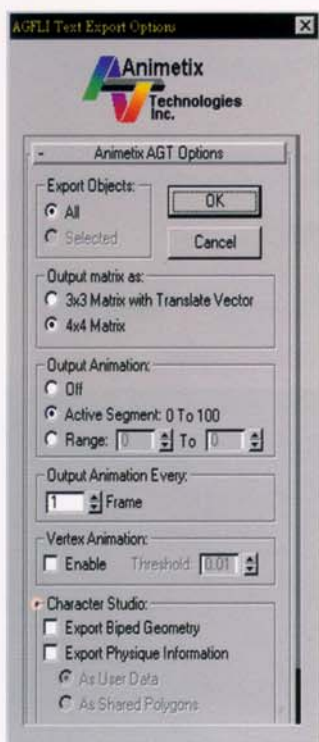


GAMUT

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 PRODUCT GAMUT
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Games, everyone knows, are cool. Video games are really cool. 3D video games rock the hardest.

Now, I don't dare call myself a 3D MAX guru, nor am I an expert modeller but when I got the chance to review these plug-ins I jumped: output my models and animations to games platforms – how cool is that? (Very, in case you were wondering.)

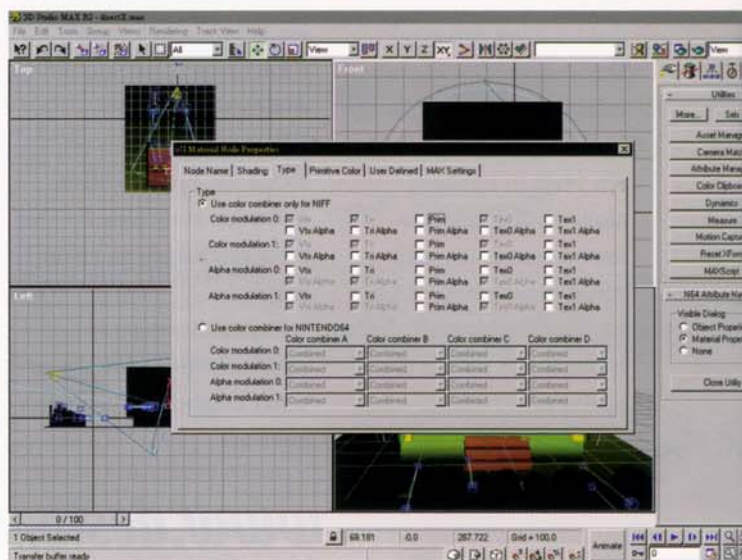
Now, I'm no games developer either, I don't own a Yaroze PSX or programmable N64, but even I can see the obvious wide-ranging benefits of porting from MAX to games platforms. It's a whole new meta-ball game entirely.

So enter GAMUT v.1.1: a series of plug-ins for MAX, constituting one for each of the major consoles – Nintendo 64, Sony PlayStation and DirectX (PC). (Apologies to any enraged Atari Neo-Geo fans out there.) Each plug-in allows you to export your models and artwork to whichever platform you require, efficiently, easily, and best of all, with real time previews. Yes, you can preview all your work and make alterations before handing it over to the game-head coding people.

GAMUT allows 3D MAX artists to both import and export games console files to MAX. The core of the GAMUT plug-in is to do mostly two things: one – get your MAX files onto a console, and two – make sure you can preview them first.

Once you start using the GAMUT plug-in you are introduced to the View Manager. This is a very neat tool that acts as a virtual console/Direct3D window.

GAMUT exports your scene into an intermediate file format called AGT Briefly this is an



Above: With Gamut DirectX, you can output both models and animations

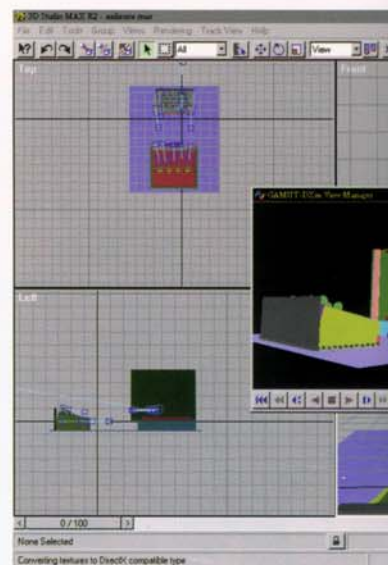
Left: GAMUT also provides a new file format, the AGT Export

ASCII format specified by Animetix and is designed as a platform-independent format for games developers, or so it says in the manual. (More on this later.)

Effectively the AGT format transfers MAX files into the Direct3D environment or any other games environment (PSx or N64) virtually.

In another neat turn the AGT Viewer also runs outside MAX. So, once you've exported your work to the AGT format you are then able to view the fruits of your labours in the viewer of your platform of choice or just on your PC monitor. This is especially useful if you don't have access to the hardware kit yet want to preview your work before handing it over to game programmers.

So let's take a look at the big three GAMUT plug-ins...



GAMUT-N64

N64 files, or the NIFF format, are exported easily using GAMUT-N64. The export dialogue seems very straightforward, with a simplistic approach to making sure your MAX models look good on an N64. New to version 1.1 of GAMUT-N64 is more extensive support for object and material attributes, provided by Nintendo's NIFF Editor tool. The