



Granny Quickstart for Artists

Evaluation guide for artists

Thanks for evaluating Granny! Our documents are primarily aimed at programmers, so we thought we'd put together a simple guide to getting the Granny art tools up and running quickly.

Plugin Installation

The first step, is of course, downloading the export tools. Because the exporter is shared across all Granny platforms (Win32, Xbox 360, etc), it has it's own directory. You'll find the installation files under the "exporters" directory of the FTP site, there are 3 exporter files per release of the SDK. Be sure you've downloaded the following:

- granny_exporters_(version#)_release.exe
- granny_exporters_bin_(version#)_release.zip
- granny_exporters_scripts_(version#)_release.zip

Version# will correspond to the latest version number of the Granny SDK. At the time of this writing, it was 2.8.23.0.

The easiest way to install the exporters is to simply run the .exe version of the installer. For standard installations of the art tools we support, this will do all of the required copying automatically and notify you of any manual installation steps you should perform. If you would rather do this manually, or if the executable is unable to automatically install the exporters for your particular setup¹, you can install the plugins manually from the .zip distribution.

When manually installing, we recommend that you install the Granny plugin to the "bin/plugin-ins" directory for Maya, the "plugins" directory in 3DS Max, and the "Application/Plugins" directory in XSI.

Note that for XSI and Max, this should be all you need to do to ensure that the plugins load when the DCC package is started, but in Maya, there is an additional step required. In the `Window | Settings/Preferences | Plug-in Manager` menu, you'll need to click the "Loaded" and "Auto load" checkboxes to load the plugin.

To verify that the plugin is loaded, check the export menu in your tool. You should have .gr2 or "Granny" as an export option. You can find this:

- (Max) `File | Export...`
- (Maya) `File | Export All...`
- (XSI) `File | Export | Granny`

¹ For all three art tools, there is no official, Autodesk-supported way to find the correct installation directory. The Granny installer uses the best heuristic we've been able to find after many years, but it can fail on unorthodox installations.

Your First Export

Now that the plugin is installed, let's create a very simple Granny file that we can use to test the rest of the pipeline. In your 3D editor, simply create a polygonal box. Then, in the menu item listed above, select the Granny export format, and tell the editor you want to save the exported scene somewhere convenient.

The Granny export options dialog will appear. For now, ignore the settings, and just click "Export". A progress dialog will pop up, and give you some feedback on what is going on internally as Granny saves out your scene. When it finishes, just click "Close", and you're done!

I Have a .GR2, Now What?

Now that we have a file to work with, let's install the Granny Viewer. This tool will let you easily inspect and preview your scenes without integrating them into your application. The viewer is included in the SDK distribution, but the easiest and most foolproof way to set it up is to use the installer you can find on the RAD Game Tools website. Simply visit <http://www.radgametools.com/granny/download.html>, and download the Viewer.

Once you've installed it, the viewer will launch every time you double-click on a .GR2 file, so go ahead and launch the scene you just created. If everything has gone according to plan, you should be looking at a grey version of your box.

This is obviously not particularly exciting, but it's a good time to familiarize yourself with the basic Viewer controls. Drag with the left mouse button on the scene to rotate, middle mouse drag to pan, and spin the mouse wheel to zoom.

You'll notice along the bottom edge of the preview window that there are a series of tabs. "File List", "Model List", "Animation List", etc. These give you a convenient way to inspect the contents of your .GR2, which can contain simple models (as in this case), or multiple animations, textures, and materials.

Getting More Interesting

Now that we can export and preview a very simple scene, let's move on to something more interesting. In particular, let's export a scene from your own art database. The steps for this are exactly the same as the box scene. Load your art, select Granny from your tools export menu, and save the .GR2 somewhere convenient.

Once you've loaded your scene, if the model was animated, select "Animation List" from the tabs, and click the thumbnail for your animation. That should be it!

Conclusion

We've skimmed a large amount of material in this quickstart guide. For information on the options dialog, or scripting the export process, please check the Granny help file, or write to us at any time at granny3@radgametools.com. Thanks again for evaluating Granny!