Hamish McKenzie

Over the past 13 years I have worked alongside some of the top animators and artists in the world creating tools to maximize productivity and streamline production. Having started out as a character modeler and animator I have an intimate knowledge of the production problems involved. I have built up a strong reputation within the animation and rigging community and my tools are used by film, commercial and game studios around the world. They are also used by a variety of educational institutions around the globe.

In my own time I develop a suite of open source tools for animators and fellow technical leads. The project is called "the zooToolBox" and is hosted on google code. Details are outlined below.

I have extensive experience with Python, MEL and Javascript languages, and some experience with C++.

Valve Software – Senior Technical Lead
7 January 2007 – 27 May 2011

I worked primarily on building the content creation pipeline used in the following mega hit titles:

- Team Fortress 2
- Left 4 Dead 2
- Alien Swarm
- Portal 2
- DotA 2
- A project that has yet to be publicly announced.

Some of the goals included dependency tracking, version control integration, abstracting data from the authoring applications and making it possible for multiple artists to work on a single asset at once.

Responsibilities beyond tool and workflow development include:

- Interviewing candidates for technical and animation roles within the studio
- Refining the interview process
- Defining direction and implementing tools for the content creation pipeline
- Training content creators with new and existing tools to streamline creation and standardize methods
- Documenting process and tools to empower content creators
- Rigging and general setup of animation assets
- Animating various character and articulated game assets.

zooToolBox
2003 - present

The zooToolBox is a suite of both GUI based tools and code tools I've written to aid the development of animation production for game and film artists and animators. These tools have been adopted in part or in full by numerous game studios, production companies and educational institutions around the globe.

code.google.com/p/zootoolbox/

I've developed these tools over the years on my personal time. The code base was initially written using MEL (an embedded scripting language for Autodesk Maya) and later using Python.

My site and blog maintains a consistent 3000 unique visitors per month and the actual tools average about 1500 downloads per month. My blog can be found here:

www.macaronikazoo.com

THQ Studio Australia – Lead Animation Technical Lead
June 2006 – December 2006

My primary responsibility was developing a new animation pipeline as the studio started the transition from XBox/PS2 development to XBox360/PS3 development. My general responsibilities included:

- Creating and maintaining the asset dependency tracking tool which was responsible for keeping track of the relationships between assets and all the pieces of data that constitute them
- Collaborating with systems programmers to ensure the data coming out artists and animators was valid, clean and optimal
- Collaborating with animation leads to maximize animator efficiency, and ease the transition to the newer technology and newer procedures
- Training artists and animators to use the new tools and pipeline
- Maintaining tool and process documentation to empower artist and animators.

DNA Helix Studios – Animation Technical Lead
19 September 2005 – 20 May 2006

I worked on the film "The Ant Bully" for Warner Brothers as the technical lead for the animation department. My responsibilities included:

- Designing, writing and maintaining the entire library of animation tools
- Collaborating with the rigging department to make sure their rigs provided all

the needs of the animation and story departments

- Working with the shot finaling department to ensure data flowed freely between the departments
- Ensuring all necessary data flows between the animation department and other dependent departments such as editorial, dressout, crowd and layout
- Training the animators on tools, procedures and techniques for dealing with heavy scenes, solving shot specific problems and maximizing compatibility with procedures.

I also animated a variety of shots on the film.

THQ Studio Australia - Animation Supervisor
14 April 2003 - 15 September 2005

I was part of the core start up crew of this studio and was employed initially for my Maya expertise and technical skills. My initial role was to develop the creative pipeline from scratch and head up the technical side of the animation department. Additionally I was responsible for helping other staff develop their skills in Maya, as most of the early staff were familiar only with 3D Studio Max.

While at Studio Oz, I was involved in bringing two projects to market, and had started pre-production on the third. On the first project, "*Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies*", I was both the senior animator on the project, as well as the animation technical lead. I was responsible for pipeline development, rigging and a small bit of modeling. Toward the end of the project I was brought in as a senior cinematics animator.

After Jimmy, my role at the studio expanded to the animation supervisor. On the second project, "*Spongebob Squarepants: Lights Camera Pants!*", I was responsible for all aspects of animation production including scheduling, animation pipeline development, staffing and creative direction.

General responsibilities included:

- Scheduling projects
- Providing constructive feedback and guidance for the animation team
- Designing and maintaining a flexible pipeline
- Collaborating with producers and managers to provide an accurate view of the department and its spending
- Maintaining quality and staff morale through crunch times.

Beeps - VFX Artist and Character Animator
14 October 2002 - 11 April 2003

I joined Beeps as a character animator for the Disney film "*George of the Jungle II*". I also worked as an effects animator for a variety of commercial and television projects.

Queensland University of Technology - 3D Tutor
All through 2002

In addition to working full time in 2002 at Krome Studios, I co-lectured an introductory animation class 2nd year students and tutored 2nd and 3rd year animation students.

Krome Studios - Senior Technical Animator / Character Animator
08 December 2000 - 11 October 2002

Krome Studios was one of the largest independent games studios in Australia. I started with them just as they were starting their first, wholly owned, tripe A rated project "*Ty: the Tasmanian Tiger*". My responsibilities included:

- Character animation and modeling
- Creature rigging and support
- Supervising the modeling and animation work of other character artists
- Collaborating with the programming team to ensure asset deployment.

While at Krome I was involved in bringing 2 games to market, and had started pre-production on the sequel to Ty (aptly named Ty2) which would also be met with critical success.

Digital Media World - Sporadic Writer of various articles CG related
1998 – 2003

I contributed a variety of tutorial articles to this popular magazine covering topics such as:

- UV mapping in Lightwave. This was quite a novel and unique technique for the time
- Building an input driven UV distortion node network in Maya
- Creating an area light based on a nurbs curve
- Various rigging articles.