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Dariush  
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**AUTODESK® 3DS MAX® 2016**

*ESSENTIALS*



# AUTODESK® 3DS MAX® 2016

*ESSENTIALS*

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Education is an all-important* goal in life and should always be approached with eagerness and earnestness. We would like to show appreciation to the teachers who inspired us; you can always remember the teachers who touched your life, and to them we say thanks. We would also like to thank all of our students, who taught us a lot during the course of our many combined academic years.

Special thanks go to Stephanie McComb, David Clark, Joel Jones, and Mary Beth Wakefield, our editors at Sybex who have been professional, courteous, and ever patient. Our appreciation also goes to technical editor Jon McFarland, who worked hard to make sure this book is of the utmost quality. We could not have done this revision without their help.

In addition, many thanks to our son, Max, our motivation and our inspiration.

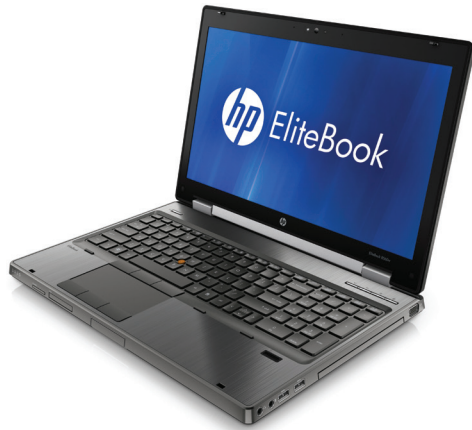


# WRITING ON THE HP ELITEBOOK

*Having a good computer* system is important with this type of work, so a special thank you goes to HP for keeping us on the cutting edge of workstation hardware by providing us with a fully decked-out EliteBook 8760w, which was our primary computer in writing this book. What struck us about the laptop was that it was not only portable, making it easy for a writing team to collaborate; it was also powerful enough to run truly demanding tasks. It takes a special machine to run graphics-intensive applications, such as the Autodesk® 3ds Max® 2016 software, and we were thrilled to write this book on the HP EliteBook.

Running an Intel i7 CPU with 16GB of RAM and an NVIDIA Quadro 5010M (with a whopping 6 GB of memory) gave us the muscle we needed to run multiple applications alongside 3ds Max splendidly. Dual 320 GB hard drives gave us plenty of space for Windows 7 Professional and its applications, and still left lots of room for renders. We opted out of the RAID option to mirror the drives (you can also stripe them for performance), but that doesn't mean we neglected our backup duties with this machine! The 8760w was easily integrated into a gigabit network in the home office, and on fast Wi-Fi everywhere else, so we had constant access to the home network and the hundreds upon hundreds of files (and all their backups!) necessary to write this book.

And since we are so very image-conscious (as in the screen!), we wondered if the images we created and captured for this book would be done justice on “just a laptop screen.” The EliteBook has a stunning 17-inch, 30-bit IPS display panel that put those questions to rest very quickly! The EliteBook screen is professionally accurate and calibrated for optimum image clarity and correct color. Barely a handful of high-end mobile workstations could even come close to meeting the demands that image professionals put on their gear. But this notebook HP DreamColor display is remarkable—there's just no other way to put it—going as far as besting any of our desktop screens in color and vibrancy.



With performance at such a high level, and in a nice portable form, we were easily convinced that we should perform all of our intensive work for this book on the EliteBook. Going back to a desk-bound tower quickly became a non-option. Thanks, HP!

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Randi L. Derakhshani is an** Autodesk-Certified Instructor. She began working with computer graphics in 1992 and was hired by her instructor to work at Sony Pictures Imageworks, where she developed her skills with the Autodesk® 3ds Max® program and Apple's Shake image-compositing program among many other programs. A teacher since 1999, Randi enjoys sharing her wisdom with young talent and watching them develop. Currently, she is teaching at Exceptional Minds, a school where individuals on the autism spectrum learn through customized instruction the fields of multimedia, computer animation, and post-production. She also teaches a wide range of classes, from Autodesk 3ds Max, Autodesk® Maya®, and ZBrush to compositing with The Foundry's Nuke. Juggling her teaching activities with caring for a little boy makes Randi a pretty busy lady.

**Dariush Derakhshani is an** Autodesk-Certified Instructor and Certified Evaluator, a visual-effects supervisor, a writer, and an educator in Los Angeles, California, as well as Randi's husband. Dariush used Autodesk® AutoCAD® software in his architectural days and migrated to using 3D programs when his firm's principal architects needed to visualize architectural designs in 3D on the computer. Dariush started using Alias PowerAnimator version 6 when he enrolled in USC Film School's animation program, and he has been using Alias/Autodesk animation software for the past 14 years. He received an MFA in film, video, and computer animation from the USC Film School in 1997. He also holds a BA in architecture and theater from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. He worked at a New Jersey architectural firm before moving to Los Angeles for film school. He has worked on feature films, music videos, and countless commercials as a 3D animator, as a CG/VFX supervisor, and sometimes as a compositor.



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# INTRODUCTION

*Welcome to Autodesk® 3ds Max® 2016 Essentials.* The world of computer-generated (CG) imagery is fun and ever changing. Whether you are new to CG in general or are a CG veteran new to 3ds Max designing, you'll find this book the perfect primer. It introduces you to the Autodesk 3ds Max software and shows how you can work with the program to create your art, whether it is animated or static in design.

This book exposes you to all facets of 3ds Max by introducing and plainly explaining its tools and functions to help you understand how the program operates—but it does not stop there. This book also explains the use of the tools and the ever-critical concepts behind the tools. You'll find hands-on examples and tutorials that give you firsthand experience with the toolsets. Working through them will develop your skills and the conceptual knowledge that will carry you to further study with confidence. These tutorials expose you to various ways to accomplish tasks with this intricate and comprehensive artistic tool. They should give you the confidence you need to venture deeper into the feature set in 3ds Max, either on your own or by using any of the software's other learning tools and books as a guide.

Learning to use a powerful tool can be frustrating. You need to remember to pace yourself. The major complaints CG book readers have are that the pace is too fast and that the steps are too complicated or overwhelming. Addressing those complaints is a tough nut to crack, to be sure. No two readers are the same. However, this book offers the opportunity to run things at your own pace. The exercises and steps may seem confusing at times, but keep in mind that the more you try and the more you fail at some attempts, the more you will learn how to operate the 3ds Max engine. Experience is king when learning the workflow necessary for *any* software program, and with experience comes failure and aggravation. But try and try again. You will find that further attempts will always be easier and more fruitful.

Above all, this book aims to inspire you to use the 3ds Max program as a creative tool to achieve and explore your own artistic vision.

## Who Should Read This Book

Anyone who is interested in learning to use the 3ds Max tools should start with this book.

If you are an educator, you will find a solid foundation on which to build a new course. You can also treat the book as a source of raw materials that you can adapt to fit an existing curriculum. Written in an open-ended style, *Autodesk® 3ds Max® 2016 Essentials* contains several self-help tutorials for home study as well as plenty of material to fit into any class.

## What You Will Learn

You will learn how to work in CG with Autodesk 3ds Max 2016. The important thing to keep in mind, however, is that this book is merely the beginning of your CG education. With the confidence you will gain from the exercises in this book, and the peace of mind you can have by using this book as a reference, you can go on to create your own increasingly complex CG projects.

## What You Need

Hardware changes constantly and evolves faster than publications can keep up. Having a good solid machine is important to production, although simple home computers will be able to run the 3ds Max software quite well. Any laptop (with discrete graphics, not a netbook) or desktop PC running Windows XP Professional, Windows 7, or Windows 8 (32- or 64-bit) with at least 2 GB of RAM and an Intel Pentium Core 2 Duo/Quad or AMD Phenom or higher processor will work. Of course, having a good video card will help; you can use any hardware-accelerated OpenGL or Direct3D video card. Your computer system should have at least a 2.4 GHz Core 2 or i5/i7 processor with 2 GB of RAM, a few GBs of hard-drive space available, and a GeForce FX or ATI Radeon video card. Professionals may want to opt for workstation graphics cards, such as the ATI FirePro or the Quadro FX series of cards. The following systems would be good ones to use:

- ▶ Intel i7, 4 GB RAM, Quadro FX 2000, 400 GB 7200 RPM hard disk
- ▶ AMD Phenom II, 4 GB RAM, ATI FirePro V5700, 400 GB hard disk

You can check the list of system requirements at the following website:  
[www.autodesk.com/3dsmax](http://www.autodesk.com/3dsmax).

## FREE AUTODESK SOFTWARE FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

The Autodesk Education Community is an online resource with more than five million members that enables educators and students to download—for free (see website for terms and conditions)—the same software used by professionals worldwide. You can also access additional tools and materials to help you design, visualize, and simulate ideas. Connect with other learners to stay current with the latest industry trends and get the most out of your designs. Get started today at [www.autodesk.com/joinedu](http://www.autodesk.com/joinedu).

## What Is Covered in This Book

*Autodesk® 3ds Max® 2016* is organized to provide you with a quick and essential experience with 3ds Max to allow you to begin a fruitful education in the world of computer graphics.

**Chapter 1, “The 3ds Max Interface,”** begins with an introduction to the interface for 3ds Max 2016 to get you up and running quickly.

**Chapter 2, “Your First 3ds Max Project,”** is an introduction to modeling concepts and workflows in general. It shows you how to model using 3ds Max tools with polygonal meshes and modifiers to create a retro alarm clock.

**Chapter 3, “Modeling in 3ds Max: Architectural Model Part I,”** takes your modeling lesson from Chapter 2 a step further by showing you how to use some of the Architecture Engineering and Construction (AEC) tools to build an interior space using a room from an image.

**Chapter 4, “Modeling in 3ds Max: Architectural Model Part II,”** continues with the interior space from Chapter 3 by adding some furniture. The main focus of this chapter is the Graphite Modeling Tools tab and its many tools.

**Chapter 5, “Introduction to Animation,”** teaches you the basics of 3ds Max animation techniques and workflow by animating a bouncing ball. You will also

learn how to use the Track View - Curve Editor to time, edit, and finesse your animation.

**Chapter 6, “Animation Principles,”** rounds out your animation experience by showing the animation concepts of weight, follow-through, and anticipation when you animate a knife thrown at a target.

**Chapter 7, “Character Modeling Part I,”** introduces you to the creation of polygon mesh character model of an alien. In this chapter, you begin by blocking out the primary parts of the body.

**Chapter 8, “Character Modeling Part II,”** continues the alien model, focusing on using the Editable Poly toolset. You will finish the body details, head, hands, and feet.

**Chapter 9, “Introduction to Materials,”** shows you how to assign textures and materials to your models. You will learn to texture the couch, chair, and window from Chapter 4 as you learn the basics of working with 3ds Max materials and UVW mapping.

**Chapter 10, “Textures and UV Workflow: The Alien,”** furthers your understanding of materials and textures, and introduces UV workflows in preparing and texturing the alien.

**Chapter 11, “Character Studio: Rigging,”** covers the basics of Character Studio in creating a biped system and associating the biped rig to the alien model.

**Chapter 12, “Character Studio: Animation,”** expands on Chapter 11 to show you how to use Character Studio to create and edit a walk cycle using the alien model.

**Chapter 13, “Introduction to Lighting: Interior Lighting,”** begins by showing you how to light a 3D scene with the three-point lighting system. It then shows you how to use the tools to create and edit 3ds Max lights for illumination, shadows, and special lighting effects. You will light the furniture to which you added materials in Chapter 9.

**Chapter 14, “3ds Max Rendering,”** explains how to create image files from your 3ds Max scene and how to achieve the best look for your animation by using proper cameras and rendering settings when you render the interior scene.

**Chapter 15, “mental ray,”** shows you how to render with mental ray. Using Final Gather, you will learn how to use indirect lighting.

The companion web page to this book at [www.sybex.com/go/3dsmax2016essentials](http://www.sybex.com/go/3dsmax2016essentials) provides all the sample images, movies, and files that you will need to work through the projects in *Autodesk® 3ds Max® 2016*.



**NOTE** This book is a great primer for Autodesk 3ds Max. If you're interested in taking the Autodesk Certification exams for 3ds Max, go to [www.autodesk.com/certification](http://www.autodesk.com/certification) for information and resources.

## The Essentials Series

The Essentials series from Sybex provides outstanding instruction for readers who are just beginning to develop their professional skills. Every Essentials book includes these features:

- ▶ Skill-based instruction with chapters organized around projects rather than abstract concepts or subjects
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You can contact the authors through Wiley or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/3dsMaxEssentials](http://www.facebook.com/3dsMaxEssentials).



# The 3ds Max Interface

*The Autodesk® 3ds Max®* 2016 software interface is where you view and work with your scene. This chapter explains its basic operations and tools. You can use this chapter as a reference as you work through the rest of this book, although the following chapters and their exercises will orient you to the 3ds Max user interface (UI) quickly. It's important to be in front of your computer when you read this chapter, so you can try out techniques as we discuss them in the book.


## In this chapter, you will learn to

- ▶ Navigate the workspace
- ▶ Transform objects using gizmos
- ▶ Use the Graphite Modeling Tools set
- ▶ Use the command panel
- ▶ Use the time slider and track bar
- ▶ Manage files

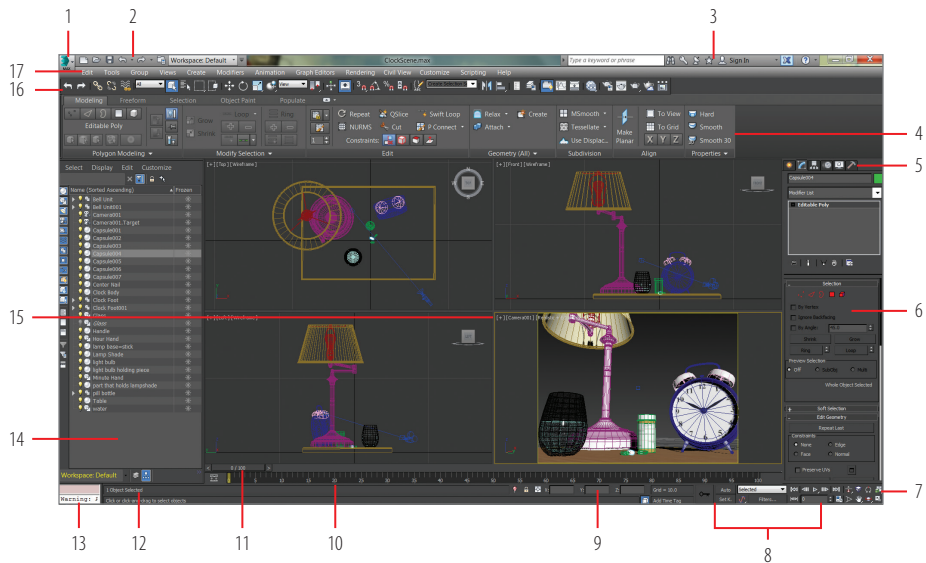
## Navigating the Workspace

The following sections present a brief rundown of what you need to know about the UI and how to navigate in the 3D workspace.

### User-Interface Elements

Figure 1.1 shows the 3ds Max UI. (See Table 1.1 for explanations of the UI elements.) At the top left of the application window is an icon called the Application button (); clicking it opens the Application menu, which provides access to many file operations. Running along the top is the

Quick Access toolbar, which provides access to common commands and the InfoCenter, which in turn offers to access many product-related information sources. In this version of the program, they have rolled out a new Enhanced Menus workspace that defines the look of the interface. When you first open the program, you will see the Default workspace. To switch to a different workspace, go to the Quick Access toolbar located at the top of the interface. In the Workspaces drop-down list, choose the desired workspace. Some of the most important commands in the Quick Access toolbar are file-management commands such as Save File and Open File. If you do something and then wish you hadn't, you can click the Undo Scene Operation button (↶) or press Ctrl+Z. To redo a command or action that you just undid, click the Redo Scene Operation button (↷) or press Ctrl+Y.



**FIGURE 1.1** The 3ds Max interface elements

**TABLE 1.1** The 3ds Max interface elements\*

Element	Function	Description
1	Application button	Opens the Application menu, which provides file management commands.
2	Quick Access toolbar	Provides some of the most commonly used file management commands as well as Undo Scene Operation and Redo Scene Operation.