

Importing Models into Alice

Utilizing TurboSquid



This tutorial requires access & installation of AutoDesk 3DsMax.



Alice 2.2

This tutorial also requires access to Alice 2.2 for Mac or Windows.



Turbosquid.com - 3D Model resource site that has a variety of quality designs.

Importing your Logo into Alice 2.2

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This tutorial was written by Travis East for the SPIRIT program at Purdue University. The content is provided to the end user for the express purpose of finding and using free models in your Alice worlds. This tutorial utilizes a web resource called Turbosquid.com. There are a variety of models ranging from the free kind all the way up to ones that cost hundreds of dollars. It should also be noted that some of the models on TurboSquid (and other 3D model sites) that are displayed without clothing. Also, you should realize that there may be models on any 3D model site that can either crash Alice or even your computer. Your results will vary depending upon which version of 3DsMax the original model was created in and also the one you are using to convert into the correct format for Alice. It is recommended that you import any model you download into a new Alice document (not one you have spent hours preparing). A 3D model that Alice does not like can corrupt your project. I cannot be held responsible for any lost data or issues.

If you have questions or issues, you can contact Travis East at teast@nhj.k12.in.us.

Good Luck,

Travis East

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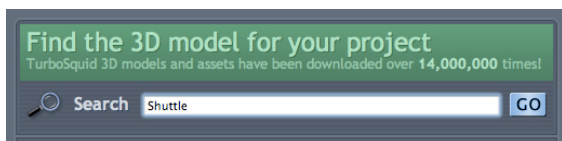
3D Model Websites



1 Navigating TurboSquid.com

TurboSquid is one of several online services for 3D models. While there are several quality sites that provide this service, I chose TurboSquid because it has a large collection of models. Many of these models cost money, some of them costing hundreds of dollars. However, you can normally find a couple of the models for free on the site. It should be noted that some of the models found on the site don't always work with Alice. The models were created by a variety of individuals all using different modeling software and/or versions of the software. The rule of thumb is to choose the models that are simple and have fewer vertices. But, let's face, when it comes down to it, you will likely try the ones that are free. For the sake of this tutorial, I chose a model from TurboSquid that will work with Alice to show you what the procedure looks like when things work well.

To begin, open your favorite web browser and direct the URL field to <http://www.turbosquid.com>. After the page loads, you should see a window with a Search field near the center of the screen. While you will eventually search for the models you wish to incorporate, I advise following the tutorial as your results will vary. For this tutorial, we will search for a space shuttle. In the Search field, type in the word "Shuttle".



You will likely find hundreds of results.

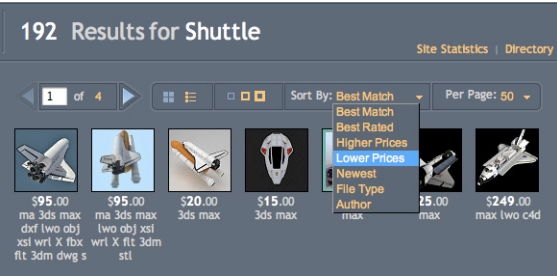


To limit your search, it is best to filter the results by "Compatibility". Since we are using AutoDesk 3DsMax for the conversion, click on the 3DsMax filter link. You should now have fewer results than you did before.

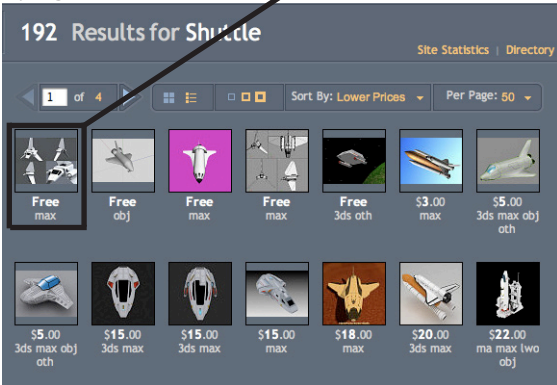


But these cost money !!!

If at first you don't find a free version of the model you seek, it is possible to sort the results by the price. To do this click the menu that is labeled "Sort by:" & click on "Lower Prices".



TurboSquid will then provide you the results beginning with the free and moderately priced models first. Below, you can see there are a few results for free, but the majority cost money. As this tutorial was written for poor teachers, we will use one of the free ones. As we will use 3DsMax to convert the model, we will want to choose the most compatible format. The native format of 3DsMax is the *.max format. However, one can also import *.3ds files seamlessly into the software also. With *.3ds files you must use File:Import & with *.max files, you can use File:Open. While 3DsMax can import other file formats, these are the two I recommend trying first. Click on the link shown here.



You will see a window that looks like this.



Before you decide to download a model, you can save yourself some time and headaches by simply scrolling down a bit on the page. To the right, you should find a listing of reviews for the model. In the case of the Lambda shuttle, you can see that most people give it very high ratings. This does not guarantee compatibility with Alice, but it is a good start.

Downloading the Model

The time has arrived to download the model. Scroll back up to the top of the page and click the "Download" button. If you already have a TurboSquid account, you can simply type in your username and password. However, if you don't, you will be prompted to create a new account. Registration is free and you have the option to opt out of receiving newsletters or updates.



An important aspect of the registration process is the ability to hide mature content.

Some things to remember about any 3D model resource site are:

- ◆ Some of the most elaborate models are human.
- ◆ Not all human models are clothed.
- ◆ Some models are very anatomically correct.

To avoid issues with your technology department or students, it is best to simply make sure that your settings from the beginning are set to hide the mature content.

After you select a user name and password and check that you agree to the “Terms of Use”, you are ready to submit and get logged in. If all goes well, you should see a screen that looks like this.



Click “Continue to the Download page”.

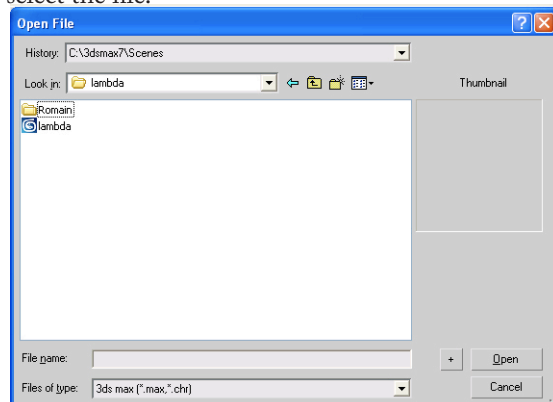
You will get to a screen that looks like this.



Click the Agree Download button. When you see a save dialog box, select a place on the hard drive that is easy to find and delete. This file will only be a temporary file on the path to getting the model into Alice.

Importing the model into 3DsMax:

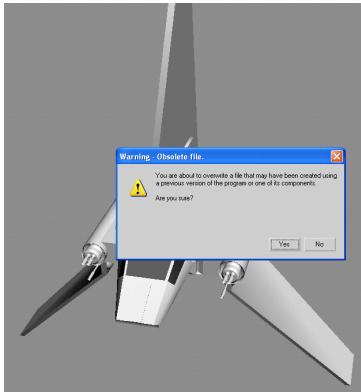
Open AutoDesk 3DsMax. Move your cursor up to the File menu and select Open... (Remember, if this were a *.3ds file, we would select Import...) Navigate to the directory where you saved the model and select the file.



If you are using a new version of 3DsMax, you may get an error message that indicates the model has obsolete data. Saving the model once it is opened should eliminate this error from happening again.

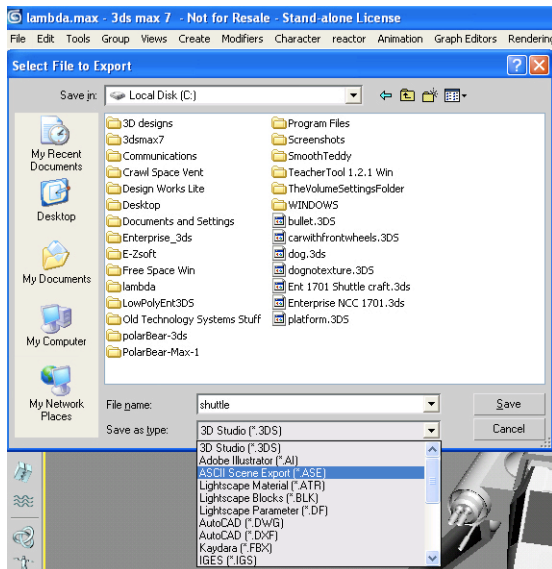
To save the document, simply go up to the File menu and select Save. You will likely see a message warning you that you are overwriting the old file. This is perfectly normal.

Click Yes.



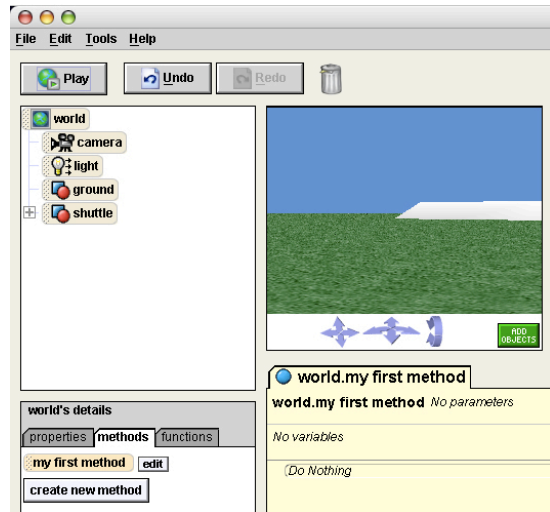
Exporting the Model to ASE

Move your cursor up to the File menu and select Export... When the Export dialog box appears, select *.ASE for the file type. Click Save. As always, make sure you are saving in a location that is easy to find. When the dialog box appears, it is OK to go with the default ASCII Scene Export settings. However, if the model does not import into Alice, you might have to go back and tweak the settings.

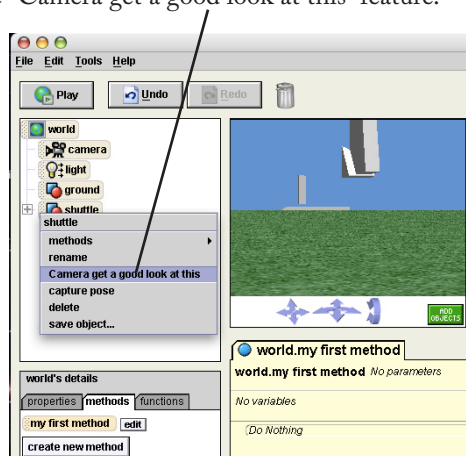


Ready for Alice

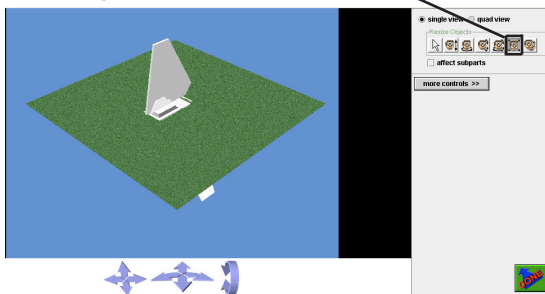
Now that the model is in the right format, it is time to open up Alice. When it is open, go up to the file menu and select Import. Navigate to the directory where you saved the *.ASE file and select it. When the model finishes importing, your screen will likely look like the one shown here if all goes well.



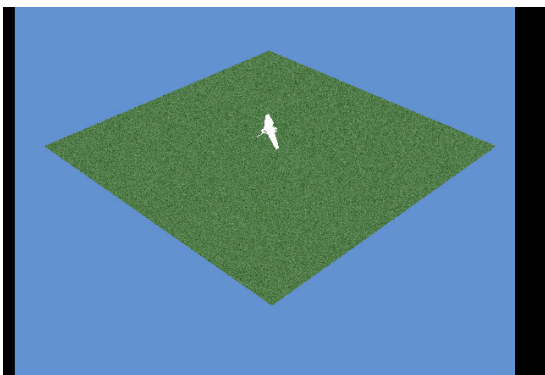
Either use the camera tools to zoom back out or use the “Camera get a good look at this” feature.



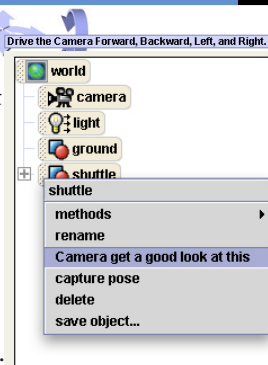
Once zoomed out, you will notice that the model is much larger than the models from the Alice Object Gallery. This is common for models found on TurboSquid. If you are familiar with scaling in 3DsMax, it is possible to shrink the model before importing it into Alice. If you don't, you can just use the scaling tool inside of Alice to scale it down.



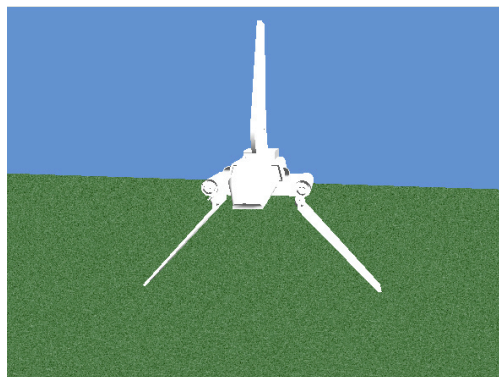
Click & drag on the model with the scale tool selected to shrink its size down.



Once scaled, you can right click on the shuttle model and select "Camera get a good look at this". The model should come into full view of the camera. It would be helpful to bring in some other models to gauge the appropriate size.



At this point, you should have something that looks like this. You will likely notice that your model has a plain white look to it.

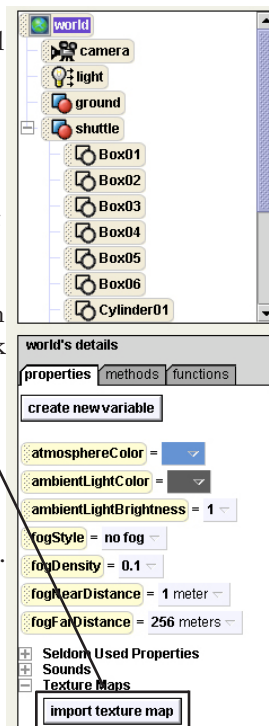


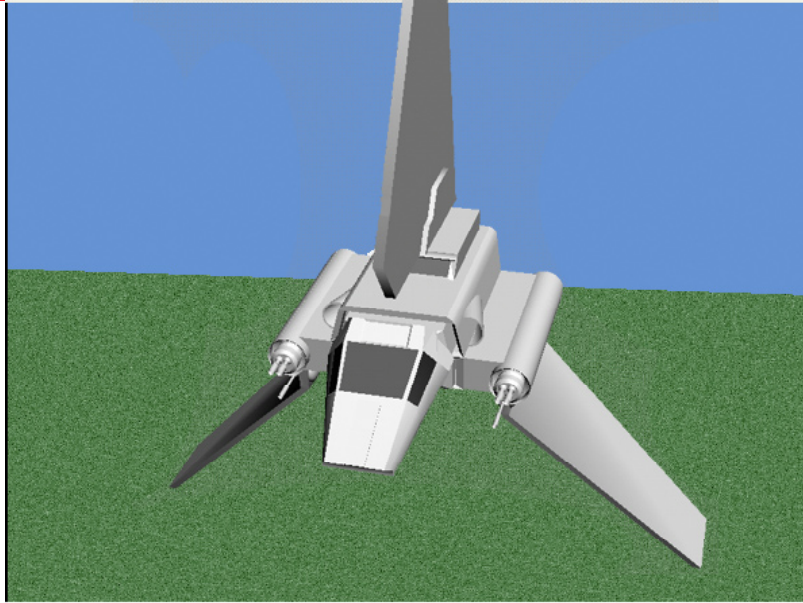
You can remedy this by branching out the hierarchy structure of the model and begin importing the appropriate textures to match what the model should look like. You can do this by highlighting the model and importing textures.

You should now be able to click on individual components of the model and then click the Import texture map button near the bottom of the screen. If you don't see the button immediately, you can click on the + sign next to the the word "Texture Maps".

You can either search the internet for textures maps or make your own in your favorite graphics program.

Congratulations, you are ready to begin using your new model in your Alice world.





Travis East, 803 West Indian Creek Drive. ☒ Trafalgar, IN 46181 ☒ 317 878•2110 ext. 6486, fax 317 878•2112 ☒ teast@nhj.k12.in.us