Simon Hodgkiss – CG Generalist & Character Animator

2a Dukelands, Weedon, Northampton NN7 4RF. Tel 01327 341184 Mobile 07790 368575

Career Synopsis

I have been working as an independent CG Director and Animator for the last 17 years. Having worked in IT, Games and Post Production. As a Designer I worked for just over 3 years as a Web Design Manager for a large corporate, in Games I have managed teams as a Lead Artist and Lead Animator and in Post I have set-up production pipelines and departments at both Pinewood and Shepperton Studios. I enjoy working with other artists and animators and I'm very passionate about anything I do. Over the last few years I have used 3dsmax, Maya, Lightwave, Modo and Softimage Xsi in production in both industries. I have also directed motion capture shoots using 2 of the biggest facilities in the uk, (Audio Motion and Centroid 3d). I have experience in taking this data and editing it in both Softimage Xsi using Motor and 3dsmax using Character Studio. My strongest skills are in Character Set-up and Animation Direction but I consider myself to be a experienced generalist having worked in all areas of production and design . I have also done a fair amount of Offline editing using Final Cut. More recently I have Directed and Produced my own project "The Adventures of Raz and Benny". I have also produced commercials and VFX material and enjoy these challenges on a day to day basis.

Summary of Skills

Modelling for Animation - Xsi, Maya , 3dsmax, Modo & Lightwave 3D.
Environment Modelling - Xsi, Maya , 3dsmax, Modo & Lightwave 3D.
Uv Layout - Xsi, Maya , 3dsmax, Modo & Lightwave 3D.
Rigging - Xsi, Maya & 3dsmax
Fluids – Real Flow 4
Character Animation – Key framed & Motion Capture - Xsi, Maya & 3dsmax & CStudio
Animation Hard & Soft Bodies – Xsi
Cloth Simulation – Syflex Xsi
Particle Animation – ICE- Xsi
Rendering – Mental Ray, Renderman, Final Render, Final Toon, Lightwave 3d & Modo
Texture Painting – Photoshop & Modo
Sculpting – Zbrush 3.0
Compositing – FX Tree Xsi, After Effects and Motion.
Editing – FCP & Premiere
Story and Conceptual Drawing
Animatics & Layout.
Web Design - Dreamweaver

TV & Film
MetaMorphosis – (JellyFish Pictures)

I started work with Jellyfish on MetaMorphosis with a view to trying out my pipeline I used for my Pilot episode for "The Adventures of Raz and Benny" this pipeline uses Xsi and Modo. My position on this project currently is CG Supervisor having had envolvement in all aspects of production including, Modeling and Rigging the Creature "Gregor" in the film, producing animation cycles for the creature and intergrating these into the rigs. I have also set-up all the lighting schemes in Modo and worked with the Nuke guys to ensure they were fed the correct passes. This film has just over 320 live action shots which have been put through my pipeline with a crew of around 40 people.

Nutopia Babies – (JellyFish Pictures)

The Nutopia Babies pitch project produced at JellyFish Pictures was a challenging one but very rewarding. I animated 3 different shots of "Real" babies talking, this was produced using Xsi and camera projection to do full face replacements of the real babies from the show talking. These shots were animated in Xsi and comped and cleaned up in Nuke.

Psion Corporate Branding – (JellyFish Pictures)

I lead a small team on a corporate re-branding project for one of JellyFish's clent's Future Brand. This was mainly logo animations and composites with live action using XSI, Modo, Mental Ray and After FX.

Innocent Fruit Tubes Commercial – (Blue Zoo)

Recently I was hired by Blue Zoo to produce a commercial for Innocent Smoothies, I animated the entire spot in Maya which also included some Real Flow FX, plus building some additional assets and rigging them.

Socator – Feature Film VFX – 2010 (Zoo Group)

I was hired by Zoo to produce a set of VFX modules which could be used to populate some 1100 VFX shots needed for this 2d Feature Film. This work included producing VFX modules for Smoke, Fire and Lava the work was a mixture of Real flow and ICE in Softimage, plus setting up typical shots in the FX tree. These modules can now be re-used in a large number of Shots.

Sony Terminal 5 Project – 66 London

I lead a team of TD's on this project at 66 London for Sony's Terminal 5 project, this was a massive task which is currently installed at Heathrow Terminal 5 being displayed on 23 47" Sony Bravia HD Displays. The 22k job takes you from ground level in the terminal with a view of the inside of the terminal that climbs out of the building into the sky overlooking the entire London skyline from one view and Windsor from the opposite view then up into Space and back down again as a marketing stunt for Sony. This entire project was rendered in 22k in mental ray and produced with Xsi and Nuke.

The Adventures of Raz and Benny – TV Series Pilot – 2008 to 2009
SphDigital Ltd
Position – Director and Producer

This is my first project as a independent production company, the pilot that has been produced is a fast paced slapstick comedy starring two characters called Raz and Benny. The show concept is my own and I have successfully obtained Investment partners in order to produce a 4 minute polished pilot in HD with 5.1 surround sound . I have directed and set-up the Xsi pipeline for this project and along with a fellow animator produced the pilot in just over 2 months. We plan to develop the idea further in my spare time and also alongside it produce a game from the idea.
You can view the pilot here www.razandbenny.com

Monty the Dragon – TV Series -2007 to 2008
Pineapple Squared Entertainment
Position – Technical Production Director

Duties – Overseeing all elements of Production in all departments at Shepperton Studios which also includes R&D development work with Doug Creel at Imageworks in San-Francisco. Overseeing the entire animation process and helping animators with problem shots. Assisting the Lighters and Compositors with fx material and integrating new tools into the CG pipeline. Assisting the Producer and Supervising Director with schedules based on Production deadlines. Assisting the Head of Assets in making sure rigs are built to the standard needed by the Director and requirements from the animators.
Managing – Mocap shoots and making sure mocap rigs are working correctly with the live action actors. Ensuring the data is cleaned correctly and deliveries are on time from the Motion Capture facility.
General Production problem solving and speaking to Softimage about updates to Xsi and further development within their company.

Monty the Dragon – Pilot – 2006 to 2007
Pineapple Squared Entertainment.
Position – Animation Director / CG Supervisor.

Duties – In charge of all things CG in the HD Pilot of "Monty the Dragon"..building and rigging Monty and Fidget the main characters in this 6 minute Pilot. I also worked with programming TD to produce a new tool for XSI so that we could import Mo-cap data directly onto the advanced rigs in XSI ver 5.0. The show consists of Live sets which were built at Shepperton and CG elements and characters added in comp. There was only a small team of three on this project and I was responsible for the whole team from both a animation and modelling point of view and did all the shots of animation with Fidget and Monty in.

The Indestructible Production Company.
Captain Scarlet.
Position – Character TD/Modeller and later Head of Characters.

Captain Scarlet series..duties include building new models, creating blend shapes in Maya for face and Lip syncing, creating shaders for characters…overseeing all material before its sent to production for animation and lighting. Before I started on Scarlet a lot of the character shaders where not set-up correctly this lead to poor rendering results I have taken the entire shading team under my wing and showed them how the shade characters more efficiently. Because of my long term production experience I'm able to help others and drop into nearly all production related problems and offer solutions and work arounds.

422 Studios

"The Future is wild"
Position – Character Animator

This project was commissioned 4 years ago, I had to animate 12 bats for a documentary that was broadcast on Animal Discovery on SkyDigital. There were three shots which I had to do all in Maya 4.0. This also involved tracking of a live action camera and composting the CG elements.

BBC & BBC Worldwide & Zoo Film.

"The Tale of Jack Frost"
Position – Character TD and Cg Animation tester.

The Tale of Jack Frost was a half hour special produced for the BBC and BBC Worldwide. I was completely responsible for creating Modelling and Rigging all assets for this Half hour special ready to be broadcast on Christmas Day. All models for this project where modelled in Lightwave 3D then rigged and tested in 3DS Max 6 with cstudio…I also perfected the line render look for the show using Final Render and Final toon. Characters Lip mouth shapes where created and rigged with dynamics done in reactor for clothing and shaghair used on the main characters head.
I also set-up a production pipeline workbook system and a FTP system to communicate with the Indian production company which where doing the animation. The FTP system was used as a direct pipeline to send scenes and rendered data straight from India to the UK.

Nickelodeon

"The Weather Kids"
Position – Character TD and Cg Animation tester.

Small project where I had to build rig a total of four characters for a short show for Nickelodeon, Models Environments and Storyboards where done here and all animation produced by Maya Entertainment in India. Again I produced character animations, which helped in the overall style of the shows direction.

This was done in conjunction with Zoo Film in London.

New Media / Design

"Game Ready"
Position – Web Design & Motion Graphics

This freelance project included designing a brand new website for the uk arm of GameReady. I had already been commissioned to produce some motion graphic's for the US Company and the uk clients were so impressed they hired me for there website design and implementation. I used Dreamweaver for all the web authoring along with after effects and photoshop for all the elements and design assets. This also included modelling there product and animating how it works. The product animation was produced in HD, edited in FCP.

"ERA"
Position – Web Design

Era are market leaders in IT Hardware and Storage Solutions, I have known them for some time now, they look after some of the biggest names in Post Production including Cinesite, Framestore, Dneg and Framestore. I re-designed ERA's website and also produced some custom graphics and banners for the site.

"JCB" & "Massey Ferguson"
Position – Web Design Manager (TWF Corporate Solutions)

During my 3 years at TWF I helped this small company grow into a large company with a turnover of 17 million before they sold the company to Datatec in South Africa. I started with a design department of 2 people and this grew to 16 people during the 3 year rapid expansion. During this time under my management and design guidance we supported JCB and Massey Ferguson with all there online marketing and design needs. This included web designs, global portals, back end database intergration and 3D Models and illustrations for all forms of media.

Warner Brothers & Disney
Position – Design Artworker (POV – Kids)

On these projects I helped a designer in LA produce some stunning artwork for Posters and online banner advertising for film and video releases. This work was done with Maya and Modo and envolved posing of characters in 3D, rendering and clean-up work in photoshop.

Game Development

Silicon Dreams 2001

EURO EDITION
Positon:Animator

My responsibilities in this project were to produce a core set of animations for this football game. I used 3dsmax and character studio to edit mocap data in motion flow, character studios motion editing toolset. This also included producing key framed animations for moves that we had no motion capture data for.

UEFA 2001
Positon:Animator

My responsibilities in this project were to produce a core set of animations for this football game. I used 3dsmax and character studio to edit mocap data in motion flow, character studios motion editing toolset. This also included producing key framed animations for moves that we had no motion capture data for.

DREAM SOCCER
Positon: LEAD Animator

This was my first lead role as a animator on a project for Sega, I was responsible for a team of animators and had to set-up the animation system and become a mentor for junior animators. I was also responsible for ensuring the standard of animation was kept and high as possible and also workout schedules with the producer.

UEFA 2002
Positon: LEAD Animator

This game I did all the choreographed sequences and some in game material as well as being responsible for the rigging and morphs for facial animation. And being a focal point for the company as far as animation is concerned.

URBAN FREESTYLE
Positon:Lead Artist and Lead Animator.

Lead a team of 22 on a game for Acclaim. Duties included over seeing all Art and Marketing for the product. Setting animation standards for the animation team, directing motion capture shoots for the in game material that could be captured. Key framing special moves that actors could not do and combining these with motion flow in 3dsmax's Character Studio. Setting schedules with the producer and maintaining standards and milestones. Setting up character models and testing rigs and also working closely with the coding team ensuring material worked correctly. The game was produced on four platforms for Acclaim Entertainment.

Acclaim – Shadow Man 2 FMV

Commissioned again through Richard Bazley, a FMV sequence for Shadow man 2, I was responsible for all rigging adjustments from Acclaims game material and also responsible for helping a team of 12 deliver this finished sequence in just over three weeks.

KEY SKILLS in detail

Texturing – Photoshop

Long term relationship with this truly amazing piece of software. I use this as my main production 2d package, for creation of the following.
Concept Design & Artwork
Texturing and Painting

Modelling & Rigging – Softimage Xsi, Maya, Modo and 3dsmax.

I have used all four of these pieces of software to create various rigs and models for a number of broadcast projects and game dev studios. Having worked professionally with both broadcasters and Game developers I can create very accurate models to spec (Low or High res) From a professional animation point of view…I can build character rigs that deliver a performance every time due to my experiences and the amount I have created professionally.

ICE – Softimage Xsi & Real Flow

Since the inclusion of ICE into Xsi I have recently used ICE to create Smoke, Fire and Lava VFX for a Feature Film. I have also recently also started working with Real Flow to enhance effects for Commercials, while I do not have a favourite as I enjoy using both Maya and Softimage but if I did have to choose one it would be Xsi.

Animation – Xsi 2010, Maya2010, 3dsmax 2010 and Modo.

Animated off and on in all of these packages for the last 12 years..main strengths in character animation. The ability to create shapes for animating expression and lip syncing. I also use these packages for editing motion capture data. As well as cloth simulation and Physics effects. Also soft and hard body simulation.

Rendering – Mental Ray & Renderman.

I use a mixture of Renderman and Mental Ray to produce the material I create both these render engines have strengths in certain areas. I also manage my own render farm.

Compositing – After Effects and the FX Tree in Xsi.

I use a mixture of After Effects and the FX tree in Xsi to bolt together all the passes out putted from the renderer.

Video Editing – Final Cut Studio.

This my chosen edit system which I use for Storyboarding animatics and final offline editing.

SOFTWARE KNOWLEGDE:

(3d Software)

SOFTIMAGE Xsi – 2010 (7 years professional Experience)
Pixar's Renderman & 3delight
Maya 2010
Modo 401
LIGHTWAVE 3D (12 years)
3D Studio Max (9 years)
Character Studio (9 years)
Real Flow V4
8 years Mocap experience
Final Render   (3DS MAX)
Final Toon   (3DS MAX)
Mental Ray 3.3   (3DS MAX)
Shag Hair   (3DS MAX)
(2D software)

PhotoShop CS2 (8 years), Adobe After Effects (5 years)
Final Cut Studio 2 – (4 years)
Motion – (3years)
DVD Authoring and Mastering.

Personal Circumstances

I have had a passion for animating material for film and Tv for some years now but not content with just animating I have focused my skills towards all production techniques. As a person I am highly respected in the CG world and love helping others that work with me. I'm a strong believer that you are only as good as the team that's supporting you.

Age 45 years old married with two children.