

Strata 3D™ CX 4.0

*Frequently asked
questions about
Strata 3D CX*

System Requirements

Macintosh:

- Power Macintosh
- Mac OS X 10.2 or higher
- 256 MB RAM
- 335 MB free disk space
- Monitor resolution of 800x600

Windows:

- Windows XP
- Windows 2000 with SP 4 or later
- Pentium Compatible or better
- 256 MB RAM
- 335 MB free disk space
- VGA monitor 800x600 resolution

Frequently Asked Questions

What makes Strata 3D CX different?

Strata 3D CX is the only 3D application that is specifically designed for creative professionals who use industry standard graphics applications, particularly those from Adobe Systems Incorporated. The Strata interface utilizes many of the same palette configurations, tools and hotkeys as found in these popular third-party applications. This newest version of Strata 3D offers many new features, modelers, interface enhancements, and plug-ins to connect to third-party applications.

Polyspline SDS Modeling

The all new Polyspline SDS (Subdivision Surface) modeler provides the user with total control over 3D surfaces. Users can start from scratch or begin with an existing model – such as an imported object, an extruded logo, a lathed Illustrator file or even a Bézier spline surface. With Polysplines users can create objects as complex as an automobile or as simple as a cartoon character.

Meld MetaSurface Modeling

This unique modeling technology lets the user “melt together” basic primitive and polygon objects. The user simply positions the objects relative to one another and apply the Meld command to create the MetaSurface object. MetaSurfaces can be adjusted to increase or decrease the level of influence of the melting objects. Users can even animate the individual component objects to create interesting melting effects.

HDRI Support

New to CX is support for High Dynamic Range Images (HDRI). HDRI's capture a greater range of image exposure than is available in normal 24 and 32 bit images. HDRI's can be used for texture maps, lighting gels, environmental reflections and the new Lightdome image based lighting.

Lightdome Image Based Lighting

The ultimate in realistic lighting is to use a photograph of a real environment to light a synthetic 3D scene. The Lightdome image based lighting allows the user to position, rotate and set the lighting value for HDRI and 24 bit images to light their 3D models. Using this added lighting technique, users can achieve realistic surface shading, soft shadows and enhanced reflections.

Streamlined User Interface

The user interface has been updated and streamlined in many areas to improve the workflow and integration with popular graphics applications. All palettes and dialogs have been improved for ease of use. New hotkeys have been added. Of special note are the space bar based hotkeys provide instant access to view manipulation to move, rotate and zoom the views.

Photoshop File Live Linking

New to CX is the ability to import a native Photoshop layered file as a surface texture for 3D objects. This important feature allows the user, for example, to apply Photoshop based packaging art – complete with bump maps, alpha stenciling and more – to a 3D object. If the client wants a new design, all the user has to do is update the Photoshop file and the Strata 3D CX file automatically updates.



Native Illustrator CS and PDF import

Creative professionals can now directly import Illustrator .ai and PDF files into Strata 3D CX for further modeling. These 2D art elements can be made into 3D objects via Lathe, Extrude, Skin, Path Extrude, Hull, Spline Surface and Polyspline editing. This process is ideal for creating anything from an extruded logo to complex ribbed objects – such as the real world user example of HO Sports converting Illustrator section outlines into a 3D model of their new competition slalom water ski.

FBX with Motion Capture

Kaydara's FBX file format is quickly becoming the standard in high-end 3D file formats. Strata's implementation of FBX allows the user to import in fully textured models that can even include complete animation information such as motion captured data. Motion capture creates the ultimate in realistic animation of animals and humanoids.

Who needs Strata 3D CX?

Strata 3D CX addresses the needs of designers, illustrators and multimedia artists who work with a variety of graphics tools. These professionals work in diverse areas.

Graphic Designers

Strata 3D CX provides an ideal extension to the core toolset of the graphic designer through its ease of use and professional features. The power of 3D offers a new dimension to the work of graphic designers, helping them to be more competitive in today's market. Strata 3D CX allows them to add this dimension while maintaining a consistent work environment for an efficient workflow. Strata 3D CX's ability to save out Photoshop compatible compositing images further enhances the process. Using the optional Strata 3D Vector plug-in, graphic designers can also render true Bezier spline based vector art for Illustrator .ai and .eps formats and for Flash based files.

Package Designers

Many package designers create their basic designs in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Strata 3D CX gives the designer the ability to explore more ideas, visualize more effectively and create photo-real client presentations. Designers can easily visualize and present how finished packaging will appear on store shelves and in product display systems. Strata 3D CX also provides file compatibility with dedicated package design solutions.

Product Designers

Designers involved in the creation of consumer and industrial products use Strata 3D CX to design, visualize and present their concepts. Strata 3D CX provides powerful new modeling tools to assist the designer in creating and controlling surfaces. Strata 3D CX also has the ability to import model data from CAD (computer assisted design) applications where the models can be further refined, textured, graphics can be applied, etc. Highly realistic renderings and animations can then be created to further assist in the design process or for client presentation.

Environmental Designers

The design of three-dimensional spaces is a challenge that is well suited to Strata 3D CX. Designers who specialize in exhibit design, retail space design, theatrical and television set design, interior design and more have used Strata 3D for years. Strata 3D CX now provides even more modeling tools to assist these designers, but maybe most important are the new lighting and rendering capabilities. Strata 3D CX gives the designer the ability to set up point lights, spotlights, glowing surfaces and the new global image based Lightdome lighting. The improved Raydiosity then creates an image of the scene by calculating the light energy of the bounced light within that environment.

Marketing Designers

Designers who specialize in the creation of marketing and promotional items utilize Strata 3D CX to explore ideas and create client presentations. Point-of-purchase displays, endcaps and promotional items are often based on standard designs with client specific variations. Strata 3D CX, with live linking to Photoshop layered files, makes this process easy. Designers can have pre-created designs, complete with lighting,

staging and camera composition, and simply update the Photoshop file. The clients logo, design and message can then be rendered to create a visualization and client presentation very quickly.

Illustrators

Commercial illustrators are often commissioned by clients to create images that involve existing objects or planned for objects and structures. Strata 3D CX's integration with industry standard design applications makes this an efficient process. Architectural illustrators use Strata 3D CX to present designs. Industrial illustrators use Strata 3D CX to visualize concepts. Illustrators specializing in art for books and journals find Strata 3D CX's abilities ideal to portray complex subject matter. The uses are as varied as the artists themselves.

Multimedia Artists

Artists and designers who create animated and interactive content have long found Strata 3D a powerful part of their toolset. From the early days of the creation of the game MYST to today's use of Strata 3D CX to create sophisticated web content, multimedia artists have expanded their world with 3D. Strata 3D CX provides a host of special effects such as Pixie Dust, Lens Flare and Aura add flare to animations. All surfaces can be animated along with textures and lighting. Strata 3D CX, when combined with the optional Strata 3D Vector plug-in, extends the possibilities with output to native Flash files for web content.

What are the main differences between Strata 3D CX and pro?

The core differences between Strata 3D CX and the previous "pro" versions can be summed up in the definition of the term "CX" – Connect and Extend. Strata 3D CX connects to design applications in new and more effective ways than before. The power of Strata 3D CX is extended through new modeling tools, texturing options and rendering technology. All of these new features are outlined above, but the bottom line is that Strata 3D CX is more efficient, effective and powerful than any previous version by a wide margin.

Can I upgrade to CX from Strata 3Dplus or StudioPro?

Strata has simplified the upgrade path from all previous versions of Strata 3D. Users of any version of Strata 3Dpro or Strata StudioPro 2.0 or newer can upgrade for just \$169. Users of any other versions of Strata 3D (Vision, StudioPro 1.x, Strata 3Dplus and Strata 3Dbase) can upgrade for \$449. This \$449 price is also extended to users of competing 3D applications.

Is Strata 3D CX difficult to learn for an Adobe user?

This may be the most core question of all. Many people are intimidated by the idea of using a 3D application. Strata 3D CX eases this addition of the third-dimension to their toolset by utilizing standard tabbed palettes, context menus, hotkeys, and file formats. As detailed above, users can import Illustrator and Photoshop content, push 2D elements into 3D objects, easily compose surfaces and scenes and render out finished images into compatible pixel and vector based content. Strata 3D CX, more than any other 3D application on the market – regardless of price, is universally hailed as the easiest, most powerful application for designers, illustrators and artists who work primarily in the Adobe toolset.

Does Strata 3D CX support Macintosh OS X?

Yes, Strata 3D CX makes extensive use of the power and enhancements of the latest operating system from Apple. In fact, unlike previous versions of Strata 3D, CX will not run on OS 9 and earlier systems.

Does Strata 3D CX support Windows XP?

Strata 3D CX runs very efficiently on Windows XP based PCs. When combined with Windows versions of Adobe applications, this can be a very effect solution for designers.