Get Organised with Runtime

Tools Needed

*** Windows**

*** Poser**

*** Daz studio (optional)**

Introduction
If like me you're obsessed with organisation, and you're fed up with Pose's content management system, this tutorial might be for you. In this tutorial I'll give you a glimpse of how I manage my content in both Poser and Daz Studio, using Poser's "runtime" management system. The end result should be shorter loading times in Poser, and the ability to break down the content into appropriate groups so that you don't have to comb through items designed for different figures. This tutorial requires the installers / archives to all your digital content.

Step 1 - Understanding the basics

If you understand Poser's file type and content management system, please skip to Step 2

Poser is very "careful" (aka rigid) with its content, it will verify the file types in each section before letting you use them (cr2 for figures, pz2 for poses / morphs / textures, hr2 for hair etc.). This means if you move a pz2 file to the "\character\" folder, you will not be able to find it withint Poser's content. This completely limits our ability to group a set of content in its own file structure.

In an ideal world this would be my file structure for a particular clothes set:-

\costume name\ - contains figure files

\costume name\texture - contains MAT files for the costume

\costume name\props - contains props for the costume

etc.

But in reality, Poser will only allow the following strcture:

\character\costume name\

\pose\costume name\

\props\costume name\

etc.

Unfortunately (far as I can tell) there is no way to avoid this unless Poser developers decides to actually allow recognition of different file types for each section (which I don't see why not). Guess we just have to wait till Daz Studio dominate the market with their innovations for optimal workflow.

Note:

Daz Studio isn't bounded by such problem, so if you don't use Poser at all, feel free to group these files anyway you want. However the core files like geometries, texture images etc. should not be touched at all. Rule of thumb is to only touch files inside these folders:-

\camera\

\character\

\face\

\hair\

\hand\

\light\

\pose\

\props\

Step 2 - Runtimes

Thankfully Poser has a runtime management system, which gives us a little bit of hope to organise our content.

Runtimes are basically the root level container of your digital content. By default Poser uses its own runtime, and incorporates the "Downloads" runtime for you to place your downloaded content. You can create additional runtimes to your liking.

Each runtime contains all the default file structure for your content, including but not limited to the figures, poses, hair etc.

When you switch runtimes, your entire library will be updated to contain the current runtime's content. i.e. if you go into the Downloads runtime and access "Figures", you'll find all figures inside your Downloads runtime, but all the default Poser figures would disappear.

And it is this system that we're going to work with to sort out the content organisation nightmare.

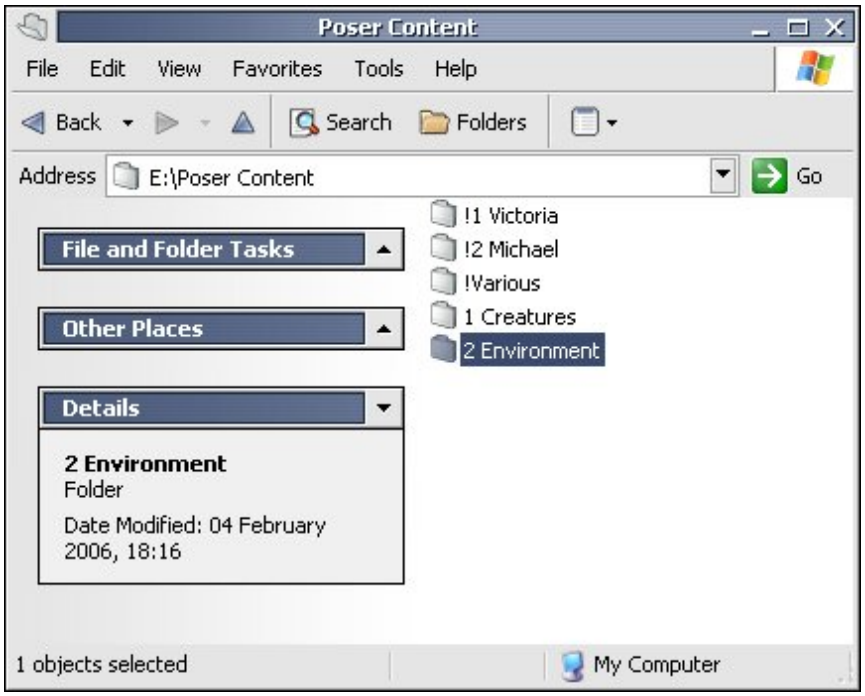
Note:

Depending on how much digital content you have in your runtime(s), you might notice that Poser sometimes takes a fairly long time to load the "context" menu which was designed for "speedy" access to your content.

The loading time occurs when Poser needs to reload the runtime file structure into memory in order to build the context menu. We're talking about Poser going through your entire runtime folder, exploring each and every sub-folder, possibility checking for file types. If you have a huge runtime, this could take up 30 seconds or more!!

Daz Studio doesn't suffer from this problem, even though its content tab is practically the same as Poser's context menu with the exception of being easier to navigate around. I cannot at all understand why Poser suffers so badly.

Step 3 - Getting Started



So here's the bad news, we're going to reinstall ALL your digital content (it's certainly easier than finding out the file relationships manually to move the core files around), so I hope you've got all the installers and zip files ready.

To start off, we're gonna create a new folder. It can be created anywhere you want, preferably one a big storage harddisk and somewhere easy to access. I've chosen "e:\Poser Contents" on my storage drive, and it's in this folder that we're gonna put all our runtimes.

Note:

You don't have to group all your runtimes into a single folder, but it's a certainly sensible approach for organisation reasons, especially when we need to locate the folder during installations (as well as future file/folder manipulations.

Next create subfolders, giving them meaningful names depending on how you intend to break down your runtimes. Here's my approach:

Victoria - all Victoria specific content, including clothes, props, morphs etc.

Michael - all Michael specific content

Creatures - all non-human figures and related items

Various - any content that could belong to numerous figures

Environment - any environment content

etc.

The "Various" runtime is important. Poser content files looks for "core files" like geometries and textures within the SAME runtime. If you have a set of clothing that could fit multiple characters, you can't just move the cr2 or pz2 files to their relevant runtimes, as the clothes will no longer be able to access the core files. If you know the file relationships however, you can move/copy the approach files into the relevant runtimes.

Optional step:

Poser allows you to add runtimes in any order you want, and the order is sustained according to the order you added them. These are stored inside the \[Poser folder]\runtime\prefs\LibraryPrefs.xml file which you can edit if you want.

Daz Studio however order all your runtimes alphabetically, which means you might want to add prefixes to your runtimes to better order them:

!1 Victoria

!2 Michael

!Various

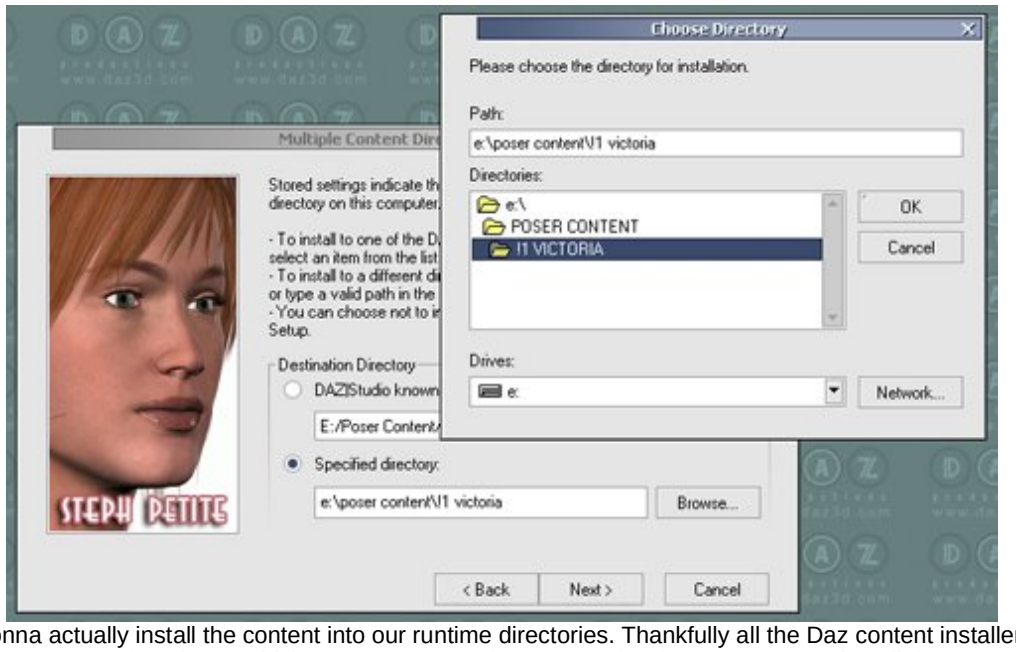
1 Creatures

2 Environment

The ! precedes any alphanumeric characters, and numbers preceds alphabets, so the above structure will allow custom

orders quite happily.

Step 4 - Installing the digital content



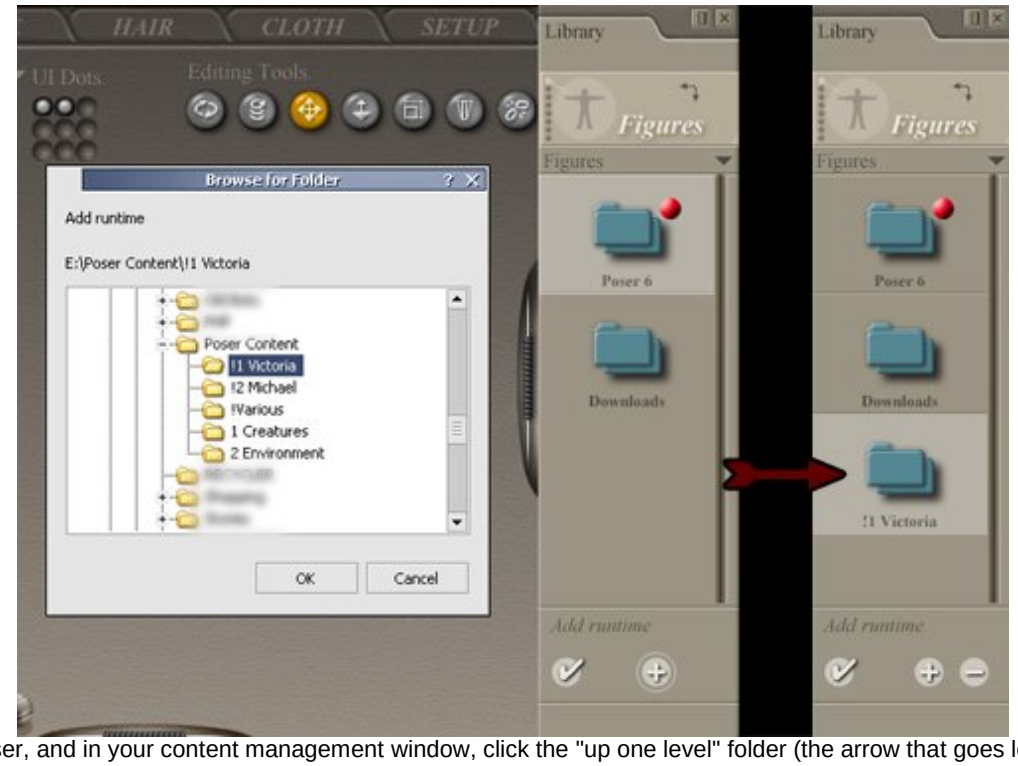
Next we're gonna actually install the content into our runtime directories. Thankfully all the Daz content installers understand the concept of runtimes, which means you can choose exactly where you want to install the content to, by the runtime folder. Choose the appropriate runtime folder and it'll put the files in the appropriate folders. Here I'm installing the Victoria base figure, and selecting the "e:\Poser Content\!1 Victoria" folder for installation.

After the installation, you'll find a runtime folder has been created inside your custom runtime folder:

\!1 Victoria\runtime

And inside the runtime folder you'll have the readme and libraries folders, which contain all the files that comes with the Victoria Base figure. The fundamentals are done, we just have to import the runtime into Poser and/or Daz Studio in order to use them.

Step 5 - Adding the runtimes in Poser



Load up Poser, and in your content management window, click the "up one level" folder (the arrow that goes left and up) repeatly till you can't go any further. This is your "runtime folder". It's not an actual folder, but a virtual folder containing links to runtimes anywhere on your computer (or network drives).

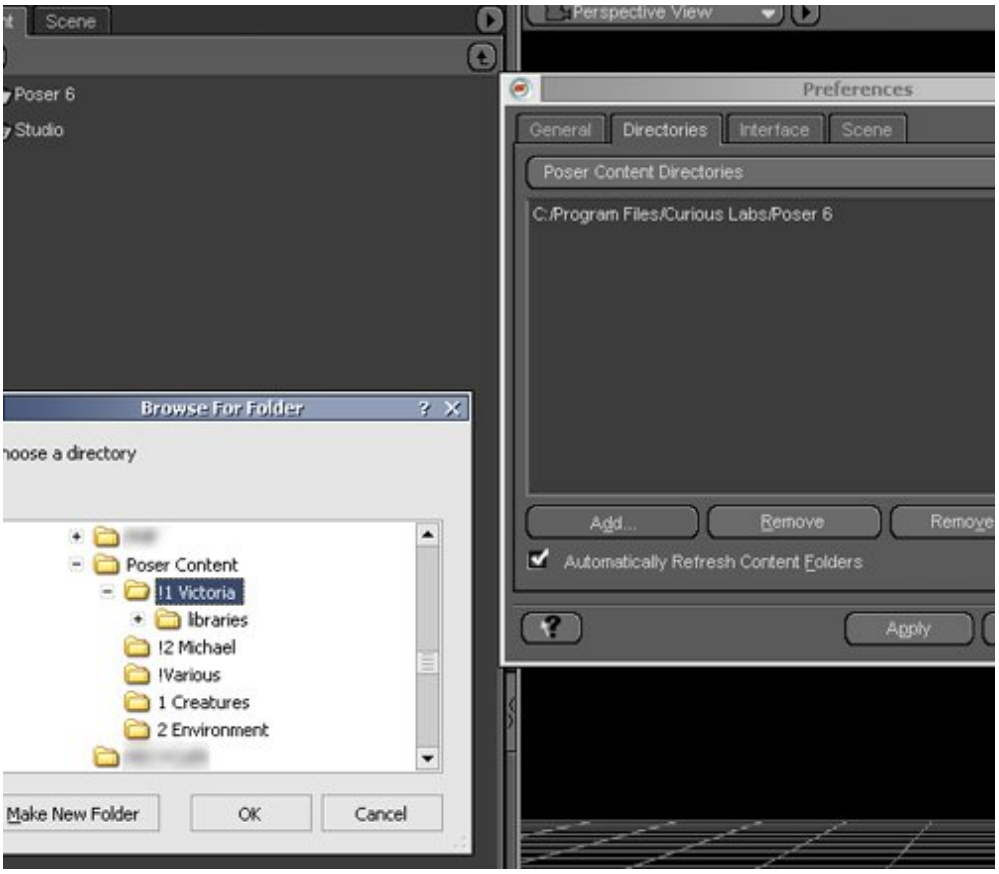
At the bottom of the content management window, you'll find two small icons, a tick and a + sign.

The tick sign sets the current runtime to the selected runtime (same as double clicking the runtime), the + sign allows you to add a new runtime. The current runtime is signified by the red dot marker.

Click on the + sign and it'll bring up a new window asking your to "Browse for Folder". Browser through your file structure to find where you've placed your custom runtimes. Select the custom runtime folder - note that in this example it'd be the "!1 Victoria" folder, not the parent folder, nor the "runtime" folder inside.

Click OK and you'll find a new "!1 Victoria folder" in your runtime window. That's it! You've imported a new runtime! Double click on it (or use the tick sign) and go into "Figures". You should now find nothing but the newly installed content, namingly our Victoria base figure.

Step 6 - Adding the runtimes in Daz Studio



Skip this step if you don't use Daz Studio.

The version I'm currently using is 1.2.0.1, you can download the latest from the Daz website.

Go to Edit > Preferences. (hotkey F2)

Select the "Directories" tab at the top.

Click on the top dropdown menu (by default it reads DAZ|Studio Content Directories) and select "Poser Content Directories".

Note:

It's important that you choose "Poser Content Directories" here as it reads the runtime using the Poser runtime file structure, understanding that "runtime\libraries\character" is the "Figures" section, and hides any core file folders from view.

Despite being in Poser Content Directories mode, Daz studio will still be able to read "poses" files inside the "figures" section, so if you intend to make the move from Poser to Daz Studio completely, you can happily group all your contents together in sensible fashion.

Click on the Add button, and browser for your content folder. Again, choose the "!1 Victoria" folder, and click Ok.

Click Apply to see the changes in your Content tab, click Accept to close the Preferences window and get back to Daz Studio.

Now you will see a new root node inside your content tab, which when expanded, will have all the familiar Poser "sections" listed, all the content files readily available for you to add to the canvas.

Step 7 - Adding more Runtimes

It is important that you don't add empty folders as runtimes to Poser. By default, if Poser cannot find a "runtime" folder - "\Michael\runtime" - it'll create a "\libraries\" folder and treat the folder you've selected as the "runtime" folder. By default it's not much of a problem, until you try to install new content with an Installer. Daz Content Installers always add content to the "\runtime\" folder, after you've selected the runtime's parent directory.

This will basically mess up the file structure, and it can be avoided easily on the first place:

After you've created a custom runtime folder, e.g. "\Michael\", create a new folder named "\runtime\" inside. Now when you add "\Michael\" to Poser, it'll create the "\libraries\" folder inside the "\Michael\runtime\" folder - "\Michael\runtime\libraries\". Which means you can safely install new content easily to the "\Michael\" folder.

So, start installing content to your runtimes accordingly and add them to Poser and/or Daz Studio. If you're using archive files, just extract the content into a temporary folder, and copy/cut and paste the "runtime" folder to the appropriate location to match the runtime file structure.

Step 8 - Organising your Content

This is another optional step, but I always do this to further organise my content.

Despite being able to separate the content into individual runtimes, you'll still find that most of the content is a mess - it's hard to tell what's in each folder until you've seen the thumbnails. While this is less a problem with Daz Studio thanks to their very speedy and intuitive content tab, it'd still be nice to properly structure your content within each runtime.

First let's get one thing straight:

Some contents require installed "morphs", like expression, head and body morphs etc. Typically these are Character specific morphs, other times it's morphs that take advantage of existing morphs. They make use of installed morphs, injecting them into the figure first and then adjusting the property dials.

Since morphs are not "core files" hidden from access, you will find a lot of "!V3 Morph INJ" and "!V3 Morph REM" folders littered in your Poses section. It is VITAL that you don't touch these folders, even though it's located at the root of Poses which eats up a lot of space.

Morph packages that make use of previously installed morphs, access them by the default file structure. If you change the morph folder names, or move them into a sub-folder, the new morphs will become unusable (I think they end up asking you for the morph files manually).

Of course the chosen folder names has made things somewhat a nightmare - with the ! prefix. This means all the morph folders by default will come before any other folders inside your Poses section, since ! is alphabetically placed higher than any letters or numbers.

I get around this by using "! " prefix to other contents. This could lead to lots of renaming, so instead I just create several logical folders.

Go inside your "\runtime name\runtime\libraries\pose\" and create folders of the following names:

! Cloth

! Hair

! MAT

! Morph

! Pose

etc.

And move all the content inside the relevant folder, to anyway you see fit.

Note: You might not want a Morph folder since you need to understand whether the morph has any "child dependence". Of course any custom morph you've created will happily go in here as well.

Step 9 - Conclusion

Now that you've separated your runtimes, you should find it much much easier to locate all related items in both Poser and Daz Studio. Things will still be relatively slow in Poser as it doesn't have a quick shortcut to access the Runtime section without "up a level" from any section root.

Also Poser will still have to spend time "loading" each runtime (to rebuild the context menus), but it won't be loading absolutely all your content in one go, since they've been broken down into separate runtimes.

Here're a few extra things for you to consider:

- To make it easier to see where your content ends and where the littered morph folders begins, create an empty folder called "!_____" which will become a separater (especially useful for Daz Studio).

- Don't over do the runtime breakdown, remember it's still slow to switch between runtimes in Poser, break it down to what helps your workflow the most. For instance you might put all Victoria clothes into a single runtime.

- While there're 8 sections to Poser contents: Camera, Expressions, Figures, Hair, Hand, Light, Pose and Props, Daz Studio checks if there are actually any content within each section, and if nothing's found it'd hide the sections. This is a nice feature to minimize the wasted space on your interface.

- If disk space is not an issue for you, or if you have the time on your hands, it's worth installing packages aimed for multiple characters, into each of the runtimes. This will stop the necessity to switch runtime just to check if you've got clothes for a particular figure.

- After installing each content package, I always rename the readme file to something sensible (as well as the installer for that matter). Very rarely do you find a content package coming with an easy to locate filename for their readme file, so if you do want to check back on the readme files in the future, I'd suggest you rename them now.

- Organise your installers and zip packages according to which runtime to go in, this will help the future install process.

- Don't forget you can take your entire runtime anywhere you want and import it into another person's Poser / Daz Studio. This is useful even for reinstallation purposes.

- Daz Studio is free for download, so you should seriously give it a go. Daz Studio is designed with intuitive workflow in mind, so give it a chance to see how much easier (and faster) it is to work with Daz Studio, from content management to camera control to object properties.