

## Maya/Life Forms File Translator

### 1 Introduction

The file translator is designed to provide an easy way for Maya 3.0, 4.0 and 4.5 ® users to harness the animation power of the Life Forms. It allows the animator to export the skeleton of the current model to Life Forms where it can be animated and the resulting animation saved as a Life Forms file. This file can then be imported into Maya, and the contained animation mapped to the original model.

### 2 Installation

1. Unzip the installation package into a temporary directory
2. Using Windows Explorer, copy or move *Life FormsFileTranslator.mll* to the Maya plug-ins directory. In a standard Maya 3.0 installation this will be C:\AW\Maya3.0\bin\plug-ins. In a standard Maya 4.0 installation this will be C:\AW\Maya4.0\bin\plug-ins. In a standard Maya 4.5 installation this will be C:\Program Files\AliasWavefront\Maya4.5\bin\plug-ins.
3. Copy Life.dll to the bin directory (e.g. for Maya 3.0, C:\AW\Maya3.0\bin or for Maya 4.0, C:\AW\Maya4.0\bin or for Maya 4.5 C:\Program Files\AliasWavefront\Maya4.5\bin.
4. Launch Maya and invoke the plug-in manager (Windows -->Settings/Preferences --> Plug-in Manager ... )
5. Check the *loaded* and *autoload* boxes beside *Life FormsFileTranslator.mll*.
6. Close the Plug-in Manager

### 3 Usage

#### 3.1 Exporting the Skeleton

1. Create a scene containing exactly one model with a skeleton of IK joints. Note the model mesh does not need to be present for the procedure to work.
2. Make sure there is no animation attached to this initial file. Save this scene as your base scene.
3. Select *Export All ...* from the File menu.
4. In the export file dialog, select *Files of Type .lfa* from the drop-down menu.
5. Type in the file name and click the *Export* button.

#### 3.2 Animating the Skeleton

1. Open the file created in 3.1.4 with Life Forms.
2. Animate the skeleton using any one of the many techniques available in Life Forms.
3. Save the resulting animation as a new Life Forms file.

### **3.3 Importing the Animation**

1. Load the unanimated base scene saved in 3.1.1 containing your model.
2. Select *Import ...* from the File menu.
3. In the import file dialog, select *Files of Type .lfa* from the drop-down menu.
4. Navigate to the directory where you have saved the Life Forms animation created in 3.2.2.
5. Double click on the file that contains the desired animation.

At this point your model should have assumed the animation data as it was defined in Life Forms. You can test this by pressing the Play button in the lower right corner of the Maya application.