Exporting to Poser with Zign Track

Tutorial by Luuk Steitner

This tutorial shows how to export your motion capture from Zign Track to Poser. For this you need e-Frontier's / Smith Micro's Poser 4 or higher or Poser Pro. This tutorial is made using Poser 7.

The Poser export in Zign Track calculates the morphs based on the movements of the facial markers. See the Zign Track manual for details about this.

If you're done tracking your video, go to Project->Export As->Poser PZ2. You should see the Poser export configuration. On the third tab you can alter the morph names. This is the most important thing to do, because if the morph names don't match your Poser character's morphs, it will not work. To make sure you name them correctly, open Poser and your Poser character model. Select the model's head and view the parameter dials window. Now you can compare the available morphs in your model and Zign Track.

If you would use the Simon G2 character for example, you can leave all names to their defaults. Some of the morphs are not available in this character; like "CheekLeft/Right", "JawDown" and "MouthShiftLeft/Right". If your model does not have some of the morphs, just leave the names in there. Poser will ignore morphs that do not match your model. For more advanced control you could add such morphs to your model yourself.

An other thing to keep in mind is the key frame reduction, which you can find on the next tab. The default difference values are kept low. As explained in the manual; if you set these values too high, the motion of your model will loose it's smoothness and will be more robot-like. Unless you're animating a robot, keep these values low or even at zero.

If all settings are like you want them to be, you can now export the motion capture data by clicking the "Export" button. If a valid Poser version was detected, Zign Track should open the save dialog to the Zign Track folder in your Poser library directory by default. Enter a name for the pose and click "Save". Zign Track will now create the PZ2 file that contains your pose.

Now it's time to open up Poser.
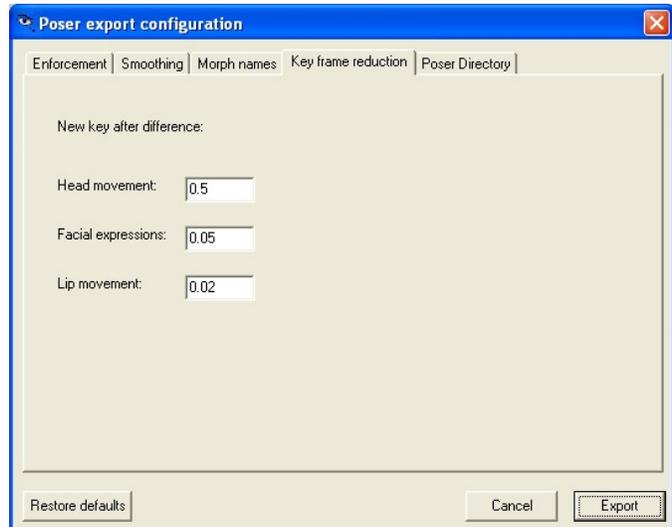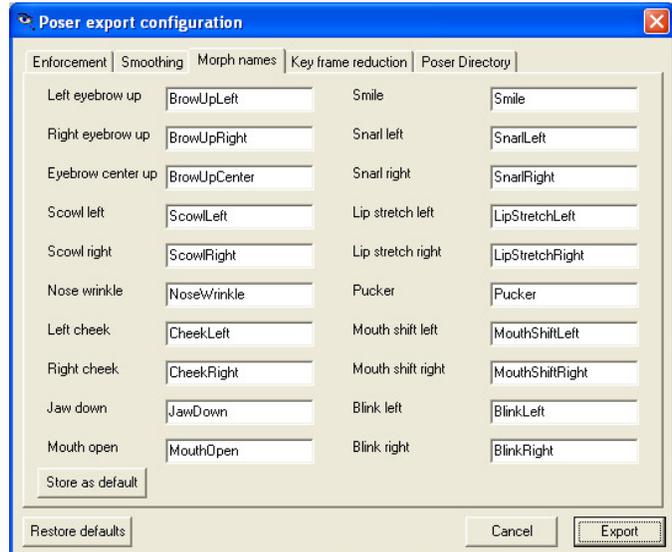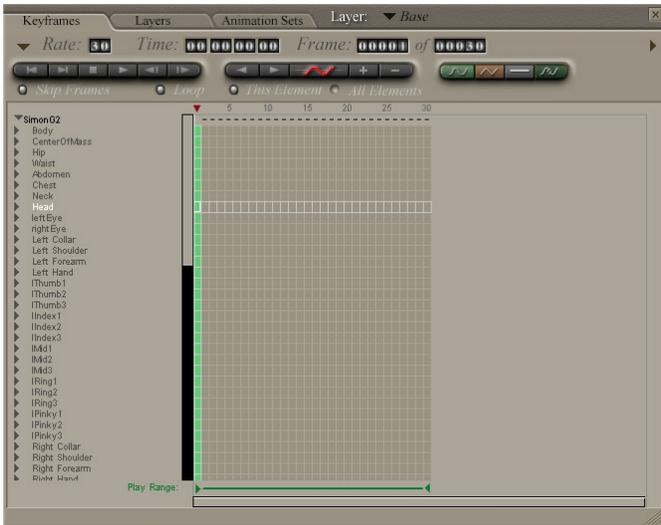
In Poser, load your model. Before you can load your pose, you have to set the range of the animation and the frame rate. You can do this on the keyframes tab in the animation palette. Make sure the frame rate matches the video you have used for the motion capture. The length of the animation should be at least the same as your motion capture. You don't have to start at frame '0'.

When these settings are correct, you can load the Zign Track pose. Locate the Zign Track folder in the libraries window. The pose you've just saved should be in there. Now double click this pose and it will be loaded onto you character.

Now you can play the animation or scroll trough the time line to check if the pose is like you want it to be. If all expressions have incorrect offsets, you have probably set the neutral frame in Zign Track to a frame where the face is not neutral. In this case it's best to change this frame number in Zign Track and export the pose again.

If you want to make smaller adjustments, the best way to do this is to add a second animation layer. You can add this layer from the Layers tab in the animation palette. Click "New" and give it a name. Then set the composite method to "Add". This way you can make simple adjustments like adding some offset to a morph or adjust the mouth shapes where it deviates too much from the captured motion.

Now you're done with this and you can add the audio track, and of course add other things to your animation.

I hope this tutorial is clear enough. If you still have questions left, send an email to support@zigncreations.com.