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CrazyTalk Animator 2 review

By Jahirul Amin

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Rigger and animator, Jahirul Amin uses his professional knowledge to take Reallusion's newest iteration of CrazyTalk Animator out for a spin...

Review Score: ★★★★½

Product: CrazyTalk Animator 2

Company: Reallusion

Website: www.reallusion.com

Key features:

- Rolling character rotation tools
- Multi-dimensional 2D characters
- 3D camera system. Drag and drop animation clips
- Auto lip-sync tools
- Import 3D models from external apps and apply them to 2D characters
- Keyframe retopology tools

If you are looking to get into 2D animation but do not know where to start, then CrazyTalk Animator 2 may be the software package for you. CrazyTalk Animator 2 comes from the same team who created Cinema, but in this 2D package so much fun or as unique as the 3D Iclone version or Crazytalk 7 is not on first sight.

So what exactly is CrazyTalk Animator 2? Quite simply, it allows you to create 2D animated content with a slight 3D twist. Evolving from the previous version, you can now create performances that are free from the restrictions of the 2D perspective, allowing for animations to be more engaging and inviting.

Replacing a default character's head with that of Jim Carrey in Computer Mode

The process of creating an animation is handled in real-time as opposed to the traditional methods of drawing or setting key-frames. This may sounds great but a little alien at first, especially for those who are used to animating pose-to-pose, but after a little practice, you should find your feet. Like its 3D sister iClone, animating in real-time means you personal, drag and drop character clips onto characters and then through a combination of dance tools, you move from one clip to another. I found this a slight struggle at first, as my experience with motion-capture data is limited and I like to go in and tweak things manually.

With the character ready to go and the environment in place, it's time to select Mixer mode to start animating

However, I found that for folks new to CG (in this case my kids), who had no ingrained methods or approaches to animation, they would jump straight in and start to grab their clips and drag them around in a random manner. This resulted in results. The important word there being FUN. CrazyTalk Animator 2 allows them to just go for it and start creating animations, and once they become unbearable (I joking) they can simply revert to a previous checkpoint. Another thing in our hearts' content with the huge library of parts supplied with the software, and then start finite-during some shots.

One of the default characters with a selection of its customizable attributes. Image used with permission from Reallusion

I'm a big fan of getting kids involved in animation, but for the most part, the tools out there are pretty heavy for young users. CrazyTalk Animator 2 takes a breath of fresh air in this regard and has managed to hit a greater range of users than many packages.

Users are rewarded a wide range of different motion clips from walking to clapping, jumping, crying, and so on. Therefore, just like creating a character, starting an animation can be pretty instantaneous. You can also use the mouse to tools to make modifications to the animation clips or enhance the movements to fit your needs.

Using the 3D camera tools to add depth to your animation can be easily achieved by shifting the assets back and forth. Image used with permission from Reallusion

Adding voices to your characters is also a breeze as you can tap a couple of buttons to record your insane and this is automatically lip-synced to your characters. If you wanted to fine-tune the lip-sync, then tools available to do this as well. And in addition to being able to use the supplied voice clips, you can add your own voices in external packages such as Photoshop or Flash, you could very easily start creating your own personal animation. However, this brings up one of CrazyTalk Animator 2's downsides as you need an external package to help in the process of creating the assets. Would have loved for CrazyTalk Animator 2 to have been able to integrate this step into the package and.

Animate facial performances easily with the multi-layer mouth. Image used with permission from Reallusion

Modifying and using the presets was a great and easy get started, but what I found in the CrazyTalk Animator 2's great strength was the ease at which you could build your own characters and apply the same animation clip that are supplied with the package. Either through adding photographs or designing your own assets in external packages such as Photoshop or Flash, you could very easily start creating your own personal animation. However, this brings up one of CrazyTalk Animator 2's downsides as you need an external package to help in the process of creating the assets. Would have loved for CrazyTalk Animator 2 to have been able to integrate this step into the package and.

"CrazyTalk Animator 2 has plenty of other tricks up its sleeve; from its Multi-Dimensional Character System, allowing you to animate characters at different angles, to its ability to render out in numerous styles"

CrazyTalk Animator 2 has plenty of other tricks up its sleeve; from its Multi-Dimensional Character System, allowing you to animate characters at different angles, to its ability to render out in numerous styles; one easily expect the image or an image sequence to other packages, and more besides. What is possible, therefore, really comes down to what they user would like to create: an animated comic, a short film, a commercial – it really is in the hands of the user. I could envision the award winning studio of Joanna Lyn Crawford's family being created in a package like CrazyTalk Animator 2. You could even be the star of your very own animated talk-show. The tools are in your hands to jump in and run with that.

Using a character sheet to create a cartoon character in front and ready to be animated in CrazyTalk Animator 2. Image used with permission from Reallusion

Reallusion offers 3 different versions of CrazyTalk Animator 2, depending on your needs and your budget. There is plenty of information on their site on the differences between the 3, but I thought I'd give a quick summary on how they differ. First, you have the Standard edition. This version has plenty of pre-made characters, props and scenes allowing you to jump in and started. As you cannot add your own content, you can consider this as the version that allows you to use the content. Next you have the Pro version. This allows you to add and create your own assets and has additional animation and motion editing tools, so you can consider this as the version that allows you to modify the content. Lastly, you have the Pipeline version, which is the version I tested. This has all the tools and websites enabling you to create, modify, customize and integrate assets and motions into other packages. On top of all of this is the Reallusion Marketplace, where you can add additional content to your library.

Become the director and create your very own short animation with your favourite stars. Image used with permission from Reallusion

"If you are interested at creating animated content but without the hassle of everything that comes with it, I highly recommend you try it out"

Overall, CrazyTalk Animator 2 is a great little package that may seem a little quirky but comes with a pretty powerful punch. And as I said previously, it's a good bundle of fun. If you are interested in creating animated content but without the hassle of everything that comes with it, I highly recommend you try it out! Happy animating!

Using the Face Mixer to add in and tweak a lip-sync for your animation

Reviewed by:

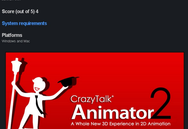
Jahirul Amin

Score (out of 5) 4

System requirements

Platforms

Windows and Mac



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