Quick Reference Guide for the new Sims Sprite Exporter

This document is intended to provide easy and clear explanation of the various controls and functions of the new Sims Sprite Exporter. The controls are described below, from the top down. Default in the exporter panel is for rollouts to be open.

GENERAL CONTROLS

Antialias:

Checkbox, default = On
When checked, exports Alpha .tga for sprite. If this box is unchecked during an export, and a previous export has been done with the box checked, (i.e., a previous render produced an (x)Alpha.tga) the exporter will warn the user, but allow export.

Poke-Through Elimination:

Checkbox, default = On
When checked, adjusts z values of object tiles so as to prevent pokethrough of walls. 1x1 objects (or edges of Edge tile multi-tile objects) which closely approach or overlap the cage in the left and right corners will require hand tweaking of z-values in those corner areas (the Zone) due to limitations of this functionality.

Clip to Cage:

Checkbox, default = Off
When checked, surpresses render of any pixel outside of the cage. Made redundant by Poke-Through Elimination for 1x1 objects, and by the Multi-Tile functionality described below. May have possible future use.

Clip to Floor:

Checkbox, default = Off
When checked, surpresses render of any pixel that lies below the Floor (World axis Z < 0 in MAX, not to be confused with the z of the zbuffer)

Use Light Controller

Checkbox, default = On
When checked, causes lights assigned to rotations in the Light Controller (see below) to turn on and off as assigned.

Display Previews

Checkbox, default = Off
When checked, causes each individual render window during export to remain on screen after exporting has finished, allowing immediate inspection. Shows the results of renders before exporter slices multitile objects. Might be useful to verify that objects in the game are identical to the MAX renders.

Animation

The Exporter uses two fields to control the range of animation exported by MAX. The Last Frame field will always be >= to the First Frame field. To export just one frame, set both fields to the same number.

Zooms

Set of radio checkboxes. Default = "All"
Controls which zoom levels are rendered. This feature permits the user to test a specific zoom level without being forced to render unwanted zooms. "All" must be checked for final production export.

Rotations
Set of radio checkboxes. Default = No Symmetry
Controls whether all, some or only one rotation is exported. Excluded rotations are drawn as blank areas (key color, see below) in final .tga. Primary use is to provide optimized .tga files supporting sprite symmetry, and to speed up the export process by not rendering unneeded rotations.
- No Symmetry: All four rotations exported
- 2-Fold symmetry (Bilateral): Rotations 0 and 1 are exported.
- 4-Fold Symmetry (Radial): Only Rotation 0 is exported.
Useful as well, as above in Zooms, for users who want to check only one or some rotations without having to render unwanted rotations. When rotation checkboxes are checked in some combination other than those described above, the "Special" checkbox is checked. Someday we might add a "merge" feature to merge a partial export into a previous export's TGA file.

Filename
Dir: Text field, default = SCENDIR environmental variable (…/TDSContent/Sprites/)
This field establishes the directory where the resulting export .tga will be saved. The field contents may either be modified by typing directly into the field, or through browsing by clicking on the "…" button to the right of the field.

Name: Text Field, default = "Unnamed Sprite"
This field establishes the name of the resulting .tga export file. The field may either be modified through typing directly into the field, or through browsing by clicking on the "…" button to the right of the field. No file format extensions are permitted in this field; the field will strip out any extensions, regardless of format, whether typed or the result of browsing.
.TGA format is the only allowable type of export format.

Key Color
Key Color: Color Picker box
Establishes the primary key color of the resulting .tga export file. When clicked, brings up MAX color picker window.

Alt Color: Color Picker box
Establishes the key color used if the primary Key Color (see above) is found in any rendered pixel of the resulting .tga export file.

LIGHT CONTROLLER CONTROLS
Rotation spinner
This up/down arrow set allows the user to specify which rotation's assigned lights are displayed in the List Window (see below). Total # of rotations = 4

List Window
Text field
This window shows all lights that pertain to the currently set rotation, or which are not assigned to any rotation (see List Unassigned Lights below). Double-clicking on any light shown in the List Window brings up a dialog box with a set of checkboxes, one per rotation, allowing the user to quickly assign or remove lights to any rotation, or multiple rotations.

List Unassigned Lights
>Checkbox, default = Off
>When checked, shows all unassigned lights in the List Window, and disables the Rotation Spinner (see above)

Add Lights (pick)
>Checkbox, default = Off
>When checked, permits lights to be assigned to the current rotation in two ways:
>>1) By hit, where the user clicks on the light in MAX's viewports
>>2) By use of the Picker in MAX's main menu bar
>
>When checked, this function disables the double-click functionality in the List Window (see above)

Remove Lights (pick)
>Checkbox, default = Off
>When checked, permits lights to be removed from the current rotation in two ways:
>>3) By hit, where the user clicks on the light in MAX's viewports
>>4) By use of the Picker in MAX's main menu bar
>
>When checked, this function disables the double-click functionality in the List Window (see above)

Auto-Apply
>Checkbox, default = On
>When checked, this automatically sets all assigned lights of the current rotation to On, and turns Off and hides all other rotations' assigned lights. Using the Rotation Spinner (see above) to cycle through the rotations will hide/unhide and turn On/Off all assigned lights as appropriate. Unassigned lights are not affected.

Apply Lights
>Button.
>When pressed, turns off and hides assigned lights of other rotations. Light settings do not change when the Rotation Spinner is changed up or down. For use when Auto Apply is turned off. Unassigned lights are not affected.

Unhide All Lights
>Button
>When pressed, shows all lights hidden by the action of either Auto Apply or Apply Lights (see above). If Auto Apply remains checked, changing the Rotation Spinner up or down will rehide all lights of other rotations. Unassigned lights are not affected.

Reset
>Button
>When pressed, sets all lights to "unassigned." This destroys data!

MULTI-TILE CONTROLLER
Multi-Tile Extent
>Numeric field.
>Default: X = 1, Y = 1
>Sets the exporter to render the proper dimensions of the object, expressed in number of 3'x3' tiles. The X and Y dimensions correspond to the MAX World X and Y axes, most easily examined in the Top Viewport. Due to the orientation conventions imposed by the export pipeline, X >= Y.
>Note that (0,0,0) in MAX world coordinates corresponds to the center of the X=0, Y=0 tile of a multi-tile object.

Virtual Origin
Numeric field
Default: X = 0, Y = 0
Sets the exporter to properly position an overlay sprite on top of another multitile object. The X and Y describe the number of tiles offset from the origin that an overlay sprite will appear. These numbers are easily derived through observation in the Top Viewport. Entries are always positive.

DEBUG PANEL
Restore Defaults
Button
When pressed, sets all values and fields in the exporter to defaults.