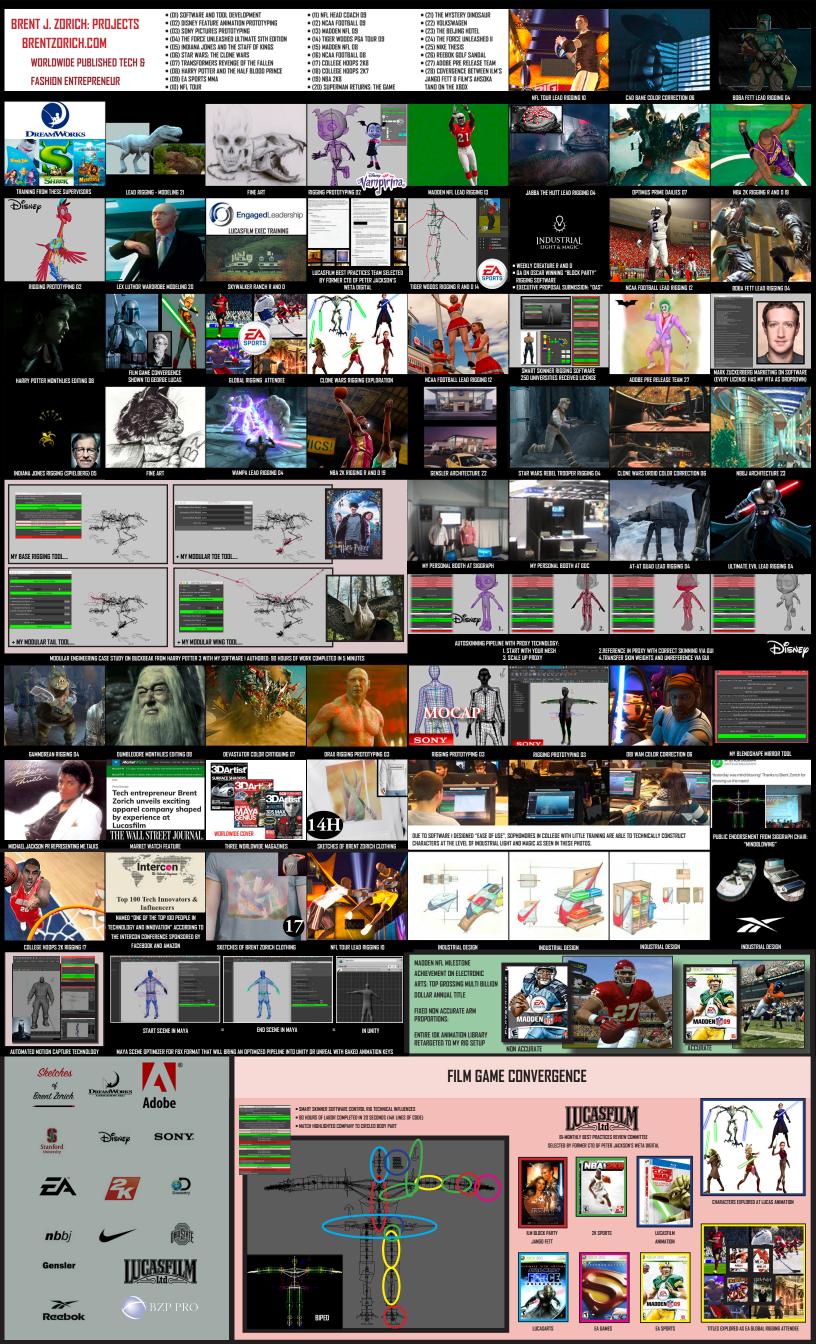


EXTRA INFORMATION



Workspace Interview

WORKSPACE

INTERVIEW workspace



Each issue, 3D Artist finds out how the top people in the 3D industry got their jobs and what you need to know to get a foot in the door

About the insider Job Character technical

Master's of Fine Art CAD at The Ohio State University Company website www.lucasfilm.com

There are few people in the 3D industry who can claim to have worked on bestselling EA Skywalker Ranch with Lucasilim the next, but Brent Zorich is a man who can. Zorich was part of a steering committee meeting for Lucasilim on film/ game convergence. In addition, he was lead rigger on *her Force Unleashet: Ultimate Sth Edition*. On this title, he was working in the LucasArts division, looking at pipeline and storage optimisation and lead rigging on such characters as jabba the Hutt and Boba Fett. Zorich was also dealing with convergence on all divisions from LucasArts. Lucasfilm Animation, Industrial Light & Magic and Lucasfilm Animation Singapore.

3D Artist: What did this role of working on convergence mean in practice? Brent Zorich: As a part of the senior staff, I wrote proposals to help set the direction for Lucaslin Ltd as a company. In Singapore, not only was I part of research and development prior to my promotion and relocation to the home office in San Francisco, I



wana Jones and the Staff of Kings Vars: The Clone Wars orts MMA Tra--

3D Artist: What did this role of working on

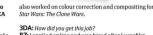
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3DA: How did you get this job? **BZ:** I applied online and was hired after Lucasfilm Animation Singapore saw the great work I did on EA Sports' football franchise.

3DA: What kind of course did you do at university, or training did you do? BZ: At ACCAD at the Ohio State University, I did B2: At ACCAD at the Ohio State University, I did extensive research on the following topics: VRML; procedural animation; Pixari S RenderMan; motion capture. I also researched Wayfinding in real-time simulation (the subject analysed and improved upon was the game Spider-Man The Movie). First of all, the Wayfinding tool was created out of VRML and theories worked on with an eminent scholar. I also studied the enhancement of realism in computer animation through the incorporation of biomechanics and fatigue (the subject analysed was Shrek). Next, I looked at rigging of prehistoric animals with my project-based thesis Mystery Dinosaur work. Finally. I looked at regutures evolving based on the ecosystem around them. Classes were also taken in digital still-life lighting and theatre lighting.

3DA: For today's generation of students, what is the kind of educational grounding they should be looking to undertake to get a first job as a character animator, or is the entry level a less specific role?
B2: This is the way that I do it. I have a television next to my monitor. I watch Harry Porter and the Prisoner of Azkobor (the Buckbeak scene). If I am embarrassed hole at their to pay to more than the matra rate done. to look at what is on my monitor then I'm not done, plain and simple. I am my own toughest critic and I

ave zero tolerance. 3DA: In your role as associate technical artist or lead

rigger at EA Sports, what kind of work did that entail?









B2: I needed a complete understanding of physiology of humans built for strength and speed. Because I was an athletic trainer who trained football players, it came to me naturally. I know how a football player flexes, I know how they run and sprint and I know how they get prepared for collision. Often, because I have a football player's body. I would go into the washroom at EA where there was a mirror, take off my shirt and flex both my traps and my arms to see the proper deformation. This is how I got into character i was spetiting into was myself character I was getting into was myself!

3DA: Is there much of a culture or professional working Processional working of a curater of professional working practice difference between working for some like EA and a company like Lucasfilm? BZ: You are who your team is. Lucasfilm, as a company, is a natural fit for me. We both have zero

company, is a natural filt for me. We both have zero tolerance when it comes to the quality of our work. We push the absolute limitation of technology in every way, shape and form. Because we are not on yearly titles, whave the ability to push back a launch date to guarantee that to break new ground.

3DA: What softw packages and tools have you used for rigging and animation? **BZ:** I use Maya, the

proprietary software to Industrial Light & Magic, and After Effects and HyperCam for documentation.

3DA: Do you think there is a shortage of skilled digital artists doing animation and did you find it difficult getting into the industry?

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 Artwork from SW: TFU Ultimate Sith Chara NFL Tour The Ultima Edition in full

BZ: My best advice to any student is try to do an internship in a studio. Do not rush to get out of school; stay in and develop your craft. Finally, do the Buckbeak test as I mentioned above.

3DA: What are the key skills required to work as a Soft much a constraint of a second se your team.

3DA: If there was one feature missing from current software apps that you would like to see implemented to help with any aspect of CG animation, what would

BZ: I saw a demo from a company where you can actually draw arcs of motion on a Wacom tablet and the object will have an animation path.

3DA: Professionally, what's the most satisfying project 3DA: Professionally, what's the most satisfying project you've worked on and why? B2: Seeing my name at the end credits of Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Ultimate Sith Edition makes me incredibly proud. I saw the first Star Wars film when I was three in syr, It motivated my whole career. To see my name in a Star Wars product gave me a sense of satisfaction.

3DA: What would be your dream project to work on? **BZ:** One that continues to push film/game convergence on every level. The ultimate goal for me would be to have an engine that supports a controlled character and the user cannot distinguish between real-time and render.





3DArtist

SURFACE SHADERS



20 MINS filesilo.co.uk/3dartist-7 **Auto rigging with Smart Skinner**

How can I rig and skin a character more efficiently to save billable hours - typically days or weeks?

This tutorial is a breakdown of how the Smart Skinner is used in the production environment to save days, if not weeks, on the rigging and skinning process of a Analysis of the second billable standpoint, a development director might give me two weeks to start, execute, and complete a rigged character. This caused headaches in the production setting as often I was repeating the same task on different proportions without an effective way of cutting down hours. At Lucasfilm, I was looking through the assets of the main characters such as

Assoka, Jargo Fett and General Grierous extracting their key attributes and incorporating them into a super rig that could be benchmarked for the company. At EA Sports in the late 2000s I designed the rigging system used for Central Football for titles such as Madden NFL and KOAA. This Sama Shinner software I have written is a culmination of techniques from these too compansio incorporated into a these top companies incorporated into a tool that is affordable and easy to use. The character will be completed through a process of firstly executing a sketch skeleton to obtain proper proportion. Then, the character will be blocked out within the mesh to ensure the joint positions are in the correct spot. The Smart Skinner will create the leaf helpe twist joints to assist with the proper deformation required to make the rig

production quality. Then, the animator specifies whether or not he wants the character to be a 'linn next gen character or 'ambie character'. From there he will reference in a pipeline that enables auto skinning, transferring the skinning till and making an entire control rig at the push of a button. The end result will delive a character able to be animated out of the bot that is top-other-line production quality ready for either film or game.









DID YOU KNOW? • All tutorial files can be do ded from: filesilo.co.uk/3dartist-76



rotation down the imps for proper deformation. The animator can use the white anchor controls to assist in the orientation of the joints. Translate the red crosshairs to the proper position, if desire to orient the pecs and lats on your charac

04 Delete unwanted joints or simplify for mobile gaming

Use the pink buttons to delete unwanted joints. It might be possible that you do not require pecs, lats, hamstrings, or biceps – use these buttons only to delete the joints and simplify down to 'mobile' if necessary

05 Reference in skinning pipeline and transfer weights

Select whether or not you have a 'm character' or a 'film next-gen charac (note for the quad you will pick wheth your character is built like a cat or a horse) your character is built like act or a horse) and hi buton 6A to reference in the pipeline file. Scale the yellow controls so the reference mask encompasses the character mesh. Hit 88 to transfer the skin weights. Your skinning should be near completed. Hit 80 to unreference the reference file. You now have a clean scene with weighting that is 90 to 59 per cort complete. Do any cleanup skinning at this point.

06 Create control rig and facial GUI

You have a skinned file, hit button 9 to generate the entire control rig. Your rig is complete. The rigging process is a three-joint chain rig: a control rig driving an animation skeleton that drives a deformation skeleton. In regards to complexity, the control rig is at the level of a major motion picture studio. Hit button 10 to generate your facial GUI that can be used with blendShapes in Maya. Once you've done this, you're ready to animate

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O1 Execute Scale Node and sketch skeleton

sketcn skeleton Push the button to activate the Scale Node. This will set the overall scale of the rig. Then hit button 2 to generate the sketch skeleton that is already in a base proportion. The animator needs to translate the root of their mesh to the 0.0 curved. mesh to the 0 0 0 world space co The root of the sketch skeleton is locked.

O2 Block out proportions of the skeleton

counter rotation

joints. These joints will assist in the counter

05

66

of the skeleton By using the open channels, and open channels only, begin to sketch out the proper proportion of the skeleton to the character. Lockad are not to be unlocked, this will maintain the proper joint orientation and guarantee that your IK will be set up properly in Step 6. You can also mirror your skeleton for symmetry. Once you have the proportion you want, ith button 4 to lock the sketch skeleton into place. That will zero out your joints in your sketch skeleton. **03** Create leaf joints for deformation and

he 'leaf helper