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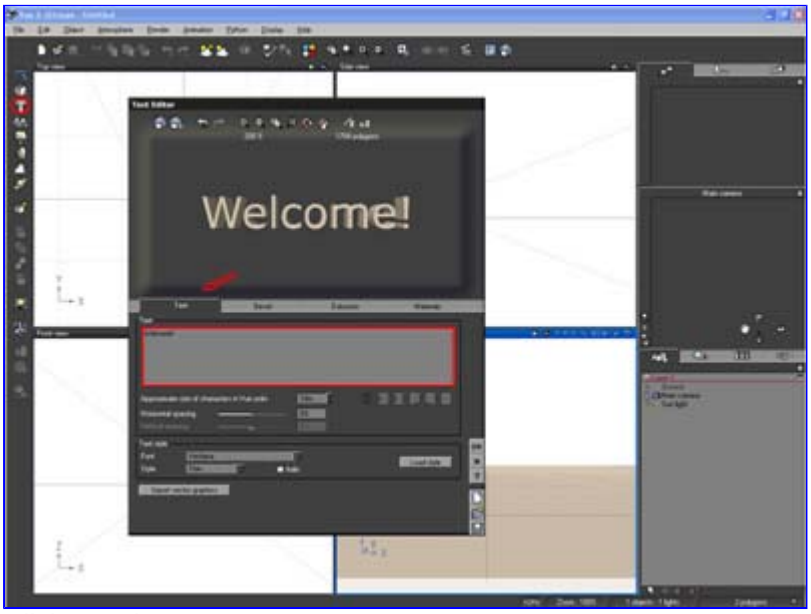
Creating Area Lights

In this tutorial we will be creating a basic scene with radiosity and converting text to an area light.

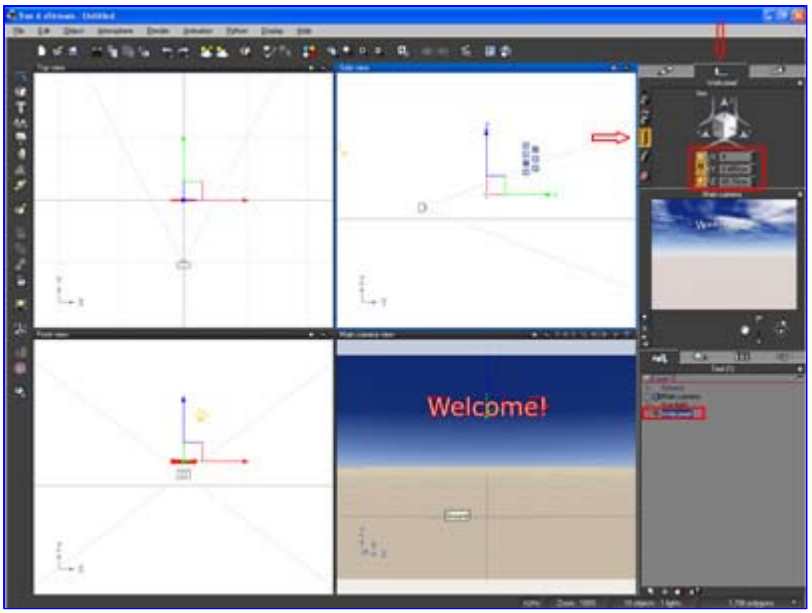
To begin, open a new scene and select a sunset. Different Atmosphere settings can have different effects on the final output. Dark atmosphere's will work better for this tutorial, so for this example I have used a Sunset atmosphere. Sunset --> Spectural Sunset, "Good Night".

Create some text: To do this, click on the text editor button on the left hand side of the screen. Click on the "text" tab and then enter the text you want in the "text" field. In this example i have enter the word "Welcome!". You can change any of the other parameters on this screen if you would like to customise your font style in a different way. Exit the text editor when done.



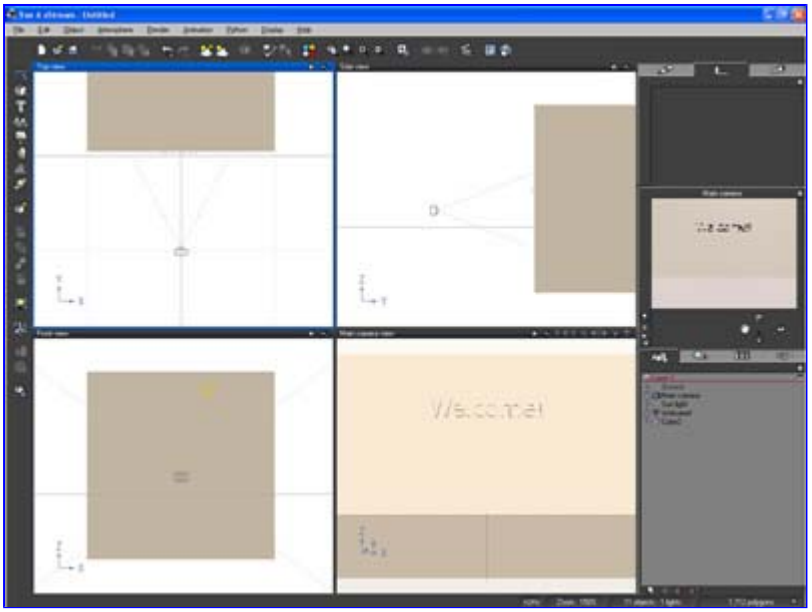
Click to enlarge

Resize this text: Select your newly created text and in the upper right corner click on the "numerics" tab. On the left hand side of this box, click on the "size" button. Turn on "Lock sizing proportions" (a small padlock icon) first and resize your text to a medium-small size (like the one pictured below). Turn off "Lock sizing proportions" and change the size of the Y axis to a low number eg .1 (point 1) to make the text very thin.

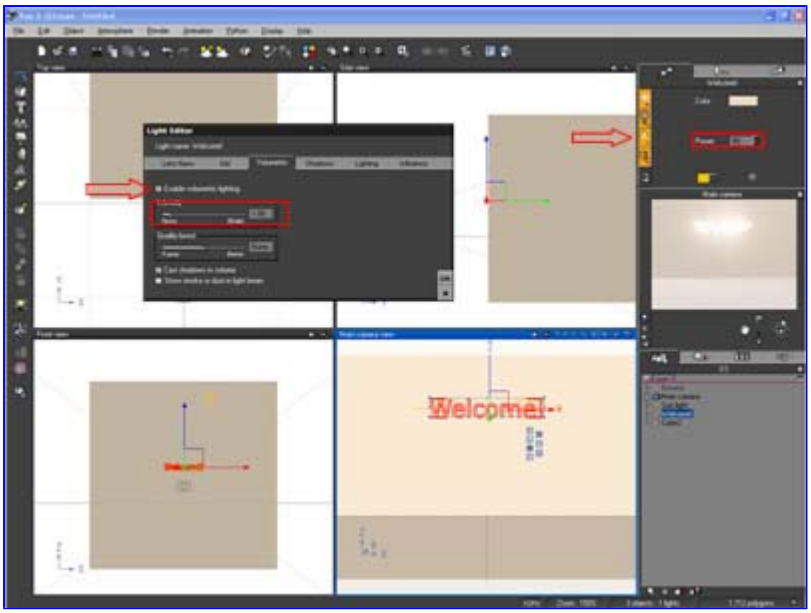


Click to enlarge

Create a wall: On the left hand of the screen right-click on the create primitives button and select a cube. Select the cube and adjust its size properties. Enlarge it to create a wall that fills the screen. Using the top-down view move the cube back so that the camera is the required distance from the cube. Move the welcome sign so that it is positioned infront of the wall with a small amount of space between the 2. Your scene objects should be positioned similiar to this picture.


click to enlarge

Transform text to area light: Select your text and click Object --> Convert to Area Light at the top of the screen in the Vue menu bar. With the newly created area light selected,, click on the "Aspect" tab at the top of the screen. Change the "power" of the object's light to 60. Above this setting there is a "color" setting. If you wish to use a different colored light, change this setting to the desired color. Right click on the Volumetric Light setting on the left hand side of the "Aspect" tab and turn on Volumetric Light. Enter a value of "1" (or less) for the volumetric intensity setting.



click to enlarge

In the Menu bar, click on "Atmosphere" then select "Atmosphere Editor". Click on the "Light" tab. Under "lighting model" select "Global Radiosity". Exit the atmosphere editort. In the layers list on the right-hand side of the screen, select "sun" and hit delete to remove it from the screen.

Here is a final view of this scene with a sphere in the foreground.

Here is different scene i created using the above process, except with blue used for the light color to create a neon effect..

There adding textures to the wall and floor or add some objects to the scene to add more subject matter.

This concludes the area-light tutorial.

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Tips for improving quality in area light scenes:

- A small amount of volumetric light (below 1) in most situations will create the most realistic renders.

- If you are receiving grainy shadows or lighting increase your shadow softness quality under the light editor --> shadows tab. This can help smooth out rough shadows.

- Make sure your light source is not too close to the wall. In some cases this can have undesireable effects.

-Try changing properties in your atmosphere and inside the light editor to create different effects.