

I might have some specific technical suggestions after a while, but meanwhile here are some general ideas:

My hope for Cheetah 3D is that it is adopted by a wide range of users who already have advanced 2D design skills but need to learn 3D. Cheetah 3D is relatively easy to learn, but with the emphasis on *relatively*. Compared to Blender and industry-standard professional software. Speaking from personal experience, the learning process can be very confusing and frustrating; you need to precisely arrange the correct combination of tools, in the correct sequence, with the exact right settings. Unless you have a detailed step-by-step recipe, it's really hard to produce anything resembling what you imagine.

Like a lot of others back in the 90s I started 3D with Bryce. It was cheap, simple, and powerful. Lots of pre-sets. The available printed manuals were everyday references to grasp the new concepts and techniques. I later bought Cheetah 3D because I wanted better renders with radiosity. C3D's modeling tools, vastly better than Bryce's, took years to figure out. I was glad to purchase the PDF edition of Learn 3D for Cheetah 3D 6, as well as Andrew Heyworth's version 5 videos. Both have been very helpful.

As stated on your new online version, page 1: "Cheetah 3D's Best Feature: The Community." I would go further and say the forum is C3D's *essential* feature. Without it, users at every skill level would get hopelessly stuck, to the point where we would give up hope and abandon C3D. It's not a tool if you can't get it to work.

I do not have unlimited patience. Do not suggest that I "play around with it" when I'm trying to get work done.

What the forum can't provide is a coherent updated outline, like the Table of Contents in a book. I'm not suggesting this is possible, but I miss having the Bryce-style printed manual with Post-it stickies marking key pages and my notes scribbled in the margins.

The forum Search function is hit-and-miss. The forum is invaluable for two reasons: it's easy to attach files and pictures (including animated GIFs) and it's easy to get a rapid answer from Frank/Helmut/Zoohead/Podperson et al. Without them there is no knowledge base, no teacher, no forum.

The book's textbook format is logical and progresses from basic concepts to advanced techniques. That's good. I have reservations about Learn 3D's adoption as a textbook in a school. High school and college curriculum is the subject of constant debate. Standards are set for average students. There are probably already precocious teenagers using C3D, but I'd bet that typical users are at least college-aged, more likely over 30, judging from forum comments. The Learn 3D book is most suitable for a self-starter of any age who is highly motivated and intellectually capable to do work that involves 3D design. It reminds me of the glib advice to the unemployed to "Learn to Code." It's unrealistic to think everyone can do this stuff. As we all appreciate, C3D is an ideal program for someone on a budget but needing professional-level tools with an accessible user interface. I would recommend it for a college-level vocational training course or an introductory course for Computer Graphics majors. The Learning 3D book would be perfect for those settings. Just get Frank Beckmann to teach it.

What I want from a book is a logical arrangement of related information, in chapters with clearly defined subjects. I still prefer printed paper. In this case I personally don't want a linear design, where I start on page one and turn pages until I get to the end. I need a reference book, with a Table of Contents

and an Index, so I can find the specific information I need at the moment I need it. It has to support my creative process, helping to maintain a productive work flow. I don't want to read a book. I want to make 3D designs.

Unlike a printed book, a digital version can include video tutorials. I understand this is a book, not a YouTube channel, but sometimes a narrated video is necessary to illustrate a 3D technique. Video examples can be paired with .jas files and linked to sections in the book. The examples should be simple, short, and clear, just one or two basic concepts per video. Long videos with extended sequences of steps and tools and settings might be nice to discover what is possible to do, but they aren't as useful when you are trying to do something original and need specific help. Better to make a series of short videos to explain a complicated process one step at a time.

By the way, to explain a step-by-step process I prefer a series of pictures arranged in a grid, in chronological order, instead of an animated GIF displaying one frame at a time at an arbitrary speed. I want to slowly compare side-by-side pictures to see what changes. I would reserve animated GIFs for when the animation itself is the main point and an MPEG is not an option.

DESIGN EVERYTHING FOR 3D BEGINNERS. I assume they are Martin's primary customers, and even after years of practice I'm still a beginner every time I get stuck. And I get stuck a lot. I have only done a few simple animations, just to try them out. Joints? Vertex weights? The material nodes: State Instance Composite Pulsetrain Modulo Vec2Float Cellnoise Voronoi Dielectric PBR. The scripts: Boolean Cut? LaplacianSmooth?

DESIGN EVERYTHING FOR 3D BEGINNERS. Aim at smart experienced 2D artists who need to get started on 3D. Serious creators with deadlines. Have an online archive of simple example .jas files and videos, to accompany the book's text. The sample files should be easy to adapt and customize, like a template. Include one file with a wide variety of basic pre-set materials*, another with a set of more advanced materials, derived from the first set. By contrast, the forum's Decorated Pig thread tends to feature wildly complicated node networks to create gorgeous but impractical materials, and it's necessary to spend many hours inspecting them to maybe understand them if you are already a material expert.

*<https://www.cheetah3d.com/forum/index.php?threads/13002/post-113067>

Make free use of the great resources accumulated on the forum. The problem is it's scattered and obscure. Assuming Martin has no objection, make an appendix or possibly a Wiki to organize and link to the most useful forum posts, the most frequently asked questions. "Why is my chrome ball black?" "How does the Gadget work?"

I don't know how many people have purchased Cheetah 3D and at least occasionally use it, but it seems like there are only a couple dozen regular posters on the forum. This suggests that there is great potential for growth, once Mac artists realize the potential utility and return on investment. This is a great product, and deserves to be promoted and supported. Tonio Loewald's book could be the catalyst for C3D's widespread adoption and use. I have greatly benefited from Tonio's book and frequent forum posts. I look forward to buying the updated Version 7 edition when it's ready.