Voice-O-Matic

Speak freely with this, the last word in automatic lip-synch programs

BY PETE DRAPER

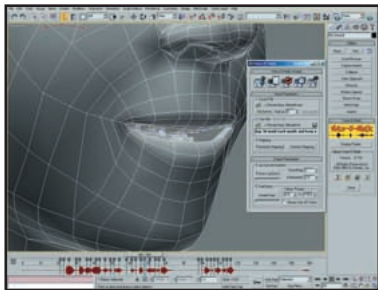Recently, there has been an onslaught of developers releasing automatic lip-synching technologies as plugins or standalone programs. With so many to choose from, what makes *Voice-O-Matic* special?

Voice-O-Matic **allows you to create keyframes that drive the morpher to generate the resulting lip synch animation with little effort**

Quite simply, its ease of use. Everything is so well laid out on the utilitarian interface that you can simply skip the documentation. You're initially presented with either a wizard to guide you along the five steps, or you can just dive right in. Every step is almost entirely self-explanatory. You simply load an audio track of the dialogue you want to synch, load a text file of the same dialogue (or type it), and (providing that you have your Phonemes and Visemes mapped) you process the result. And that's it.

The only hard part is something you would do for every head model you want to animate anyway – setting up the morph targets for the Visemes. With *Voice-O-Matic* you can assign up to 40 Visemes, but chances are you'll only need a fraction of that amount. After creating the morph targets, Phonemes are allocated to the Visemes (either using the default ones or adding, creating, and re-allocating them), and then the Visemes are mapped to the specific morph track it relates to. After that, two more clicks and you're done.

Di-O-Matic's plugins are known to be easy to use, and this one is no exception. After using other third-party automatic lip-synch products in the past, it amazes me that the developers made the process as they did. These other manufacturers really ought to stop and look how it should be done, and *Voice-O-Matic* is the ideal teacher. ■

3D VERDICT — 9

RANGE OF FEATURES	8
VALUE FOR MONEY	9

PROS **Multiple Viseme mapping >> Ability to save mapping set-ups >> Animation smoothing**

CONS **Some tweaking of the generated animation may be required when using low Viseme set-ups**

MINIMUM SYSTEM

>> **Any system capable of running *3ds max 4.2* or higher**

MAIN FEATURES

>> **Up to 40 Visemes usable**
>> **Uses audio and text files**
>> **Uses existing morph targets**
>> **Wizard set-up**
>> **Smoothing of animation**
>> **Anticipation**