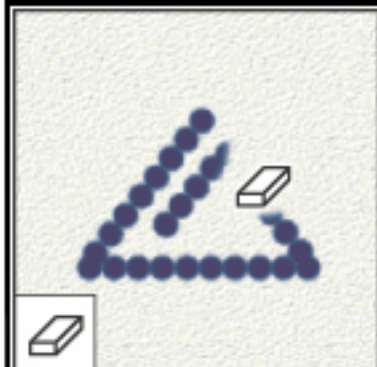**The Clone Stamp tool** paints with a sample of an image.

The Pattern Stamp tool* paints with part of an image as a pattern.

The History Brush tool* paints a copy of the selected state or snapshot into the current image window.

The Art History brush tool* paints with stylized strokes that simulate the look of different paint styles, using a selected state or snapshot.
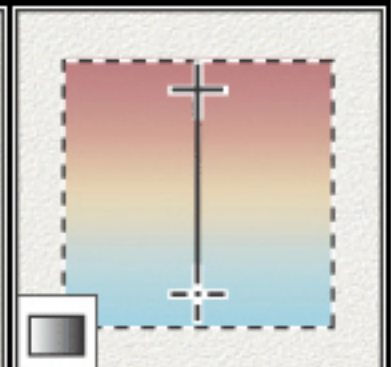
The Eraser tool erases pixels and restores parts of an image to a previously saved state.

The Background Eraser tool* erases areas to transparency by dragging.

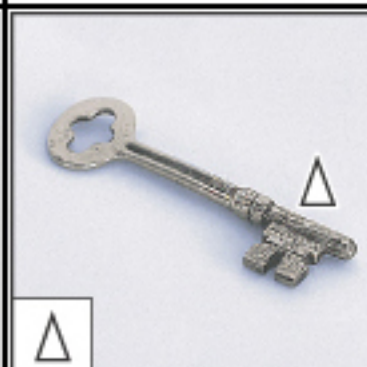**The Magic Eraser tool** erases solid-colored areas to transparency with a single click.

The gradient tools* create straight-line, radial, angle, reflected, and diamond blends between colors.

The Paint Bucket tool fills similarly colored areas with the foreground color.

The Blur tool* blurs hard edges in an image.

The Sharpen tool* sharpens soft edges in an image.

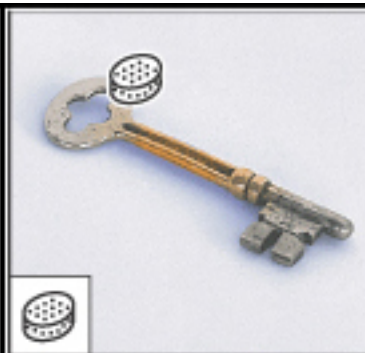**The Smudge tool*** smudges data in an image.
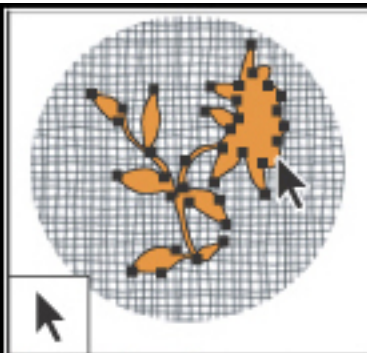
Photoshop Tool Overview

The Dodge tool* lightens areas in an image.

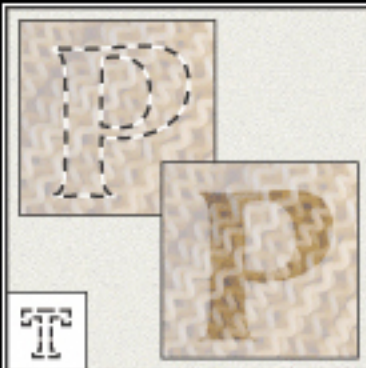The Burn tool* darkens areas in an image.

The Sponge tool* changes the color saturation of an area.

The path selection tools* make shape or segment selections showing anchor points, direction lines, and direction points.
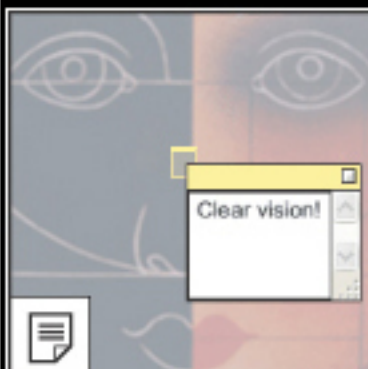
The type tools create type on an image.

The type mask tools* create a selection in the shape of type.

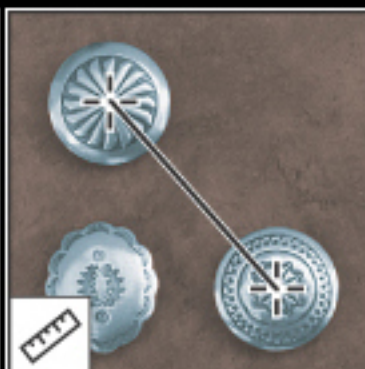The pen tools* let you draw smooth-edged paths.

The Custom Shape tool* makes customized shapes selected from a custom shape list.

The annotation tools* make notes and audio annotations that can be attached to an image.

The Eyedropper tool samples colors in an image.

The Measure tool* measures distances, locations, and angles.

The Hand tool moves an image within its window.

Photoshop Tool Overview

The type tools create type on an image.	**The type mask tools*** create a selection in the shape of type.	**The pen tools*** let you draw smooth-edged paths.	**The Custom Shape tool*** makes customized shapes selected from a custom shape list.
The annotation tools* make notes and audio annotations that can be attached to an image.	**The Eyedropper tool** samples colors in an image.	**The Measure tool*** measures distances, locations, and angles.	**The Hand tool** moves an image within its window.
The Zoom tool magnifies and reduces	**The image map tools**§ define image map areas	**The Image Map Select tool**§ selects image	**The Toggle Image Map Visibility tool**§ toggles

3d Interview

Please start out by giving your name, location and contact details .....

My name is Nicolas Collings, I'm 23 and I'm currently living in Belgium.
Email: ncollings1@hotmail.com // website: http://sillord.free.fr

How did you get into the Digital World, what got you started?

Well, I started computer graphics study in 2002 here in Belgium. I really
didn't know exactly what it was about; I just knew that I liked computers
and arts. After a few weeks, I felt a true interest in 3d Modelling and after a
few months, character modelling became a passion. During my last year of
study in 2005, I made a 4 months internship in character modelling at
"Oniria Pictures" (www.oniriapictures.com), it's an award winning animated
studio based in Luxembourg. It was my first step in the digital world
industry.

What is it about 3d graphics that makes you keep doing it every day?

I am fan of character modelling. You always have something to learn about
it: anatomy, clothes, hair and fur, mechanical stuff, etc... You never stop
improving your skills in organic modelling. Practicing, training, learning,
sharing with other fans & artists is a daily exciting reality.
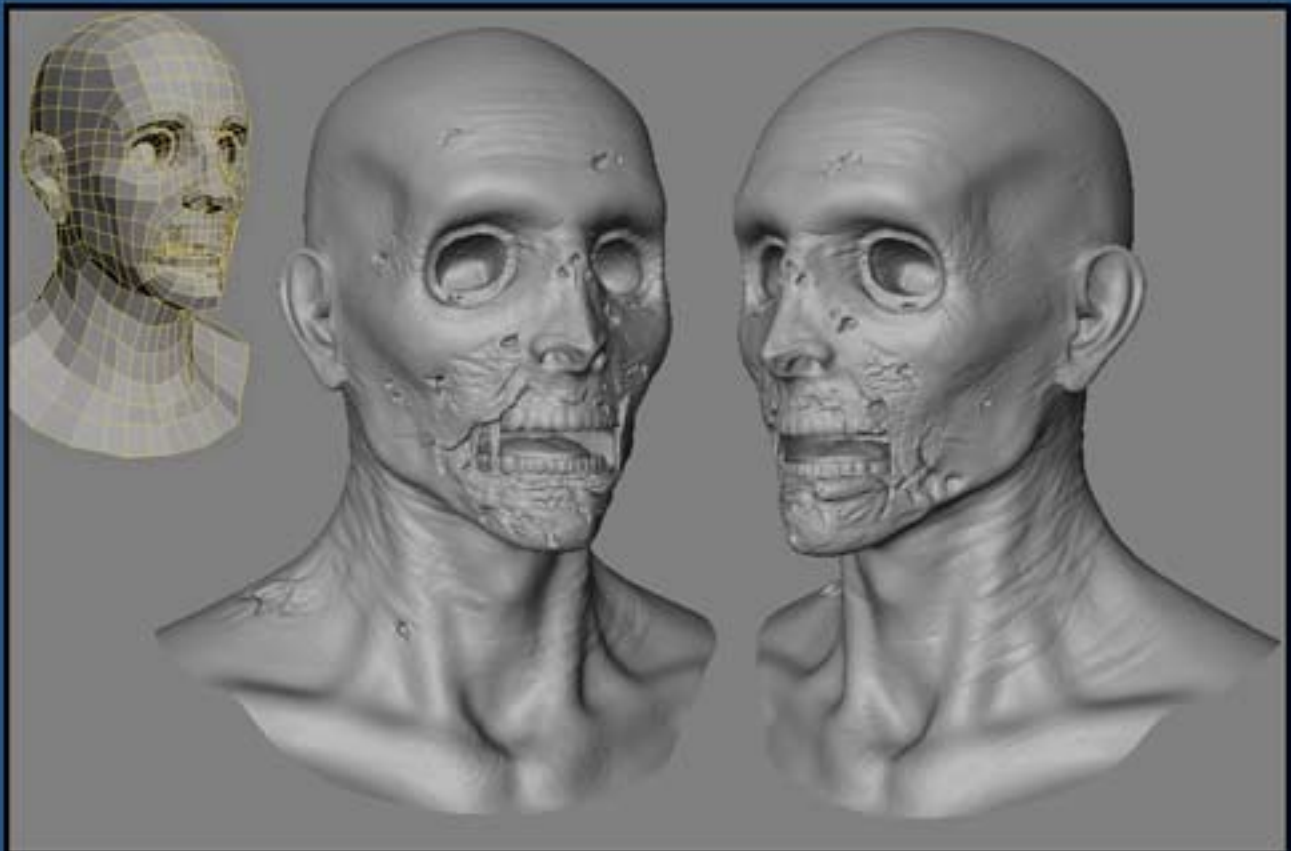
3d Interview

Where are you currently working and how is the work environment?

Actually I do freelance work for now, so my work environment is my home. I do mainly character modelling and texturing.

What or who is your greatest inspiration?

Inspiration comes from everywhere. (The Internet, movie, nature, animals, etc...). I also learn a lot from the other artist's work. These days, the concept designer who inspires me the most is Miles Teves, www.milesteves.com

Do you have much time to produce your own work other then what your Boss wants?

When I was in production, I didn't really have the time to do personal work at home. But I am in-between jobs since some months, so I had a lot of time to work on my demoreel and finalize it. By the way, you can see it on my website, http://sillord.free.fr .

Do you have any advice, or tools / plug ins that you think our readers could benefit from?

Any advice... Well the best advice I can give is to continuously practice and never give up. Observation and practice is key. For the 3ds max users, I really recommend Polyboost. It's a plug-in that all max users should have in their tool set. For any information about this plug in go to www.polyboost.com

3d Interview

Do you plan any career changes soon?

Until now, I worked in the 3d animated field and I d' like to develop my career orientation by entering the video game industry.

Dvd Training Review

Hello Total d Readers and welcome to another product review! Let me start off by giving a big round of applause to www.3dgamics.com for the 3d Interior Training Kit. I feel that it is a must own training kit for anyone who wants to learn architectural modeling and rendering whether you are a max user or not. The workflow can be used in any software!

Learning Curve: The learning curve is about 5 minutes for the DVD…

What Formats Are Offered: The format is strictly for your computer with a DVD drive. It cannot play in a regular DVD player as it's harder for you to look at on a different screen. So it's really called a "CDVD" "Computer DVD".

Quality: The picture quality is just pure perfection in this training kit! It is a joy to work through as the teacher "Michael Johnson" keeps things running smooth without being boring! He is actually a very good teacher and 3dartists to boot! The sound is a little low; 3dgamics has informed us that it is best to use a headset if in a noisy environment.

3dgamics Support: The support team at 3dgamics cannot be matched, they are fast on their responses as well as helping with any difficulties, in fact we had a problem with one of the lessons on the DVD and 3dgamics offered us the choice of downloading it or they would send us a brand new DVD from the owner himself to ensure it worked. Overall 3dgamics gets 5 Stars for support, best there is!

Menu / Navigation: Since we chose the download version of the DVD there was no menu, just the individual parts for download. But they did show us the menu and it is pretty straight forward, nothing fancy is needed.
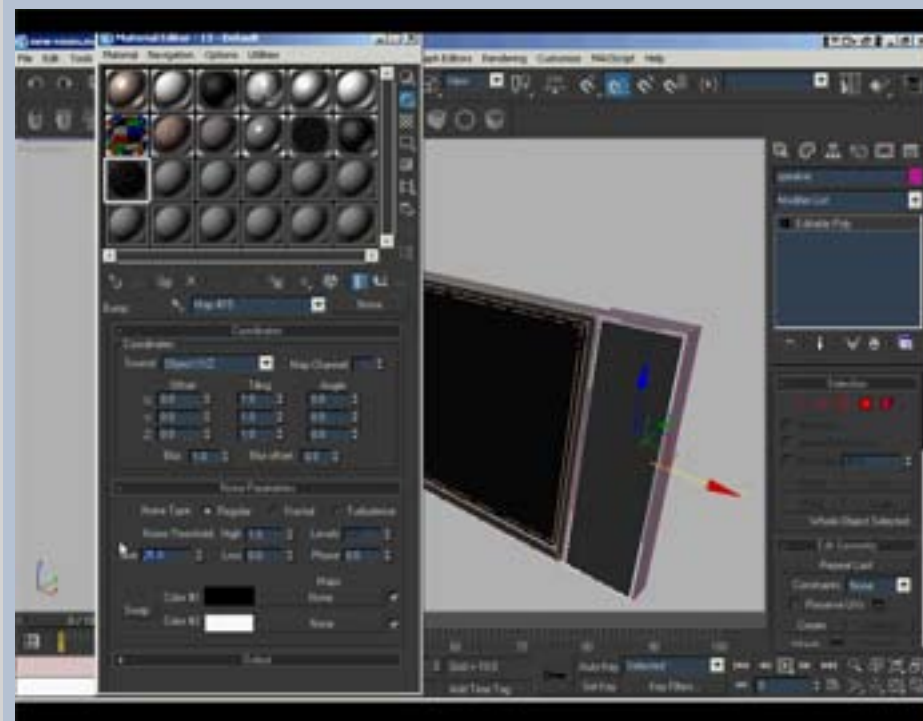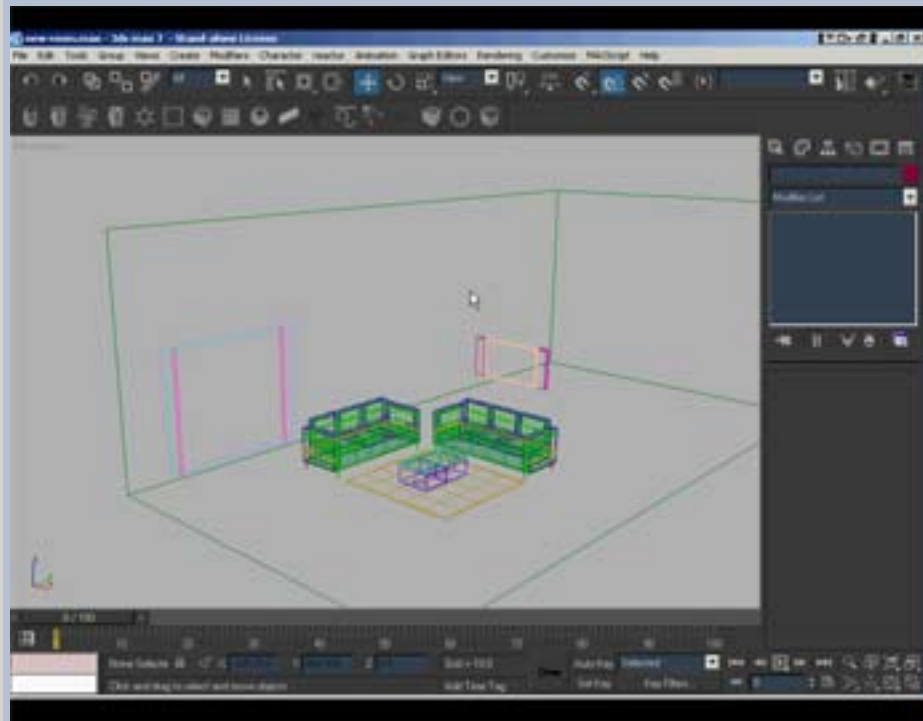
Price: The price is currently 45.00 + 5.00 for shipping. They have informed us that soon they will have coupon codes for up to 25 % off your order of 150.00 or more.

All In All: 3dgamics Interior Training Kit Is A Must Own For Every One!
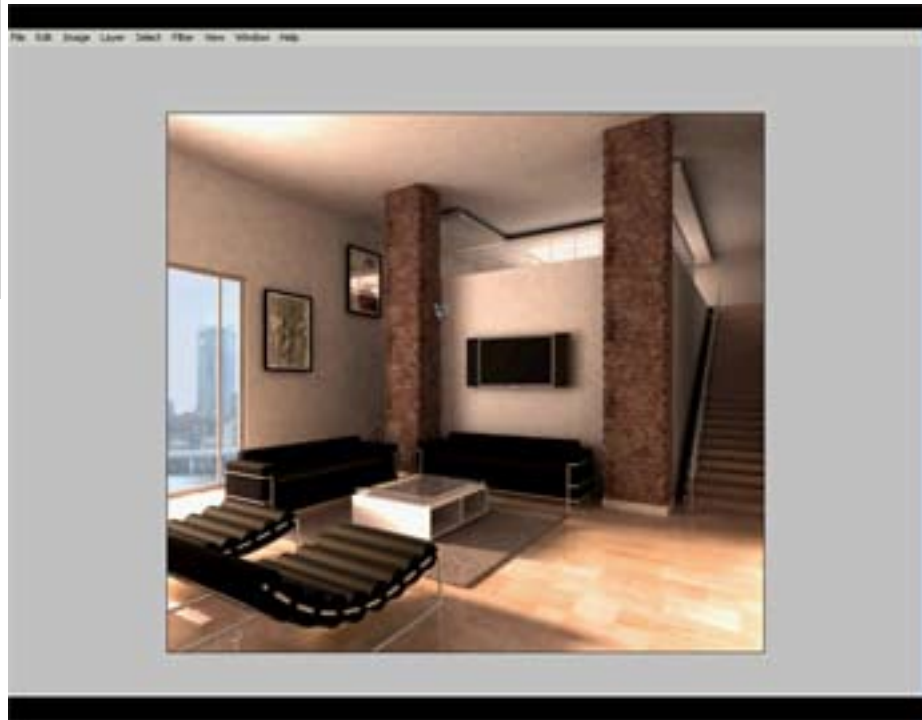
The Soft brush simply moves vertices in a particular direction. By default, the direction is determined by the average of all normals within the boundary of the brush. Different directions can be selected in the Advanced section of the tool's Properties. The soft brush builds up gradually to its maximum strength setting. The rate at which it builds is determined by the Buildup Rate property under Advanced.
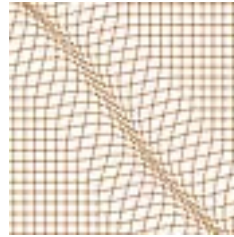
The Pinch brush sucks vertices in toward the center of the brush cursor.

The Scratch brush also simply moves vertices in a particular direction, which by default is also along the Averaged Normal. However, internally, this brush works very differently than the Soft brush. The Scratch brush does no stamping, which allows it to cut through dense geometry like butter. The Scratch brush has no build-up and moves vertices directly to the distance defined by the strength setting. Since it does no stamping, the Stamp section in Properties is grayed out for the Scratch brush.

The Bulge brush is basically a Soft brush with the Direction property set to Vertex Normal.

The Smooth brush smooths the surface by averaging the positions of vertices.

The Flatten brush levels vertices by moving them toward a plane. The Flatten brush's Advanced options determine how the plane is defined.

Andrei Cristea Interview

Hi Andrei Cristea, Thanks for taking the time out to talk with us, Please start out by giving your name, location, website and contact details.....

Hello. My name is Andrei Cristea, I'm a 3d modeller from Romania. My website is undoz.com

How did you get into the Digital World, what got you started?

I can't tell for sure. It was a "relationship" that developed in a couple of years. The first time I was fascinated about this field was when I first saw a version of 3d studio running on dos. After that I became interested in any software related to digital graphics. More seriously I began venturing into the 3d world around 99. I think it was a boom at that time, a lot of people started back then.

What is it about 3d graphics that makes you keep doing it every day?

For me it's the challenge of creating something and the satisfaction that you get afterwards. But there is also a lot of frustration and obstacles, so not every day is fun :)

Where are you currently working and how is the work environment?

I'm working and I've always worked to this day as a freelancer, so my workplace is my home. The advantage of this is that you are your own boss and you can manage your time as you like. The downside is the insecurity, because you never know what tomorrow will happen.

What or who is your greatest inspiration?

I don't have a main source of inspiration.. It depends what I've recently seen at the time when I'm in the mood of creating something new. It may be a movie, a book, a game, etc.

Do you have much time to produce your own work?

I can say that I have, but It's ... different. I don't usually create scenes, or compositions. I like more to explore new techniques, exercise on new models and experiment with various things. Most of my works are unfinished and a lot of part of them, nobody have seen. I do this kind of things for myself, because this way I can remain interested in this field.

Do you have any advice, or tools / plug ins that you think our readers could benefit from?

Learn the fundamentals, practice a lot and try everything you can get your hand on. Any new experience is valuable.

Do you plan any career changes soon?

I don't plan it because I like what I'm doing right now, but you never know what can happen.
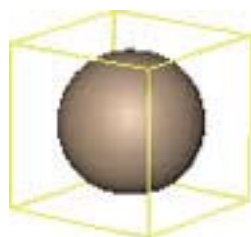
Thanks,
Andrei Cristea
www.undoz.com

The Move tool grabs vertices and pulls them around like taffy.

Use the Faces tool to select faces on a mesh.

Use the Objects tool to select objects in the 3D View.

The Freeze brush locks affected vertices such that they can not be moved by another tool. Unfreeze vertices by holding Ctrl down while painting or by selecting Invert Function in Properties before brushing.

The Layer Mask brush works with Layers to hide and show information stored on the layers. Each layer has its own mask, and the mask brush paints the mask for whichever layer is currently selected. Unmask vertices by holding Ctrl down while painting or by selecting Invert Function in Properties before brushing.

2d Sketch / Color Gallery

Dragon Sketch & Color By
JEANNOT LANDRY

Product Review

Tech Smiths Snag It Review

Let me start off by saying thanks to Techsmith at www.techsmith.com for the opportunity to review their products. Over the next two issues we will cover Snagit & Camtasia and give you the readers a chance to see what they can really do before laying out the money to buy.

Snagit Overview: From what we gather Snagit is a program in which it captures a selected area and or your full screen and then allows you to im it ftp it save it etc… Of which can come in handy if you cannot afford a program like Photoshop. Not only that but it also offers instant screen grab effect filters like gray scale and torn edges to name a few. It also allows you to save to your computer in various formats. Making it easy to work with and getting great results quickly!

Options Included: Below I will brake down exactly what snag it offers in saving options, instant effect filters, export options etc…

Save Formats:
.bmp
.cur
.gif
.ico
.jpg
.mht
.pdf
.png
.snag for later editing
.swf
.tif

Instant Effect Filters:
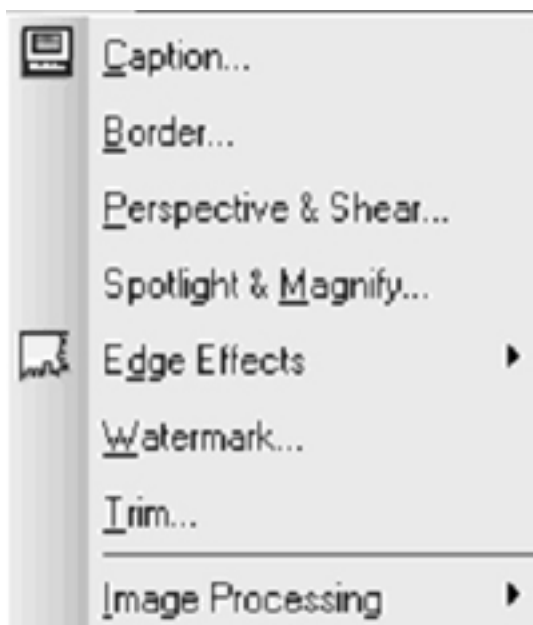
Product Review

Edge Effects:

- Drop Shadow Edge...
- Fade Edge...
- Torn Edge...
- Wave Edge...
- Saw Edge...
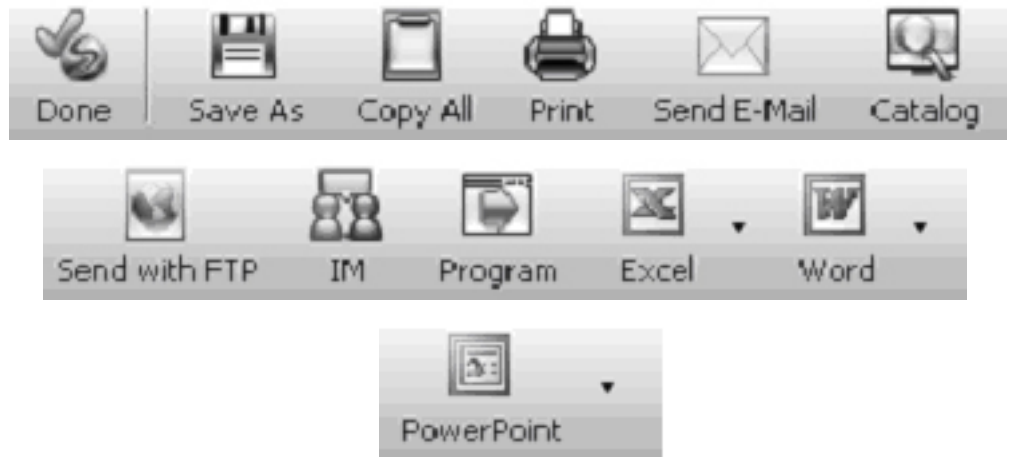- Sharktooth Edge...
- Beveled Edge...

Image Processing Effects

- Posterize...
- Pixelate...
- Average Blur...
- Median Blur...
- Sharpen...
- Add Noise...
- Emboss...
- Oil Painting...
- Underlay...
- Solarize...
- Edge Detection...
- Edge Enhance

Export Options:

Done | Save As | Copy All | Print | Send E-Mail | Catalog

Send with FTP | IM | Program | Excel | Word

PowerPoint

Ease Of Use: We believe that anyone with any skill level can pickup Snagit and the provided training and be creating screen grabs in a matter of minutes.

Strong Points: This program cannot be beat when it comes to grabbing a shot of your screen and giving you the ability to save it out to any format you need. It is a Life saver for those who don't need a program like photo shop.

Weak Points: Because of the simple functionality someone with photo shop doesn't really need it, although it does create some great edge effects that are time saving for photo shop users. It is worth the low cost for those effects.

Price:

|	
Buy individual copies	
single-user license	$39.95 per copy
Buy 5-user copy	
multi-user license	$199.75 $149.75 Save 25%
Buy 10-user copy	
multi-user license	$399.50 $239.50 Save 40%
Buy 25-user copy	
multi-user license	$998.75 $495.00 Save 50%

Support: While we didn't have any technical questions for tech smith on snag it as its so simple to use, being a customer of theirs in the past, I can vouch for them by saying that there support is great. They reply back within hours of the inquiry and they never leave you hanging.

Bouncing Ball Animation

In this tutorial for www.totaldmag.com we will learn to create a bouncing ball animation the best place to start :) in Auto Desks Maya! We will learn the basics of animation only. We will use basic key frames and such, so follow along!

1. Start by selecting your ball object.
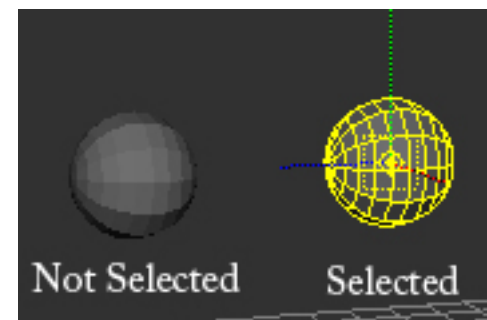
2. Next lets press "S" to create a key frame for position, rotation and scale.
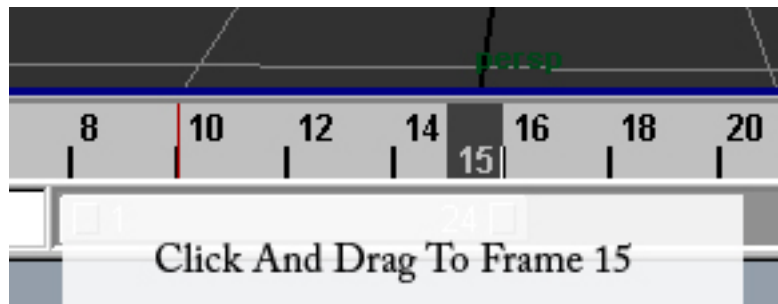
3. Next let's move the key frame slider to frame "10"
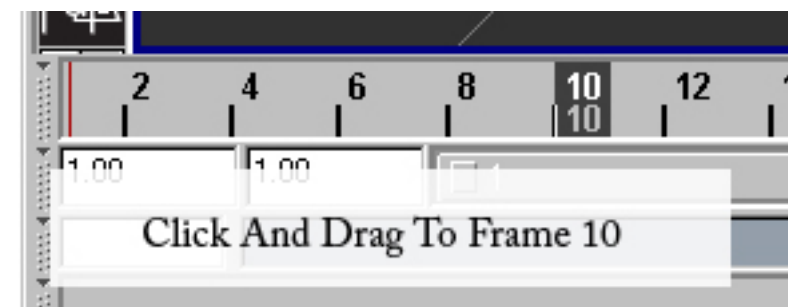
4. Now let's scale our ball down in the "Y Axis" by pressing "R" to select the scale tool, and then use the green box to scale the ball down a tad. Next press "W" to select the move tool, then drag the ball down to the ground with the yellow arrow, then press "S" to create another key frame.
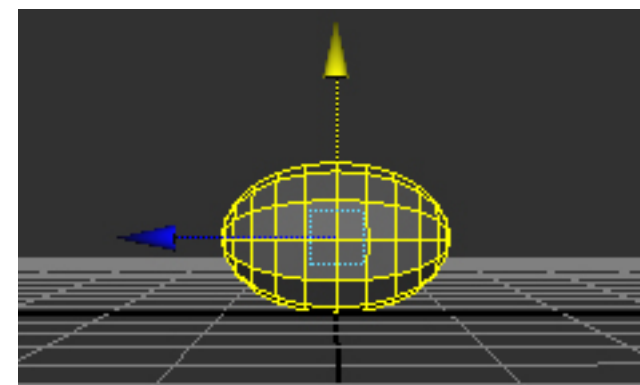
5. Now move the time line slider to frame "15"

Click And Drag To Frame 15

6. Finally let's scale our ball up in the "Y Axis" by pressing "R" to select the scale tool, and then use the green box to scale the ball up a tad. Next press "W" to select the move tool, then drag the ball up above the ground with the yellow arrow, then press "S" to create another key frame.

7. Next set the key frame time to 15 frames instead of the full 24.

Change the first 24 box to 15
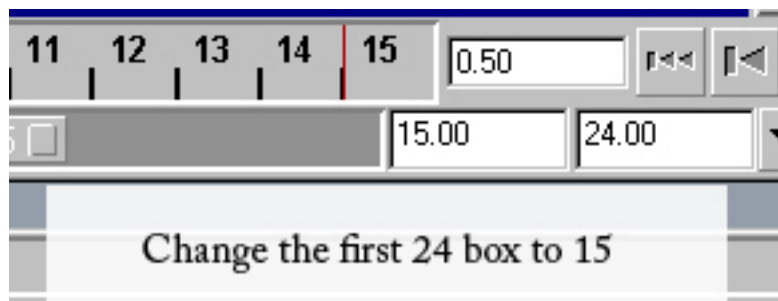
8. Now if you press your "Enter Button" you will see that the ball bounce up and down fast! Congratulations, you have just animated a bouncing ball!
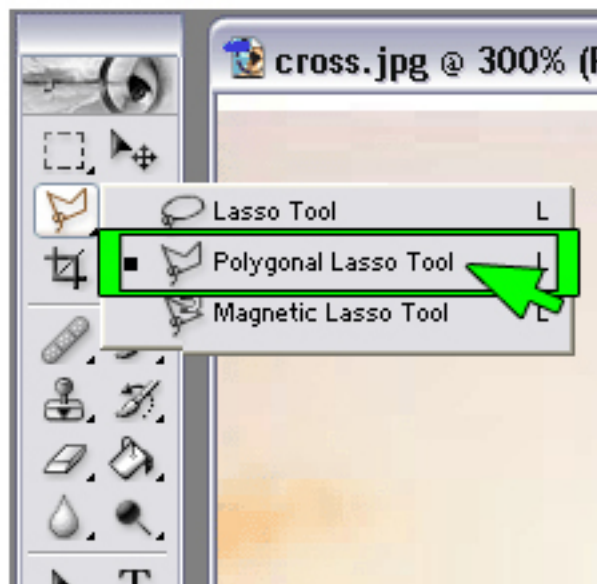
P o l y g o n Lasso T o o l

In this tutorial you will learn how to manually select certain parts of images
and cut out the unwanted parts using the very helpful polygonal lasso tool.

1. Start by opening an image that you want to cut something out of.
We have chosen to cut out the cross in this image as an example.
Click here to download the photo if you want to use it in practicing.

2. Once your image is open find the polygonal lasso tool. It may be set on "Lasso Tool"
if so click and hold on the tool until a small pop-out appears, then select the "Polygonal Lasso Tool"

3. Play around with the tool for awhile. This will help you get a feel for what it can do.

Polygon Lasso Tool

4. If your image is too small, press "Ctrl and +" 1-3 times simultaneously on your keyboard to zoom in.

5. To become more familiar with this process use the example picture included with this tutorial & follows the dotted lines already shown on the image.

6. To cut out a certain part of the image you want. Start by clicking near by the part you want to cut-out.

7. Note: When you get to a turn or corner of the image, click only once. Double clicking will lasso too soon and you'll have to start over. Then put the mouse over to the next corner and click again.

8. When you get back around to the area you wish to select double click right where you started.

Polygon Lasso Tool

9. You can cut out the cross by pressing "Ctrl + X" or press "Ctrl + Shift + I" then "Ctrl + X" to cut out the background. Note! The better you select out the image the better your cut will be.

10. Save your image or add things to your liking. You have now successfully used the Polygonal Lasso Tool.
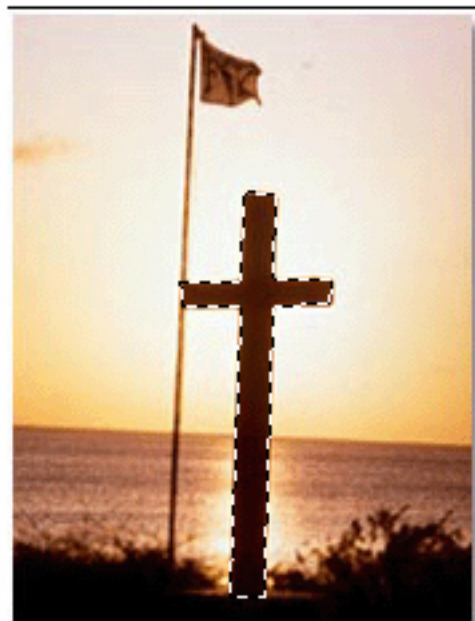
Got Greg?
Talk

Welcome back to Greg Talk! We will now resume where we left off in the December issue of exploring the bad things to do while trying to get your website ranked! Below are the things that you should NOT do when performing SEO methods or obtaining links to strengthen your popularity!

According to experts search engines do not like dynamic pages that contain query characters like "?". Try avoiding those. You could try using rewriting rules to map good URL names to those dynamic URLs behind the scenes. Google definitely doesn't index pages containing "&id=" as a parameter in your URLs.

Using Re-Directs in your website can be harmful! If you must move a document to a new location, the old location has to issue a 301 redirect code, which tells the crawler that the page has moved permanently. Webmaster have tried to use a 302 redirect (temporarily moved) to fool the users and redirect them to a different page than the one indexed by the spider. Though I can see how the spider can be fooled to not do the redirect, when it spiders the pages. This is because spiders can be identified as such before the page is served to them. So one could serve different pages to visitors and search engine crawlers. But don't do that.

Do not post too many links on a single page. Google suggests less than 100. When linking to other sites, avoid linking to sites with bad reputation. When you receive a request to link to another site, first go and check that the site is of a good quality and that it's of a relevant content.

Linking your sites with other sites! When having other sites link to yours (inbound links), try to use different wordings for the anchored text. If it's always the same wording, search engines may consider those links as an attempt to raise your page rank and your site's page rank will be devalued.

Things to know about adding URLs to the search engines! Several sources indicate that submitting your site via "Add URL" to various search engines might be a bad idea. The premise is that if spiders can't find your site via other sites linking to you, then your site probably is not worthy their time. But this is only relevant for new sites.

Well there you have it! You will read many tips and techniques throughout Total Digital Magazine but these are the top things in Greg's opinion to stay away from to be successful in building your rank popularity!

In the next issue we will finish my series up with the positive ways to improve your website using certain tips and techniques!

It's like my dad always told me…there are many ways to skin a cat but try to use the best method in order to succeed !

Winter's Lig

By: Travis C Lackey
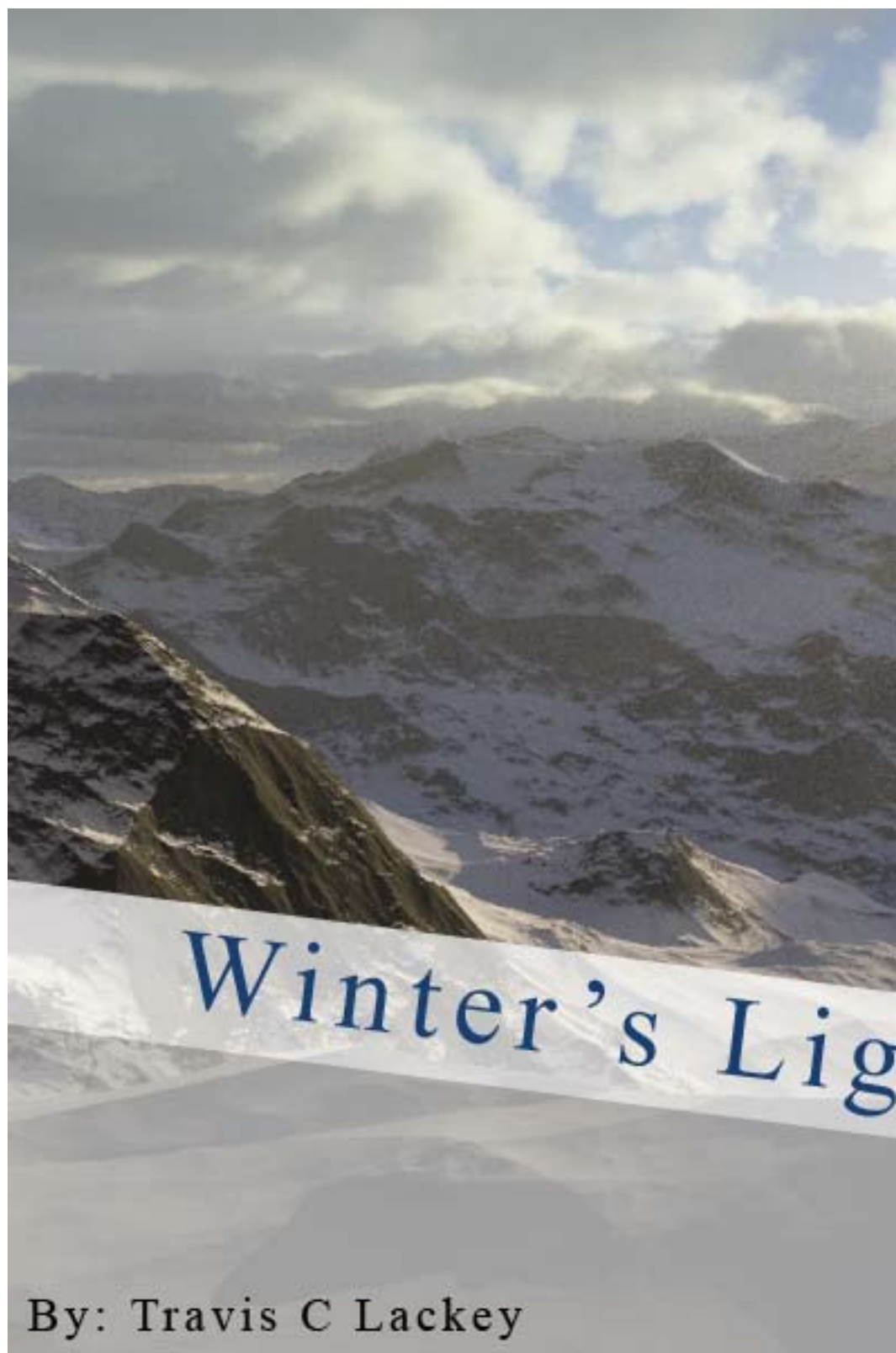
We would like to wish you a Ha
you all will prosper in the new y
from totald and send us some fe
know how you like it! Thanks!

ht

ppy New Year and we hope that
year! Expect more great things
edback about the mag to lets us