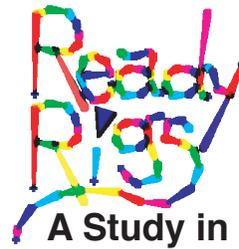


CONTROL STRIP



A Study in character animation with Electric Image Universe.

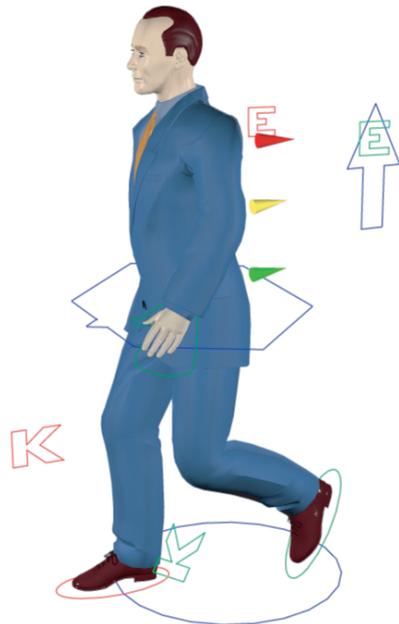
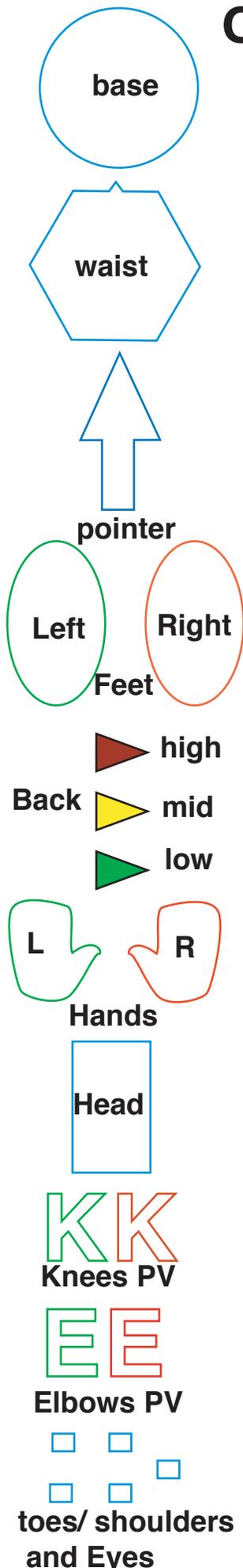
by Alonzo Von Threut

ICONIC CONTROLLERS

ALL TOP PROFESSIONAL STUDIOS USE ICON CONTROLS ON RIGS.

Let's examine why. Good rigs are rigs that help animators intuitively, creatively, and promote speedy animation decisions. Iconic controls are a fundamental basis and a step one, prime feature for smart, intuitive rigging. Character animation is about animation not rigging. If you can't read your rig's controls at a glance, then you are thinking about the rig not the animation. Controls are

responsible for communicating information about the rig as well as executing information you give the rig. One reason my walk cycles come out well is because I can always tell what the waist is doing because the controller communicates the angles of the hip plain as day from any perspective. I can compare exactly how each part of the spine is twisted (Muy Importante). Icons are more than just a beautiful thing. Rarely should controls look identical even if they are the same shape, they should vary in color just as no two controllers have the same functions. Animators need only to read a spec sheet to know how to operate the rig. A new control would have a new symbol. A cognitive animation process is the premise of ReadyRigs. ReadyRigs follows convention and philosophies of the masters and industry standards. If your rig doesn't have icons for controls you are immediately losing a whole level of interactivity and spontaneity when you animate. With ReadyRigs you read symbols which communicate identity, direction, angle, and distinguish itself from other controls by shape and color. Move the big red hand to move the right arm and wrist. Never search for the right control. Controls should not be able to do what you don't want done with them. Why shouldn't bones be controllers? Because that's not what they are for. They are for deformations. Rigging bones as controls can also be confusing while rigging the heirarchy. Icons are a substantial speed boost for the rigging and animation process. Comparatively, Maya bones stretch. So using bones is not a procedure that is common or even usable in high-end rigging. Also, If you use only bones and boxes instead of shapes, symbols and indicators, your rig will quickly become cluttered with a bunch of boxes and look like a warehouse, unmarked without any labels of what's inside. Shapes, wires, icons and designs are the key to a well thought out rig. All of your animators will be able to read the same symbols regardless of what type of character you use. This is a base fundamental to expect from a Rig Tech. If I had a Maya rig with a bunch of boxes I wouldn't use it. Nor would I buy a book that only had boxes for rig controls, animation is hard enough without the ambiguity. ReadyRigs focuses of techniques and procedures for directly intergrating icon controls in your rig. Parenting Icons to rigs is inefficient. Symbols should be a functioning part of the rig and not geometry slapped on top of an effector or bones which is already functioning as a control. To me, that's compounding clunky rigging. Icons also greatly assist in motion analysis for correcting animation during render tests, and not just previews. Bones in ReadyRigs are used for what bones do best...deformations, Under the controls, the bones are performing as dynamic operators and deformer to make the geometry and accessories animate. No control stretches the characters volume. Some says it's a perference, I prefer not to be concerned about distorting my characters anatomy when I move the skeleton.



CONTROL STRIP



A Study in Character Animation with Electric Image Universe.

by Alonzo Von Threet

-athreet@adelphia.net

SPEED- Controls and assemblies have been optimized to not bog down your projects or machine. Simple, efficient controls to get the job done. No over abundant use of IK, constraints, or bones.

KEEP IT SIMPLE, An architecture that's simple but effective in all the right places. Smooth deformation in the spine and arm. Placeholder bones only when necessary. It just makes the character look good. ReadyRigs is not for those who want to spend a month rigging a character. It is for animators who want to animate. The idea is to get as many characters effeciently rigged as soon as possible. It's production oriented so your character can be fully tested in a week or less. Rig Fast and Animate Earlier.

INTERFACE- Every part of the projects has been refined by eliminating clutter. No searching through a mega-tude of bones to get the one you want. The interface is a conjunctive workflow of the project window, F-curve editor, selection sets and manipulators. Logical color coding has been use to enhance productivity throught the interface. You know where you are not matter what window you are in...so you get right down to business instead of staring wondering what to do. (Else you're FIRED!)

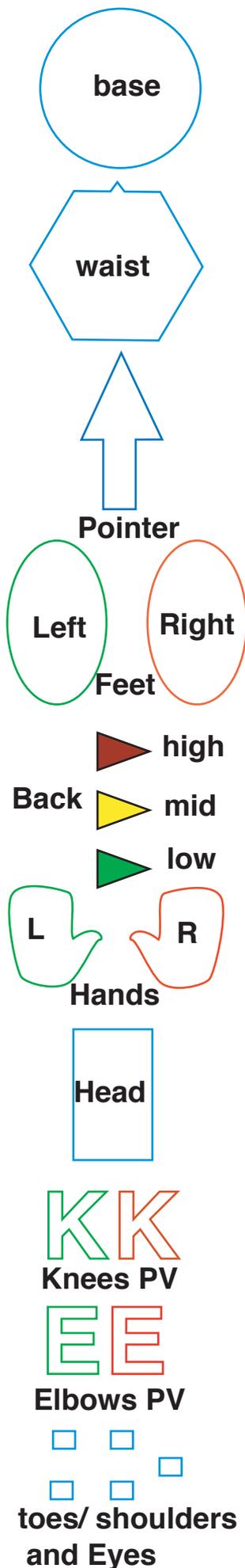
FLEXIBLITY AND RELIABILITY- Proven Practical application. Animation posted (EI Gallery) is proof positive of how they work. No rig does every move. Sometimes special rigs must be built or modified for special moves but ReadyRigs can handle most situations and expressive poses.

“One thing I like about **READY RIGS®** is it's built on my own first hand experience. The walk cycle are my own hand work so I never send your character walking down the wrong path with unproven practices. As Morpheus said in the Matrix, “There's a difference between knowing the path and walking it!” I have personally paved this path.”

Alonzo Von Threet
Independent Producer
AVT Prouductions



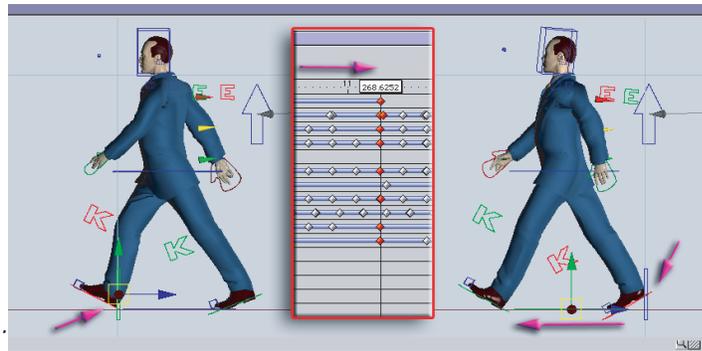
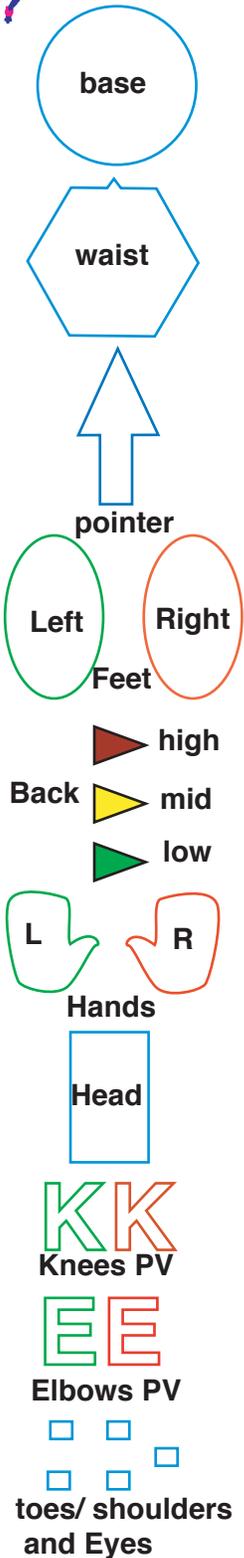
Alonzo is an artist and leading EIU user for ten years. He taught as adjunct professor at Pratt in Bklyn/Mhtn, Parson's New School and Bridgport Univ/Conn. Asst. Manager/3D CG Special for Merchandising/Development at Philip Morris, Park Ave NYC. His client list includes LockHeed-Martin, Philip Morris, Microsoft. Also, Former chairperson of the New York City ElectricImage FormZ 3D UserGroup, Apple Market Center. As an authorized trainer he independently instructed, video editors, architects, animators and manufacturers in 3D. Alonzo developed ReadyRigs to produce character animation in Buffalo, NY at his studio AVT Productions which was founded on B'way in NYC.





ReadyRigs Salesman WalkCycles

The purpose of this project is to open the door of character animation to professional EI users who don't need to learn character animation but would like animated characters in their work. The Salesman ReadyRig is a fully functional rig and walk-cycle of a suited businessperson. The idea is to save time importing a smoothed model, studying how to rig it, then rigging it, studying how to animate a walkcycle and then animating a walk that looks decent enough to use. Basically, this is something I needed working for big corporate clients with small deadlines. Now with ReadyRigs you can save yourself from all "Rigors of Rigging". Just import the project, use the long effector to point the guy in the right direction, and watch him go. He eases down the road in a realistic walk. It doesn't get any easier. ReadyRigs saves a ton of money and time. He looks great in a flyby with a camera following him through your scene. It just adds the "WOW" factor to your work and edge over your competitors. Import him, size your scene, color him and pose him for still presentations, in minutes not hours. [Applause button]



Instructions 1.

This first implementation of ReadyRigs is specifically for architectural environment or display and not learning how to rig or animate. However, if you need to animate or pose, you can. Essentially all you need to do is import the object, size your scene, point or move the direction null. He will walk for about 20 seconds. If you need to keyframe more length to the walk, you only need to make a null object, go to the full extent of the stride, place the null at the heel. Using the null to mark the distance of each step, move the time marker to the next full stride. Match the heel to the null by sliding the location controller (the whole body) to move rig base in the Z direction for the distance of the stride so that the heel is touching the null again. You only need to generally make him move along without the feet sliding. Don't worry if it's not perfect. Some sliding is OK and looks smoother and continuous. It's very quick and simple, to make him walk and turn in any direction. It's took me about 15 minutes to do 20 seconds of walking. APPLAUSE Use the top view for turning corners if necessary.

However, there are a couple of small problems that I should warn you about. There's a import problem. I made a blooper in the import size so you will have to scale your scene by to make him come in at the size you want. 3 feet is good. This should not be a set back for any one with a deadline. If I fix it I will post a new project.

Two, if you don't have EIU 5, then you should get it if you are going to do any character animation at any capacity. There's a Euler Gimbal logarithm snap, or flip that exists in all 3D apps. It causes rigs and bone to loose rotations axis and lock or sharply pop when it reaches a certain rotation angle. EIU v.5 reduces the snap with less occurrences that in v.4. It happens around 180 degree or an about face. You can correct it in the F-curve editor or just skip that snap angle. In v.4 it will snap 3 times, in version 5 it only happens once.

That's it! If you need any help with more animation, job projects, or support just email me. I will be producing more projects that will have all the rigging tutorials, walk cycle tutorials and animation tips. This is not necessary for enviros animators using this project. Just animate the camera in your flyby. If you need more time just key the base of the character.

CONTROL STRIP



