



Akeytsu 1.0

Nukeygara releases an all-in-one rigging, skinning and animation suite that does away with overly complex technical workflows

Being a new launch, it's worth noting that Akeytsu's UI is slightly unorthodox. There are two main work areas: rigging and animation, which you can toggle between and are ideal for rig testing and refinement. Tools for working in each area are easily accessed through unobtrusive collapsible floating menus. Transformation, reverse foot and IK pole vector controls are located in the floating 'spinner', which definitely takes a moment to adjust to, but quickly becomes second nature. Rather conveniently, the spinner reduces the need to reorient the viewport camera as often while manipulating the rig.

Loading assets is a straightforward process of importing a rig-ready FBX mesh. To expedite biped setup, customisable half-rig skeletons ready-made for Unity3D and UE4 are included. Furthermore, Akeytsu's default workflow supports mirroring the completed half-skeleton and half-skin of a symmetrical character at the same time. This is worth keeping in mind when creating skeletons for custom creatures and quadrupeds (or even bipeds) from scratch, using the joint tools.

Skin binding uses a 'duo skin' process. The online tutorials offer a good insight into what

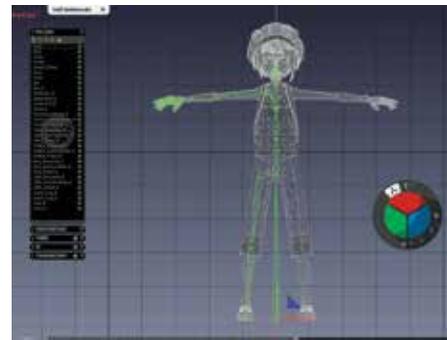
Akeytsu is capable of here. In short, the two step action involves creating a pre-bind that serves as a guide for then creating a smooth bind with options for the level of smoothing per joint. Once bound, weights are adjusted using familiar methods such as weight painting and vertex weight adjustments in the Skin Atelier menu. Once done, the half-skeleton and half-rig is mirrored. It's also possible to easily copy/paste weights to different characters.

Adding an IK/FK setup takes only two clicks, and a reverse foot setup takes one! But that's as far as Akeytsu gets with its 'light rig system', all other animation is joint-based. For example, currently there's no morphing/blend-shape system, control rig or facial animation controls.

Keyframe animation capabilities are well served with features you'll use. For example, cycled animations such as walks and runs can be auto-generated with the Cyclemaker, which offsets animation across the character. And manipulating curves with the CurveBoard that's overlaid in the viewport is more preferable than working in a separate window.

'Deceptively simple' is the phrase that comes to mind when describing Akeytsu. The product is designed to offer artists as direct and simple an approach as possible to the production of quality character setup and animation, in only its first official release. The real strengths of Akeytsu lean towards game development for the indie market but with further enhancement that could certainly be expanded.

Paul Champion



MAIN Each animation that belongs to a character is listed in the Animation Bank as separate layers. When importing and exporting, the layers are preserved

BOTTOM LEFT Akeytsu's workflow for rigging, skinning and animation cycles is optimised for working in half. Premade half-rig Unity3D and UE4 skeletons are included

Essential info

Price	\$39 educational licence / \$179 Indie licence / \$589 Pro licence
Website	nukeygara.com
OS	Windows 7 and up (32 or 64 bit)
CPU	4GB minimum)
Storage	4GB
GPU	VRAM 1GB minimum
DirectX	Version 9 and up

Summary

- ★★★★★ Features
- ★★★★★ Performance
- ★★★★★ Design
- ★★★★★ Value for money

Verdict ★★★★★

For game development Akeytsu covers the bases, but it's not yet ready for high-end work

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