

Paul Franz

paul@paulfranz.com - Malmö, Sweden

FX Pipeline Developer October 2017 - January 2020 (2 years 4 months)

Tau Films - working remotely

- Sole U.S. (daytime) technical support supporting hardware, software, infrastructure, services, and custom software running on remote artist-owned machines (Windows, macOS, Linux) -- about 5-20 artists
- Sole Houdini/FX department pipeline developer/support: asset management (HDAs interfacing with custom asset management software built on Shotgun), performance/error troubleshooting, quality of life improvements
- Render farm management and troubleshooting (CGRU Afanasy)
- Set up and maintained monitoring for hardware and services (Prometheus and Grafana) which allowed proactive admin of disk space, network and service outages
- Contributed to core services and asset manager software (bittorrent, Python, Qt)
- Compiled VFX third party packages (vfx reference platform: cmake, openexr, Pixar USD) and integration with newly adopted package manager, Rez

Special Projects:

- part of a small team (3) to set up and manage a temporary remote render farm (100s of hosts over a few months)
- Part of a small team (3) to organize and transfer ~100tb of data via AWS Snowball

Senior 3d Developer October 2015 – March 2017 (1 year 5 months)

Saatchi & Saatchi - Torrance, CA

Our department delivered 3d rendered vehicle images for Toyota North America's website, billboards, pamphlets, and brochures.

As part of a team of 4 we shared responsibilities managing an air-gapped network providing: hardware support, DNS (Microsoft), Chat (Spark), Windows 7 Desktops and Servers, Linux Servers (Ubuntu and CentOS), license management, Render farm (Deadline), Source control (GitHub Enterprise), Asset and Production Tracking (Shotgun), and Ticketing (YouTrack). I added monitoring (Prometheus and Grafana) to track resource usage in a single place and proactively identify problems. Our same team supported and customized production tools for Maya, Nuke, and Photoshop using Python and ES6.

The challenges were organizing the high poly models and large amount of variations for each car as well as maintaining a well organized back catalog of model years for easy access.

Special Projects: developed in-house VR content demos using HTC Vive, Oculus, Unreal Engine 4. I also took over VR project from another team, addressed client notes, and redelivered assets.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC2Dc8EjP6U>

Pipeline Technical Director — March 2011 – October 2015 (4 years 7 months)
Digital Domain - Marina Del Rey, CA

- Maintain in house render farm scheduler; Race - C++
- Contributor to in house asset management/workflow tool; WAM - Python, PyQt
- Maintain animation publish system - Maya, Python, PyQt
 - Worked close with rigging and debugged issues related to Euler/Gimbal problems, time sampling issues, space/deformer precision issues, transform versus vertex animation inconsistencies
 - Generates multiple formats and manage multiple LODs: Alembic, Maya scenes, Chan, and proprietary formats
 - Publish process will isolate character from the rest of the scene file (baking off parenting and constraints) so export can happen by itself for more efficient use of RAM
- Contributor to in house Python environment and import system
- Contributor to studio/shot environment - tcsh
- Maintainer of logging system - Python, PyQt
- Setup and maintain ELK stack (ElasticSearch, Logstash, and Kibana) wrote custom Python infrastructure for event logging including exception tracking.
- Investigated svn to git transition
 - Ported existing svn repositories
 - Evaluated tools around git that would be necessary; installed and maintained server and toolset
 - Identified in-house prerequisites for transitioning
 - Wrote up a 3-phase transition plan

Technical Director — November 2007 – March 2011 (3 years 5 months)
DreamWorks Animation - Glendale, CA

Kung Fu Panda: The Kaboom of Doom (Feature film, 2011)
Kung Fu Panda Holiday Special (TV special, 2010)

- FX Technical Director
 - Designed a system to create ambient motion for background objects
 - Developed procedural character dust system as part of a team
 - Prepping pipeline assets to be imported into Houdini, passed into Maya, finally exported to proprietary rendering tools
 - Unified camera rendering settings across in-house software, Maya and Houdini
 - Updated generic animation rig used for environment assets; fixed flaws and improved consistency with character rigs
 - General support for 30 fx artists with script development in Python, MEL, and proprietary languages as needed
 - Troubleshooting geometry, surfacing, particle, volume, lighting, compositing, rigging, and asset architecture
 - Recruiting: resume review and phone/in-person interview for new TDs

Monsters vs Aliens (Feature film, 2009)

- Surfacing Technical Director
 - Established asset architecture for use throughout the rest of the pipeline
 - General support for 11 surfacers with script development in Python and tcsh
- Animation Technical Director
 - Supported and wrote tools for cycle animators
 - Validation and handoff for animation cycles
 - Multi-camera rendering to compare animation across different rigs
 - General support for 30 animators with script development in Python, Perl and proprietary languages as needed

Technical Resource Administrator (render wrangler) — June 2005 – November 2007 (2 years 6 months)
DreamWorks Animation - Glendale, CA