

# NOW-CROWD BILLBOARDS USER MANUAL

Now-Crowd Billboards User Manual

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## Introduction

It can be lonely being a Daz Figure. With too many friends in the same scene, you can bring Daz to a screeching halt without some serious computer hardware! So often, the lonely Daz Figure will be in scenes with only 2, 3, or maybe 4 other figures! Billboards are a **fantastically quick and resource easy way to add background crowds to your scenes**. These pre-rendered elements are great to play the background characters in your scene. **The Now-Crowd Billboards improves on standard billboards by providing 72 different views for every billboard figure**. Change a billboard figure to 12 different horizontal angles and 6 different vertical angles. When you move your camera, the Now-Crowd Billboards can be changed to match!

There are two great scripts to make these billboards easy to use. There is one script to turn the billboards to face the camera and another script to change billboard figure angle based on horizontal and vertical orientation.

### For Iray and 3Delight

**No other products are needed to use Now-Crowd Billboards.**

## Features

- **Scripts Include:**
  - Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera Script - Change billboards to face camera
  - Now-Crowd Change Billboard Angle Script - Change billboards to use different figure angle
- **Textures Include:**
  - 72 Texture and Transparency Maps (2048 x 2048) per single Figure Billboard
  - 72 Texture and Transparency Maps (3072 x 3072) per single Multi-Figure Billboard

## How to use Now-Crowd Billboards

Now-Crowd Billboards are very easy to use. *It is recommended that you set your viewport drawing style to wire texture shaded, texture shaded, cartoon shaded or NVIDIA Iray in order to see your billboard figures when you are positioning them.*

To use a figure billboard:

- Double-click the billboard to place it in your scene.

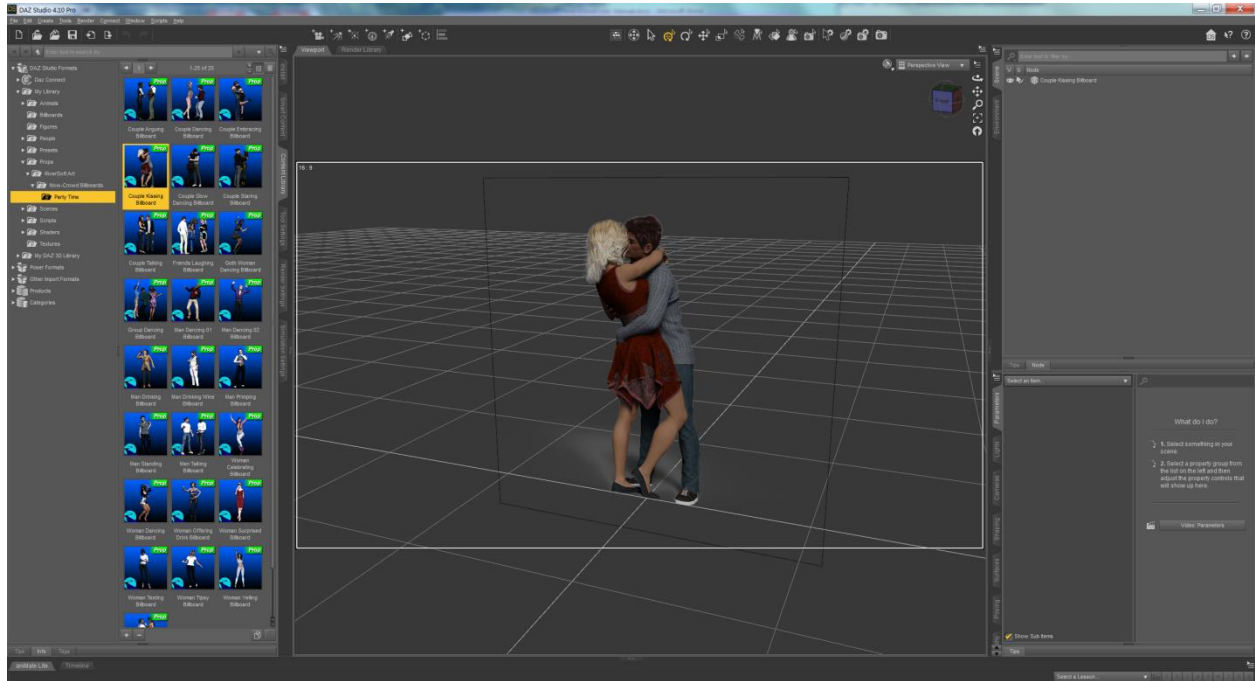


Figure 1 - Couple Kissing Billboard (from Now-Crowd Billboards - Party Time) in your scene

- Use the Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera script to make the billboard face square to the camera (see next section)
- Use the translation transformations sliders or widget to place the billboard in your scene with the feet **just** on the floor (this is where the drawing style helps). Note that you may have to use the Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera script again.
- Use the Now-Crowd Change Billboard Angle Script to select the best view of the figure
  - Use the horizontal angle slider to "turn" the figure in the billboard
  - Use the vertical angle slider to give an overhead view if you need to match your camera angle.
  - **Note that If you change the vertical angle and face the billboard at the camera again, your billboard will not be flush with your floor again. You are going to need to drop the figure(s) to the floor.**

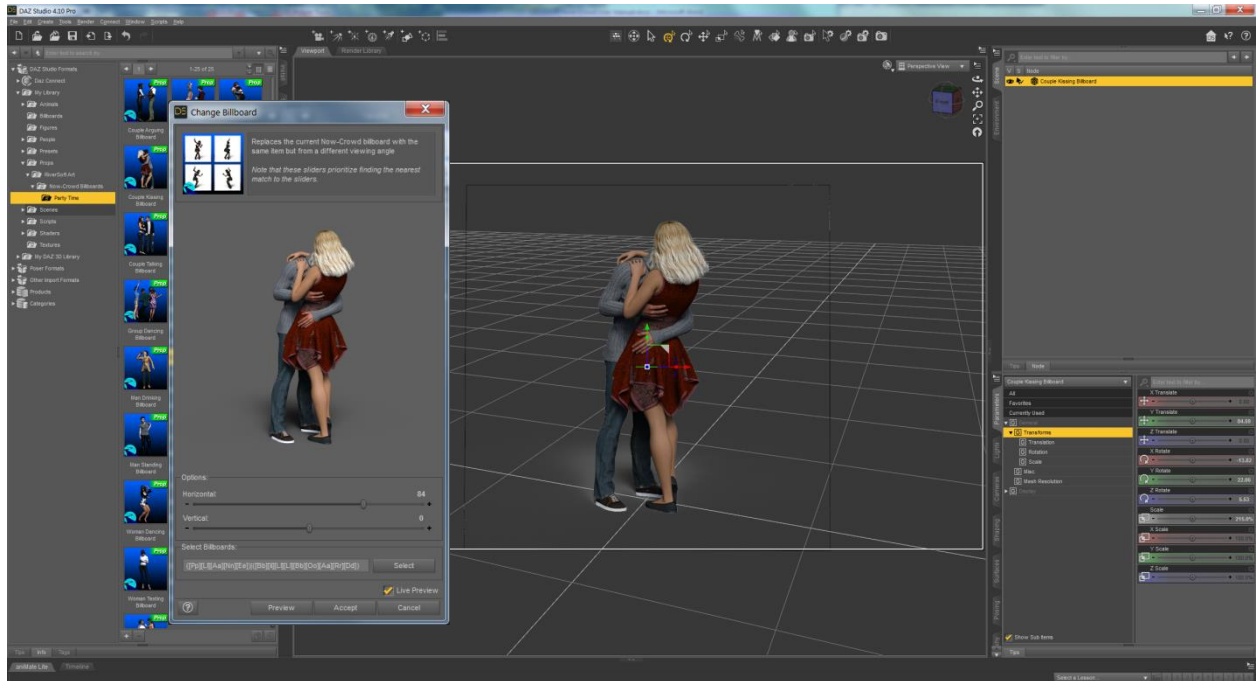


Figure 2 - Use the Change Billboard Angle script to change the rotation of your billboard figures

Note that shadows are a weakness for billboards from high up angles (where you can see the shadows clearly). With careful attention to lighting and positioning, you can minimize the issue:

- Make sure the billboards are aligned directly on top of surface they are on (when you change camera angle, the billboard moves away/towards relative to the surface)
- Orient all billboards in the same horizontal angle (to get the prerendered shadows lined up)
- Orient light source to the billboard prerendered light source
- Avoid using multi-figure billboards (as usually only one figure in the billboard would look perfectly grounded)

## Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera Script

The Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera script rotates the selected billboards (or planes) so that their front surface directly faces the current viewport camera. This script allows the billboards to look "real" in your scene. **The Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera script will rotate anything selected in the scene, not just billboards.**

*Billboard planes are assumed to have been created with the primary axis being the z-axis for this script. This condition is true for all billboards provided by Now-Crowd. However, if you create your own planes and use this script, you want to make sure you create them with the z-axis as the primary axis.*

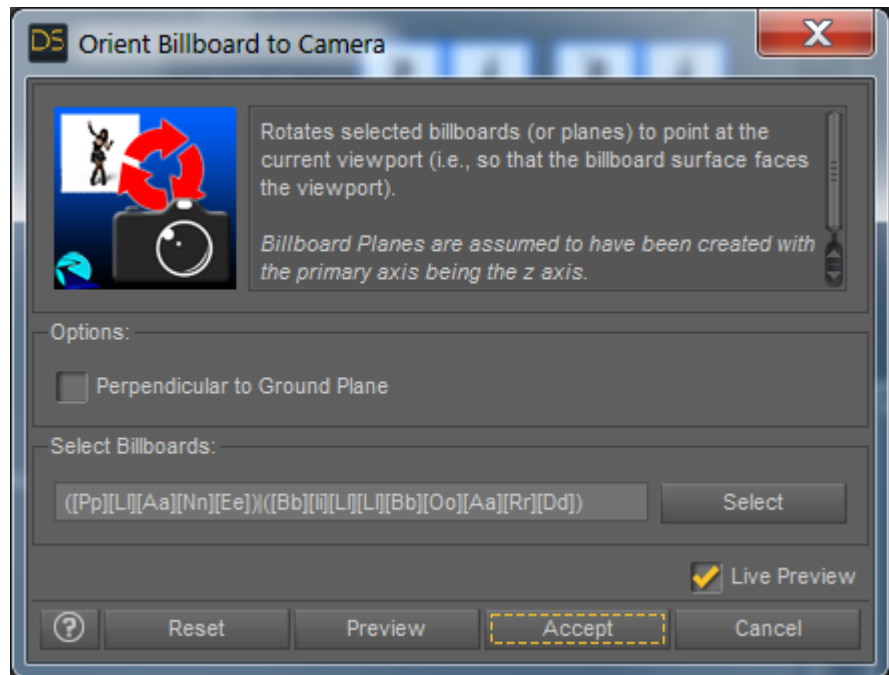


Figure 3 - Now-Crowd Orient Billboard to Camera Dialog

The Perpendicular to Ground Plane option, when enabled, orients the billboard toward the camera. However, it keeps the billboard perpendicular to the ground plane. *It is recommended to keep this option off.*

The script window provides a selection text input and button to help you select all billboards in a scene. The input text box specifies a regular expression that is used to search for all items with labels that match the expression in the scene. Currently, the selection text box will match all items that have **PLANE** or **BILLBOARD** in their name (ignoring the case of the words). The Select Button executes the selection operation. Note that all currently selected items are deselected.

Specifying your own regular expressions for the Selection input text box is beyond the scope of this manual. Daz recommends you read the following reference: <http://www.regular-expressions.info/reference.html>

## Now-Crowd Change Billboard Angle Script

The Now-Crowd Change Billboard Angle script "rotates" the angle for the figure(s) for the selected billboards. Use the Now-Crowd Change Billboard Angle Script to select the best view of the figure

- Use the horizontal angle slider to "turn" the figure in the billboard
- Use the vertical angle slider to give an overhead view when you need to match your camera angle.

Every Now-Crowd Billboard currently comes with 72 different angles, 12 angles in the horizontal (i.e., as if the figure was turning around) and 6 angles in the vertical (i.e., as if the camera was moving up and down while pointed at the figure(s)). The following angles are currently provided in Now-Crowd:

- Horizontal: -180, -150, -120, -90, -60, -30, 0, 30, 60, 90, 120, 150
- Vertical: 0, 15, 30, 45, 60, 75

Drag the sliders and the script will find the nearest matching angles for the billboard figure(s).

The Use Soft Mask checkbox controls the mask used by the billboard. Soft masks are the default masks and provide a smooth, transparent shadow for the figure. Hard masks get rid of the pre-rendered shadows in the billboards (at the cost of jaggies), which make them really good for overhead shots.

*Note that if you change the vertical angle, your billboard figure(s) feet position will change. This means that it will not look like the figure is standing in the same place. You are going to need to use the transformation sliders to drop the figure(s) to the floor.*

*Even though there are currently only 72 angles for each billboard figure, the script is designed to handle any number of angles (from -180 to 180, and -90 to 90). By moving the horizontal and vertical sliders,*

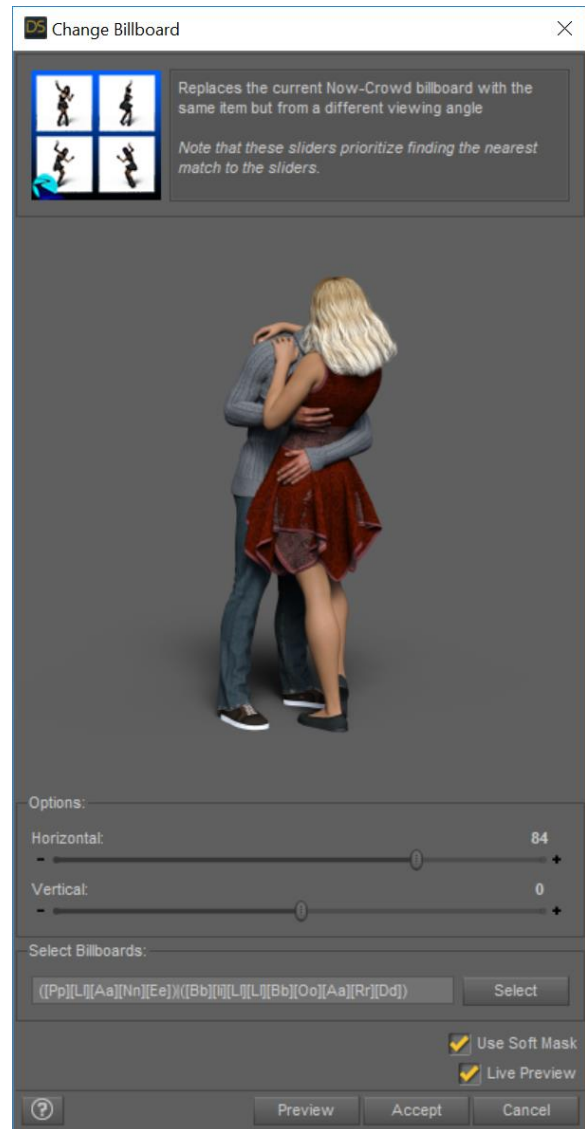


Figure 4 - Now-Crowd Change Billboard Angle Dialog



*the script will look for the nearest match to the slider values.*



Figure 5 - Horizontal views for the "Goth Woman Dancing" billboard (from Now-Crowd Billboards - Party Time) with the vertical angle as 0.

The script window provides a selection text input and button to help you select all billboards in a scene. The input text box specifies a regular expression that is used to search for all items with labels that match the expression in the scene. Currently, the selection text box will match all items that have **PLANE** or **BILLBOARD** in their name (ignoring the case of the words). The Select Button executes the selection operation. Note that all currently selected items are deselected.

Specifying your own regular expressions for the Selection input text box is beyond the scope of this manual. Daz recommends you read the following reference:

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Figure 6 - Vertical views for the "Goth Woman Dancing" billboard (from Now-Crowd Billboards - Party Time) with the horizontal angle as 0.