3D Artists Gain More Creative Control With New Autodesk Maya 8.5 Software

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Introduces Unified Simulation Framework and Maya Python Scripting

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Jan. 15 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK) today announced Autodesk Maya 8.5, the latest version of its Maya 3D animation, modeling and rendering software. Maya is widely used for games development, as well as film and television visual effects production. Now shipping, Maya 8.5 gives artists enhanced creative control, enabling faster completion of complex animations and simulations.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO)

"Autodesk is committed to making Maya the foundation for modern production pipelines. Maya 8.5 supports industry-standard Python scripting, offering improved workflows and development productivity," said Marc Petit, Autodesk's Media & Entertainment vice president. "We're excited to offer Maya 8.5 as a Universal application for both Intel-based and PowerPC-based Macintosh computers. As well, the software features innovative new capabilities for character animation; the new Maya Nucleus unified simulation framework enables interactive simulations while keeping artists in full control of the animation."

Maya Nucleus features technology developed by Autodesk's Academy Award-winning* Principal Research Scientist Jos Stam. This unified simulation framework allows artists to create elements that interact, in a 3D animation, with other dynamic objects such as fluids, cloth and rigid bodies.

Maya 8.5 includes Maya nCloth, which is the first module of Maya Nucleus. With Maya nCloth, artists can quickly direct and control a range of simulations, including cloth, plastic, metal and other materials. Believable cloth-on-cloth simulations with complex cloth collisions, such as a cape over a jacket, can be created more easily. A unique air-pressure model enables artists to use any geometry -- whether a closed, sealed volume such as an inner tube, or an open volume such as a balloon -- to create an inflatable object with internal and external pressure.

Python scripting is also new in Maya 8.5. This popular open-source programming language helps accelerate facility-specific custom script development and plug-in prototyping, extending and automating Maya production pipelines. Python scripting offers a powerful alternative to Maya software's native scripting language, MEL, while featuring the same deep level of integration with the Maya command engine. Python scripting further augments the creative control gained with Maya Nucleus, giving scriptwriters the ability to efficiently manipulate, customize and automate the software.

Anders Langlands, R&D lead at The Moving Picture Company (MPC) and Maya 8.5 beta tester, commented: "Having Python support available in Autodesk Maya means we can leverage many of our existing tools directly within Maya, rather than having to write glue code to bind Maya to our pipeline. This allows us to develop new node and command plug-ins in a fraction of the time it would normally take using other solutions." London, UK-based MPC offers visual effects and post-production services for advertising, television and feature film.

Maya 8.5 is available as a Universal application release for Intel- and PowerPC-based Macintosh computers (announced separately), as well as on the Microsoft Windows and Linux platforms. The software includes a number of new artist-driven features and performance optimizations. For a complete list of features in Maya 8.5, please visit www.autodesk.com/maya.

*In 2006, Autodesk Principal Research Scientist Jos Stam was honored with a Technical Achievement Award (Academy certificate) by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The award acknowledges Stam's research on subdivision surfaces and contributions to the motion picture industry.

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc. is a Fortune 1000 company, wholly focused on ensuring that great ideas are turned into reality. With seven million users, Autodesk is the world's leading software and services company for the manufacturing, building, infrastructure, wireless data services and media and entertainment fields. Autodesk's solutions help customers create, manage and share their data and digital assets more effectively. As a result, customers turn ideas into competitive advantage by becoming more productive, streamlining project efficiency and maximizing profits.

Founded in 1982, Autodesk is headquartered in San Rafael, California. For additional information about Autodesk, please visit www.autodesk.com.

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