



Left: This plug-in allows direct and interactive previewing of your MAX art on a Nintendo 64 console

plug-in exports geometry, materials, Nintendo specific attributes using the Attribute Manager, textures, mapping co-ordinates, hierarchy and animation, including animations created with Character Studio™ version 2's Biped™ plug-in. (All the GAMUT plug-ins do this for each platform.)

The Nintendo IS-Viewer (with a SCSI interface connection) allows you to preview your models, scenes and artwork on an NTSC monitor with materials, Nintendo attributes, textures, and animation. The monitor view can be changed using the N64 Controller™, allowing you to see how your art looks from any

(the ASCII version) and TMD (binary equivalent) are exported from MAX with this version of the plug-in (rather obviously). This is only a part of what the PlayStation requires for you to see your work run on its hallowed console. So, just for the record, the RSD file consists of a .MAT file, a .PLY file and a .GRP file.

Oh, and then there's the TIM file or PlayStation's Texture Image Files as well. See, and you thought it was just like exporting to JPEG format. Well, fear not - because for the MAX artist it practically is!

GAMUT takes care of all that for you, which is decent enough considering how much fiddling and brain thrashing it would take otherwise to export all your wireframes and bitmaps and textures and so on. Once again, the PSx has an Attribute Manager which allows you to play with transparency, lighting and textures. So you can preview and alter your work and maybe remodel the new Lara Croft?

GAMUT DIRECT X

This plug-in was the most useful for me. As I mentioned before, I don't have a PSx or N64 - but I do have a PC, plus Direct X! With this plug-in you can output not just the models but also the animations, to a certain extent (this is true of all the plug-ins, by the way).

The animation output includes SRT (Scale/Rotate/Translate) animation of simple objects and hierarchical characters, Vertexes and animated deformations, camera, light positions and the usual Character Studio and Studio Physique plug-ins. Obviously more of the interactive nature of the game comes from the written code, but GAMUT is great for outputting demo sequences and

the like - or just so you can do work that will be viewable on any PC with DirectX. It opens a world of possibilities for the animator and modeller.

With this plug-in you have access to the PC through DirectX3D. It also helps to soothe the somewhat frustrating fact that I can only imagine what a thrill it would be to see your MAX models animated right in front of you on an N64 (or any console). So seeing them in DirectX running on my PC was good enough for me.

GAMUT also provides us with a new file format, the AGT Export. This file export plug-in (available as an export option from all the versions of GAMUT) allows you to export the models in your scene to Animetix's AGT file format (a game-orientated ASCII format).

With the AGT format you can output your models without the need for a console or even a TV screen on which to view your models - very useful, that.

Information from the other GAMUT plug-ins (as appropriate) is incorporated into the exported file. The plug-in exports geometry, materials, textures, mapping coordinates, hierarchy, and animation and all you need to make your model platform independent for a game environment.

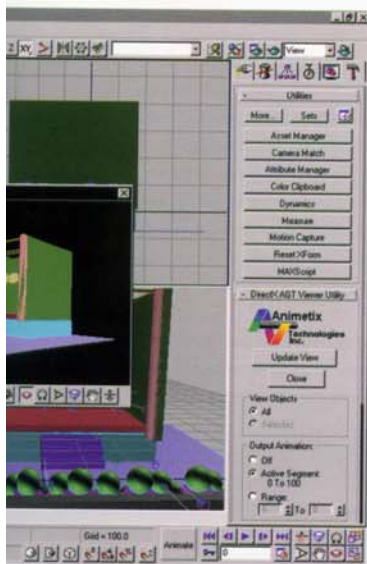
More specific information on the AGFLI (Animetix Games Format Library Interface) is included in the GAMUT documentation and offers an extremely comprehensive guide to exactly what gets exported where - matrices, vectors, spacing, lighting and about a million things only a hardcore game code-head would understand.

All in all, GAMUT seems a really useful tool for anyone

wishing to cross the divide into the games world from the animation world.

It just makes it so easy. With GAMUT, being able to view and alter your work in real time and export seamlessly from MAX to any platform is a real breakthrough as proprietary games modelling tools are outside the grasp (and wallet) of most people.

The quick realisation is that, as a freelance artist, you can now export your models and animations to the video game platform of your choice and instantly add several zeros to your potential earnings (not to mention upping your kudos). This blows open the whole ethos of groups of people sat around offices coding and modelling games, and introduces an open market with the potential to take work from anyone, not just those lucky enough to be in the games industry. Given the massive expansion of the games industry, products like GAMUT should be embraced by all as the potential for creative expertise becomes much more widespread and open.



angle. In short, this plug-in allows direct and interactive previewing of your MAX art on a Nintendo 64 console. Neat, huh?

GAMUT PSX

The similarities of these platform-dependent (or independent with the AGT format) plug-ins is obvious - it's all about getting your models from MAX to whatever is required of you.

The PlayStation format or RSD

