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Avatar Studio User's Guide

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Avatar Studio

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How to use this manual

This manual is designed for all users of Studio virtual host software. You do not need to know how to program to create your VHost talking character and embed it in a Web page. The chapters in this manual provide the instructions and information that you will need to set up your own VHost Character on a Web page or other Web environments.

If you have experience with HTML and JavaScript programming, this manual includes chapters and sections that you show you how to extend the functionality, flexibility and capabilities of VHost Scenes.

Chapter 1 is a brief introduction to Studio and an overview of VHost technology.

Chapter 2 is a Quick Start Guide that takes you through the essential steps of creating your Vhost Character and embedding it in a Web page.

Conventions

The following graphical alerts are used is this manual to draw your attention to a tip, note, or warning.

📖	Tip

✓	Note

!	Warning

Avatar Studio

Requirements

PC	**OS:** Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000 or XP **Browsers:** Internet Explorer 5.5, Internet Explorer 6, Firefox, Mozilla, Opera, etc. **CPU:** 400Mhz or faster **Other:** Flash Player 6 or better
Macintosh	**OS:** OS X 10.2 or better or Mac OS 8.1or newer **Browsers:** Safari, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Mozilla **CPU:** 400Mhz or faster **Other:** Flash Player 6 or better
Linux	Although Studio is not officially supported on Linux at this time, Oddcast is not aware of any of problems or issues with any of the system configurations that we have reviewed.

✓	**Note:** Some older or non-standard browsers, usually those released before 2001, may not be compatible. Specifically, Netscape browser versions prior to 4.7 and Internet Explorer versions prior to 5.0 are not officially supported.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Avatar Studio

The Avatar Studio is a sophisticated, easy-to-use authoring tool that you can use to create and embed customized animated characters in HTML pages, ad banners and Flash movies. You can use the Avatar Studio editing tools to create and update characters, backgrounds and audio messages effortlessly, without touching the underlying code. With basic HTML and JavaScript programming experience, you can use the Avatar Studio API (Application Programming Interface) to create advanced interactions with users based on their actions or other events on your Web site.

1.1   About VHost Technology

Avatar Studio is a client-server, Flash-based technology that both non-programmers and Web professionals use to create and embed online interactive, speaking characters in Web pages, emails, ad banners and Flash movies. These characters are also referred to as avatars.

With no programming experience you can use Avatar Studio to create advanced interactions with users based on events. For example, you can set a user's click or rollover to trigger playback, and you can open a linked Web site when a user clicks the VHost character in your scene.

The following describes some of the important features included with Avatar Studio:

Lip Sync Technology	VHost's characters lifelike lip-syncing uses the LIP Sync voice analysis engine. This engine accurately analyzes digital audio files and outputs lip-syncing data, which provides the VHost character animation cues for realistic delivery. VHost lip-syncing is language-agnostic.
Host Behaviors	Enliven your VHost character and display lifelike traits such as facial expression, head nods, eye and eye brow movement and breathing. You can also have the character follow a user's cursor movements.
Dynamic Data	You can embed your VHost in Web pages that support Macromedia Flash Objects, such as PHP, ASP, and PERL, and harness the VHost to a live data source to deliver timely, dynamic information. For example, you can connect your VHost to a live feed such as stock quotes and sports scores, and generate text-to-speech audio for your Character.
Reporting Tools	Analyze your VHost runtime usages and behavior in detail by accessing detailed reports that provide data on every aspect of VHost playback, user behavior and the use of assets.

1.2   About Shows and Scenes

The building blocks of Avatar Studio are Shows and Scenes.

* A *Scene* is a combination of a character, background, audio and functional skin.

* A *Show* is a collection, or series, of Scenes.
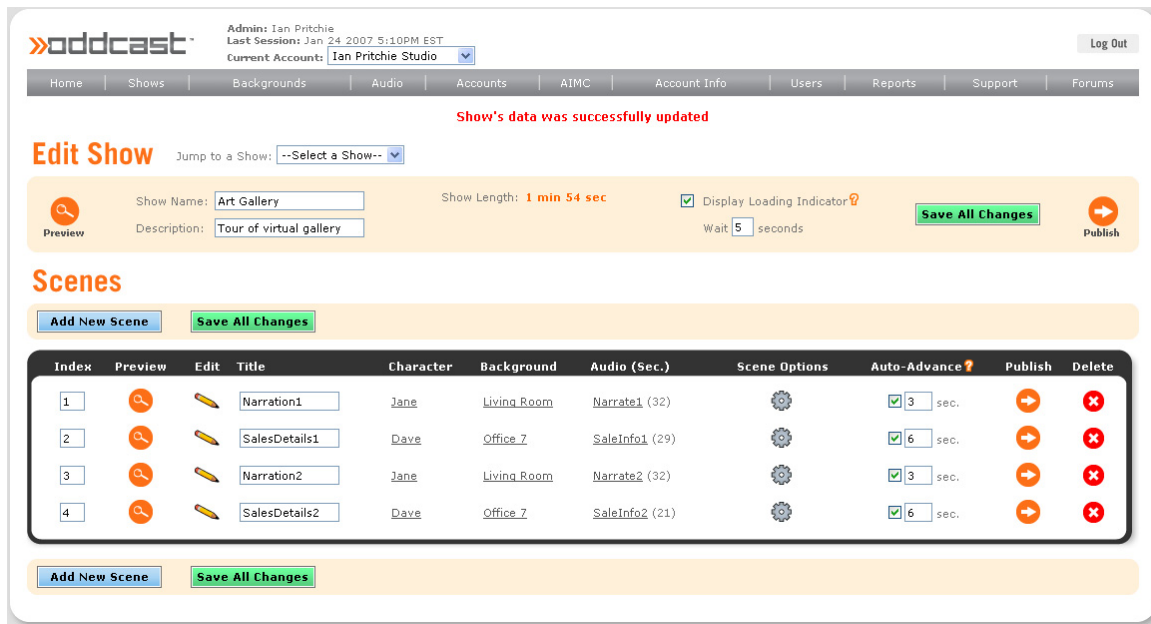
Figure 1 - Shows page

You can use a Show as a presentation by playing the Scenes in sequence and controlling the transition between Scenes. You can also use a Show as a palette of Scenes for a presentation. For example, you can determine which Scene in a Show to play based on an event or interaction with the user.

1.3   What you can create with Avatar Studio

The best way to learn about the many types of presentations that you can create with Avatar Studio is to see existing examples. At the Oddcast Web site you can see a variety of deployments created by clients of Oddcast.

Visit these and other pages on the Oddcast Web site for examples of VHost applications:

* The VHost product home page shows an example of a VHost Character that answers frequently asked questions (FAQ).

* The Viral Marketing solutions page describes an example of a character from a TV ad transformed into an interactive viral marketing campaign.

* The Client Deployments page includes many client implementations that use Avatar Studio to deploy applications for marketing, sales, content and training.

Also visit the Case Studies page to learn about how organizations use Avatar Studio for their digital marketing campaigns to help increase click-through and conversion rates and return on investment.

Chapter 2

Quick Start Guide to Avatar Studio

This chapter will help you become familiar with the elements of Avatar Studio.

Log in to Avatar Studio

1. Go to the Avatar Studio page at http://www.oddcast.com/home/studio.

2. Click **VHost Account Login** in the upper-right of the page.

    The Oddcast Login page loads.
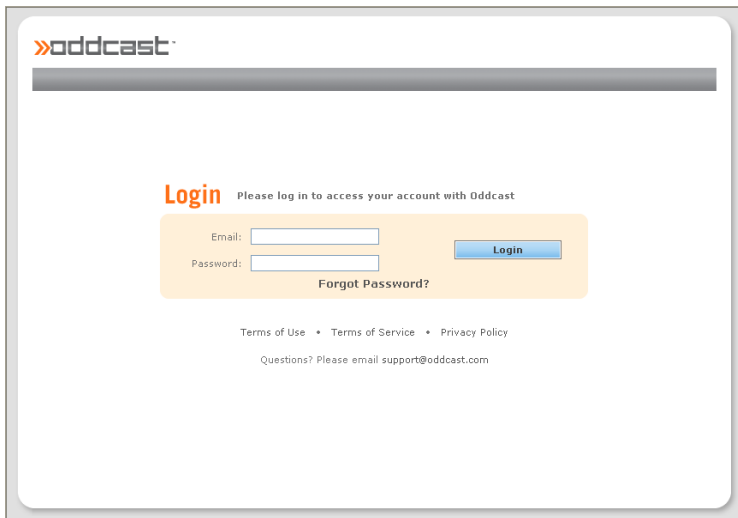
Figure 2 - Oddcast Login page

3. Enter the email address and password for your account, and then click **Enter**.

    The home page for your Studio account loads. If you have more than one Oddcast account, select the account from the drop-down menu.
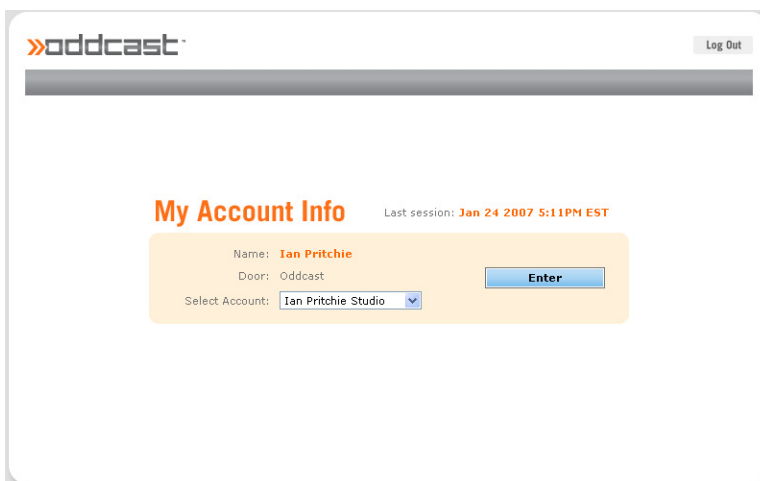
Figure 3 - Account Home page

4. Click **Enter**.

Your Shows page loads. **Note:** If you have more than one Oddcast account, your Accounts page loads. To load your Shows page, click **Shows** in the main menu at the top of the page.
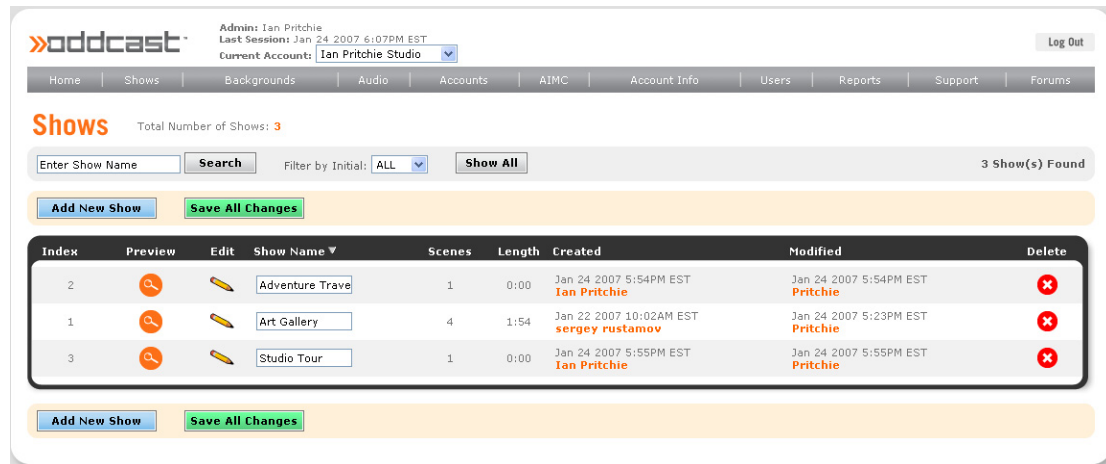
Figure 4 - Shows page

2.1   The Main Menu

Use the main menu at the top of the page to navigate Studio. The following describes the options in the main menu: The main menu on your Studio page may not include all of these options.

Menu Option	Description
Home	Loads the **My Account Info** page. This is the home page for your account.
Shows	Loads the **Shows** page. On the Shows page you can preview, edit, and rename your Shows.
Backgrounds	Loads the **Background Management** page. On this page you preview, upload and delete backgrounds.
Audio	Loads the **Audio Management** page. On this page you view information about your audio, and preview, upload and delete audio.
AIMC	Loads the **AI Management Center** page. Use the AIMC to bring your VHost Characters to life with the power of the AI Knowledge Base. By deploying the AI Knowledge Base, a Character responds to user questions with context-sensitive, spoken answers.
Account Info	Loads your **Account Info** page. On this page you view information about your account. You can edit your contact information and establish the licensed domains to prevent unauthorized use of your VHost Scenes on Web sites other than your own.
Users	Loads the **Users** page. This page is available if you are an authorized VHost Reseller. On this page you assign or associate different users with a specific SitePal account that you manage.

Menu Option	Description
Reports	Loads the **Reports** page. On this page view and analyze your VHost runtime usages in detail.
Support	Loads the **Oddcast Support** page. On this page you'll find additional documentation, technical notes, and reference information for Avatar Studio.
Forums	Loads the VHost Bulletin Board. This page is the user forums for Oddcast products and technology.

2.2   Create a Show

You create new Shows and edit existing Shows on your **Shows** page.

1.   On your **Shows** page, click **Add New Show**.

     The Add New Show page dialog box appears.

Figure 5 - Add New Show dialog box

2.   Enter a name and description for your new Show.

     If you want to create a copy of another Show including its existing Scenes, select the Show that you want to copy from the **Create As** drop-down menu.

3. Click **Submit**.

    The new Show appears in the **Edit Show** page. A new Show contains one empty Scene.

Figure 6 - Edit Show page

4. Click **Add New Scene**.

    A new Scene is added to the Show.

5. Click in the **Title** text box and enter a name for the new Scene.

Figure 7 - Scene Title text box

6. Click **Save All Changes**.

    The Scene is saved with its new title.

2.3   Create your own Character

To create your own VHost Scene, you select a Model to use for your Character and then customize the Character.

1. Under the **Character** column for your new Scene, click **none**.

    The **Character Selection** window appears.

Figure 8 – Character Selection window

2. Click **Add New Character**.

   A new Character is added to your list of Characters.
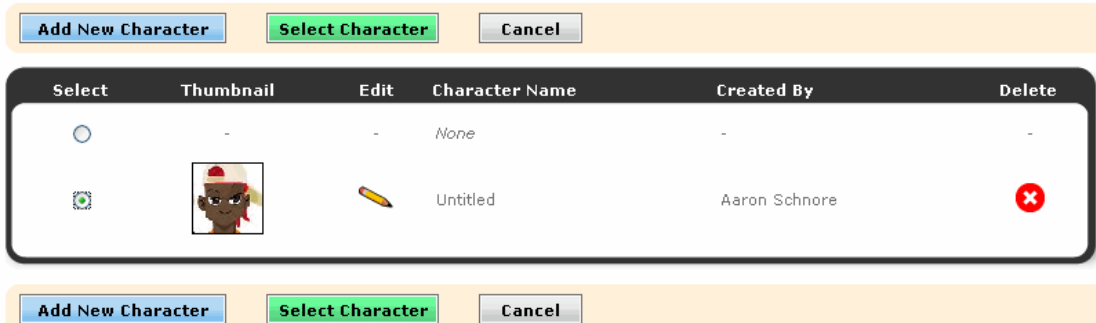
Figure 9 – Character Selection window (new Character added)

3. Click **Edit** for your new Character.

   The **Model Gallery** window appears. This window allows you to select a Model for your Character (see Step 4). You can also accessorize your Model (see Step 5).
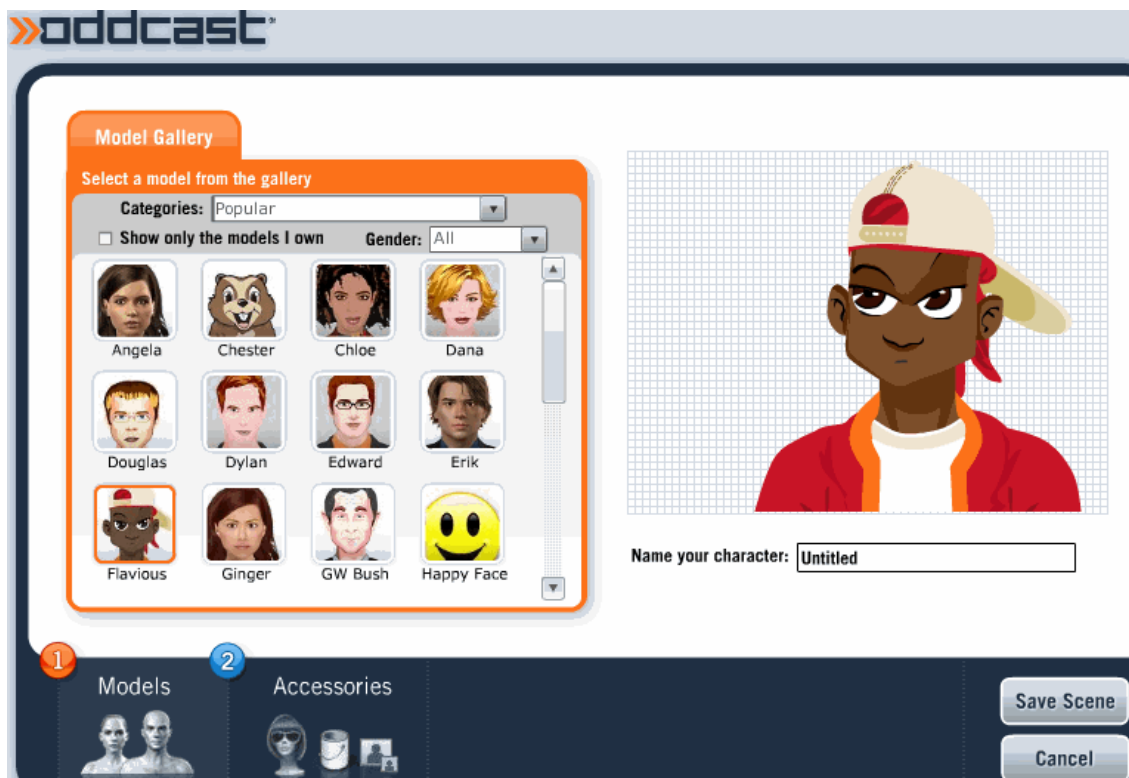
Figure 10 – Model Gallery window

4.   Select a Model for your Character.

You can view thumbnails of available Models, and use the drop-downs to filter Models by **Categories** and **Gender**.

Click the thumbnail image of the Model that you want to use for your Character.
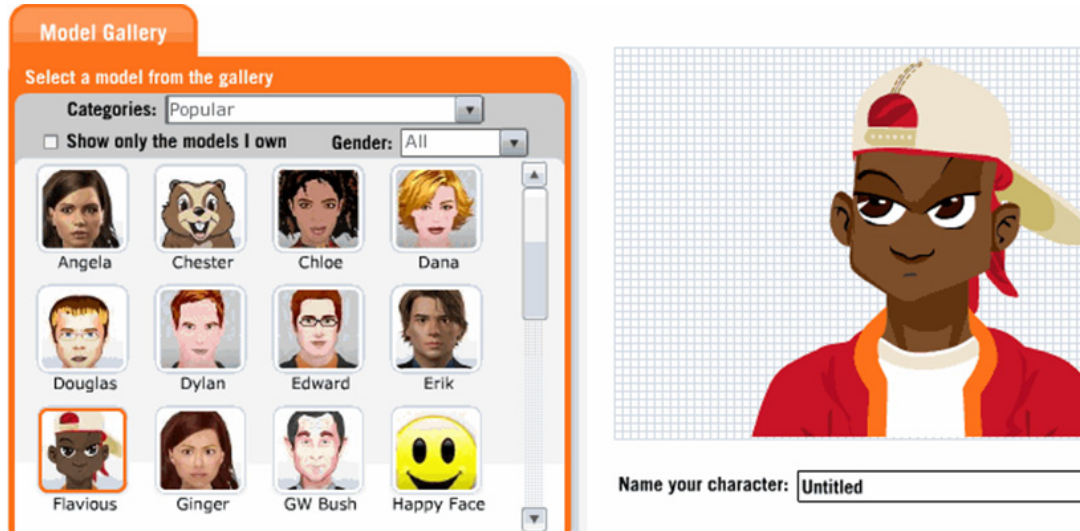
Figure 11 - Model Gallery window (thumbnails and Preview Panel)

The Model you select appears dynamically in the Preview Panel.

5.   Accessorize your Model.

At the bottom of the **Model Gallery** window, click the **Accessories** icon.

*Figure 12 - **Accessories** icon*

The **Accessories** page of the **Model Gallery** window appears. Three accessories tabs are available: **Style**, **Color**, and **Sizing**. The **Style** tab is selected by default.

Figure 13 - Accessories page of the Model Gallery window (Style tab selected)

Accessorize your Character's style

o   If you click the **Style** tab on the **Accessories** page you can customize a Model's hair, sunglasses, clothing, jewelry, hat, facial hair, and facial expressions.

Figure 14 - Accessories (style)

o   Click a **style attribute icon** to customize a *specific* style accessory; for example, hat style.

Figure 15 - Style attribute icons

You can customize the following **style accessories** for your Character:

- Hair
- Glasses
- Costume
- Necklaces
- Hat
- Facial hair
- Mouth.

If applicable, you can select a style attribute **sub-category**. For example, if you click the glasses style attribute icon for a given Model, you can scroll through the sub-categories of glasses (for example, **View All**, **All Purpose**, **Color Lens**, etc.).
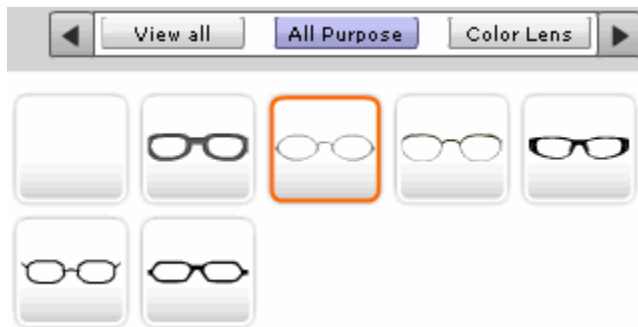
Figure 16 - Available Glasses (All Purpose sub-category)

Your Character's look changes dynamically in the Preview Panel as you make adjustments.

> ✓   **Note:** If a particular style attribute is not available for a Model, then the style attribute icon is grayed-out. For example, since female Models do not have facial hair, the facial hair style attribute icon is grayed-out for all female Models.

Accessorize your Character's color

o   If you click the **Color** tab on the **Accessories** page, you can customize your Model's skin, eye, and mouth colors.

Figure 17 - Accessories page of the Model Gallery window (Color tab selected)

○ Click a **color attribute icon** to customize the color and hue of a *specific* color attribute on your Character; for example, hair color.

You can customize the following **color attributes** for your Character:

* Hair
* Skin
* Eyes.

Roll your mouse over the color palette in the Color adjustment tool to fine-tune the hair, skin, eyes, or mouth color to the shade you want.

Use the lever on the Hue adjustment tool to fine-tune the hue of the hair, skin, eye, or mouth color.
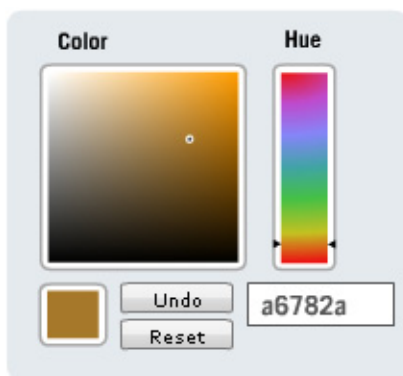
Figure 18 - Color and hue adjustment tools

> You can click the **Undo** button to undo any color or hue changes you inadvertently made. Or, you can click the **Reset** button to reset the color and hue back to the last-saved settings.

Your Character's colors change dynamically in the Preview Panel as you make adjustments.

Accessorize your Character's physical attributes

o   If you click the **Attributes** tab on the **Accessories** page, you can customize your Character's physical attributes, including the appearance of your Character's mouth, nose, shoulders, as well as your Character's head height/width.
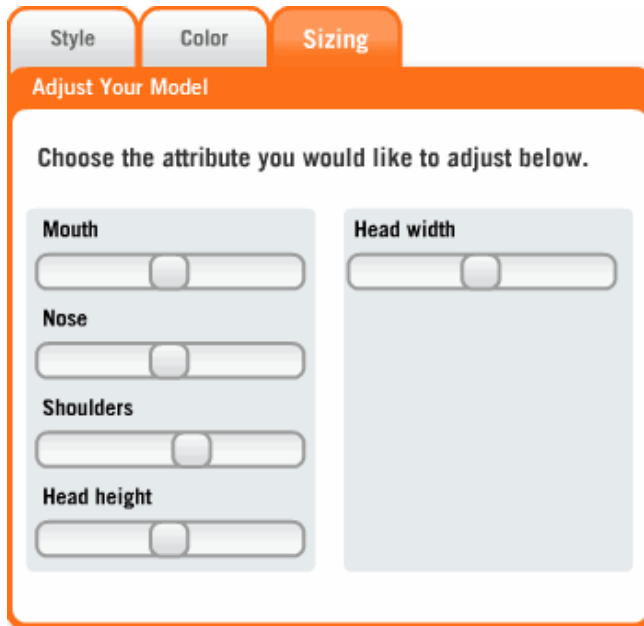
Figure 19 - Accessories page of the Model Gallery window (Attributes tab selected)

Use a **physical attribute lever** to customize the color of a specific physical attribute on your Character; for example, head height.

*Figure 20 - Physical attribute lever (**Head Height**)*

You can customize the following **color attributes** for your Character:

- Mouth
- Nose
- Shoulders
- Head height
- Head width.

Your Character's physical attributes change dynamically in the Preview Panel as you make adjustments.

6. Enter your Character's name in the **Name your character:** field (below the Preview Pane).
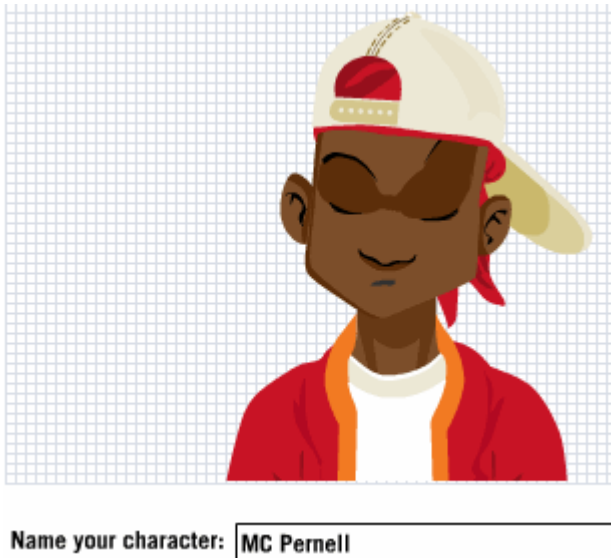
Figure 21 – Preview Pane and Name your character: field

7. Click **Save Scene**.

    The **Character Selection** window appears with your new Character.

Figure 22 - Character Selection window

8. Click **Select Character**.

The **Character Selection** window closes and your list of Scenes (in the **Scenes** section of the **Edit Show** page) is updated with the name of the character you selected for the scene.
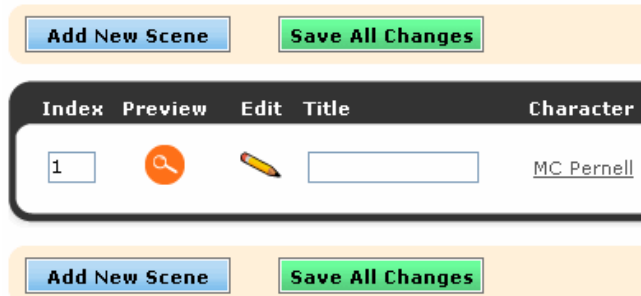
Figure 23 – Edit Show page (Scenes section)

2.4   Select a background for a Scene

Avatar Studio includes several categories of pre-configured backgrounds that are available for you to select. You can also:

- upload an image or video background
- create a background slideshow (i.e., backgrounds morph and change behind your Character as he/she speaks)
- create a text background.

1. Do one of the following:

- On the **Edit Show** page, under the **Background** column for your Scene, click **none**.
- Click the **Backgrounds** link on the top navigation bar.

The **Background Management** window appears.
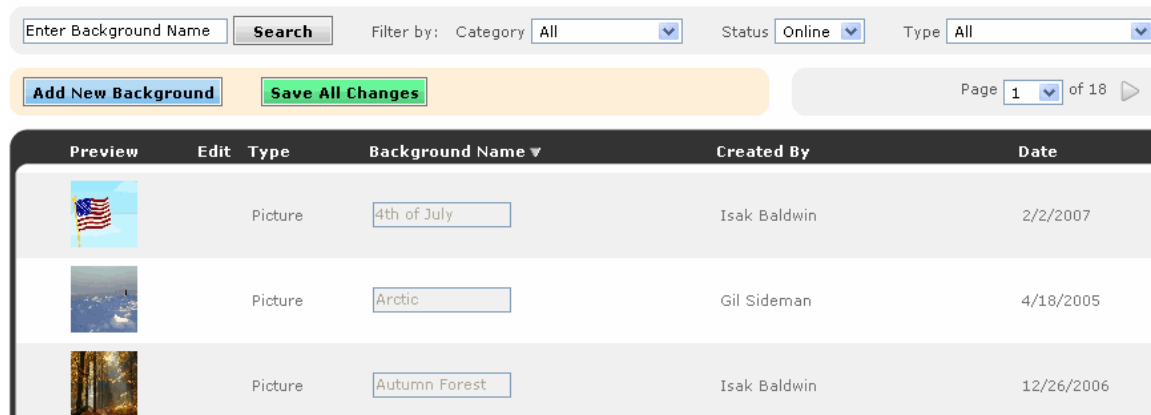
Figure 24 – Background Management window

2. Click **Add New Background**.

The **Add New Background** window appears.

Figure 25 – Add New Background window

3. Determine whether you want to upload an image or video background, create a background slideshow (i.e., backgrounds morph and change behind your Character as he/she speaks), or create a text background.

If you want to:	Then go to:
Upload an image or video background	Step 4
Create a background slideshow (i.e., backgrounds morph and change behind your Character as he/she speaks)	Step 5
Create a text background	Step 6

4. **Upload an image or video background.**

   Avatar Studio allows you to upload an **image** or **video** background.

   Do the following:

   - Locate the **Upload Image or Video** portion of the **Add New Background** window.

   - Enter the name of your image or video background in the **Name:** field.

   - Click **Browse** and locate the image file that you want to upload.

   An **image** background file must be a .JPG (JPEG) file with size of 300 pixels wide and 225 pixels height (if dimensions are different, the image will be cropped and resized).

   If you want to upload a **video** background, Avatar Studio supports the following formats: MOV, AVI, WMV, and MPG. The file size limit is 8 MB. Oddcast recommends an aspect ratio of 4 x 3 for best results.

   - Click the **UPLOAD** button.

Avatar Studio uploads your image or video background.

- Click the ❌ icon to close the **Add New Background** window.

> ✓ **Note:** If you upload a video background, your user must manually play the Scene. It does not play automatically, upon loading. However, the video background continues to play behind your Character, even after your Character stops speaking, unless your user manually stops the Scene.

5. **Create a background slideshow.**

Avatar Studio allows you to upload a **background slideshow** (i.e., backgrounds morph and change behind your Character as he/she speaks). You can add flavor to your slideshow by adding transition effects.

Do the following:

- Locate the **Create a Background Slideshow** portion of the **Add New Background** window.

- Click the **CREATE** button.

  The **Background Slideshow Editor** window appears.

Figure 26 – Background Slideshow Editor Window

- **Filter available background images by category.** Use the drop-down to filter available background images by category (e.g., **Private**, **Popular**, **Nightlife**, etc.).

- **Add images to the timeline.** Use your mouse to *drag* images on to the timeline. You can add as many images as you want to the timeline. Notice that the timeline will shift slides of an image if you drag it over an existing slide.
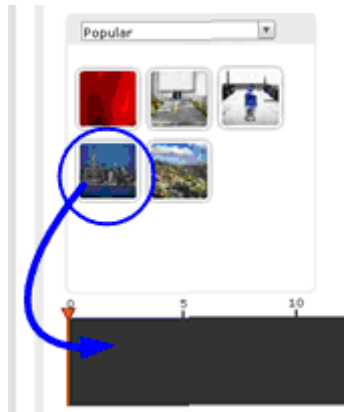
Figure 27 – Background Slideshow Editor window

- **Set your slide duration.** You can set the start and end time for each slide on your timeline. Hold your mouse down on the corners of a slide to move your slides to the desired start and end time.

Figure 28 – Timeline

- **Add effects.** Avatar Studio allows you add visual effects to your background slideshow. Do the following:

  o Click the **Settings** button.

     The **Slideshow Settings** pop-up displays.

Figure 29 – Slideshow Settings pop-up

- o   Use the **Effect:** drop-down to select a visual effect (i.e., **None**, **Fade**, **Zoom 1**, **Zoom 2**, or **Slide**).

- o   In the **Sec.** field, enter how many seconds should elapse before the effect begins on each slide. The default value is **0.75** seconds.

- o   Optionally, you can modify the **Default Shot Length:**. The default value is **4** seconds. This indicates how many seconds the effect lasts from slide to slide.

- o   When you are done, click the **Submit** button.

- **Show/hide your Character.** Avatar Studio allows you to choose whether to **show** or **hide** your Character from slide to slide. For example, you can make your Character appear during the first two slides of your background slideshow...then disappear for the third and fourth slides...then re-appear for the fifth and sixth slides.

Figure 30 – Timeline (with a Character shown and hidden)

- o   **Show a Character.** On the timeline, click the icon.
- o   **Hide a Character.** On the timeline, click the icon.

- **Preview your background slideshow.** To preview your background slideshow, click the **play** button. You can click the **rewind** button to start the background slideshow preview from the beginning.

Figure 31 – Play/rewind buttons

- **Preview your background slideshow with audio.** Add audio to preview your slideshow with audio from your account. Click the **Preview with Audio** button and select an audio track from the list.

- **Save your background slideshow.**

  Do the following:

  - Click the **Save** button.

    The **Name Your Background** pop-up prompts you to save your background slideshow.

Figure 32 – Name Your Background pop-up

  - Enter the name of your background slideshow in the **Name:** field (20 character maximum).

  - Click the **Submit** button.

> ✓ **Note:** If you upload a background slideshow, your user must manually play the Scene. It does not play automatically, upon loading. However, the background slideshow continues to play behind your Character, even after your Character stops speaking, unless your user manually stops the Scene.

6.   **Create a text background.**

Avatar Studio allows you to upload a **text background** to your Scene. You can select you're a font and choose the color of both font and background.

Do the following:

- Locate the **Create a Text Background** portion of the **Add New Background** window.

- Click the **CREATE** button.

     The **Text Background Editor** window appears.

Figure 33 – Text Background Editor window

- Enter your text in the editor window. Default text (**Text from Editor**) displays.

- Use the **Font** drop-down to select a font for your text background.

- Use the **Size** drop-down to select a size for the font background (i.e., **Large**, **Medium**, or **Small**).

- Click an **Alignment** icon to align the text. The **top row** of alignment icons allows you to align your text to the left, center, or right. The **bottom row** of alignment icons allows you to align your text on the top, center, or bottom of the window.

- Roll your mouse over the color palette in the **Coloring** portion of the window to fine-tune the color of your **Font** or **Background** (click a button to select which you want to fine-tune). You can also use the lever on the hue adjustment tool to fine-tune the hue of your font or background.

- Click the **Save** button.

  The **Name Your Background** pop-up prompts you to save your background slideshow.
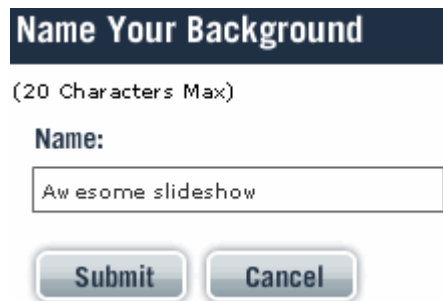

Figure 34 – Name Your Background pop-up

- Enter the name of your background slideshow in the **Name:** field (20 character maximum).

- Click the **Submit** button.

2.5   Add audio to a Scene

You can add audio for a Scene by recording it with a microphone, uploading an audio file, record by using a telephone, converting written text into synthesized audio, or by having professional voice talent record your message. In this example, we will use Text-to-Speech.

7. Do one of the following:

   - On the **Edit Show** page, under the **Audio** column for your Scene, click **none ()**.

   - Click the **Audio** link on the top navigation bar.

   The **Audio Management** window appears.

Figure 35 - Audio Management window

8. Click **Add New Audio**.

   The **Add New Audio** window appears.

9. Click **TTS Audio** tab.

   The **TTS Audio** panel appears with a preview image of the Character that you selected for the Scene.

Figure 36 - Add TTS Audio panel

10. From the **Languages** drop-down menu, select a language to use for your audio.

11. From the **Voices** drop-down menu, select a voice to use for your audio.

12. In the **Audio Name** text box, enter a name for the audio message.

13. In the **Say** text box, type the message that you want spoken.

14. Click **Preview** to hear your message.

15. Click **Save**.

    The **Add New Audio** window closes and your new audio message is selected in the **Audio Selection** window.

16. Click **Select Audio**.

    The **Audio Selection** window closes and your Scene is updated with the newly created audio.

Figure 37 - Update Scenes List

17. Optionally, you can click the audio link to display the **Audio Selection** window and add audio effects. To learn more about audio effects, see 7.11 Adding audio effects
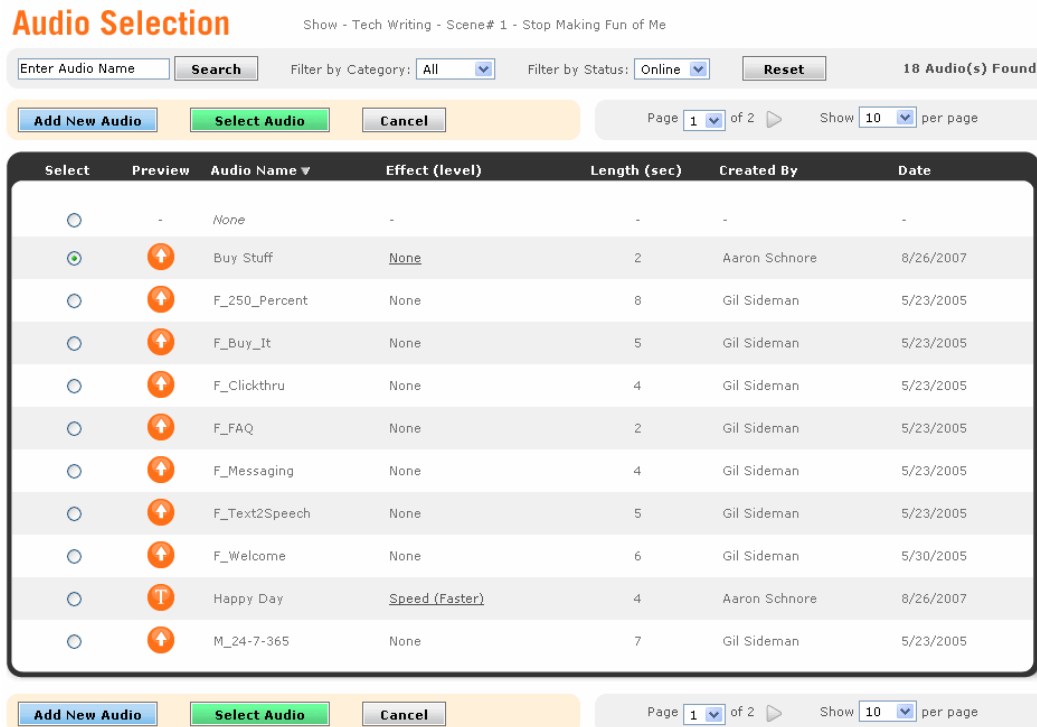
Figure 38 – Audio Selection window

2.6 Select a Player Skin

The VHost Player is the window in which your Scene plays. The Player skin is the frame of the window in which your Character appears. SitePal includes many styles of preconfigured skins that you can apply to your Scene. You can personalize the skins by modifying their appearance and choosing which playback controls to include with your Scene.

1. Under the **Edit** column, click **Edit** for the first Scene in the list.

   The **Skin Editor** loads. The Skin you select for the first Scene in a Show is applied to all the Scenes in the Show. You can select and customize a different skin for each Scene in your Show.

2. From the **Category** drop-down menu, select a category of skins.
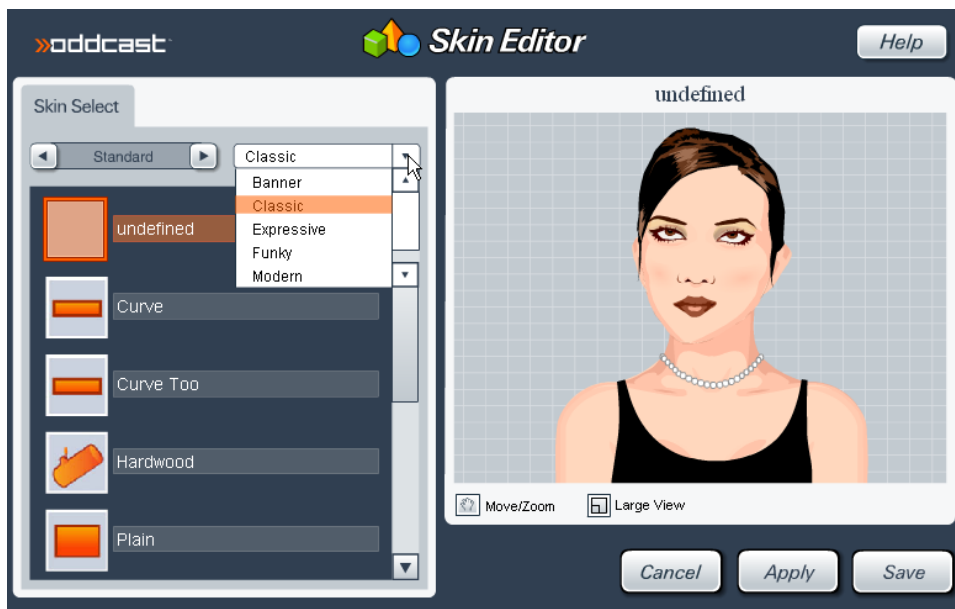
Figure 39 - Skin Editor

3. In the list box, select a skin for you scene.

    The Preview Pane is updated with the skin that you selected.

4. Under the preview image click **Move / Zoom** .

    The Move/Zoom controls appear. You use the /Zoom controls to resize and position the Character in the Skin.

Figure 40 - Move/Zoom controls

5. Click one of the Zoom buttons to increase or decrease the size of the Character

6. Click one of the arrow buttons to move the Character.

    You can also move the Character by holding down the mouse button on the Character and dragging it.

7. Click the **Close** button or click **Move / Zoom** to hide the controls.

8. Click **Save**.

    The **Skin Editor** closes.

2.7   Publish your Show or Scene

Publishing your Show or Scene means to embed, or insert, the code for a VHost Show or Scene in a Web page. The embedded code generates a link to your Show or Scene which is hosted on Oddcast servers. You use the VHost Publish Wizard to set the properties for your embedded code and copy the code into a Web page.

You can embed a Show or Scene using one of the following methods:

- In-page embedding

- Overlay embedding (**new**).

In-page embedding allows you to insert a Show or Scene into your Web page at a specific location in the page. The Show or Scene becomes a static part of the page until you manually removed the code. In addition, you must place in the embed code at a specific location within the HTML.

✓	If your target environment does not allow the use of JavaScript, use the **Web Page (No JavaScript)** option for publishing your Show or Scene. For example, eBay does not support JavaScript. The **Web Page (No JavaScript)** option does not support **VHost API calls from the Web page** or the **Follow cursor in whole page** option.

Overlay embedding allows you to add a Show or Scene on top of your page as a floating item. With overlay embedding you do not need to change your Web page's layout to include a Show or Scene. In addition, with overlay embedding:

- You can configure a Scene (but not a Show) to disappear after speaking, and reappear when initiated by viewer.

- Your viewers can drag and position the Show or Scene themselves.

- You can paste your embed code (almost) anywhere in the HTML.

✓	Overlay embedding requires JavaScript support. The overlay embedding Publish Wizard also requires Internet Explorer 6 or 7 or Firefox for Windows, or Firefox for Mac OS.

The steps for publishing a Show and a Scene are almost identical. This example explains how to publish a Scene, but most of the steps -- except where noted in Step 4: Effects -- are exactly the same as the steps you would follow to publish a Show.

1. From your list of Scenes, click **Publish** ➡ for your Show or Scene.

   The Publish Wizard window appears.
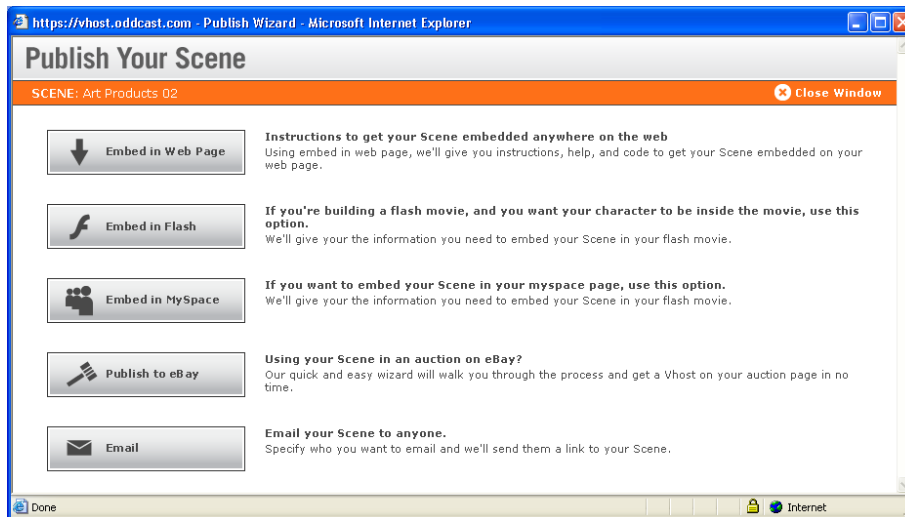
Figure 41 - Publish Wizard

2. Click the **Embed in Web Page** publish option.

   The next page of the Publish Wizard loads.
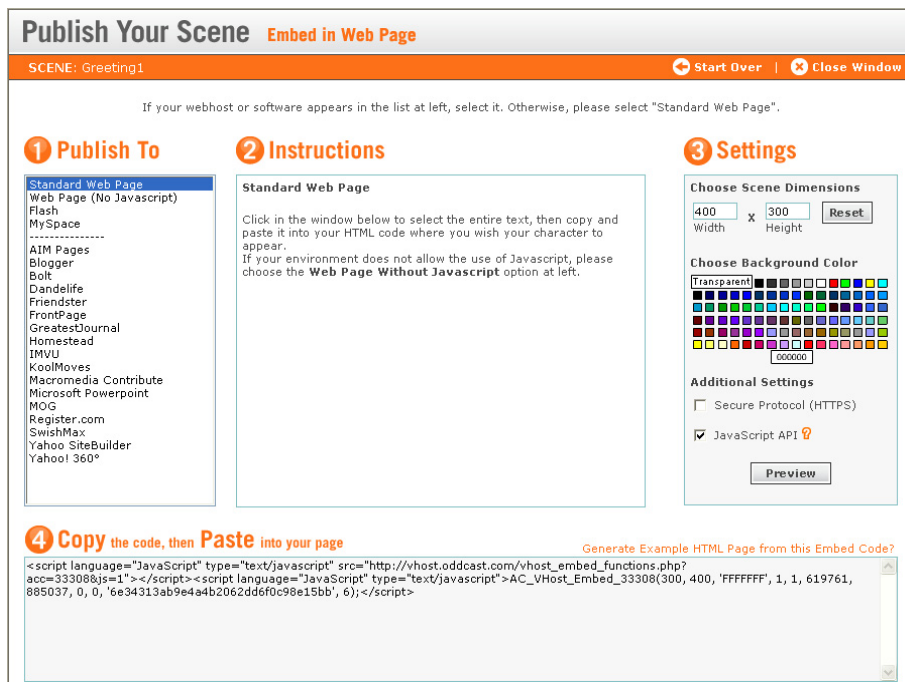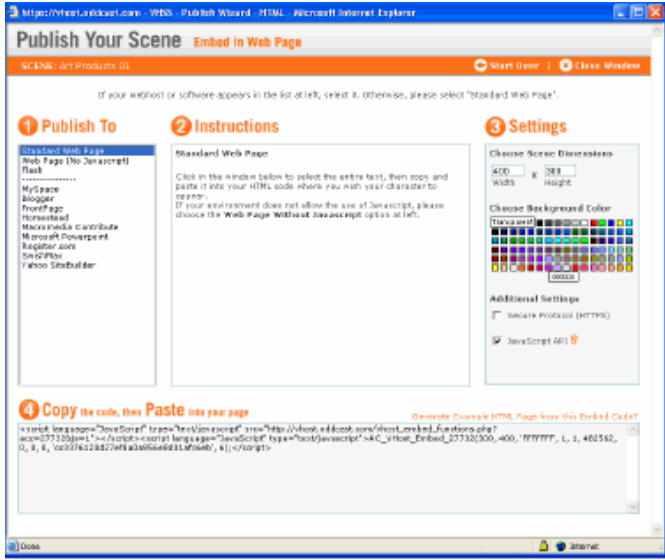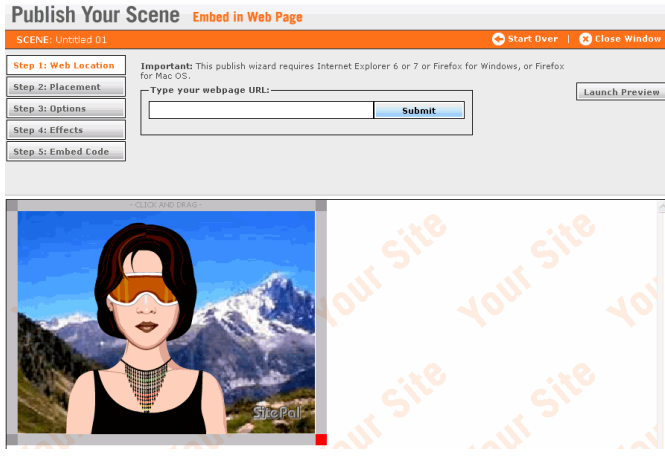
Figure 42 - Embed in Web page

3. Determine whether you want to publish your Show or Scene using in-page embedding or overlay embedding, as explained in the table below.

If you want to publish your Show or Scene using:	Then click the:	And go to:
In-page embedding	**Click Here to Embed** publish option in the **In-Page Embedding** section of the Publish Wizard (on the left). The in-page embedding page of the Publish Wizard appears. *Figure 43 - Publish Wizard (In-Page Embedding Page)*	[Embed a Show or Scene with in-page embedding](#)
Overlay embedding	Click the **Click Here to Embed** publish option in the **Overlay Embedding** section of the Publish Wizard (on the right). The first overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard appears. *Figure 44 - Publish Wizard (Overlay Embedding Page)*	[Embed a Show or Scene with overlay embedding](#)

Embed a Show or Scene with in-page embedding

Follow these steps if you want to create a sample Web page and embed your Show or Scene code in the page.

1. Create a new file in a text editor, such as Notepad.

2. Copy the following HTML code and paste it in the text file.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
<meta content="text/html; charset=ISO-8859-1" http-equiv="content-
type">
<title>Bigg &amp; Littal Airport</title>
</head>
<body>
<p>
<big>Bigg &amp; Littal Airport</big><br>
<span style="font-style: italic;">
For airplanes of all sizes</span>
<br>
Long and Winding Road<br>
Binary,  NY, 10101<br>
<br>
Bigg &amp; Littal has a runway to fit your plane. Please call
us at 555-1212 to learn more.<br>
<br>
</body>
</html>
```

3. Save the text file with an HTML extension.

    For example: myVHost_sample.html.

4. Open the sample HTML file.

    Your browser opens the sample page.
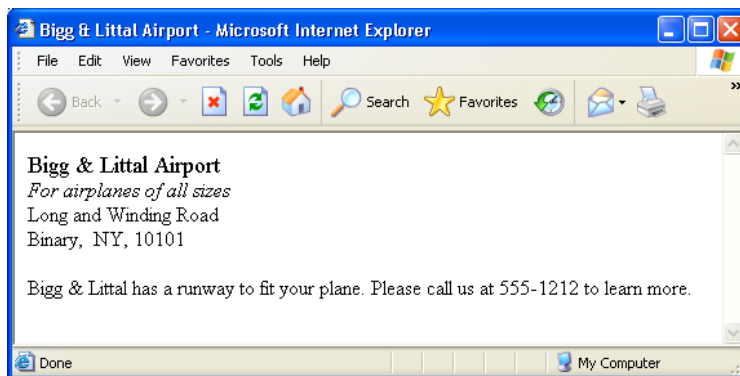
Figure 45 - Sample Web Page

Now you can embed the code for your VHost Show or Scene in this page.

5. In the Publish Wizard window, click in the panel that contains the code for your Show or Scene.

   All the code text is automatically selected for you. For this example, you do not need to change any of the properties under **Settings**. These settings are properties for the code that you embed in a Web page. To learn more about properties for embedded code, see Chapter 9, *Publishing and Embedding a Scene*.

6. Right-click the selected code and then click **Copy**.

7. In your text editor, paste the Show or Scene code starting on the line following this line of code:

```
<body>
```

   The HTML code for this page should appear as follows. The VHost Show or Scene code appears in blue.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
<meta content="text/html; charset=ISO-8859-1" http-equiv="content-
type">
<title>Bigg &amp; Littal Airport</title>
</head>
<body>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript"

src="http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_embed_functions.php?acc=27732&js
=1"></script><script language="JavaScript"

type="text/javascript">AC_VHost_Embed_27732(300, 400, 'FFFFFFF', 1,
1, 482566, 0, 0, 0,

'bb7ac132f1f3494275f85e2f222d9115', 6);</script>
<p>
<big>Bigg &amp; Littal Airport</big><br>
<span style="font-style: italic;">
For airplanes of all sizes</span>
<br>
Long and Winding Road<br>
Binary,  NY, 10101<br>
<br>
Bigg &amp; Littal has a runway to fit your plane. Please call
us at 555-1212 to learn more.<br>
<br>
</body>
</html>
```

8. Save the HTML text file.

9.   Open the sample HTML file.

     Your browser opens the sample HTML page and plays your embedded Scene.

Figure 46 - Scene embedded in sample Web page

Embed a Show or Scene with overlay embedding

Follow these steps if you want to publish a Show or Scene using **overlay embedding**. This option allows you to add a Show or Scene on top of your page as a floating item.

Overlay embedding consists of five steps. **Only Step 1 and Step 5 are required.** Each step is represented in the steps panel (shown below) which displays in the upper left portion of the overlay embedding Publish Wizard.
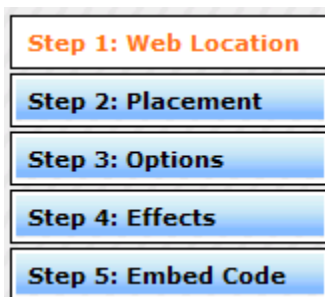
Figure 47 - First overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard

✓	In any of the following steps you can click the **Launch Preview** button to preview what your Scene will look like overlaid/embedded on the specified Web page.

1. **Step 1: Web Location.**

On the <u>first</u> overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard (shown below), **Step 1: Web Location** is illuminated in the steps panel (upper left).

Figure 48 - First overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard

Complete the following steps:

- In the **Type your webpage URL:** text box, enter the URL of the Web page where you want to overlay embed your Show or Scene.

✓	You can click and drag the Show or Scene by the handles (located on the corners of the Scene) to adjust the size of the Scene. You can adjust the size of your Show or Scene at any point, prior to embedding your code (described in the next step).

- Click the **Submit** button.

  The Show or Scene appears in the specified Web page.

- Click **Step 2: Placement** in the steps panel.

  The second overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard appears.

2. **Step 2: Placement.**

On the <u>second</u> overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard (shown below). **Step 2: Placement** is illuminated in the steps panel (upper left).

Figure 49 - Second overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard

Complete the following steps:

- Place your Show or Scene on the Web page. In the **Anchor My Scene to the:** section of the page, you can select **Window** or **Page Content**, explained in the table below.

If you select:	Then you can:
Window	Anchoring your Scene or Show to the Window fixes its location relative to the window frame regardless of the scrolling or panning of the content. You may specify how your Scene is to be anchored **horizontally** and **vertically** within your window. For example, a scene fixed left horizontally and top vertically will maintain the scene at the same location relative to the top left of the window.
Page Content	A Scene or Show anchored to the page content behaves as if fixed within your web page content. Scene will scroll with the page content, and remain in the same place relative to other content. For correct results please specify whether your web page content is aligned to the **left**, **right** or **centered** within the window. If you are not sure, you can find out by resizing the window, so that it is wider than the information within the window. As you do so, you will note that the contents of the window will either stick to the left, remain centered, or stick to the right.

- Click **Step 3: Options** in the steps panel.

  The third overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard appears.

3. **Step 3: Options.**

On the <u>third</u> overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard (shown below). **Step 3: Options** is illuminated in the steps panel (upper left).
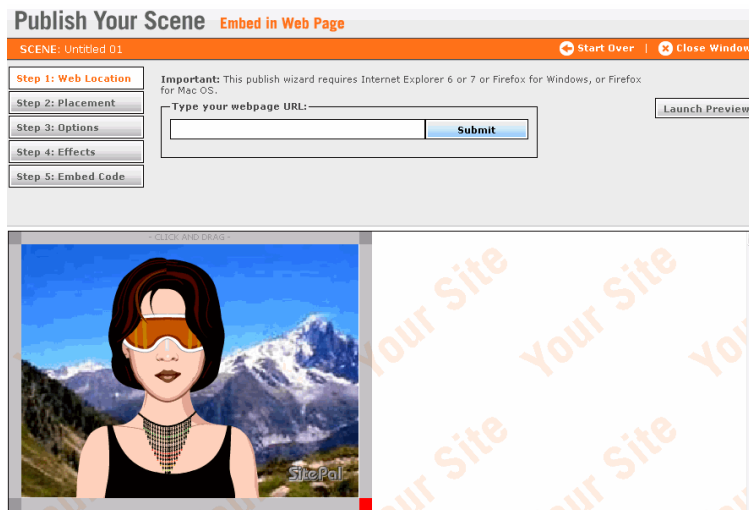

Figure 50 - Third overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard

Complete the following optional steps:

- In the **Add Options** section of the page, check:

  - **Add drag bar** to allow your viewer to re-size the Show or Scene.

  - **Add close button** to allow your viewer to close the Show or Scene any time.

  - **Add minimize button** to allow your viewer to minimize the Show or Scene .

    In **Step 4: Effects**, you can choose to minimize the Show or Scene down to thumbnail size as soon as it finishes playing (for more information, see **Step 4: Effects**.

    If you check this checkbox, the following minimize button options appear.
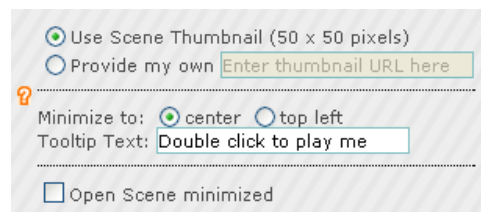
Figure 51 - Add Minimize Button Options

The following table explains your **Add minimize button** options:

Minimize button option	Description
Use Scene/Show Thumbnail (50 x 50 pixels)	If you select the default **Use Scene Thumbnail (50 x 50 pixels)**, the minimize button in your Show or Scene will display as a 50 x 50 pixel thumbnail of your Scene. Note: if you selected to embed an entire show the following silhouette will be use as the default Thumbnail.
Provide my own	If you select **Provide my own**, the minimize button in your Show or Scene will display as 50 x 50 pixel thumbnail image that you provide. You must enter the URL location of the thumbnail image in the **Enter thumbnail URL here** field.
Minimize to: center or Minimize to: top left	Select whether you want the minimize button to display in the **center** (default) or **top left** portion of your Show or Scene when minimizing.
Tooltip Text:	Enter any helpful "tooltip text" you want displayed for your user. The default text is **Double click to play me**. You can modify this text. You can also delete the text to display no "tooltip text" *(not recommended)*.
Open Scene/Show minimized	Clicking the "Load Scene Minimized" checkbox will load the Scene minimized when the page is first loaded. To view the Scene users will need to double click it.

- Click **Step 4: Effects** in the steps panel.

  The fourth overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard appears.

4. **Step 4: Effects.**

On the <u>fourth</u> overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard (shown below). **Step 4: Effects** is illuminated in the steps panel (upper left).
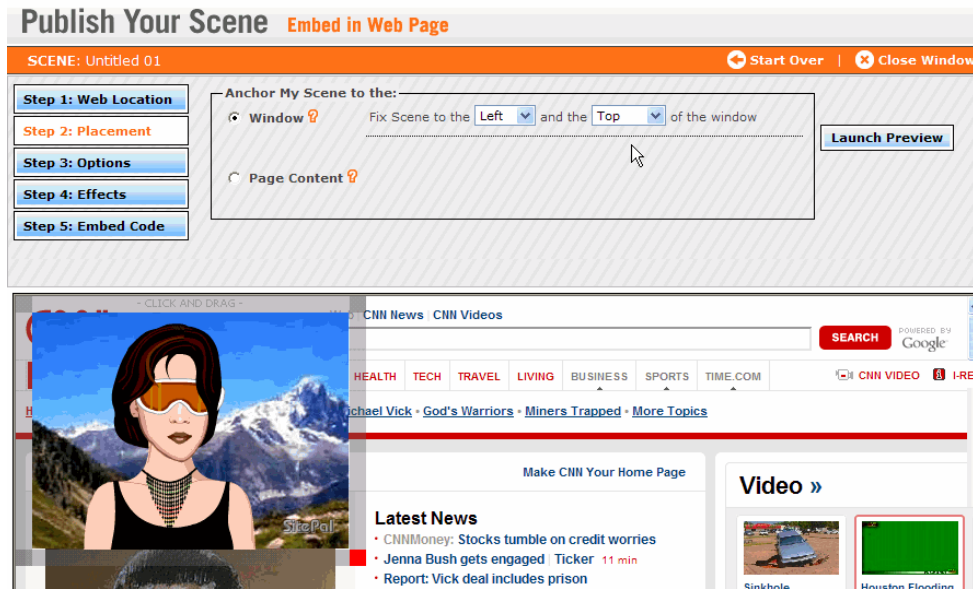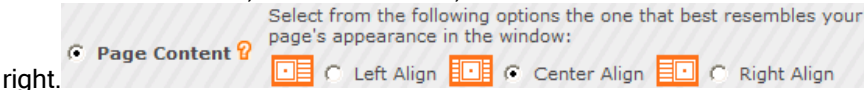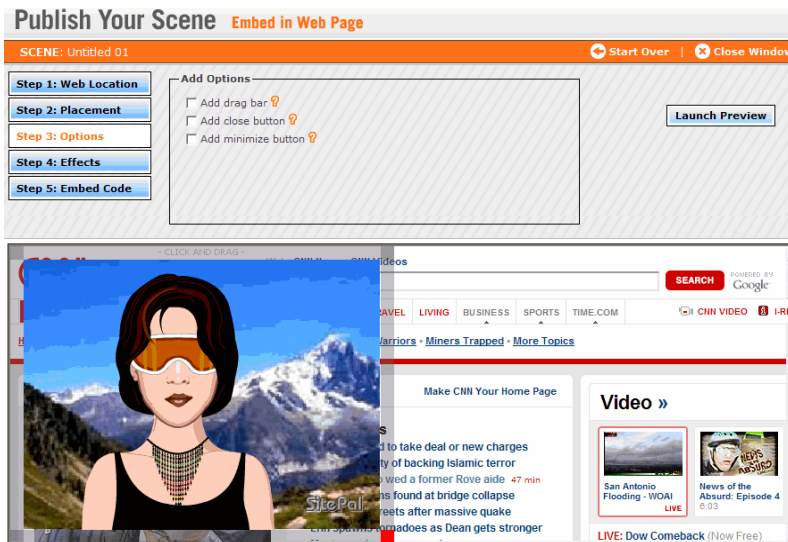

Figure 52 - Fourth overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard

The following table explains your Show or Scene effects options:

In the:	You can select:
When my page loads section	**Scene opens right away** (default) to launch your Show or Scene as soon as the Web page loads
	Scene remains closed (will be opened by API) to open the Show or Scene with VHost API technology; for more information, see the API Reference and Examples.

In the:	You can select:
When my Scene is done playing section (for Scenes only) **Note:** Due to the length of Shows, these options are grayed-out if you are publishing a Show using overlay embedding.	**Scene remains open** (default) to keep your Show or Scene open on the Web page, even after it finishes playing, until your user either exits the Web page, or clicks the close button (assuming you have added a close button, as explained in Step 3).
	Close Scene after [ ] Sec. to keep the Show or Scene open for a specified number of seconds after it Show or Scene playing. For example, if you enter 5 in this field, the Show or Scene remains open for 5 seconds after it finishes playing, then automatically closes.
	Close Scene right away to close the Show or Scene as soon as the scene audio has finishes playing on the Web page.
	Minimize Scene to thumbnail to minimize the Show or Scene down to thumbnail size as soon as the scene audio has finished playing. Your user can, optionally, maximize the Show or Scene at any time. You can customize the thumbnail image that displays in Step 3: Options.). **Note:** You can click and drag the Show or Scene by the handles (located on the corners of the Show or Scene) to adjust the size of the Show or Scene. You can adjust the size of your Show or Scene at any point, prior to embedding your code (described in the next step).

- Click **Step 5: Embed Code** in the steps panel.

  The fifth overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard appears.

5. **Step 5: Embed Code.**

On the <u>fifth</u> overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard (shown below). **Step 5: Embed Code** is illuminated in the steps panel (upper left).
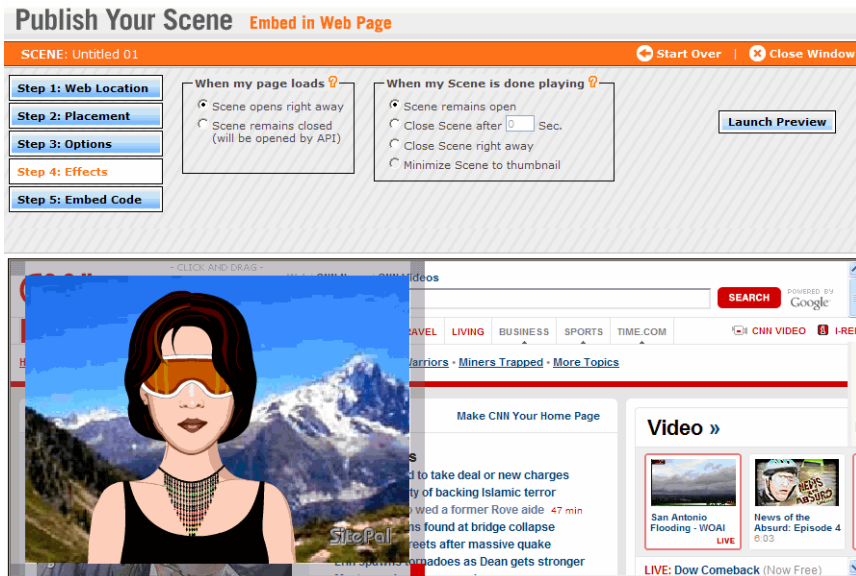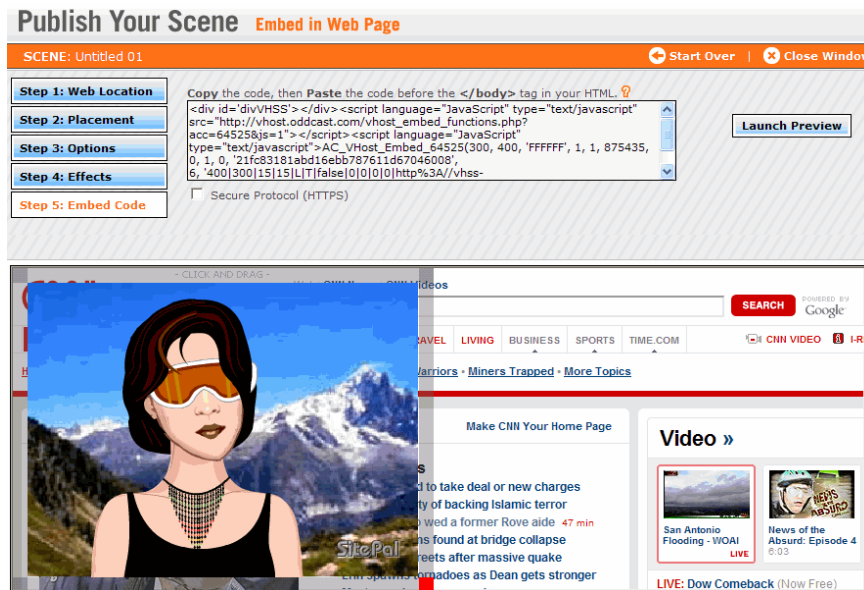

Figure 53 - Fifth overlay embedding page of the Publish Wizard

Complete the following steps:

- Copy the code that displays in the "Copy the code…" text box into the source HTML on your Web page, right after the **<body>** tag.

- Open your HTML file.

  Your browser opens your HTML file and plays your embedded/overlaid Show or Scene.

Chapter 3

Managing your Studio Account

When you log in to your Studio account, you can view, change, or edit any aspect of your Studio account.

To go to your Account Info page:

- Click **Account Info** in the main menu bar at the top of the page.

  Your Account Info page loads.

Figure 54 - Account Info page

✓	If you have other Oddcast accounts, you can view the account information for another account on the Account Info page. On the **Current Account** drop-down menu, select another account.
	If you do not have additional Oddcast accounts, the Current Account drop-down menu does not appear.

3.1   About account and streams information

On your Account Info page the **General Information** panel displays the name and ID of your Studio account, the status of the account and its date of expiration. The status of the account is Active unless the account expires.

The **Streams** panel shows the current inventory of audio streams for your account and the average daily usage for the past week.. Audio streams are audio messages delivered over the Internet by the Oddcast server. Audio streams are counted each time a stream plays in a Scene.

3.2   About optional features

The **Optional Account Features** panel shows the status of features that are optional for your Studio account:

Secure Playback	Select the check box to turn on Secure Playback. When Secure Playback is turned on, all playbacks from your account work only when the VHost Scene or Show is embedded in a Web page that is hosted within a domain which you authorize.
Text-to-Speech	Indicates the status of the Text-to-Speech feature on your Studio account. When Text-to-Speech is activated, you can convert typed text to audio that your Character speaks.
Artificial Intelligence	Indicates the status of the Artificial Intelligence feature on your Studio account. When Artificial Intelligence is activated, you can implement the AI Knowledge Base and have your VHost Character respond to user questions with context-sensitive, spoken answers. If the Artificial Intelligence feature is turned OFF and you want to use AI Knowledge Base for your VHost Scenes, contact Oddcast Sales at sales@oddcast.com or call 877-300-6030 for more information.
Audio Update By Phone	Indicates if the status of the Update By Phone feature on your Studio account. When Update By Phone is activated, you can record audio for your Studio account by using a telephone.
Update by Phone PIN	The PIN number that you use to access the Update By Phone service.
Export	Indicates the status of the Export feature on your Studio account. When activated, you can use the Export option in the Publish Wizard to save the embed code for a Scene or Show. If the Export feature is turned OFF and you want to save your Scene code, contact Oddcast Sales at sales@oddcast.com or call 877-300-6030 for more information.
Minutes	Indicates the amount of export time remaining in your Studio account. If the Export feature is available, your Studio account includes a set amount of export time that you can use to archive the embed code for your VHost Scenes.

3.3　Update your contact information

1. On your **Account Info** page, under **Contact Information**, click **Edit Contact Info**.

   The Contact Information appears.

Figure 55 - Contact Information window

2. Change your personal and company contact information or your password.
3. Click **Update**.

3.4   Change your Studio password

1. On your **Account Info** page, under **Contact Information**, click **Edit Contact Info**.

    The Contact Information appears.

2. In the **Old Password** box, type your current password.

3. In the **New Password** box, type a new password.

4. In the **New Password Verification** box, type your new password again.

5. Click **Update**.

3.5   Prevent unauthorized playback

The Secure Playback feature prevents unauthorized use of your VHost Scenes on Web sites other than your own. When you activate Secure Playback option, the domain requesting the Scene is verified before the Scene is played.

To activate Secure Playback:

1. Click **Account Info** on the main menu bar.

2. Scroll down to the **Licensed Domains** panel, and then click the first **Define Domain** link.

    A dialog box appears.

3. Enter the name of the domain in which your VHost Scenes are embedded, and then click **OK**.

    For example: www.my_domain.com. If your Scenes are embedded in Web pages in another domain, click the other **Define Domain** link and enter that name of the additional domain.
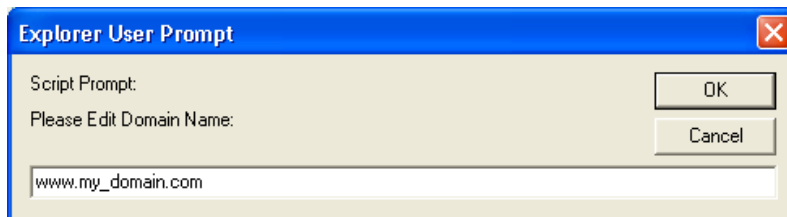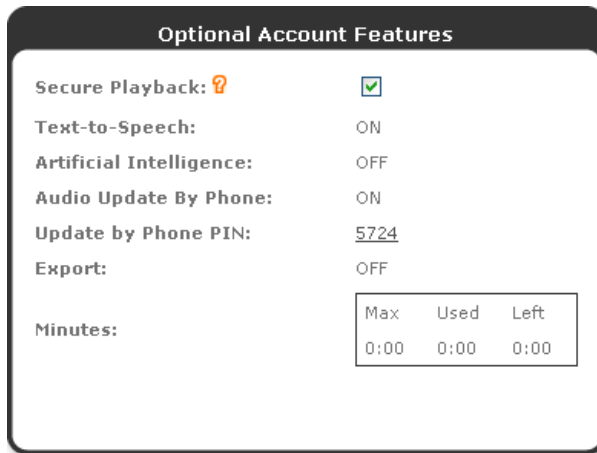
Figure 56 - Define Domain Name

✓	Note that you must declare sub-domains separately. For example, if news.my_domain.com is a sub-domain of www.my_domain.com, you must declare news.my_domain.com in addition to www.my_domain.com.

4.   In the **Account Settings** panel, select the **Secure Playback** check box.

Figure 57 - Optional Account Features

✓	Secure Playback is not compatible with the **Publish to eBay** and the **Web Page (No JavaScript)** publish option.

3.6   View a report of account activities

Your account includes a reporting feature that generates detailed statistics about your SitePal Scenes. The activities that you can track include:

- the number of times your embedded or published Shows and Scenes are viewed

- the number of audio streams that have played

- information about the various audio messages and background images that you have uploaded

To view a report of activities on your Vhost account:

1.   Click **Reports** on the main menu bar.

2.   From the **Report** drop-down menu, select the report type that you want to view.

3. From the **Period** drop-down menu, select the time frame for the report.

   Studio generates your report and displays the results. The time frames that are available vary by report type.
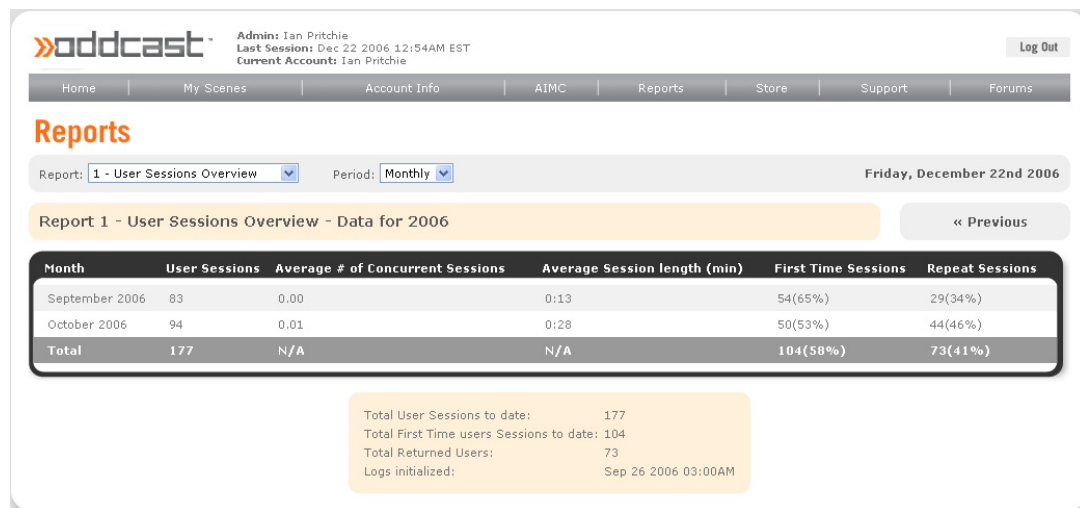
Figure 58- Account Reports page

You can view the following report types for your Oddcast account:

Report type	Description
1. User Sessions Overview	• Number of user sessions for period and total to date • Average number of concurrent sessions • Average session length • Number of first-time sessions and total to date • Number of repeat sessions and total returning users
2. Audio Usage - Overview	• Number of user sessions • Audio streams played for period and to date
3. Detailed Audio Usage	• Number of times each audio has played • Total for all audio messages played • Names of specific audio files that have were played
4. Account Activity Events List	• A list of account activities (the list may be empty)

5. All About Assets	• Number of audio files uploaded for period and to date • Average length of audio files • Amount of audio data uploaded for period and to date • Number of background images uploaded for period and to date • Amount of background data uploaded for period and to date

Chapter 4

Working with Shows

A VHost Show is a collection of Scenes. A VHost Scene is the representation of a speaking VHost Character in front of a background with a particular skin.

Use the Shows that you create with Avatar Studio to:

- Deliver a prepared presentation by playing Scenes in sequence and timing the transition between Scenes.

- Present a scripted dialogue between two Characters by playing Scenes in which a Character addresses or acknowledges the Character in the next Scene.

- Play Scenes from a Show based on triggered events or interaction with the user.

4.1   Use the Shows page

On the Shows page you can preview, edit, rename and delete your Shows. The Shows page also provides you with the following information about your Shows:

- the number of Scenes in a Show

- the total length of the Show

- the user who created the Show

- the user who last modified the Show

Figure 59 - The Shows page

The following describes how you can search for Shows and reorder the list of Shows:

To	Do this
Search for a Show	Type a name or portion of the name in the search text box and click **Search**.
Filter the list of Shows	From the **Filter by Initial** drop-down menu, select a letter to use as a filter.
List all of your Shows	Click **Show All**.
Reorder the list of Shows	Click the **Index**, **Show Name**, **Created**, or **Modified** column titles.

The following describes the actions that you can perform on the Shows page:

To	Do this
Preview a Show	Under the **Preview** column for the Show, click **Preview** 🔍.
Edit a Show	Under the **Edit** column for the Show, click **Edit** ✏️.
Rename a Show	Under the **Show Name** column, type a new name In the text box for the Show, and then click **Save All Changes**.
Add a new Show	Click **Add New Show**.
Delete a Show	Under the **Delete** column for the Show, click **Delete** ❌.

4.2   Edit a Show

The Edit Show page consists of a section to edit the show and one for editing Scenes in the Show. The Edit Show section displays the total length of the Show, which is the combined length of all the Scenes in the Show.
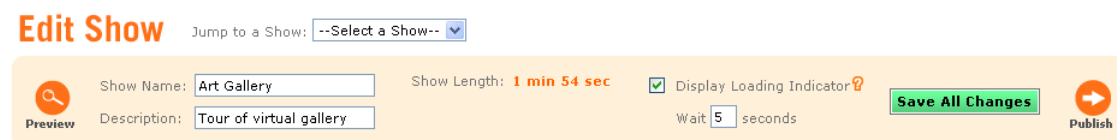
Figure 60 - Edit Show panel

The following describes the actions that you can perform on the Edit Shows page:

To	Do this
Jump to another Show	From the **Jump to another Show** drop-down menu, select another Show.
Preview a Show	Under the **Preview** column for the Show, click **Preview** .
Rename a Show	In the **Show Name** text box for the Show, edit the name of the Show, and then click **Save All Changes**.
Add or edit a Show description	In the **Description** text box, type a description, and then click **Save All Changes**.
Display the loading indicator	Select the **Display Loading Indicator** check box. See below for more information about the Loading Indicator.
Publish a Show	Click **Publish** . To learn about publishing and embedding a Show, see Chapter 9, Publishing Shows and Scenes.

About the Loading Indicator

During playback of a Show, transitions between Scenes can take anywhere from a fraction of a second, to several seconds or more, depending on the network connection. You can display a load indicator between Scenes and specify the number of seconds after loading starts before the indicator appears. By delaying the display of the load indicator, users who have a fast connection are not distracted by a brief appearance of the load indicator.

Controlling Shows with the VHost API

You can use the Navigation Flow functions of the VHost API to control Shows and Scenes. To learn more about these functions, see the VHost API Reference.

4.3   Work with Scenes

Use the Scenes section on the Edit Show page to manage and edit the Scenes in a Show.
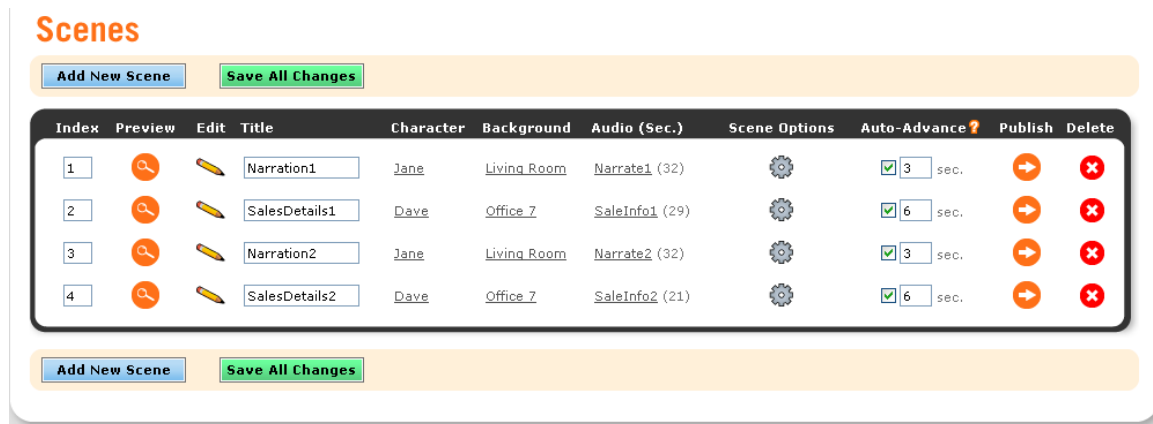
Figure 61 - Scenes panel

The following describes the actions that you can perform on a Scene:

To	Do this
Add a new Scene	Click **Add New Scene**, and then type a new name in the text box for the Scene
Reorder a Scene	Under the **Index** column, type a number in the text box for the Scene that you want reorder. **Note:** When you reorder your Scenes, make sure that you use all the indexes values for the Scenes in your Show without repetition.
Preview a Scene	Under the **Preview** column for the Scene, click **Preview** 🔍.
Select and edit the Player skin	Under the **Edit** column for the Scene, click **Edit** ✏️. To learn about editing the Player skin, see Chapter 8, Working with the Player Skin.
Rename a Scene	Under the **Title** column, type a new name in the text box for the Scene, and then click **Save All Changes**.
Select a Character	Under the **Character** column for the Scene, click the Character name. If a Character isn't selected for the Scene, the name is **none**. For more information, see Chapter 5, Working with Characters.
Select a Background	Under the **Background** column for the Scene, click the background name. If a background is not selected for the Scene, the name is **none**. For more information, see Chapter 6, Working with Backgrounds.
Select and upload audio	Under the **Audio** column for the Scene, click the audio name. If an audio message is not selected for the Scene, the name is **none**. For more information, see Chapter 7, Working with Audio.
Set options for a Scene	Under the **Scene Options** column for the Scene, click **Scene Options** ⚙️.
Set Auto-Advance for a Scene	Under the **Auto-Advance** column for the Scene, select the check box and enter the number of seconds of delay before playing the next Scene.
Publish a Scene	Under the **Publish** column for the Scene, click **Publish** ➡️. To learn about publishing and embedding a Scene, see Chapter 9, Publishing Shows and Scenes.

Delete a Scene	Under the **Delete** column for the Scene, click **Delete** ⊗ .

4.4   Set Auto-Advance for a Scene

Turning on Auto Advance for a Scene specifies that the Show automatically proceed from Scene to Scene in the Show. You can also specify a delay in seconds before the next Scene starts to play. A delay value set to zero specifies that the Scene transition happens immediately.

Auto-Advance ?

☑ 3 sec.
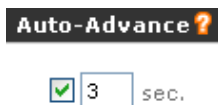
If you turn Auto Advance off for a Scene, the next Scene does not start automatically when playback is complete. Turn Auto Advance off for a Scene if you expect user feedback before proceeding or if you embed an individual Scene that is not part of a Show.

4.5   Set Scene Options

Use the settings in the Scene Options dialog box to control Scene playback, set link attributes, and set Follow Cursor behavior.
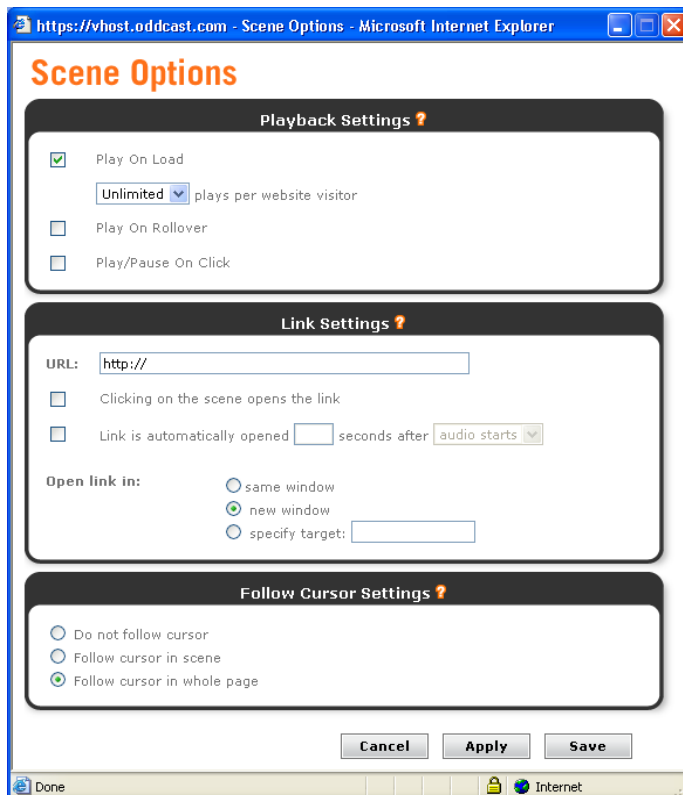
Figure 62 Scene Options

Set playback options

You can set the following playback options for a Scene:

Playback setting	Description
Play On Load	With the **Play On Load** check box selected, the audio for your Scene is played automatically as soon as the Scene loads.
	To prevent automatic playback of the audio in your Scene, clear **Play On Load** check box the. The viewer can still click the **Play** button to play the Scene, or you can program the Scene to play by using the VHost API, for example, in response to a viewer's actions.
	You can limit the number of times the Scene is played back to the same user within a specified period: per session, day, week or month. You can also economize your use of streams by limiting playback.
	In the first drop-down menu, set a playback limit. Select a limit of 1to 5 playbacks, or select **Unlimited** to play the Scene each time the page loads.
	☑ Play On Load Limit to 3 ⌄ plays per website visitor per Session ⌄
	In the second drop-down menu, specify the period of time for the playback limit. A session is a distinct visit to the Web page hosting the Scene.
Play On Rollover	Play the Scene when a user moves the mouse cursor over the Scene. The Scene plays only once on rollover for each user visit.
Play/Pause On Click	Play or pause the Scene when the user clicks within the Scene.

You can set the following link options for a Scene:

Link setting	Description
URL	Lets you set Internet address, of the target Web page or Web resource for the link. You can also use the URL setting to call a JavaScript function. For example: http://www.oddcast.com
Clicking on the Scene opens the link	Open the linked Web page when a user clicks anywhere in the Scene.

Link setting	Description
Link is automatically opened	Open the linked Web page automatically after the audio message starts or stops. In the first text box, type the elapsed time in seconds. In the drop-down menu, select **audio starts** or **audio stops**. For example, to set the link to open 6 seconds after the start of the scene: In the **Link is automatically opened** text box, type **6**, and then select **audio starts** from the drop-down menu.
Open Link in	Open the linked Web page in: • the same frame of the current browser window • a new browser window • a named frameset

Set Follow Cursor options

You can set the following Follow Cursor options for a Scene:

Follow Cursor setting	Description
Do not follow cursor	The Character does not follow mouse cursor.
Follow cursor in Scene	The Character follows the mouse cursor only when the cursor is within the frame of the VHost Player.
Follow cursor in whole page	The Character follows the mouse cursor anywhere in the host HTML page. If you select this option, enable the JavaScript API property for your Scene when you publish it. **Note:** For this feature to work, the Web page or environment where you embed your Scene must allow JavaScript code.

4.6 About audio playback limits

Audio Streams are audio messages delivered over the Internet by the Oddcast server. Audio Streams are counted each time one plays in a Scene. For example, if you place a single Scene that plays one audio message on a Web page with an average of 1,000 page views a day, expect to use an average of 1,000 Audio Streams a day.

Conserving your available Audio Streams is important since there are a pre-defined number of Audio Streams allotted for your VHost account.

In the Scene Options window you can limit the number of times an audio message is played and repeated to a user within a specified period of time.
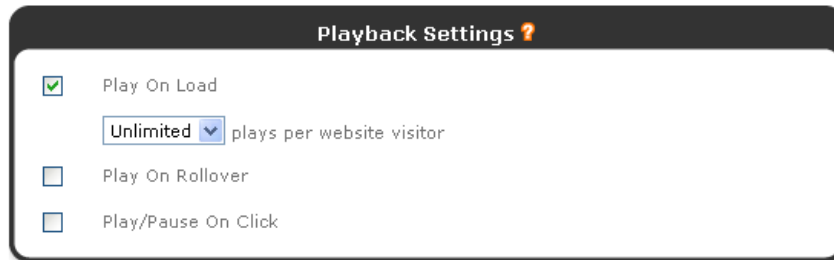
Figure 63 - Playback Settings

The number of Audio Streams that are available in your account is shown on your Account Info page in the **Shows** panel.

The playback limit is implemented independently for each page in which the Scene is embedded. If a Scene is embedded in more than one page, there is an individual limit count for each one of the pages, and it is the limit that is set at the time the Scene is published.

Chapter 5

Working with Characters

Each Show that you create includes a library of Characters that you can select for your Scenes. When you create and Save a Character for a Show, the Character is available to all the Scenes in that Show.

You can create Characters of either gender that accurately represent a range of ages and ethnicities by simply adjusting a Character's skin color, hair color, hair style, and eye color. This is useful if you want a VHost Scene on your Web site to appeal to a wide demographic and cultural audience.

> ✓ It is important to understand the difference between a VHost Model and a VHost Character: Models are pre-defined and serve as the basis for the Characters that you create. Characters are Models that you have customized and saved.

5.1   Manage Characters for a Scene and a Show

You create, edit, select, and delete Characters in the Character Selection window.

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

    The **Show** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** ✏️ .

    The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. Under the **Character** column for a Scene, click the Character name.

    The **Character Select** window appears. If a Character isn't selected for the Scene, the name is **none**.
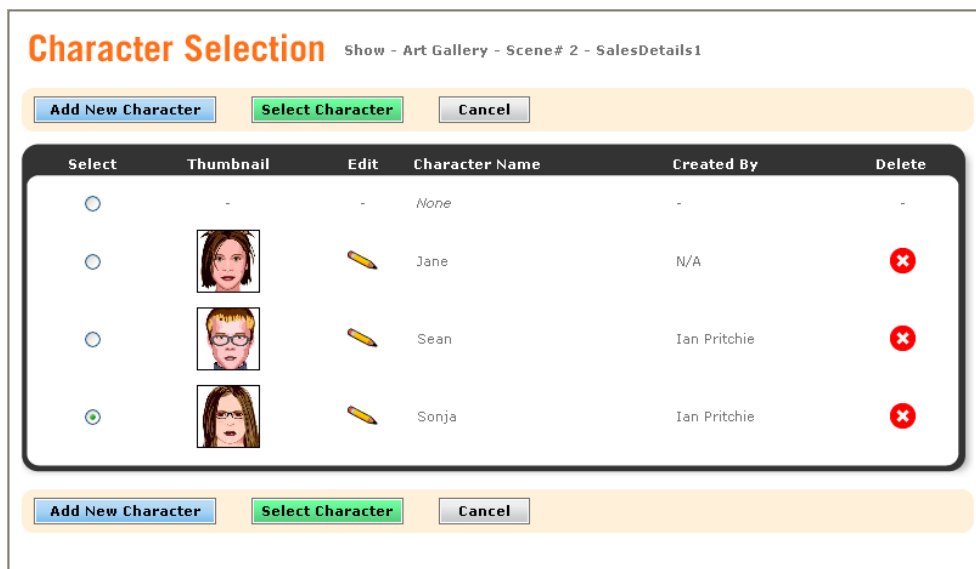
Figure 64 - Character Selection window

To select a VHost Character:

1. Under the **Select** column for a Character, click the option.

2. Click **Select Character**.

    The **Character Selection** window closes and your list of Scenes is updated with the Character that you selected.

To create a new Character:

*   Click **Add New Character**.

    A new Character is added to your list of Characters.

To edit a Character:

*   Under the **Edit** column for a Character, click **Edit** .

    The The **Model Gallery** window appears.

To delete a Character:

1. Under the **Delete** column for a Character, click **Delete** .

2. Click **OK** to confirm the deletion.

    The Characters is removed from the **Character Selection** window.

5.2   Edit a Character

You edit a Character and define its features and attributes in the **Model Gallery** window.
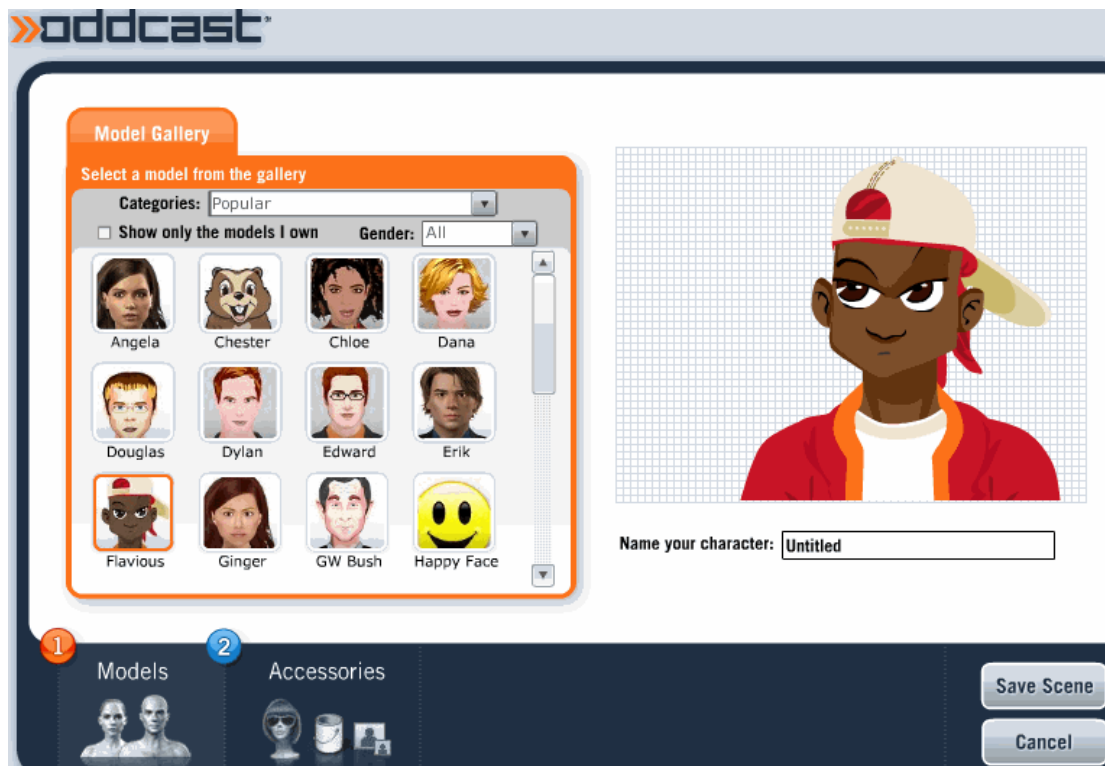
Figure 65 – Model Gallery window

To name a Character:

Enter your Character's name in the **Name your character:** field (below the Preview Pane).

Figure 66 – Preview Pane and Name your character: field

To save a Character:

1. Click **Save Scene**.

The **Character Selection** window appears with your new Character.
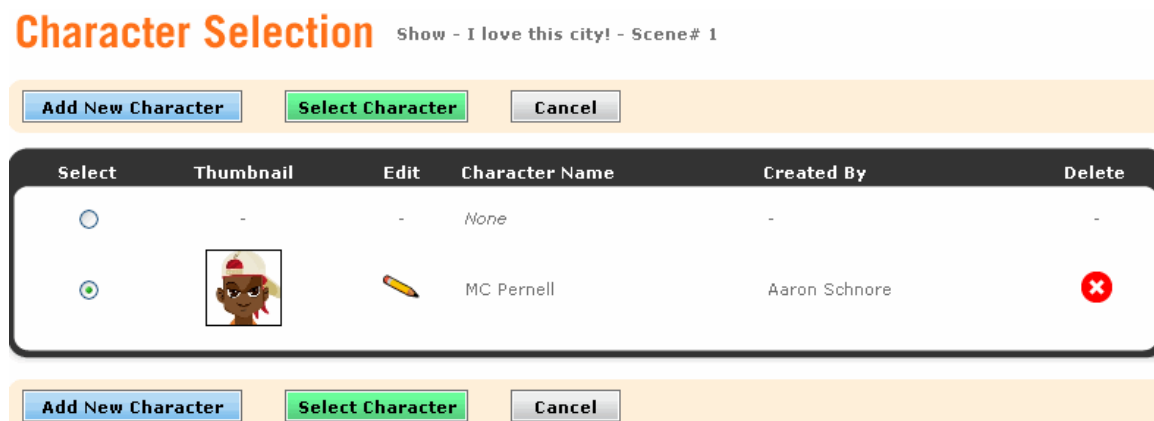
Figure 67 - Character Selection window

2. Click **Select Character**.

The **Character Selection** window closes and your list of Scenes (in the **Scenes** section of the **Edit Show** page) is updated with the name of the character you selected for the scene.
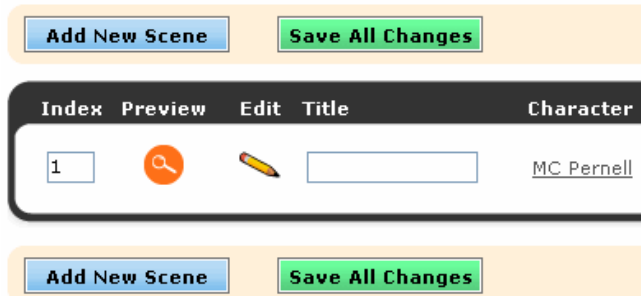
Figure 68 – Edit Show page (Scenes section)

5.3   Select a Model

In the **Model Gallery** window, you can view thumbnails of available Models, and use the drop-downs to filter Models by **Categories** and **Gender**.

> 📖 You can check **the Show only the Models I own** checkbox to display only thumbnails of Models you own.

1. Click the thumbnail image of the Model that you want to use for your Character.
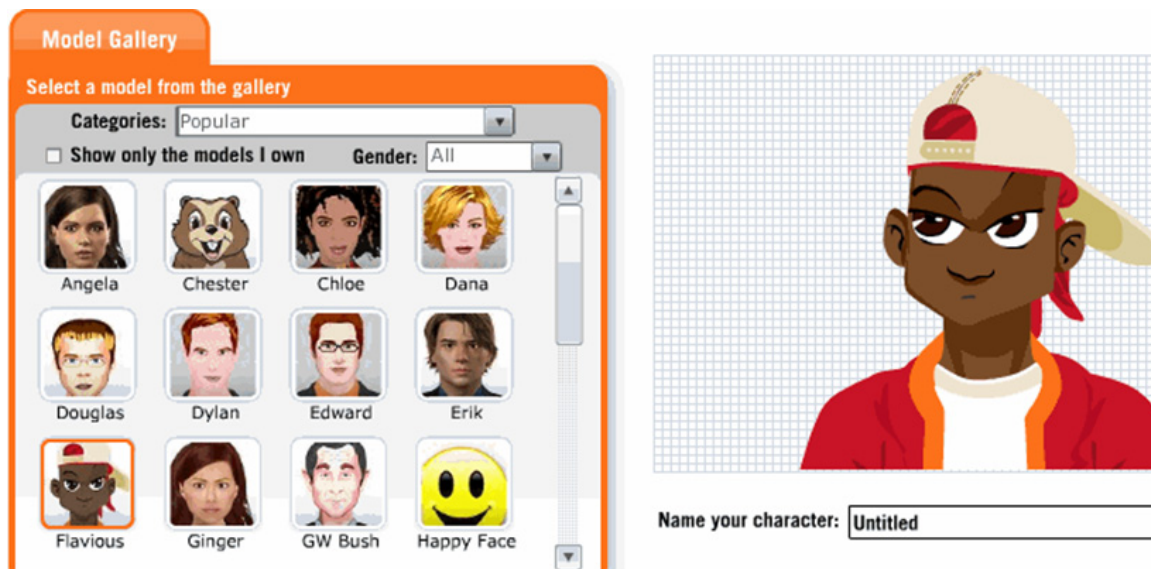
Figure 69 - Model Gallery window (thumbnails and Preview Panel)

The Model you select appears dynamically in the Preview Panel.

5.4 Accessorize a Model

You can **accessorize** your Models by adjusting their **style** (clothing, hats, jewelry, hair, etc.), their **color** (skin color, eye color, etc.), and their **size** (head size, shoulder width, etc.).

1. At the bottom of the **Model Gallery** window, click the **Accessories** icon.
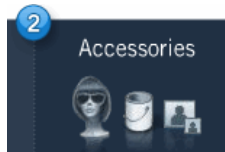
*Figure 70 - **Accessories** icon*

The **Accessories** page of the **Model Gallery** window appears. Three accessories tabs are available: **Style**, **Color**, and **Sizing**. The **Style** tab is selected by default.
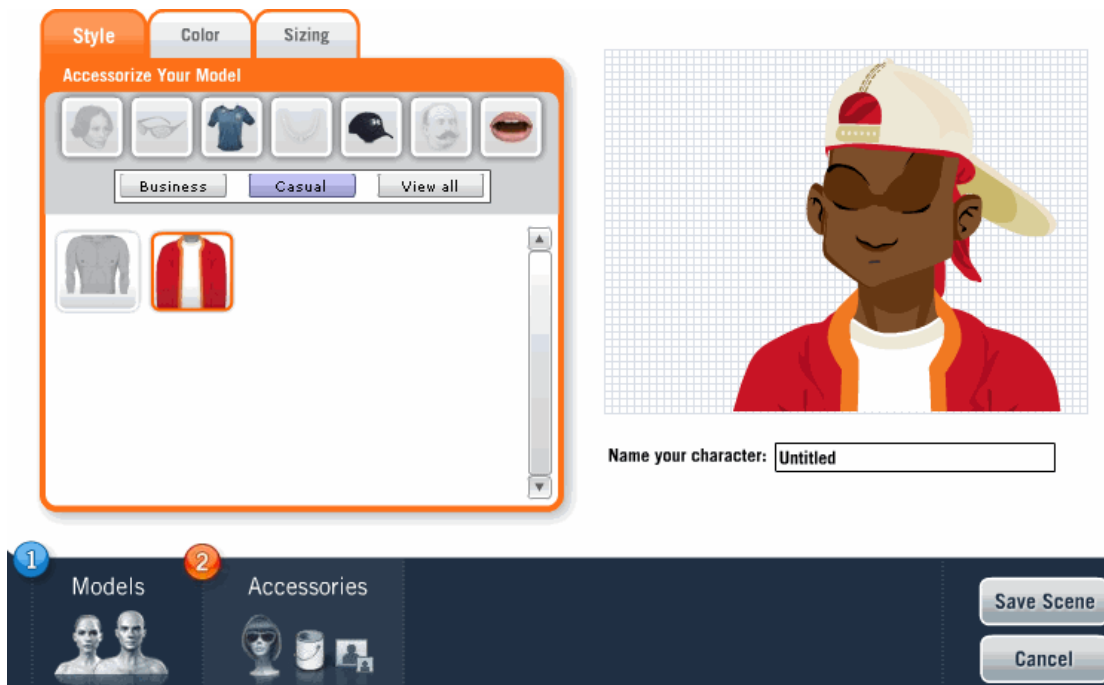
Figure 71 - Accessories page of the Model Gallery window (Style tab selected)

2. **Accessorize your Character's style.**

   o   If you click the **Style** tab on the **Accessories** page you can customize a Model's hair, sunglasses, clothing, jewelry, hat, facial hair, and facial expressions.

Figure 72 - Accessories (style)

   o   Click a **style attribute icon** to customize a *specific* style accessory; for example, hat style.

Figure 73 - Style attribute icons

You can customize the following **style accessories** for your Character:

- Hair
- Glasses
- Costume
- Necklaces
- Hat
- Facial hair
- Mouth.

If applicable, you can select a style attribute **sub-category**. For example, if you click the glasses style attribute icon for a given Model, you can scroll through the sub-categories of glasses (for example, **View All**, **All Purpose**, **Color Lens**, etc.).
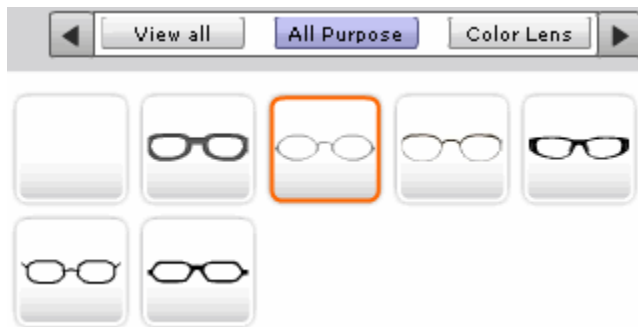
Figure 74 - Available Glasses (All Purpose sub-category)

Your Character's style changes dynamically in the Preview Panel as you make adjustments.

> ✓ **Note:** If a particular style attribute is not available for a Model, then the style attribute icon is grayed-out. For example, since female Models do not have a facial hair, the facial hair style attribute icon is grayed-out for all female Models.

3. **Accessorize your Character's color.**

o   If you click the **Color** tab on the **Accessories** page, you can customize your Model's skin, eye, and mouth colors.

Figure 75 - Accessories page of the Model Gallery window (Color tab selected)

o   Click a **color attribute icon** to customize the color and hue of a *specific* color attribute on your Character; for example, hair color.

You can customize the following **color attributes** for your Character:

- Hair
- Skin
- Eyes.

Roll your mouse over the color palette in the Color adjustment tool to fine-tune the hair, skin, eyes, or mouth color to the shade you want.

Use the lever on the Hue adjustment tool to fine-tune the hue of the hair, skin, eye, or mouth color.
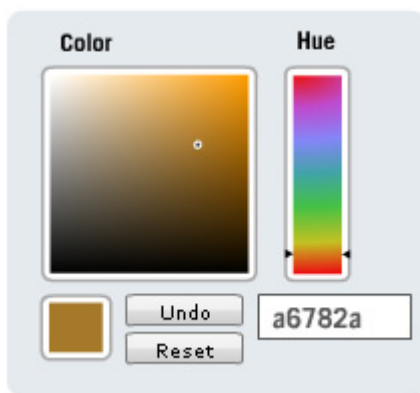
Figure 76 - Color and hue adjustment tools

You can click the **Undo** button to undo any color or hue changes you inadvertently made. Or, you can click the **Reset** button to reset the color and hue back to the last-saved settings.

Your Character's colors change dynamically in the Preview Panel as you make adjustments.

4. **Accessorize your Character's physical attributes.**

   o   If you click the **Attributes** tab on the **Accessories** page, you can customize your Character's physical attributes, including the appearance of your Character's mouth, nose, shoulders, as well as your Character's head height/width.
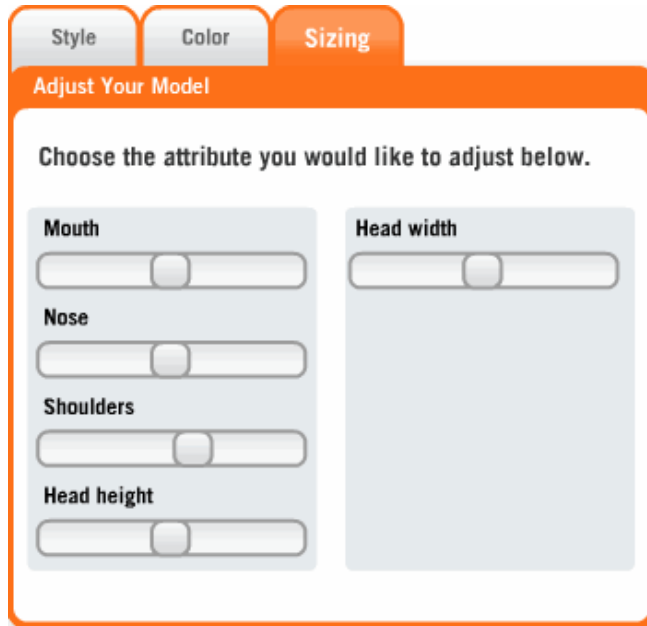
Figure 77 - Accessories page of the Model Gallery window (Attributes tab selected)

Use a **physical attribute lever** to customize the color of a specific physical attribute on your Character; for example, head height.

*Figure 78 - Physical attribute lever (**Head Height**)*

You can customize the following **color attributes** for your Character:

- Mouth
- Nose
- Shoulders
- Head height
- Head width.

Your Character's physical attributes change dynamically in the Preview Panel as you make adjustments.

5.5   About VHost Custom Models

A VHost Custom Model is a talking, animated character that Oddcast designs to your exact specifications. For example, you can create a VHost Model that looks exactly like you, or you can create a VHost Model from your company logo or mascot.

Here are some of the benefits of using Custom Models in your VHost scenes:

- Provide your customers with a unique and truly memorable online experience.

- Increase the profile of your brand and make it stand out in a crowd.

- Maximize the value and flexibility of your marketing efforts by using a VHost character customized just for you and your business.

The following are examples of the variety of VHost Custom Models that you can create:

Illustrated	Stylized	Wireframe
Anime	Animal	Photorealistic

To create a Custom Model, email Oddcast a photograph that you want to convert to a VHost Character. For more information about ordering a Custom Model, visit the VHost Web site, contact sales@oddcast.com, or call 877-300-6030.

> ✓   You own any Custom Models that you purchase. Custom Models are not re-sold and are not used by Oddcast for any other Oddcast product.

Chapter 6

Working with Backgrounds

A background is a graphic image that you incorporate in a VHost Scene. Backgrounds give your VHost Scenes context and atmosphere. For example, if you add a VHost Scene to a real estate Web site, you could use a picture of a house for sale as a background. Using an appropriate background gives your Web site a polished, professional look and reinforces the relevancy of your VHost Scene.

Studio includes a wide variety of pre-defined backgrounds. These public backgrounds are organized into diverse categories to help you find the right image for your purpose. The backgrounds that you upload are included in the Private category of your backgrounds.

You can view a list of your backgrounds in the **Background Management** page, Or use the **Add New Background** window to:

- upload and image or video background

- create a background slideshow (i.e., backgrounds morph and change behind your Character as he/she speaks)

- create a text background.

!	The backgrounds included with your Avatar Studio account are yours to use, with perpetual rights, anywhere online. However, you must have the legal rights to use any private background images that you upload.

6.1   Select a background for a Scene

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

   The **Show** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** .

   The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. In the **Scenes** panel, under the **Background** column for a Scene, click the background name.

    The **Background Selection** window appears. If a background isn't selected for the Scene, the name is **none**.

Figure 79 - Background Selection window

You can perform the following actions in the **Background Selection** window:

To	Do this
Select a background for a Scene	Under the **Select** column for a background, click the option button, and then click **Select Background**.
Set no background for a Scene	Under the **Select** column for the **None** background, click the option, and then click **Select Background**. **Note:** When a Scene has no background, the preview of the Scene is shaded in light gray. If a Scene has no background, you can set the background to a solid color when you embed your Scene or you can set it to transparent in the Publish Wizard.
Upload a background image	Click **Add New Background**. Background images that you upload are included in the Private category of backgrounds. See below for more information about uploading an image file to use as a background.
Preview a background	Under the **Preview** column for the background, click **Preview** .
Search for a background	In the **Search** text box, type the name of a background that you want to find, and then click **Search**.
Filter the list of backgrounds by category	From the **Filter by Category** drop-down menu, select a category of backgrounds to list.

To	Do this
Filter the list of backgrounds by online status	From the **Filter by Status** drop-down menu, select **Online** or **Offline**. **Note:** Only backgrounds in the Private category can be set to offline.
Clear the **Search** text and reset the **Category** to **All**	Click **Reset**.
Close the **Background Selection** window without changing the background selection	Click **Cancel**.

6.2 Upload an image or video background

Avatar Studio allows you to upload your own **image** or **video** background.

1. Do one of the following:

   - On the **Edit Show** page, under the **Background** column for your Scene, click **none**.

   - Click the **Backgrounds** link on the top navigation bar.

The **Background Management** window appears.

Figure 80 – Background Management window

2. Click **Add New Background**.

    The **Add New Background** window appears.
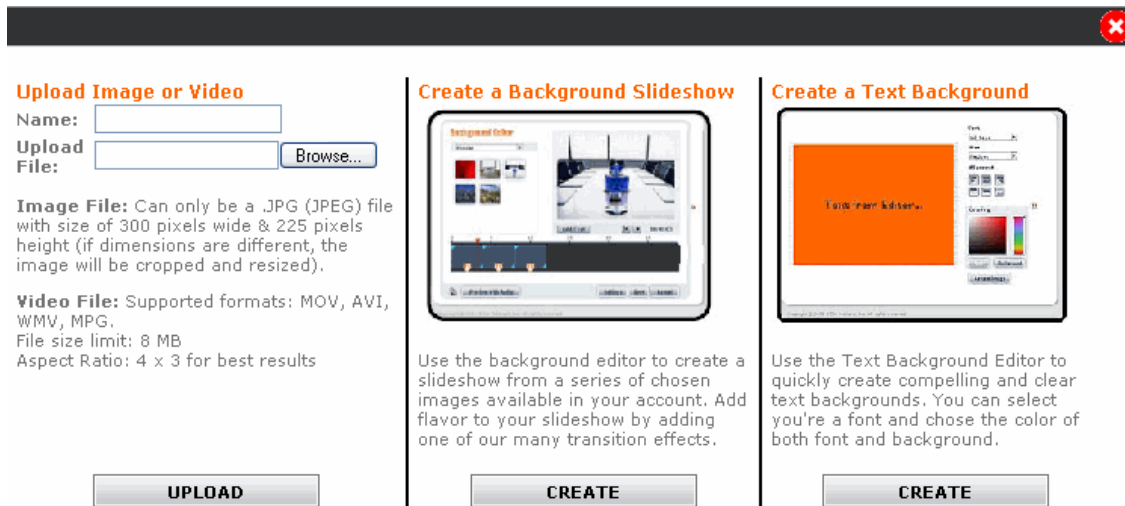
Figure 81 – Add New Background window

3. Do the following:

    - Locate the **Upload Image or Video** portion of the **Add New Background** window.

    - Enter the name of your image or video background in the **Name:** field.

    - Click **Browse** and locate the image file that you want to upload.

    An **image** background file must be a .JPG (JPEG) file with size of 300 pixels wide and 225 pixels height (if dimensions are different, the image will be cropped and resized).

    If you want to upload a **video** background, Avatar Studio supports the following formats: MOV, AVI, WMV, and MPG. The file size limit is 8 MB. Oddcast recommends an aspect ratio of 4 x 3 for best results.

    - Click the **UPLOAD** button.

    Avatar Studio uploads your image or video background.

    - Click the [X] icon to close the **Add New Background** window.

✓	**Note:** If you upload a video background, your user must manually play the Scene. It does not play automatically, upon loading. However, the video background continues to play behind your Character, even after your Character stops speaking, unless your user manually stops the Scene.

6.3   Create a background slideshow

Avatar Studio allows you to upload a **background slideshow** (i.e., backgrounds morph and change behind your Character as he/she speaks). You can add flavor to your slideshow by adding transition effects.

1.   Do one of the following:

- On the **Edit Show** page, under the **Background** column for your Scene, click **none**.

- Click the **Backgrounds** link on the top navigation bar.

The **Background Management** window appears.

Figure 82 – Background Management window

2.   Click **Add New Background**.

The **Add New Background** window appears.

Figure 83 – Add New Background window

3.   Do the following:

- Locate the **Create a Background Slideshow** portion of the **Add New Background** window.

- Click the **CREATE** button.

The **Background Slideshow Editor** window appears.

Figure 84 – Background Slideshow Editor window

- **Filter available background images by category.** Use the drop-down to filter available background images by category (e.g., **Private**, **Popular**, **Nightlife**, etc.).

- **Add images to the timeline.** Use your mouse to drag images on to the timeline. You can add as many images as you want to the timeline. Notice that the timeline will shift slides of an image if you drag it over an existing slide.
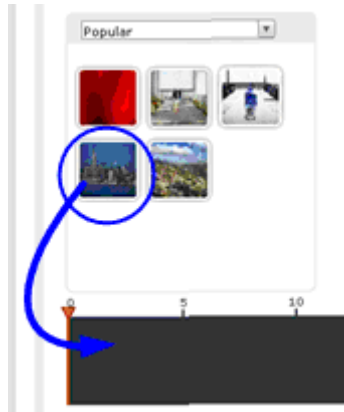
Figure 85 – Background Slideshow Editor window

- **Set your slide duration.** You can set the start and end time for each slide on your timeline. Hold your mouse down on the corners of a slide to move your slides to the desired start and end time.

Figure 86 – Timeline

- **Add effects.** Avatar Studio allows you add visual effects to your background slideshow. Do the following:

  - Click the **Settings** button.

    The **Slideshow Settings** pop-up displays.
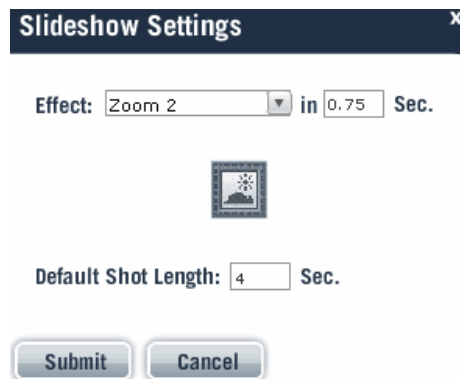
Figure 87 – Slideshow Settings pop-up

  - Use the **Effect:** drop-down to select a visual effect (i.e., **None**, **Fade**, **Zoom 1**, **Zoom 2**, or **Slide**).

  - In the **Sec.** field, enter how many seconds should elapse before the effect begins on each slide. The default value is **0.75** seconds.

  - Optionally, you can modify the **Default Shot Length:**. The default value is **4** seconds. This indicates how many seconds the effect lasts from slide to slide.

  - When you are done, click the **Submit** button.

- **Show/hide your Character.** Avatar Studio allows you to choose whether to **show** or **hide** your Character from slide to slide. For example, you can make your Character appear during the first two slides of your background slideshow...then disappear for the third and fourth slides...then re-appear for the fifth and sixth slides.

Figure 88 – Timeline (with a Character shown and hidden)

  - **Show a Character.** On the timeline, click the [icon] icon.
  - **Hide a Character.** On the timeline, click the [icon] icon.

- **Preview your background slideshow.** To preview your background slideshow, click the **play** button. You can click the **rewind** button to start the background slideshow preview from the beginning.

Figure 89 – Play/rewind buttons

- **Preview your background slideshow with audio.** Add audio to preview your slideshow with audio from your account. Click the **Preview with Audio** button and select an audio track from the list.

- **Save your background slideshow.**

  Do the following:

  o   Click the **Save** button.

      The **Name Your Background** pop-up prompts you to save your background slideshow.

Figure 90 – Name Your Background pop-up

  o   Enter the name of your background slideshow in the **Name:** field (20 character maximum).

  o   Click the **Submit** button.

> ✓   **Note:** If you upload a background slideshow, your user must manually play the Scene. It does not play automatically, upon loading. However, the background slideshow continues to play behind your Character, even after your Character stops speaking, unless your user manually stops the Scene.

6.4   Create a text background

Avatar Studio allows you to upload a **text background** to your Scene. You can select you're a font and choose the color of both font and background.

1. Do one of the following:

    - On the **Edit Show** page, under the **Background** column for your Scene, click **none**.

    - Click the **Backgrounds** link on the top navigation bar.

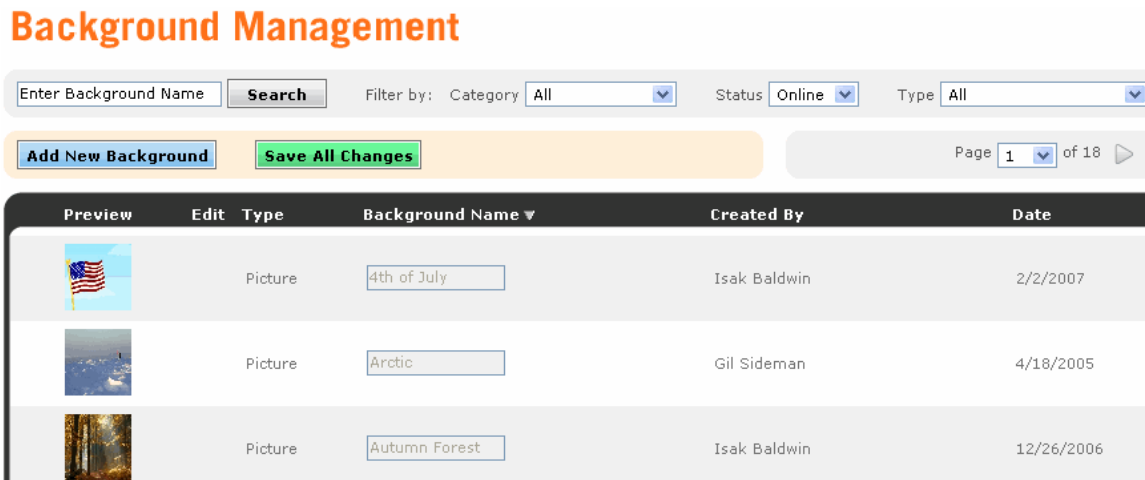The **Background Management** window appears.
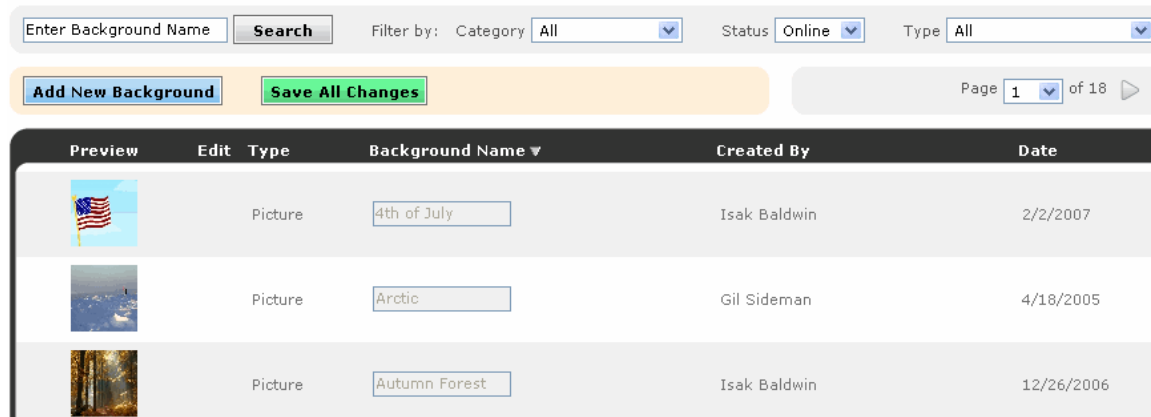
Figure 91 – Background Management window

2. Click **Add New Background**.
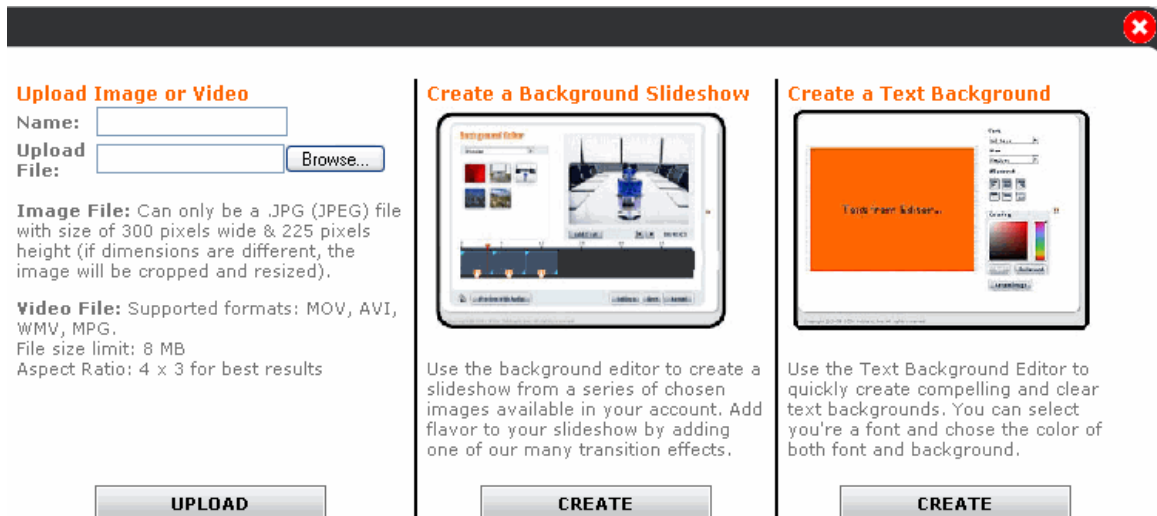
    The **Add New Background** window appears.
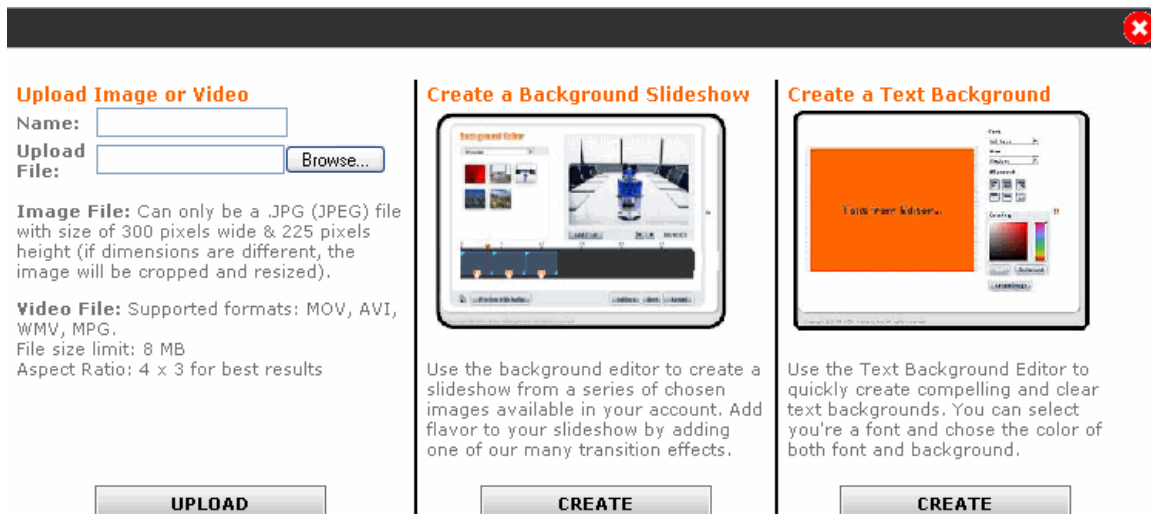
Figure 92 - Add New Background window

3. Do the following:

    - Locate the **Create a Text Background** portion of the **Add New Background** window.

- Click the **CREATE** button.

  The **Text Background Editor** window appears.
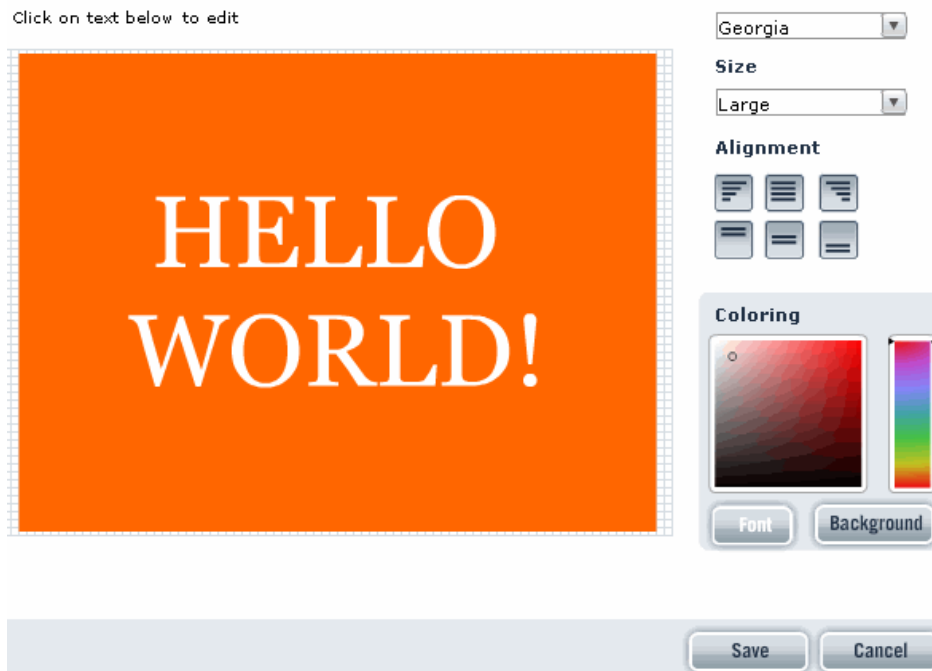
Figure 93 – Text Background Editor window

- Enter your text in the editor window. Default text (**Text from Editor**) displays.

- Use the **Font** drop-down to select a font for your text background.

- Use the **Size** drop-down to select a size for the font background (i.e., **Large**, **Medium**, or **Small**).

- Click an **Alignment** icon to align the text. The **top row** of alignment icons allows you to align your text to the left, center, or right. The **bottom row** of alignment icons allows you to align your text on the top, center, or bottom of the window.

- Roll your mouse over the color palette in the **Coloring** portion of the window to fine-tune the color of your **Font** or **Background** (click a button to select which you want to fine-tune). You can also use the lever on the hue adjustment tool to fine-tune the hue of your font or background.

- Click the **Save** button.

  The **Name Your Background** pop-up prompts you to save your background slideshow.

Figure 94 – Name Your Background pop-up

- Enter the name of your background slideshow in the **Name:** field (20 characters maximum).

- Click the **Submit** button.

6.5   Manage your backgrounds

Use the **Background Management** page to upload multiple background images and manage your library of backgrounds.

To access your Background Management page:

- On the Studio main menu, click **Backgrounds**.

    The **Background Management** page loads. The **Online** column indicates the availability status of a background, and the **Used** column shows the number of Scenes that use a particular background.

Figure 95 - Background Management page

The following describes the actions that you can perform on the **Background Management** page:

To	Do this
Preview a background	Under the **Preview** column for the background, click **Preview** .
Rename a background	Under the **Background Name** column, type a new name in the text box for the background, and then click **Save All Changes**. **Note:** You can rename only backgrounds in your Private category. You can rename multiple backgrounds before you click **Save All Changes**.
Upload a background image	Click **Add New Background**. Background images that you upload are added to the Private category of backgrounds. See below for more information about uploading background images.
Search for a background	In the **Search** text box, type the name of a background that you want to find, and then click **Search**.
Filter the list of backgrounds by category of background	From the **Filter by Category** drop-down menu, select a category of backgrounds to list.
Change the online status of a background	Under the **Online** column, select or clear the check box. **Note:** You can change the online status of backgrounds in your Private category only. An offline background is a background that is not available for a Scene. An offline background does not display when the Scene is embedded in a Web site.
Filter the list backgrounds by the online status of backgrounds	From the **Filter by Status** drop-down menu, select **Online** or **Offline**.
Clear the **Search** text and reset the **Category** to **All**	Click **Reset**.
Delete a background	Under the **Delete** column for the background, click **Delete** . **Note:** You can delete backgrounds only from your Private category. You cannot delete a background if it's used in any of your Scenes.

6.6   Upload backgrounds from the Background Management page

Background images that you upload from your computer are included in the Private category of backgrounds.

1.   Click **Add New Background**.

The **Upload Background** dialog box appears.
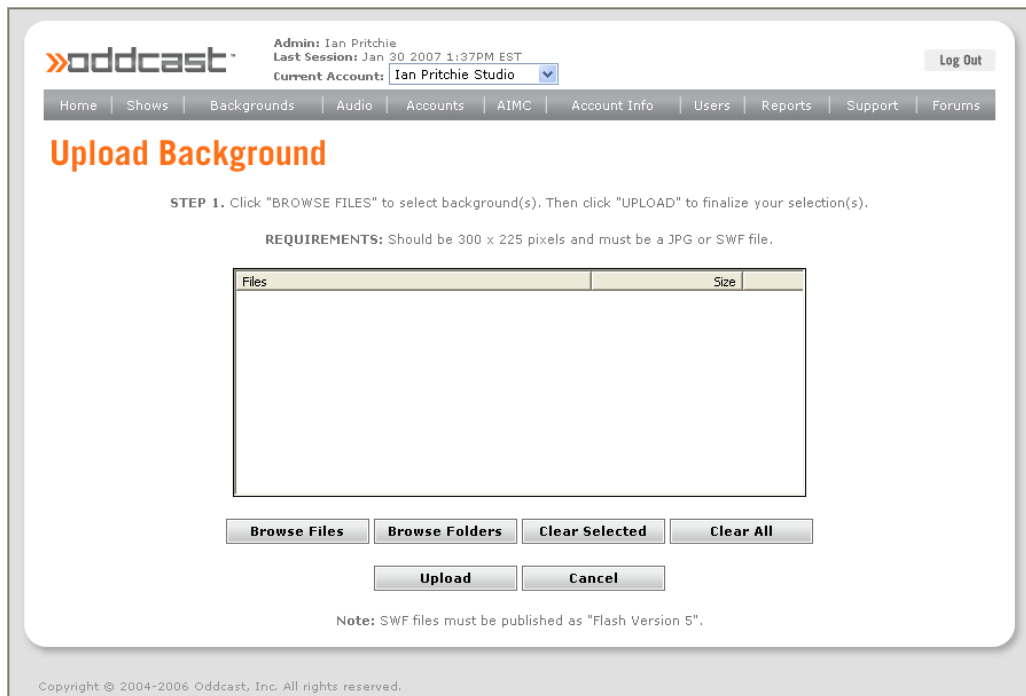
Figure 96 - Upload Background window

2.   To upload files, click **Browse Files**.

In the **Select Files for Uploading** window, select the file or files that you want to upload and then click **Open**.

3.   To upload all the files in a folder at once, click **Browse Folders**.

In the **Browse for Folder** window, select the folder that contains the files that you want to upload and then click **Scan**.

4.   You can click **Clear Selected** to remove a file from the list of files that you selected, or click **Clear All** to remove all the files that you selected.

5.   Click **Upload**.

The **Uploading** window shows the progress of the upload.
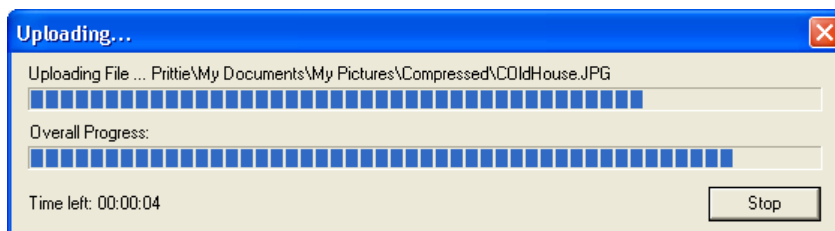
You can click **Stop** to halt the upload. The next page of the Upload Background window appears.

Figure 97 - Upload Background step 2

6. In the **Name** text box for a file, type a name for the background.

    The image must be a JPEG or SWF file and must be 300 pixels wide by 225 pixels high. If your image is a different dimension, select the **Resize** check box. If you upload an image larger than 300 x 225 and you did not check the resize checkbox, the image is centered in the Scene and cropped to these dimensions.

7. Click **Add**.

    The Upload Background window closes and the file or files that you uploaded are listed on the **Background Management** page. If you do not want to upload these image files, on the main menu, click **Backgrounds**.

Chapter 7

Working with Audio

Avatar Studio uses advanced technology to synchronize audio with your Character's lip movements. This effect is known as lip-syncing and it enhances the overall realism and impact of your VHost Characters.

You can view a list of your audio messages in the Audio Selection window and the **Background Management** page.

Audio Selection window	• access from a Scene on the Edit Show page • select an audio message for a Scene • add an audio to your Studio account
Audio Management page	• access from the Studio main menu • add an audio to your Studio account • view information about your audio messages • delete or replace audio messages • rename an audio message • replace or edit an audio message • add audio effects

7.1   About adding audio to your Studio account

The audio that you add to your Studio account are added to the Private category. The Public category includes pre-defined sample audio messages. Use these messages to test and demonstrate Scenes. The Public category is read-only; you cannot add or delete audio messages to this category.

You can use the following methods to add audio to your Studio account:

Record by microphone	Use a computer microphone to record your own audio messages for your Characters
Upload audio file	Upload audio files from your computer to use as audio messages for your Characters.
Record by phone	Use your phone to record audio messages for your Characters
Text-to-Speech	Use Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology to convert any written text into synthesized audio messages for your Characters.

7.2   Select an audio message for a Scene

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

    The **Show** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** .

    The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. In the **Scenes** panel, under the **Audio** column for a Scene, click the audio name.

    The Audio Selection window appears. If an audio isn't selected for the Scene, the name is **none**.
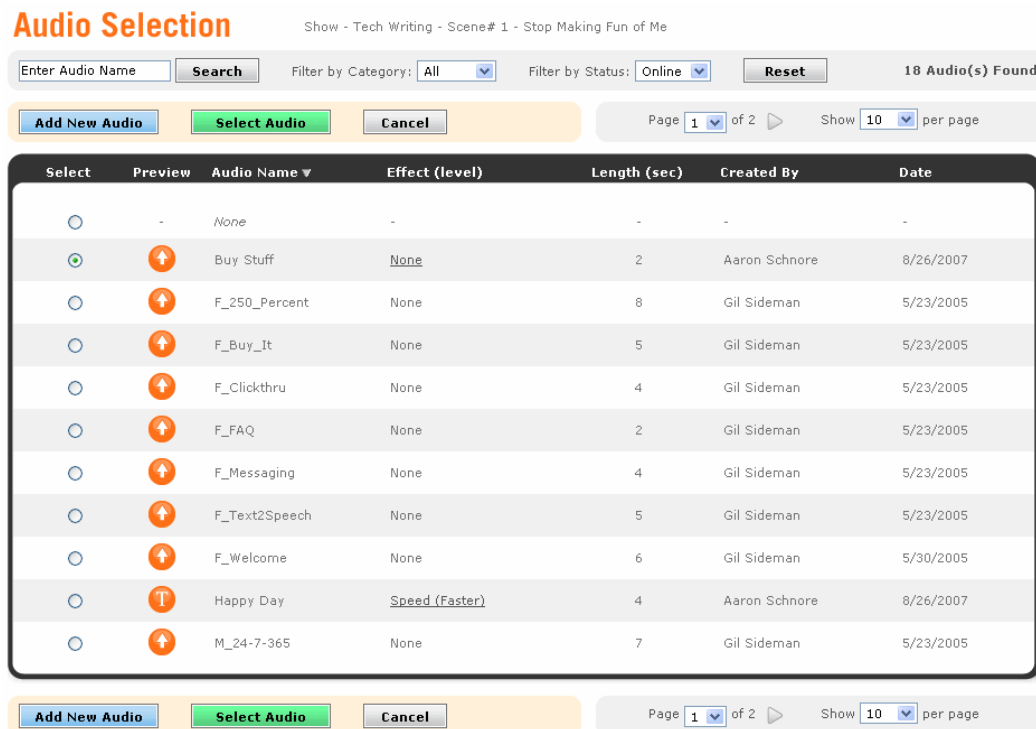
Figure 98 - Audio Selection window

The following describes the actions that you can perform in the Audio Selection window:

To	Do this
Select an audio for a Scene	Under the **Select** column for an audio, click the option button, and then click **Select Audio**.
Add an audio message to your Studio account	Click **Add New Audio**. See below for more information about adding audio to your Studio account.

To	Do this
Preview an audio	Under the **Preview** column for an audio, For uploaded audio **Preview Audio (upload)** . For Text-to-Speech audio, click **Preview Audio (tts)** . For recorded audio, click **Preview Audio (record)** . For phone recorded audio, click **Preview Audio (phone)**
Sort audio list	Click on the heading for the **Audio Name** column.
Search for an audio	In the **Search** text box, type the name of an audio that you want to find, and then click **Search**.
Filter the list of audios	From the **Filter by Category** drop-down menu, select a category of audios to filter by. From the **Filter by Status** drop-down menu, select **Online** or **Offline**.
Clear the **Search** or filter	Click **Reset**.
Close the Audio Selection window without changing the audio selection	Click **Cancel**.
Add audio effects	• Under the **Effects (level)** column for the audio, click the audio effect link. The **Audio Effects** dialog box appears. **Note:** You can also display the **Audio Effects** dialog box from the **Audio Management** page. • Create your audio effect with the **Effect:** and **Type:** drop-downs. • Click the **Preview** button to preview your audio effect. • Click the **Accept** button to close the **Audio Effects** dialog box and return to the **Audio Selection** window. Click the **Save All Changes** button to apply the audio effect.

7.3   Upload an audio file

You can upload your own audio files from your computer to your Studio account. You can then use the uploaded audio in any of your Scenes. The maximum length of an audio recording that you can upload is 90 seconds. However, you can concatenate, or chain together, multiple audio files together to produce messages longer than 90 seconds. Learn how to concatenate audio messages.

The following are requirements for uploading audio files to your Studio account:

Channels	Mono or Stereo (Mono recommended for best results)
Sampling Rate	22.050 KHz or 44.100 KHz (22.050 KHz recommended for best results)
Audio sample size	16 bit
Supported audio formats	WAV (PCM), MP3 (16, 32, 48, 64kbs), WMA (Windows Media Audio)
Maximum Audio Length	90 Seconds

To upload an audio file:

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Audio**.

    The **Audio Management** page loads. You can also add audio from the Audio Selection window when you edit a Scene.

2. Click **Add New Audio**.

    The Add New Audio page loads.

Figure 99 - Upload Audio panel

3. In the **Name** text box, type a name for the audio message.

4. Click **Browse.**

   The Choose File dialog box appears.

5. Select the audio file that you want to upload and click **Open**.

6. Select a **Playback Bit Rate**.

7. Select an **Audio Enhancement** setting.

8. Click **Upload**.

   The Add New Audio window closes and the file that you uploaded is listed on the Audio Management page.

   The Audio Enhancement options analyze your audio file and modify it to improve its overall quality. These options are primarily for audio files with low audio or low quality. However, for higher-quality audio files, this enhancement is unnecessary, and in some instances, can degrade the quality of an audio message.

!	If the upload is unsuccessful, an error message that specifies the problem appears in the Add New Audio window. Make sure that the audio file you are attempting to upload conforms to the minimum requirements for VHost audio.

✓	Although VHost audio messages are stored and played in mono, the Audio Upload feature can accept WAV, WMA and MP3 files recorded in stereo.

📖	If you upload multiple audio files, the Audio Enhancement option can insure that multiple recordings are normalized to the same volume level. This can help you achieve a consistent user experience, especially if the recordings originate from different sources and individuals.

7.4   Record an audio message

Use a microphone connected to your computer to record an audio message directly to your Audio Library. You can use the audio message that you record in any of your VHost Scenes.

To record an audio message:

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Audio**.

   The Audio Management page loads. You can also add audio from the Audio Selection window when you edit a Scene.

2. Click **Add New Audio**.

   The Add New Audio page loads.

3. Click the **Record Audio** tab.

   If the **Adobe Flash Player Settings** dialog box appears on top of the **Record Audio** panel, select **Allow**, and then click **Close**. You will not see this message again.

Figure 100 - Flash Player Settings

   To adjust the flash microphone settings, click on the microphone icon on the bottom tab of the **Adobe Flash Player Settings** dialog box, adjust the settings, and then click **Close**.

Figure 101 - Flash Microphone settings

   The Record Audio panel appears.
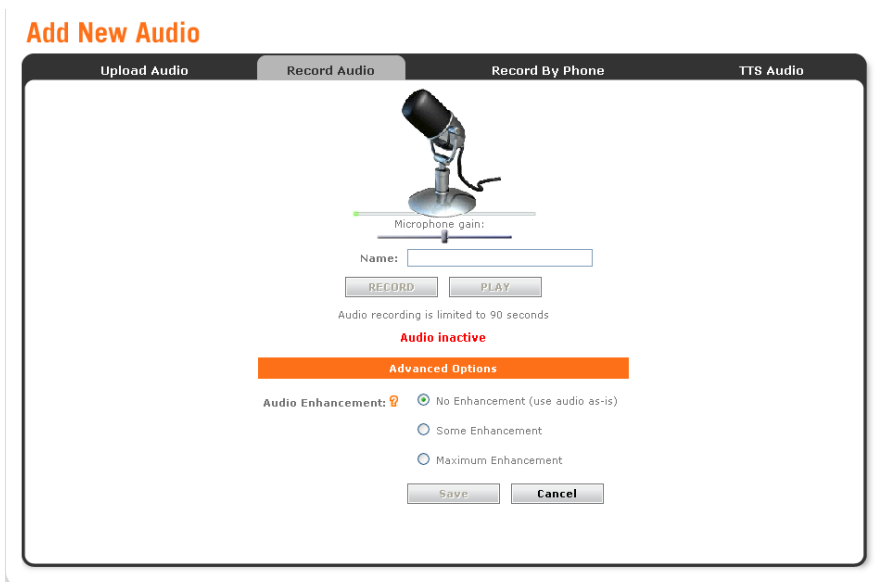
Figure 102 - Record Audio panel

4. In the **Name** text box, type a name for the recorded audio message.

5. Select an **Audio Enhancement** setting.

    These options analyze your audio file and modify it to improve its overall quality. These options are primarily for audio files originally recorded at a low volume. However, for higher quality audio files, this enhancement is unnecessary, and in some instances, can degrade the quality of an audio message.

6. Move the **Microphone gain** sliding bar to the right to increase in the amplitude of the recording or to the left to decrease amplitude.

7. Click **Record**.

    You can record for up to 90 seconds. The **Recording** status appears as you record.

    Figure 103 – Record audio

8. Record your message by speaking slowly and clearly into your microphone, and then click **Stop**.

    The **Stop Playing Recorded Audio** status appears.

    Figure 104 - Complete recording

9. Click **Play** to preview your recording.

    The **Playing Recorded Audio** status appears. If you are not satisfied with the recording, record your message again.
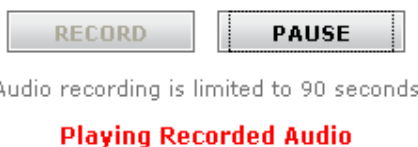
    Figure 105 - Play audio

10. When you are satisfied with your recording, click **Save**.

    The Add Audio page closes and your new recording is listed on your Audio Management page.

> Compare the recording volume level of your recordings to the sample audio messages in the public category. If your recordings are significantly lower or higher than the sample messages, adjust your microphone input volume.

7.5 Use a phone to record audio

You can record and update your audio messages for your VHost Scenes over the telephone. Due to varying quality of many phone lines, the quality of audio recorded over the telephone is lower than audio that you record with a microphone or audio files that you upload.

> 📖 To maximize the quality of the audio that you record over the phone, make your recording in a closed space with a minimum amount of background noise.

To record an audio message by using a phone:

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Audio**.

   The Audio Management page loads. You can also add audio from the Audio Selection window when you edit a Scene.

2. Click **Add New Audio**.

   The Add New Audio page loads.

3. Click the **Record By Phone** tab.

   The Record By Phone panel appears.

Figure 106 - Record By Phone panel

4. Use the information in this dialog box to dial up and log in to the phone recording service.

5. Following the instructions of the phone recording service to record, play back, and save your message.

   The Record By Phone panel shows the following while you are recording.

Figure 107 - Recording by phone

When you save your message on the phone recording service and disconnect, the Record By Phone panel shows the following:
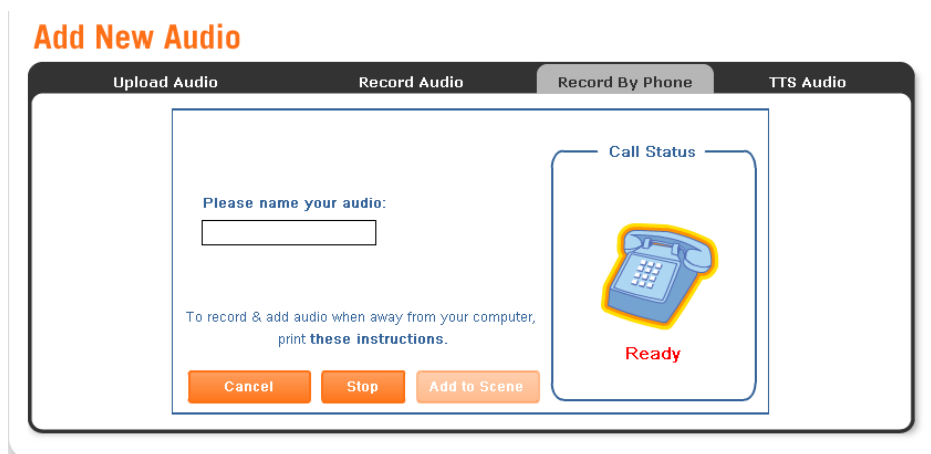
Figure 108 - Name your phone recording

6. Type a name for your audio message and click **Add to Scene**.

    An Alert informs you that your audio is saved.

7. Click **OK**.

    The Add Audio page closes and your new recording is listed on your Audio Management page.

7.6   About creating Text-to-Speech audio

You can use the Text-to-Speech (TTS) feature to convert any text into synthesized audio that is spoken by your Character. There are two types of TTS that you can use with Studio:

Static TTS	Type in your text through the TTS user interface.
Dynamic TTS	Use JavaScript to call the API *sayText* function.

Static TTS is the simpler of the two and does not require any programming knowledge. Dynamic TTS is needed only when your text must be determined while your Scene is played. For example, you can use Dynamic TTS if you want your character to say a particular phrase based on a user's interaction with your Web site. Both TTS methods support the full range of VHost languages and voices. Learn more about using Dynamic TTS.

You can also influence your TTS results by using SSML tags. These are commands that you embed in your text to direct the TTS engine to interpret the text in a particular way. A complete list of supported SSML tags and examples of how to use them appear in Appendix C of the VHost API Reference. SSML tags provide support for the following effects:

- Inserting pauses in the text.

- Altering volume in mid-sentence, or for part of a sentence, for emphasis.

- Changing language in mid-sentence, or for part of a sentence, which is useful for multi-lingual audiences and applications.

- Changing pitch or rate of speech.

7.7   Create an audio message using TTS

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Audio**.

    The Audio Management page loads. You can also add audio from the Audio Selection window when you edit a Scene.

2. Click **Add New Audio**.

    The Add New Audio page loads.

3. Click the **TTS Audio** tab.

    The TTS Audio panel appears.

Figure 109 - Add TTS audio

4. From the **Languages** drop-down menu, select a language to use for your audio.

5. From the **Voices** drop-down menu, select a voice to use for your audio.

6. In the **Audio Name** text box, enter a name for the audio message.

7. In the **Say** text box, enter the message that you want spoken.

   You can type a maximum of 600 characters. The TTS engine can convert punctuation and all printable characters in your text, except angle brackets (< and >).

8. Click **Preview** to see your character speak the text that you typed.

9. Click **Save**.

   Studio converts your text to spoken audio and closes the Add New Audio window. Your new audio message is listed on your Audio Management page.

> Due to differences in the technology, some voices generate higher quality spoken audio than others. We recommend that you experiment with changing the punctuation and spelling of certain voices to achieve the best results.
>
> For example, to make your character say the word "VHost" correctly with some TTS voices, you can try spelling it as "Vee Host". This is known as phonetic pronunciation. Most dictionaries provide phonetic pronunciations of words. Use phonetic pronunciation to help you adjust certain TTS voices to pronounce specific words or phrases more accurately.

7.8   Managing your audio

Use the Audio Management page to manage you audio and add audio to your Studio account. The Audio Library includes a Public category and a Private category of audio messages.

Public	This category includes pre-defined sample audio messages. Use these messages to test and demonstrate scenes. The Public category is read-only; you cannot add or delete audio messages in this category.
Private	This category is provided exclusively to store the audio messages that you add to your Studio account.

To access your Audio Management page:

- On the Studio main menu, click **Audio**.

    The Audio Management page loads.

Figure 110 - Audio Management page

The following describes the actions that you can perform in the Audio Management page:

To	Do this
Reorder list of audio	Click on the heading for the **Audio Name** column.
Search for an audio	In the **Search** text box, type the name of an audio that you want to find, and then click **Search**.
Filter the list of audios by category	From the **Filter by Category** drop-down menu, select a category of audios to filter by.
Filter the list of audios by the status	From the **Filter by Status** drop-down menu, select **Online** or **Offline**. Offline audios are audios will not play when the scene loads on a Web page.
Clear the **Search** text and reset the **Category** to **All**	Click **Reset**.
Add a new audio to your Studio account	Click **Add New Audio**.
Preview an audio	Under the **Preview** column for an audio, For uploaded audio **Preview Audio (upload)** . For Text-to-Speech audio, click **Preview Audio (tts)** . For recorded audio, click **Preview Audio (record)** . For phone recorded audio, click **Preview Audio (phone)**
Edit a TTS audio	Under the **Delete** column for the audio, click **Replace**. **Note:** You can edit only TTS audio in your Private category.
Rename an audio	Under the **Audio Name** column, type a new name in the text box for the audio, and then click **Save All Changes**. **Note:** You can rename audio only in your Private category.
Replace an audio	Under the **Edit** column for the audio, click **Edit Audio** . **Note:** You can replace audio only that you have uploaded or recorded to your Studio account.
Change the online status of an audio	Under the **Online** column, select or clear the check box. An offline audio is an audio that is not available for a Scene. An offline audio does not play when the Scene is embedded in a Web site. **Note:** You can change the online status of audio in your Private category only.

To	Do this
Delete a Private audio	Under the **Delete** column for a Private audio, click **Delete** ![X icon]. **Note:** You can delete audio only from your Private category. You cannot delete an audio if it used in any of your Scenes.
Assign an audio to a category	Under the **Edit** column for the audio, click **Edit Audio** ![pencil icon]. From the **Category** drop-down menu, select a category and click **Update**. **Note:** You can assign an audio to a category only if it is an audio that you added to your Studio account. An audio that you assign to a category is also in the Private category.
Add audio effects	• Under the **Effects (level)** column for the audio, click the audio effect link. The **Audio Effects** dialog box appears. **Note:** You can also display the **Audio Effects** dialog box from the **Audio Selection** window. • Create your audio effect with the **Effect:** and **Type:** drop-downs. • Click the **Preview** button to preview your audio effect. • Click the **Accept** button to close the **Audio Effects** dialog box and return to the **Audio Management** page. • Click the **Save All Changes** button to apply the audio effect. **Note:** To add audio effects, the audio must be in the **Private** category.

7.9   Replace an audio

1. Under **Edit** column for the audio, click **Edit Audio** ![pencil icon].

   The Edit Audio Info window appears. You can change the name of the audio and assign it to a different category in this window.
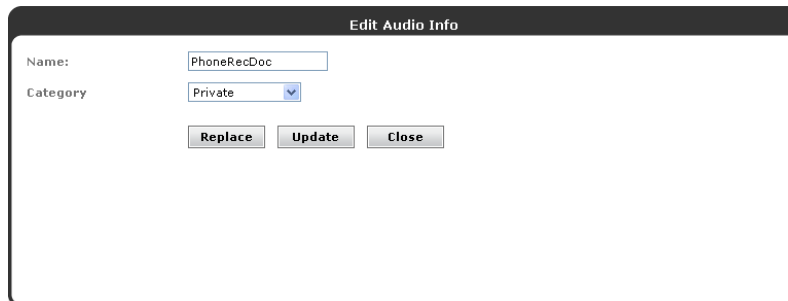
Figure 111 - Edit Audio Info window

2. Click **Replace**.

   The Add New Audio page loads.

3. Replace your audio and save it.

7.10 About audio playback limits

Audio Streams are audio messages delivered over the Internet by the Oddcast server. Audio Streams are counted each time one plays in a Scene. For example, if you place a single Scene that plays one audio message on a Web page with an average of 1,000 page views a day, expect to use an average of 1,000 Audio Streams a day.

In the Scene Options window you can limit the number of times an audio message is played and repeated to a user within a specified period of time. Learn how to economize your use of streams by limiting playback.

Figure 112 - Playback Settings

The number of Audio Streams that are available in your account is shown on your Account Info page.

The playback limit is implemented independently for each page in which the Scene is embedded. If a Scene is embedded in more than one page, there is an individual limit count for each one of the pages, and it is the limit that is set at the time the Scene is published.

7.11 Adding audio effects

Avatar Studio allows you to add effects to your audio, such as speeding audio up, slowing audio down, adding time delay, altering the pitch and many more.

> 📖   **Note:** To add audio effects, the audio must be in the **Private** category.

From the **Audio Management** page or the **Audio Selection** window, complete the following steps:

1. Under the **Effects (level)** column for the audio, click the audio effect link for the audio you whish to midify. The **Audio Effects** dialog box appears.

`   *Figure 113 - Audio Effects dialog box*

Create your audio effect using the **Effect:** and **Type:** drop-downs. The audio effect you choose with the **Effect:** drop-down determines which types (or variations of the effect) are available in the **Type:** drop-down. For example, if you choose **Pitch** from the **Effect:** drop-down, your choices in the **Type:** drop-down are **Highest**, **Higher**, **High**, **Low**, **Lower**, and **Lowest**. This means you can adjust the pitch of your audio from the highest available level, to the lowest, or

anywhere in between.

2. You **must** click the **Preview** button to preview your audio effect.
3. Click the **Accept** button to close the **Audio Effects** dialog box and return to the **Audio Management** page or the **Audio Selection** window.

Note: To remove the audio effect follow the steps and select **NONE** from the effects pull down.

Chapter 8

Working with the Player Skin

The VHost Player is the window in which your VHost Show/Scene plays. The Player skin is the frame of the window in which your VHost Character appears. You can use a preconfigured skin that is included with VHost to create your own customized skin. You can also change the appearance of the player skin and select which playback controls to include with your Show/Scene.

In a VHost Show, all the Scenes use the same skin. The skin that you select for the first Scene in the Show is used for the other Scenes in the Show, although you can customize that Skin for each Scene by setting different options and colors.

8.1 Select a Player skin for a Show

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

   The **Shows** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** ✏.

   The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. Under the **Edit** column for the **first Scene** in the list, click **Edit** ✏.

   The Skin Editor appears.

Figure 114 - Skin Editor

4. On the **Skin Select** tab, click the left or right scroll arrows to select the type of skin that you want to use.

5. Click the drop-down menu and select a category of skins.

   The skins that are available for the category appear in the list box.

6. In the list box, click a skin.

    The Preview Pane is updated with the skin that you selected.

You can use the following types of skins for the VHost Player:

Type of skin	Use to create
Standard	VHost Scenes that include a speaking Character.
AI	VHost Scenes that incorporate the AI Knowledge Base. The AI skin includes a text box where users can type questions for your Character.
FAQ	VHost Scenes that incorporate the FAQ Skin allow your scene to answer frequently asked questions on your Web site.
LEAD	VHost Scenes in which visitors to your Web pages can submit their contact information.

8.2   Edit a Player Skin

To edit a skin:

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

    The **Shows** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** .

    The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. Under the **Edit** column for a Scene in the list, click **Edit** .

    The Skin Editor appears. If you are editing the skin for other than the first Scene in the Show, you cannot use the Skin Select panel. To change the settings and color of the Scene, click the **Settings** tab.
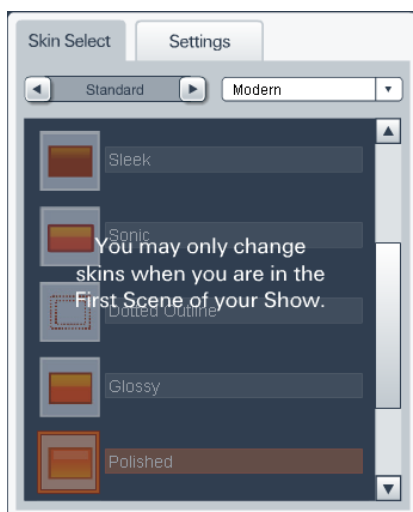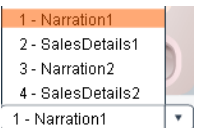
Figure 115 - Skin Select panel disabled

You can perform the following actions in the Skin Editor:

To	Do this
Reposition and resize the Character	Click **Move / Zoom** . See below for more information.
Maximize the preview panel	Click **Large View** . In the full preview panel, click **Normal View** to return to the Skin Editor.
Edit another skin	From the pop-up menu, click another Scene. 1 - Narration1 2 - SalesDetails1 3 - Narration2 4 - SalesDetails2 1 - Narration1 ▼
Copy skin settings to other skins	Click **Copy Settings**. See below for more information.
Close the Skin Editor	Click **Cancel**.
Save your changes and continue editing a skin	Click **Apply**.
Save your changes and close the Skin Editor	Click **Save**.

8.3   Position the Character in a Scene

You can use the **Move / Zoom** controls to position the Character in the Skin.

Figure 116 - Move/Zoom controls

You can perform the following actions in the Skin Editor:

To	Do this
Increase or decrease the size of the Character	Click the Zoom buttons [+] [–].
Move the Character	Click the arrow buttons [◄] [►] [▲] [▼].
Move the Character by using the mouse	Hold down the mouse button on the Character and drag it to a new location.
Undo your changes to the position and size of the Character	Click the **Reset** button [↺].
Center the Character	Click the **Center** button [⊕].
Close the Move / Zoom controls	Click the **Close** button **X** or click **Move / Zoom** [✋].

8.4   Change the settings for a Player skin

1. In the Skin Editor, click the **Settings** tab..
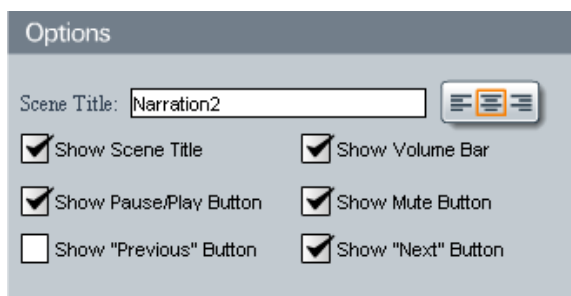
Figure 117 - Player skin settings

2. In the **Scene Title** text box, type a title for your scene.

    If you do not want to include a title for your scene, uncheck the **Show Scene Title** check box.

3. Click one of the buttons next the **Scene Title** text box to set left, center, or right justification for the title.

4. Clear the check boxes for the playback controls that you do not want included with your scene.

    •   The **Previous** button on the Player skin plays the preceding Scene in the Show.

    •   The **Next** button on the Player skin plays the next Scene in the Show.

5. Click **Apply** or **Save** to save your Scene.

8.5   Set the colors of the Player skin

1. In the Skin Editor, click the **Settings** tab.
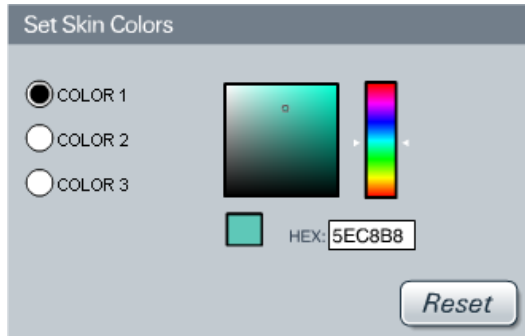
Figure 118 - Set skin colors

2. Under **Set Skin Colors**, select the radio box for a pre-defined color scheme.

3. To set the base color scheme, drag the selector up or down in the narrow rectangular color ramp.

4. To pinpoint the exact color that you want, drag the small circle in the larger color range box.

    The Preview Panel is updated to show the new color scheme. The color that you set is shown in the small square box to the right of the color ramp.

> You can also set the color of a feature by entering the hexadecimal value of the color in the HEX box.

5. Click **Apply** or **Save** to save your Scene.

    If you click **Apply**, you can click **Reset** to reset the colors to preconfigured colors of the skin.

8.6   Copy skin settings to other Scenes

You can copy the settings and color scheme of your default Show skin to other Scenes in the Show same show.

1. In the Skin Editor, click **Copy Settings**.

    The following dialog box appears:

Figure 119 - Copy skin settings

2. Click one of the options for copying the skin settings.

    An alert informs you that settings were copied successfully.

3. Click **Okay**.

8.7   FAQ Player skin

Use the FAQ skin to create a VHost Scene where visitors can hear answers to frequently asked questions. When a user clicks a question, your VHost Character speaks the answer.

1. In the Skin Editor, on the **Skin Select** tab, click the left or right scroll arrows to select the **FAQ** skin.

2. In the list box, click a FAQ skin.

    The Preview Pane is updated with the FAQ skin.

3. Click the **FAQ** tab.

4. Click **Add**.

    A question dialog box appears in the FAQ Management panel.

Figure 120 - FAQ question dialog box

5. Under **Edit Question Text**, type a question and then click **Choose Audio Answer**.

    The Audio Selection window appears.

6. Select the audio message that you want to use to answer the question that you entered.

7. Click **Select Audio**.

    The audio you selected is associated with the question and Audio Selection window closes.

8. Repeat steps 5 through 8 to add more questions to your FAQ.

9. Click **Save**.

✓	To remove a question from the FAQ skin, click the [X] in the question window.

📖	To change the order of appearance of your questions, click the **Order** pull down menu and select a number.

8.8   Lead Generator Player skin

Use the Lead Generator skin to create a VHost Scene where visitors can enter their contact information and send it to you via Email. You can rename any text label or message in the lead generator form.

!	You must specify your email address in the Lead Generator skin. If you do not enter a valid email address, you will not receive the contact information that your visitors want to send you.

1. In the Skin Editor, on the **Skin Select** tab, click the left or right scroll arrows to select the **LEAD** skin.

2. In the list box, click a Lead skin.

   The Preview Pane is updated with the lead skin.

3. Click the **Lead Generator** tab.

   The Lead Generator options panel appears.
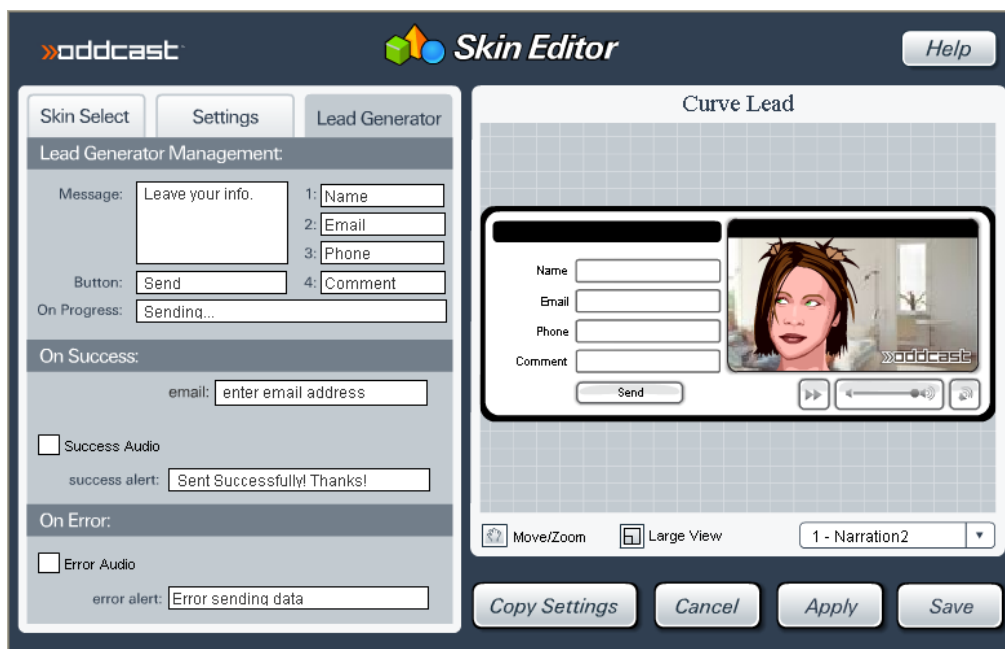
Figure 121 - Lead Generator skin options

4. Click the **Lead Generator** tab.

5. Under **Lead Generator Management**, edit the labels and message text that appear in the form.

   The form in the Preview Pane is updated as you edit the label text.

6. Under **On Success**, type the email address where you want contact information sent.

   If you want a different message to appear when the data is sent, edit the **success alert** text. Select the **Success Audio** check box if you want your character to speak when the contact information is sent.

7. Under **On Error**, edit the **error alert** text if you want a different message to appear if the data is not sent successfully.

Select the **Error Audio** check box if you want your character to speak if the data is not sent successfully.

8. Click **Save**.

The Skin Editor closes and the changes to your Lead Generator skin are saved.

8.9 Edit the AI Player skin

Use the AI skin to create a VHost Scene that incorporates the AI Knowledge Base. The AI skin includes a text box where users can converse with your Character. Your Character responds to user input with context-sensitive, spoken answers.

1. From your Scene List, open a Scene and click **Edit Skin**.

2. On the **Skin Select** tab, click the left or right scroll arrows to select the **AI** skin.

3. In the list box, click an AI skin.

The Preview Pane is updated with the AI skin.

4. Click the **AI** tab.

The AI skin options panel appears

Figure 122 - AI skin option

5. In the **Enter Custom Button Label** text box, type a caption for the button.

6. Clear the **Show Response Text** check box if you do not want the response text to appear.

7. Under **Voice Selection**, select the language and voice that you want your Character to use for responses.

Your AI Skin uses dynamic Text-to-Speech (TTS) to answer your visitor's questions. For your protection and to secure your streams, you are required to define a Licensed Domain (the domain of your Web site where you plan to host the scene) for example www.oddcast.com

To set the licensed domain, go the **Account Info** page, and under **Optional Account Features**, select the **Secure Playback** check box. Then, in the **Licensed Domains** panel, click the first **Define Domain** link and enter the name of the domain in which your VHost Scenes are embedded.

Chapter 9

Publishing Shows and Scenes

Publishing a Show or a Scene means to embed, or insert, the code for a VHost Show or Scene in a Web page or a Web environment. The embedded code generates the code used to embed your Show or Scene. When you modify a Show or Scene, any changes you make are automatically reflected in all of the Web pages in which the Show or Scene is embedded. Re-embed the code only if you make changes to properties in the Publish Wizard.

Use the VHost Publish Wizard to set the properties for your embedded code and copy the code into a Web environment.

9.1　About VHost publishing targets

You can use the VHost Publish Wizard to publish a Show or Scene to the following environments:

Embed in a Web Page	Use the Publish Wizard to embed a VHost Show or Scene in Web pages. Learn more about embedding a Scene in a Web page.
	Use this Publish Wizard option to publish to a variety of sites. The following are a few of those sites:

AIM Pages	IMVU
Blogger	KoolMoves
Bolt	Macromedia Contribute
Bravenet	Microsoft PowerPoint
Dandelife	MOG
Friendster	Register.com
FrontPage	SwishMax
FrontPage	Yahoo! SiteBuilder
GreatestJournal	Yahoo! 360
Homestead	

Note: If your target environment does not allow the use of JavaScript, use the Web Page (No JavaScript) option for publishing your Scene.

Embed in Flash	Use the VHost Publish Wizard to embed your VHost Character in a Macromedia Flash movie. <u>Learn more about embedding a Scene in a Flash movie</u>.

Embed in MySpace	Add flair to your MySpace profile with a VHost Character. <u>Learn more about embedding a Scene in your MySpace profile</u>.

Publish to eBay	Use the VHost Publish Wizard to include a VHost Scene in your eBay auction and dramatically enhance its effectiveness. <u>Learn more about publishing a Scene to an eBay auction</u>.

Email	Use the VHost Publish Wizard to send an email message that includes a link to your Scene. <u>Learn more about emailing a link to your Scene</u>. You can also <u>embed a VHost Scene in an HTML email message</u>.

Export	Archive the embed code for your Scene to a ZIP file. <u>Learn more about exporting a Scene</u>.

Video	Save your Scene as a video file. <u>Learn more about generating a video file from a Scene</u>.

9.2   Publish a Show

You can determine which Scenes in an embedded Show play and the order of play for all scenes in the show.

- In the Publish Show Wizard you can specify which Scene in a Show starts the Show.

- On the Edit Show page, you can specify that the Show automatically proceed from the Scene to the next Scene in the Show when playback is complete.

- You can use the VHost API to determine which Scene plays based on user interactions and other events.

✓	A Show is composed of one or more Scenes. Publishing a Show embeds code for the entire Show and includes all the Scenes in the Show.

To publish a Show:

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

   The **Shows** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** .

   The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. In the **Edit Show** panel, click **Publish** .

   The Publish Wizard appears.
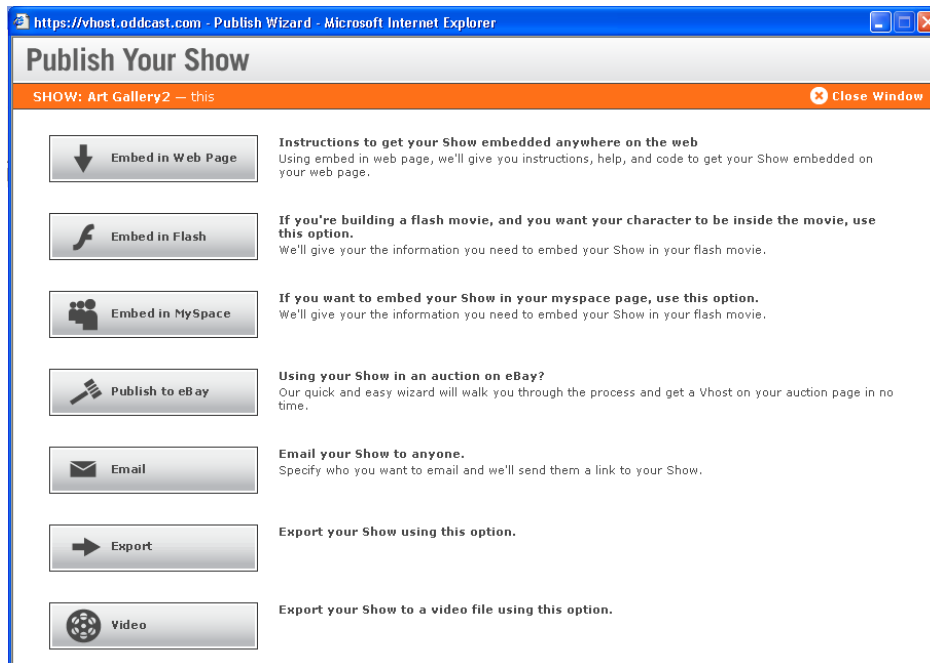
Figure 123 - Publish Show Wizard

4. Click one of the publishing options for your Show.

    For example, click **Embed in Web Page**. The next window of the Wizard appears.
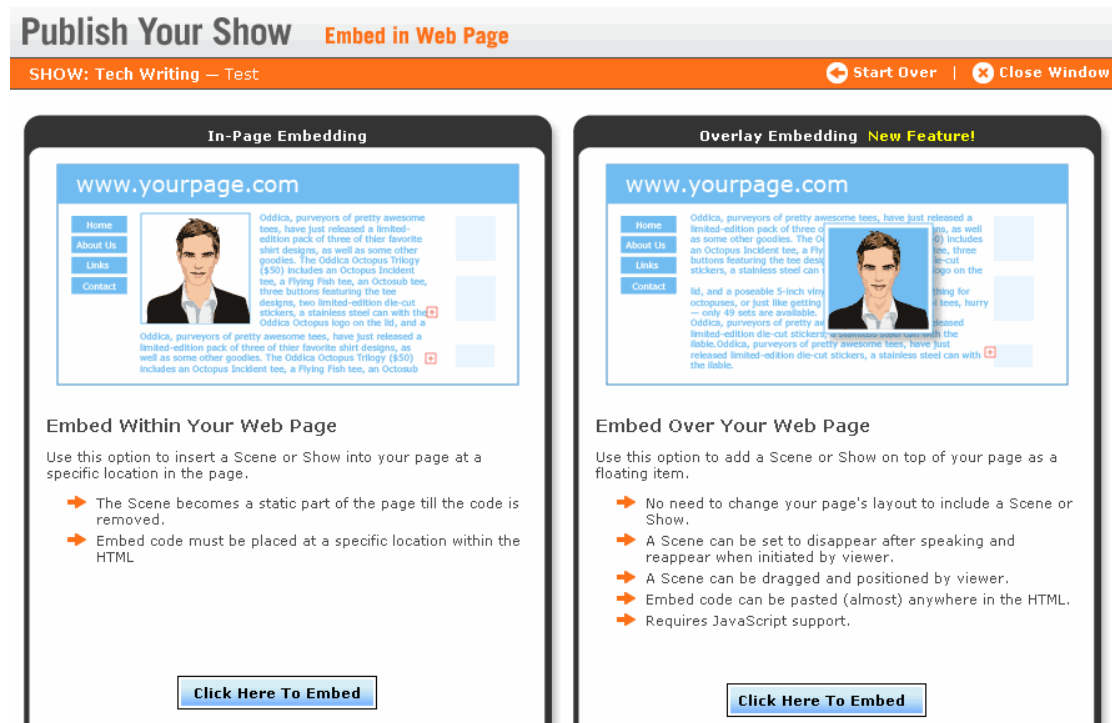
Figure 124 - Publish Wizard (Publish Your Show page)

5. Determine whether you want to publish your Show using in-page embedding or overlay embedding, as explained in the table below.

    If you want to publish your Show using **In-page embedding**, then click the **Click Here to Embed** publish option in the **In-Page Embedding** section of the Publish Wizard (on the left side of the page). Follow the instructions in the **Publish Your Show** window for copying your Scene code into an HTML Web page. For more information, see

Publish your Show or Scene.

If you want to publish your Show using **overlay embedding**, then click the **Click Here to Embed** publish option in the **Overlay Embedding** section of the Publish Wizard (on the right side of the page). Follow the five steps for embedding/overlaying your Show, and then copy your Show code into an HTML Web page.

6. Under **Settings**, set the starting Scene and other properties for the Show code.

    <u>Learn about the properties</u> that you can set when you publish a Show.

    Starting Scene: 3

    Preview

7. Click **Preview**.

    > ✓ Use Preview to make sure that you are satisfied with the show dimensions and background color that you set. Preview does not play the Show.

8. Follow the instructions under **Instructions** for copying and embedding the code for your Show.

    > 📖 If you do not have a Web page where you can embed your Show or Scene code, you can generate an example HTML page from your Embed code. In the Publish Wizard, click **Generate Example HTML Page from this embed code?**

9.3   Publish a Scene from a Show

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

    The **Shows** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit**   .

    The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. In the **Scenes** panel, under the **Publish** column for a Scene, click **Publish**   .

    The Publish Wizard appears.
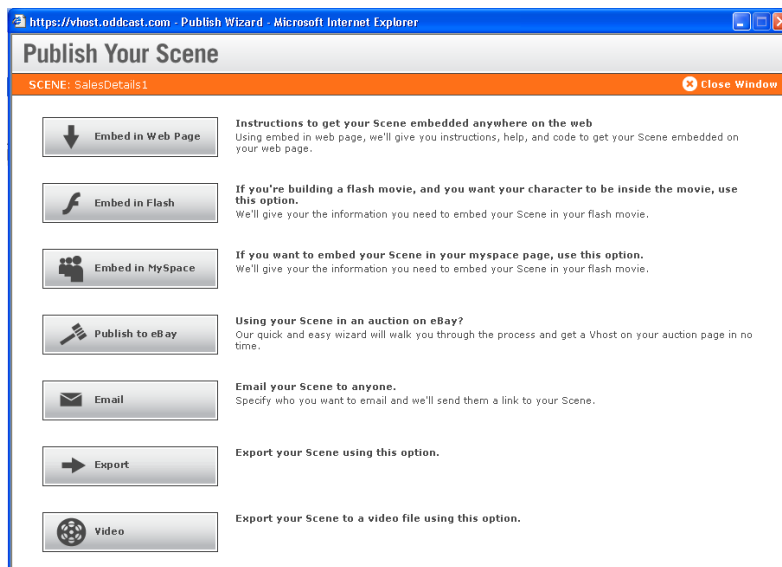
Figure 125 - Publish Scene Wizard

4. Click one of the publishing options for your Show.

   For example, click **Embed in Web Page**. The next window of the Wizard appears.
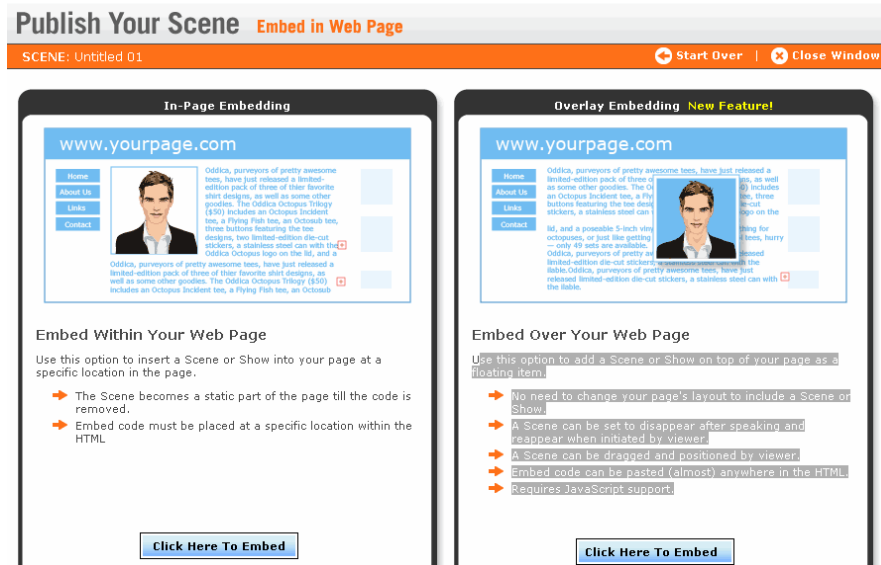
Figure 126 - Publish Scene Wizard (Publish Your Scene page)

5. Determine whether you want to publish your Show using in-page embedding or overlay embedding, as explained in the table below.

   If you want to publish your Show using **In-page embedding**, then click the **Click Here to Embed** publish option in the **In-Page Embedding** section of the Publish Wizard (on the left side of the page). Follow the instructions in the **Publish Your Show** window for copying your Scene code into an HTML Web page. For more information, see

Publish your Show or Scene.

If you want to publish your Show using **overlay embedding**, then click the **Click Here to Embed** publish option in the **Overlay Embedding** section of the Publish Wizard (on the right side of the page). Follow the five steps for embedding/overlaying your Show, and then copy your Show code into an HTML Web page.

6. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the Scene code.

   Learn about the properties that you can set when you publish a Scene.

Figure 127 - Properties for embed code

7. Click **Preview** to view the dimensions and background color of your Scene.

8. Follow the instructions under **Instructions** for copying and embedding the code for your Show.

9.4   Properties for embedded code

In the Publish Wizard you can set the following properties for a Show or Scene:

Property	Description
Scene Dimensions	The contents of your entire Scene, including your background image and Player skin, are re-sized to the dimensions you specify.
	The suggested dimension is 400 x 300 pixels; some Show/Scenes may have different default dimensions. To use different dimensions, as you type a different width, the height is automatically calculated so that the aspect ratio of the Show or Scene is maintained.
	Click **Reset** to return to default dimensions.
Background Color	Select a color from the palette by clicking on a color box or click **Transparent**. Alternatively, you can enter the hexadecimal value for a color in the box centered below the palette.
	Note: For the Embed background color to be visible you must make sure that no background has been set in the Scene.
Secure Protocol (HTTPS)	Select this check box if you want the embedded code for your Show or Scene to work with the HTTPS (secure) protocol. This protocol is used for most Web-based e-commerce applications and for private areas of Web sites.
	Note: Although the HTTPS embed code works for both HTTP and HTTPS enabled Web sites, it does not work in an HTML page launched from the desktop. The Web page must reside on a Web server.
JavaScript API	Select this check box if you make VHost API calls from the Web page or if you have set the **Follow cursor in whole page** option in the **Scene Options** window. Learn about the options that you can set for a Scene.

9.5   Embed a Show or Scene in a Web page

You can use the Embed in Web Page option of the Publish Wizard to embed your Show or Scene in an HTML Web page.

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** .

    The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Embed in Web Page** option.

    The next window of the Wizard appears.

3. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the Show or Scene code.

    Learn about the properties that you can set for the embedded code.

4. Click **Preview** to play your Show.

5. Follow the instructions under **Instructions** for copying and embedding the code for your Show or Scene.

✓	If your target environment does not allow the use of JavaScript, use the **Web Page (No JavaScript)** option for publishing your Show or Scene. For example, eBay does not support JavaScript. The Web Page (No JavaScript) option does not support VHost API calls from the Web page or the **Follow cursor in whole page** Scene option.

9.6   *Embed a Scene in a Flash movie*

Use the Embed in Flash option of the Publish Wizard to embed your VHost Scene in a Flash movie.

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** ➡.

   The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Embed in Flash** option.

   The next window of the Wizard appears.

3. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the Show or Scene code.

   Learn about the properties that you can set for the embedded code.

4. Click **Preview** to play your Show.

5. Follow the instructions under **Instructions** for copying and embedding the code for your Show or Scene.

✓	To embed a Show or Scene in a Flash movie, you should be familiar with using Flash and its scripting language ActionScript.

9.7   *Embed a Scene in a MySpace page*

Use the Embed in MySpace option of the Publish Wizard to embed a Show or Scene in your profile on your MySpace page.

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** ➡.

   The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Embed in MySpace** option.

   The next window of the Wizard appears.

3. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the Show code.

   Learn about the properties that you can set for the embedded code.

4. Click **Preview** to play your Show.

5. Follow the instructions under **Instructions** for copying and embedding the code for your Show or Scene.

9.8   Publish a Scene to an eBay auction

Use the Publish to eBay option of the Publish Wizard to include a VHost Scene in your eBay auction. If the Publish to eBay option is not available in your Studio account, you can purchase this option in the SitePal Store.

1.   For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** [→].

     The Publish Wizard appears.

2.   Click the **Publish to eBay** option.

3.   Sign in to eBay using the Web page that appears

4.   Follow the instructions in the Publish Wizard to embed a Show or Scene in an eBay auction.

     Learn about the properties that you can set for the embedded code.

Be aware of the following when publishing to eBay:
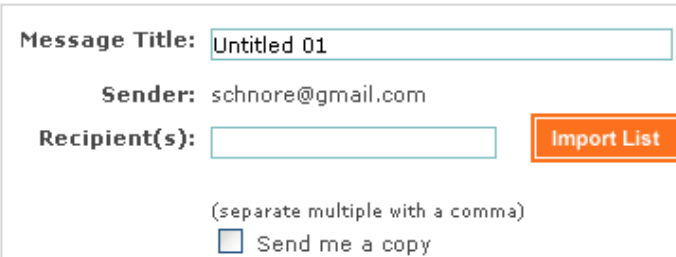
- Your auction's description cannot be modified after the auction is bid on.

- The auction cannot be modified within the last 12 hours of bidding.

- Do not modify your Scene through the life of the auction unless the change is specific to the auction. Changes to your Scene are instantaneously reflected on your auction page.

- If you are using the same Scene across multiple auctions, your audio message should be generic.

9.9   Email your Scene to anyone

To email a link to your Scene:

1.   On the Edit Scene page, click **Publish** [→] for a Scene.

2.   Click the **Email** option to display the **Publish Your Scene** page.

3.   Locate the **1. Email Information** portion of the page.

Figure 128 - **1. Email Information** *portion of the* **Publish Your Scene** *page*

4.   Do the following:

- In the **Message Title:** text box, enter the title of your email message.

- In the **Recipient(s)** text box, enter the email addresses for the recipients of the message.

> 📖 Check the **Send me a copy** checkbox to send a copy of the email to yourself (i.e., to the non-modifiable email address that displays in the **Sender:** field).

5. Locate the **2. Settings** portion of the page.

*Figure 129 - **2. Settings** portion of the **Publish Your Scene** page*

6. Do the following:

    • Specify the **Scene Dimensions:** of your email message. Enter the **Width** and **Height** in pixels.

    • Specify the **Scene Background Color:** your email.

7. Locate the **3. Template Settings** portion of the page.

*Figure 130 - **3. Template Settings** portion of the **Publish Your Scene** page (**HTML Email** tab selected)*

8. If you want to create:

    - an HTML email message, click the **HTML Email** tab (selected by default) and go to Step 9

    - a text-based email message, click the **Text Email** tab and go to Step 10.

9. If you select the **HTML Email** tab in Step 8, do the following:

    - Select a pre-defined HTML email template in the **Choose Template** portion of the page.

    - Enter your HTML email message header, body, and footer in the **Message Header** , **Message Body**, and **Message Footer** portions of the page, respectively. You can use the available icons and drop-downs to:

    - specify the font format (i.e., **Heading 1**), font family (i.e., **Arial**), font size (i.e., **10**), and font color of your HTML email message header

    - highlight your HTML email message header

    - add **bold**, *italics*, underline, or ~~strikethrough~~ to your HTML email message header

    - create a numbered or bulleted list for your HTML email message header

    - align your HTML email message header to the left, center, or right

    - add a hyperlink to your HTML email message header

    - add a graphic to your HTML email message header.

    Go to Step 11.

10. If you select the **Text Email** tab in Step 8, the text email fields display.
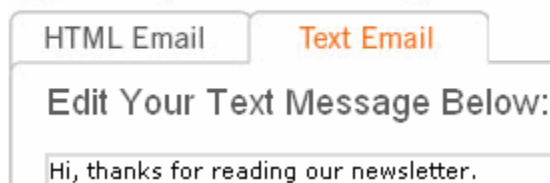
Figure 131 - **3. Template Settings** *portion of the* **Publish Your Scene** *page (***Text Email** *tab selected)*

In the **Edit Your Text Message Below:** text box, type the message that you want to include with the link to your Scene.

Go to Step 11.

11. Locate the **4. Preview** and **5. Send** portions of the page.

Figure 132 - **4. Preview** *and* **Send** *portion of the* **Publish Your Scene** *page*

12. Click the:

    - **Preview** button to preview your email message

    - **Send** button to send your email message.

    The message is sent and the **Publish Your Scene** window closes.

13. The recipient receives an HTML- or text-based message with a link to your Scene.

The Scene loads in the Web browser when the recipient clicks on the link in the email message.

Figure 133 - Scene linked from email

9.10 Embed a Scene in an HTML email message

You can embed a VHost Show or Scene in an HTML email, but the recipient may not see the Scene, depending on the email client and the settings the recipient is using. You can also send an email message that includes a link to your Show or Scene.

> Some email client programs can automatically remove the VHost embed code. Therefore you should design your HTML email in such a way that it still makes sense to the viewer if the VHost Scene is removed by the client. For such cases, you should include a link, or an image with a link, to a Web page embedded with your Scene.

The following describes the general process of how to embed a Scene in an HTML email by using Microsoft Outlook Express 6.0. You should test the HTML email with the embedded Scene by sending it to yourself before sending it to others. Your results can vary widely due to the settings and configurations of the recipient's email client program.

To embed a Show or Scene in an HTML email message:

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** .

   The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Embed in Web Page** option.

   The next window of the Wizard appears.

3. In Outlook Express, on the **Message** menu, click **New Message**.

4. In the **New Message** window, on the **Format** menu, click **Rich Text (HTML)**.

5. On the **View** menu, click **Source Edit**.

6. At the bottom of the window, click the **Source** tab.

   The underlying HTML source code of the message is revealed.

7. Modify the message's HTML source according to your design preferences.

   Design the HTML so that it will display reasonably well if the VHost Scene is stripped out by the user's email client.

8. From the **Publish Your Scene** window, copy the code.

9. Paste the code between the **<BODY>** and **</BODY>** tags.

10. Add a link to the Web page where your VHost Scene is embedded.

    Recipients of the message who cannot see the Scene in the email message can go to your Web site to view the Scene.

11. Click the **Edit** tab.

12. Enter email addresses in the **To** field, enter a subject in the **Subject** field, and then send the message.

9.11 Embed a Scene in a PowerPoint presentation

Use the Microsoft PowerPoint option of the Publish Wizard to embed a VHost Scene in a PowerPoint presentation.

To play a Scene in PowerPoint, you must be connected to the Internet during the presentation. Alternatively, you can load the Scene into the presentation while you're connected to cache the Scene in the presentation. You can then give the presentation without an Internet connection as long as you do not exit the PowerPoint program.

✓	You must have Flash version 6 or higher installed on your computer to perform this operation.

To embed a Scene in a PowerPoint presentation:

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** .

    The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Embed in Web Page** option.

    The next window of the Wizard appears.

3. Under **Publish To**, click **Microsoft PowerPoint**.

4. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the embedded code.

    Learn about the properties that you can set for the embedded code.

5. Click **Preview** to play your Show.

6. Follow the instructions under **Instructions** for copying and embedding the code for your Show or Scene.

✓	If you view the Scene before you save the PowerPoint presentation, the Playing property reverts to False, and you must reset it to True.

!	If a PowerPoint document includes an embedded Scene, you cannot exchange the document between a Windows computer and a Macintosh computer. Windows and Macintosh computers embed the flash control differently.

9.12 Export a Scene to an archive file

Use the Export option in the Publish Wizard to save the embed code for a Scene or Show. Your Studio account includes a set amount of export time that you can use to archive your VHost Scenes.

> ✓ If the Export option of the Publish Wizard is not available in your Avatar Studio account, contact Oddcast Sales at sales@oddcast.com or call 877-300-6030 for more information.

To export a Scene or Show to an archive file:

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** ➡.

    The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Export** option.

    The Export window of the Wizard appears.
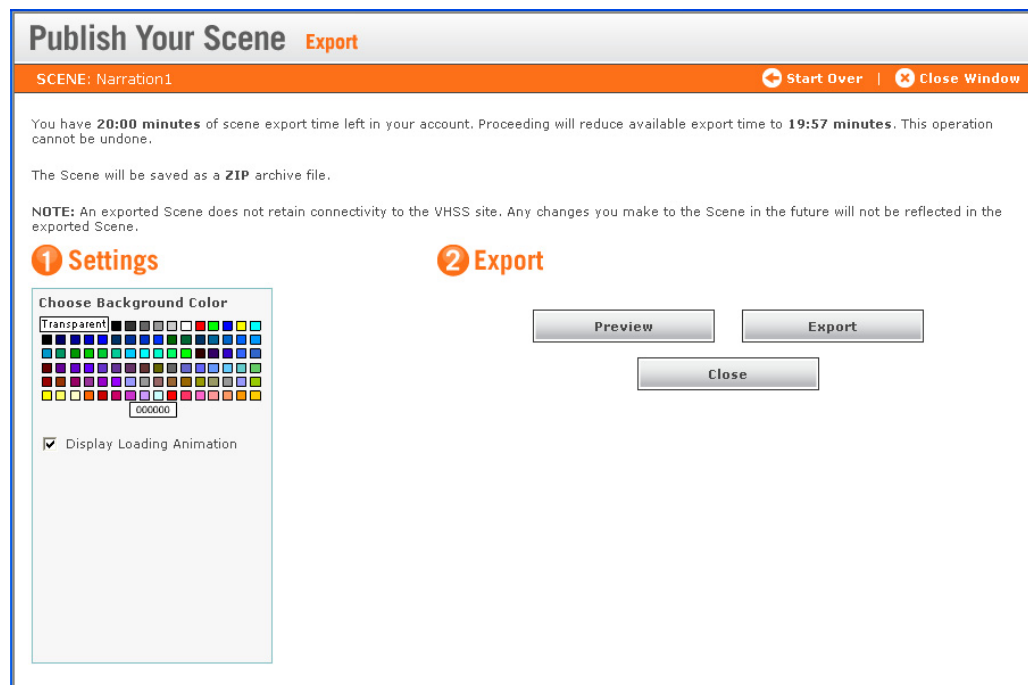
Figure 134 - Export a Scene

3. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the exported code.

    Learn about setting the background color for the exported code. Clear the **Display Loading Animation** check box if you do not want to save the VHost loading animation with the exported file.

4. Click **Export**, and then click **OK**.

5. Specify a location for the file, and the click **Save**.

9.13 Save a Scene as a video file

Use the Video option in the Publish Wizard to save a Scene or Show as a video file. Your Studio account includes a set amount of video generation time that you can use to save your VHost Scenes as video files.

| ✓ | If the Video option of the Publish Wizard is not available in your Avatar Studio account, contact Oddcast Sales at sales@oddcast.com or call 877-300-6030 for more information. |

To generate a video file from a Scene or Show:

1. For a Show or a Scene, click **Publish** .

    The Publish Wizard appears.

2. Click the **Video** option.

    The Video window of the Wizard appears.

Figure 135 - Generate video from a Scene

3. Under **Settings**, set the properties for the video file.

| Fit to Frame | The Fit to frame option resizes the scene to match the video width. The height scales accordingly. This format is often called widescreen video and is usually represented by two black bars above and below the video |
| Cover Frame | The Cover frame option scales the scene to match the video height. Some cropping will occur on the edges. This format is often called letterbox. |

4. Click **Generate Video**, and then click **OK**.

5. Click **Save**.

6. Specify a location for the file, and the click **Save**.

9.14 Limit audio playback

Conserving your available Audio Streams is important since there are a pre-defined number of Audio Streams allotted to each VHost account package. The number of Audio Streams that are available in your account is shown on your Account Info page.

In the Scene Options window you can limit the number of times an audio message is played and repeated to a user within a specified period of time. Learn more about limiting audio playback.

To limit audio playback:

1. On the Studio main menu, click **Shows**.

    The **Shows** page loads.

2. Under the **Edit** column for a Show, click **Edit** .

    The **Edit Show** page loads.

3. In the **Scenes** panel, under the **Scene Options** column for a Scene, click **Scene Options** .

    The Scene Options window appears.

4. Under **Playback Settings**, on the first drop-down menu, select a playback limit.

5. On the second drop-down menu, select the period of time for the playback limit.

    For example, if you select **Limit to 2** for the playback limit and **per Day** for the period of time, your Scene plays twice to each viewer in a day. You can select **Unlimited** to play the Scene every time the page loads. The viewer can click the **Play** button any time to play the Scene.
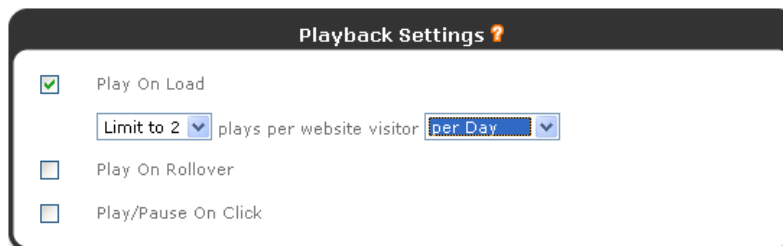
Figure 136 - Limit playback

Chapter 10

Using Dynamic Text-to-Speech

Use Dynamic Text-to-Speech (TTS) to determine the text that your Character speaks when your Scene is played. For example, you could store your text in a database and have your character speak different TTS messages through a program that interfaces with the database.

10.1 About implementing Dynamic TTS

To implement dynamic TTS inside an HTML page, you use JavaScript to call the VHost API *sayText* function. This method supports the full inventory of VHost languages and voices. For more information about Voice Family IDs, Language IDs, and Voice IDs supported by the *sayText* and *sayAIResponse* API calls, see Appendix B of the VHost API Reference.

The following describes the process of using Dynamic TTS with a VHost Scene:

1. Turn off audio for the Scene that you want to use.

   To turn off audio for a Scene, in the Audio Selection window, under the **Select** column for the **None** audio, click the option, and then click **Select Audio**.

2. Embed the Scene in your HTML page.

   Make sure that the **JavaScript API** check box under **Settings** is selected in the Publish Wizard when you generate the code for your Scene.

3. Set the Licensed Domain.

   TTS is licensed by domain. To use TTS you need to specify the domain name from which your pages are served. Domain-specific licensing is implemented as a security measure to prevent TTS-stream theft from your account. A TTS license includes two domains. You can change your licensed domains at anytime.

   To set the licensed domain, go the **Account Info** page and under **Optional Account Features**, select the **Secure Playback** check box. Then, in the **Licensed Domains** panel, click the first **Define Domain** link and enter the name of the domain in which your VHost Scenes are embedded.

Figure 137 - Licensed Domain panel

   An example of a domain name is www.mycompany.com (do not include http:// or any path information). You can use multiple domains with your account to support deployments on several Web sites. Your account includes two domains, and you can buy additional domains in the VHost Store.

4. Review the *sayText* API function.

   Review the syntax of the *sayText* function in the VHost API Reference. Call this function to invoke dynamic TTS in response to events. Use the function parameters to specify the language, the voice and the engine that you want to use. For advanced functionality, review

the available SSML tags that you can use to fine-tune TTS audio. For more information, see Appendix B of the <u>VHost API Reference</u>.

5. Call the *sayText* API function.

    You can call *sayText* to induce speech at any time after the Scene fully loads. You can have your Character speak when a user clicks the Character, when the mouse rolls over a certain area of your page, or after a certain amount of time has elapsed. The following example shows JavaScript that plays the audio when a user clicks a link:

```
<a href="javascript:sayText('something',1,1,1);">Click here to say "something"!</a>
```

    In a similar way you can invoke TTS in response to rollover or other events that JavaScript can detect or generate. The following example shows JavaScript that plays the audio when the Scene first loads:

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){
sayText("Welcome to my Web site!",1,1,1);
}
</SCRIPT>
```

    The *vh_SlideBegin* callback function captures the *vh_SlideBegin* event. This event indicates that the Scene is loaded and ready to accept your call. For more information about Event Callback functions, see the <u>VHost API Reference</u>.

You can <u>view an example of a Dynamic TTS implementation</u> that uses the methods described above. Right-click and click View Source to see the source code for the page. You can copy and paste code from this page to use in your own implementation of Dynamic TTS.

10.2 Use SSML tags with TTS

You can use the Speech Synthesis Markup Language (SSML) to control, manipulate, and refine Text-to-Speech.

<u>SSML</u> is a <u>W3C</u> specification and is based on the <u>XML</u> markup language that instructs a Text-To-Speech engine how to process text to generate audio. SSML provides a standardized way for authors of synthesized text to control such aspects of speech as pronunciation, volume, pitch, rate, and other elements of speech.

SSML is based on XML, so certain rules apply to the use of SSML tags:

*   SSML tags must be properly nested and must not overlap.

*   SSML is case sensitive: opening and closing tags must match exactly.

Incorrect	`<Say-as interpret-as="Currency"> $25.32 </say-as>`

Correct	`<say-as interpret-as="Currency"> $25.32 </say-as>`
	
	`<SAY-AS interpret-as="Currency"> $25.32 </SAY-AS>`

*   Attribute values must be set in quotes.

Incorrect	`<say-as interpret-as=Number:decimal> 3.14159 </say-as>`
Correct	`<say-as interpret-as="Number:decimal"> 3.14159 </say-as>`

- The tags of empty elements must be closed.

Incorrect	`No time for a pause <Break size="none"> Keep going.`
Correct	`No time for a pause <Break size="none"/> Keep going.`

In addition, there is an SSML-specific markup rule:

- Tokens (that is, words) in SSML cannot span markup tags.

  A simple English example is "cup<break/>board"; the synthesis treats this as the two words "cup" and "board" rather than as one word with a pause in the middle. Breaking one token into multiple tokens this way will likely affect how the processor treats it.

> ✓ Additional SSML markup guidelines appear in the SSML specification. A complete list of supported SSML tags and examples of how to use them appear in Appendix C of the VHost API Reference. A list of all SSML elements and attributes appears in the W3C SSML Recommendation.

10.3 Fine-tune SSML-driven TTS

There are tools on the Oddcast Web site that can help you fine-tune your SSML-driven TTS:

- The Loquendo tool is at http://www.oddcast.com/vhost_minisite/support/ssml/loquendo

- The AT&T tool is at http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_minisite/support/ssml/att

- The NeoSpeach tool is at http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_minisite/support/ssml/NeoSpeach

Paste your SSML-marked up text into the tool's text field, click the Say Text-to-Speech button, and listen to how the engine interprets your text and tags. Then use the tool to edit your tags and retest the message until you obtain the desired results. When you are finished, use the text and the SSML tags in your Scene.

The following is an example marked up with SSML for the Loquendo speech engine:

```
Using <SAY-AS interpret-as="Acronym">SSML</SAY-AS> tags I can
pronounce addresses, currencies, dates, time, and more.
I can! pause <Break size="large"/> anywhere for any duration.
I can! <prosody volume="soft">speak very softly, and then</prosody>
<prosody volume="loud">surprise! speak loud!</prosody>
I can! <prosody rate="slow">speak very slowly, and
then:</prosody><prosody rate="fast">speak so fast, you could hardly
follow!</prosody>
I can! shift my pitch! <prosody pitch="high">I might be
high.</prosody> and <prosody pitch="low">I might be low!</prosody>
and everything in between.
```

The following is an example marked up with SSML for the AT&T engine. The voice tag gives you control over the voice of the TTS speaker from the input text. You can use this feature to change voices or language, as demonstrated below. This voice feature is supported only for the AT&T voice family and must be processed by the AT&T engine.

```
I can! change my voice while I speak! <VOICE Name="Audrey16">A
different accent!?</VOICE> or speak in a different language!<VOICE
Name="Juliette16">Merci beaucoup!</VOICE>
```

Text with SSML tags can also be used with the VHost API *sayText* function.

✓	Additional SSML markup guidelines appear in the W3C <u>SSML specification</u>. A complete list of supported SSML tags and examples of how to use them appear in Appendix C of the <u>VHost API Reference</u>.

10.4 Troubleshoot Dynamic Text-to-Speech

Consider the following suggestions if your implementation of Dynamic TTS does not work correctly.

- Verify that you have properly copied the Standard Web Page embed code from the Publish Wizard into your page. Before copying the code, make sure that you have selected the JavaScript API setting.

- Verify that the licensed domain name has been configured properly on your Account Info page. One of the specified domain names must be identical to the domain name you see in your browser's Address field after stripping away the preceding http:// and any path information. For example, if your browser's Address field shows http://www.mycompany.com/abcd/index.html, your licensed domain name should be www.mycompany.com.

- Verify that the *sayText* function is actually being called. You can verify this by adding a JavaScript alert in the line before the *sayText* function call:

  If your implementation is correct, the alert will appear when your Character is about to speak. If you do not see the alert, your code is not calling the *sayText* function, and you need to examine your code for omissions.

Chapter 11

Using the API to control audio

This chapter shows you how to use the VHost API and JavaScript to extend the functionality, flexibility and capabilities of VHost Scenes.

11.1 Vary audio messages by the time of day

The following HTML code illustrates how you can use JavaScript to precede a regular audio message with a specific audio message based on the time of day. The code that plays the audio is shaded in blue.

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>VHost Time of Day Example</TITLE>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript"
src="http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_embed_functions.php?acc=12194&js
=1&followCursor=1">
</script>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){
var now = new Date();
now.setTime(now.getTime() + 30 * 24 * 60 * 60 * 1000);
   d = new Date();
   mins = d.getMinutes();
   hours = d.getHours();

     if(hours < 12){
         sayAudio('goodMorning');
       }else if (hours < 17){
         sayAudio('goodAfternoon');
     }else{
         hours = hours - 12;
         sayAudio('goodEvening');
       }
   sayAudio('regularMessage');
}
</script>
</HEAD>

<BODY>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript">
AC_VHost_Embed_12194(327,500,'FFFFFF',1,1,217600,469151,0,0,'27f8f45
d14efc8d47e78f86503522d26',6);
</script>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

11.2 Use cookies to play alternate audio files

You can use the value of a cookie to determine the number of times a user has accessed your page and then vary the audio accordingly. For example, if a user is returning to a page, an audio plays that is different than the audio played on the user's first visit to the page.

1. Turn off audio for the Scene that you want to use.

    To turn off audio for a Scene, in the **Audio Selection** window, under the **Select** column for the **None** audio, click the option, and then click **Select Audio**.

2. Copy the code below and paste it into the **<head>** section of your HTML page.

    Paste this code before the following line of code:

```
// and do not exceed one line unless the new line also starts with //
```

```
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript">
  <!--

  var caution = false

  // name - name of the cookie
  // value - value of the cookie
  // [expires] - expiration date of the cookie
  // (defaults to end of current session)
  // [path] - path for which the cookie is valid
  // (defaults to path of calling document)
  // [domain] - domain for which the cookie is valid
  // (defaults to domain of calling document)
  // [secure] - Boolean value indicating if
  // the cookie transmission requires a secure transmission
  // * an argument defaults when it is assigned null as a placeholder
  // * a null placeholder is not required for trailing omitted
  // * arguments
  function setCookie(name, value, expires, path, domain, secure) {
     var curCookie = name + "=" + escape(value) +
        ((expires) ? "; expires=" + expires.toGMTString() : "") +
        ((path) ? "; path=" + path : "") +
        ((domain) ? "; domain=" + domain : "") +
        ((secure) ? "; secure" : "")
     if (!caution || (name + "=" + escape(value)).length <= 4000)
        document.cookie = curCookie
     else
        if (confirm("Cookie exceeds 4KB and will be cut!"))
           document.cookie = curCookie
  }

  // name - name of the cookie
  // * return string containing value
  // of specified cookie or null if cookie
  // does not exist
  function getCookie(name) {
     var prefix = name + "="
     var cookieStartIndex = document.cookie.indexOf(prefix)
     if (cookieStartIndex == -1)
        return null
```

```
        var cookieEndIndex = document.cookie.indexOf(";",
cookieStartIndex +
            prefix.length)
        if (cookieEndIndex == -1)
            cookieEndIndex = document.cookie.length
        return unescape(document.cookie.substring(cookieStartIndex +
            prefix.length,
    cookieEndIndex))
    }
    // name - name of the cookie
    // [path] - path of the cookie
    // (must be same as path used to create cookie)
    // [domain] - domain of the cookie
    // (must be same as domain used to create cookie)
    // * path and domain default if assigned
    // null or omitted if no explicit argument proceeds
    function deleteCookie(name, path, domain) {
        if (getCookie(name)) {
            document.cookie = name + "=" +
            ((path) ? "; path=" + path : "") +
            ((domain) ? "; domain=" + domain : "") +
            "; expires=Thu, 01-Jan-70 00:00:01 GMT"
        }
    }

    // date - any instance of the Date object
    // * you should hand all instances of the
    // Date object to this function for "repairs"
    // * This function is taken from
    // Chapter 14, "Time and Date in JavaScript," in
    // "Learn Advanced JavaScript Programming"
    function fixDate(date) {
        var base = new Date(0)
        var skew = base.getTime()
        if (skew > 0)
            date.setTime(date.getTime() - skew)
    }

    var now = new Date()
    fixDate(now)
    now.setTime(now.getTime() + 365 * 24 * 60 * 60 * 1000)
    var visits = getCookie("counter")

//Use this section of the code to test your cookie; if it's set, the
cookie will increment.

  if (!visits)
  visits =1
  else
  visits = parseInt (visits) + 1
  setCookie ("counter", visits, now)
  document.write("you have been here " + visits + " times(s).")

//The code is set for one visit, but you can change the numbers to
whatever you like:

//Oddcast API function call:
```

```
   function vh_sceneLoaded(){
if ( visits <= 1 ){
 sayAudio('sampleName')
}
else if (visits >= 1){
 sayAudio('anotherSampleName')
}
}
   </script>
```

3. Change the name of the audio messages that are referenced in the last section of code.

   Change *sampleName* to the name of the audio message that you want to play for first-time visitors, and change *anotherSampleName* to the name of the audio message you want to play for returning users.

4. If you want the user to be able to replay the original audio message, set up a replay link using the *sayAudio* function from the VHost API.

> ✓ These functions do not work with the Audio Enhancement option or with the Web Page (No JavaScript) embedding option. You must set the **JavaScript API** property in the Publish Wizard to use this code in your page.

11.3 Publish a Scene in different pages with different audio

To publish the same Scene in different Web pages while using different audio messages for each page, you use the VHost API *vh_slideBegin* event with a *sayAudio* or *sayText* function.

1. Open your Scene in the Scene Editor.

2. Turn off audio for the Scene that you want to use.

   To turn off audio for a Scene, in the **Audio Selection** window, under the **Select** column for the **None** audio, click the option, and then click **Select Audio**.

3. Embed the Scene in your Web pages by using the **Embed in Web Page** option of the Publish Wizard with the **JavaScript API** option activated.

4. In **<head>** section of your HTML pages after the call to the VHost, place the following code and replace the name of the audio file Count with the name of an audio message from your Audio Library.

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){ //event function
 playMyAudio();
}
function playMyAudio(){
sayAudio('Count');
}
```

5. For each different HTML page, change the name of the audio message to the audio in your Audio Library that you want to play.

   The following shows the complete and functional code for this example:

```
<html>
<head>
```

```
<title>
VHost Say Multiple Audios Example</title>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript"
src="http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_embed_functions.php?acc=18&js=1"
></script>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){ //event function
 playMyAudio();
}
function playMyAudio(){
 sayAudio('Count');
}
</SCRIPT>
</head>
<body>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript">
AC_VHost_Embed_18(229,350,'FFFFFF',1,1,578,1366,0,0,'2a718006e025d6c
ef28cc565cdeaeb8a',6);
</script>
</body>
</html>
```

✓ These functions do not work with the Audio Enhancement option or with the Web Page (No JavaScript) embedding option. You must set the **JavaScript API** property in the Publish Wizard to add these functions to a Scene.

11.4 Use JavaScript to play audio messages randomly

You can randomly alternate the audio messages that play in a Web page using JavaScript. This example assumes that you have uploaded the audio files that you want to play.

1. Copy the following code and paste it in your HTML page following the code that calls your VHost Scene.

```
<!-- randomize audio code -->
<script language="javascript" type="text/javascript">
<!--
function random_Audio(){
var ranAudio= Math.round(Math.random()*5);
return ranAudio;
}
function vh_sceneLoaded(){
var Audio=random_Audio()
//specify random audio below, replace test1 through test6 with the
//names of your audio files.
var myAudio=new Array (6);
myAudio[0]="test1";
myAudio[1]="test2";
myAudio[2]="test3";
myAudio[3]="test4";
myAudio[4]="test5";
myAudio[5]="test6";

var audioToPlay = myAudio[Audio]

sayAudio(audioToPlay);
```

```
}
//-->
</script>
```

2. Change the names of the audio messages in the code to match the actual names of the audio messages that you want to play. For example:

```
myAudio[0]="myFirstAudioFile";
```

To add audio messages to the array:

1. Copy the following code and paste it in your HTML page following the code that calls your SitePal Scene.

```
var myAudio=new Array (6);
```

For example, if you call 10 audio messages, change the (6) to (10).

2. Change the multiplier in the code to a number that is one less than the total number of audio files that you are calling in the script:

```
var ranAudio= Math.round(Math.random()*5);
```

For example, if you have 10 audio files, change the *5 multiplier to *9.

> ✓ These functions do not work with the Audio Enhancement option or with the Web Page (No JavaScript) embedding option. You must set the **JavaScript API** property in the Publish Wizard to add these functions to a Scene.

11.5 Concatenate audio messages

You can concatenate, or chain together, specific audio messages by using multiple instances of the *sayAudio* or *sayText* functions. In the following example JavaScript code, the *sayAudio* function concatenates four audio messages:

```
<head>
<title>
Oddcast VHost Say Multiple Audios Example</title>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript"
src="http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_embed_functions.php?acc=18&js=1"
></script>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){ //event function
    singAsong();
}
function singAsong(){
    sayAudio('LondonBridge 1');
    sayAudio('LondonBridge 2');
    sayAudio('LondonBridge 2');
    sayAudio('LondonBridge 1');
    sayAudio('LondonBridge 3');
}
</SCRIPT>
</head>
```

You can view the above example online. To see the complete source code for this example, open the example in your browser and on the **View** menu, click **Source**.

If you have the Text-to-Speech option available to your account, you can also concatenate text with the ***sayText*** function:

```
<head>
<title>
Oddcast VHost SitePal Say Multiple Text Example</title>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript"
src="http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_embed_functions.php?acc=18&js=1"
></script>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){ //event function
    singAsong();
}
function singAsong(){
    sayText('london bridge is falling down',5,1,1);
    sayText('falling down',5,1,1);
    sayText('falling down',5,1,1);
    sayText('london bridge is falling down',5,1,1);
    sayText('my fair lady',5,1,1);
}
</SCRIPT>
</head>
```

You can view the above example online. To see the complete source code for this example, open the example in your browser and on the **View** menu, click **Source**.

For more information about the *sayText* function, see Using Dynamic Text-to-Speech.

11.6 Queue concatenated audio messages

You can use the *setStatus* speech function to either

- stop playing the current audio message when *sayAudio* or *sayText* is called

- queue, or sequence, the audio messages called by *sayAudio* or sayText to start playing after the current audio message finishes

The API function *setStatus* accepts an integer of either 0 or 1 as its first parameter, which initiates the *interruptMode* routine.

> 📖 The value of the second routine of *setStatus*, *progressInterval*, steps through the audio message playback and should typically be set to 0. For more information about *setStatus*, see the VHost API Reference.

If the parameter for *interruptMode* is set to 0, the current audio message stops playing when *sayAudio* or *sayText* is called. If the parameter is set to 1, the current audio message continues playing and all audio messages called by *sayAudio* or *sayText* are queued and played after the current audio message finishes.

```
function sayMyAudio() {
 setStatus(1,0); //The value of 1 in the first argument specifies
                 //that the message not may be interrupted.
 sayAudio('count');
}
```

In the following complete example, *setStatus* is demonstrated with both of its *interruptMode* arguments and highlighted with comments:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>
SitePal Say Multiple Audios Example</title>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript"
src="http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_embed_functions.php?acc=18&js=1"
></script>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function vh_sceneLoaded(){ //event function
 singAsong();
}
function singAsong(){
 setStatus(0,0);
 //The 0 value in the first argument specifies that the
 //messages will be queued.
 sayAudio('LondonBridge 1');
 sayAudio('LondonBridge 2');
 sayAudio('LondonBridge 2');
 sayAudio('LondonBridge 1');
 sayAudio('LondonBridge 3');
}
function sayMyAudio() {
 setStatus(1,0); //The 1 value in the first argument specifies
                 //that the message not may be interrupted.
 sayAudio('count');
}
</SCRIPT>
</head>
<body>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript">
AC_VHost_Embed_18(229,350,'FFFFFF',1,1,578,1366,0,0,'2a718006e025d6c
ef28cc565cdeaeb8a',6);
</script>
<p>
Click
<a href="javascript:sayMyAudio();">here</a> to hear another
message<BR>
or click here to hear <a href="javascript:singAsong();">London
Bridge</a> again.
</body>
</html>
```

Chapter 12

AI and the AI Knowledge Base

Bring your VHost Characters to life with the power of artificial intelligence (AI) by using the AI Knowledge Base. You can think of the AI Knowledge Base as the personality and brain of your VHost Character, enabling the Character to respond to user questions with context-sensitive, spoken answers. The AI Knowledge Base is also referred to as a Bot.

For example, a user who is visiting an art Web site can type a question for a Bot, such as:

"How much are these prints?"

The VHost AI engine retrieves the relevant information from your AI Knowledge Base, and then your VHost Character speaks the answer:

"The price of the prints featured on this page is 45 dollars framed or 25 dollars unframed. These prints are available for immediate shipping."

To use the AI Knowledge Base, you need to:

1. Design and embed your VHost Scene in a Web page.
2. Edit your Bot's characteristics.
3. Teach your Bot concepts, which is the detailed knowledge for responding to keywords.
4. Use the API function *sayAIResponse* to route visitors' questions to your VHost character. Your character will automatically respond to these questions. (you must add a text field to your Web page so your visitors can type in their questions).
5. Use the *vh_aiResponse* API callback to capture and display the text response (optional).
6. Deploy your Bot on a Web site.

You use the Artificial Intelligence Management Center (AIMC) to edit the AI Knowledge Base. Your Studio account includes a Bot which has defined characteristics including name, age, and gender. This built-in Bot contains over 23,000 unique pieces of information. Using the AIMC is optional. If you do not edit your Bot, your character will respond based on the built-in information and pre-configured characteristics.

✓	The AI Knowledge Base is setup for English only. However, other languages are now supported. Please contact Oddcast Support to learn how to add French, German or Italian AIML sets.

12.1 Set up the AI Management Center

You use the VHost AIMC to edit and maintain your Bot. In the AIMC properties window, you can change your Bot's characteristics. In the AIMC's concepts window, you can teach your Bot detailed knowledge about a specific subject matter.

> ✓ The changes and additions you make to your Bot through the AIMC are reflected in its Artificial Intelligence Markup Language (AIML) File System. AIML is a derivative of the Extensible Markup Language (XML) and is used to create pattern-based, stimulus-response knowledge content. AIML serves this content over the Internet with HTML, XHTML, and XML. Knowledge of AIML is not required for you to use the AIMC or to use the AI Knowledge Base.

To set up the AIMC for your Bot:

1. On the main menu bar, click **AIMC**.

    The AIMC Home page appears.

2. On the top menu bar, click **Edit**, and then click the **Edit Bot Properties** link.

3. Under **Base Properties**, enter the characteristics of your Bot.

Figure 138 - Base Properties for Bot

4.   Under **Custom Properties**, enter knowledge about specific subject matter for your Bot.

Figure 139 – Custom Properties

5.   Click the **Update Properties** button.

> ✓   To create a new custom property for your Bot, you must first write the corresponding code in the AIML file system. To learn more about AIML, see the AIML Primer.

12.2 Define concepts for your AI Knowledge Base

Concepts are responses for a Bot to use when it encounters specific keywords or phrases that are entered by users.

To define a concept for your Bot:

1.   On the main menu bar, click **AIMC**.

   The AIMC Home page appears.

2.   On the top menu bar, click **Edit**, and then click the **Edit Concepts** link.

3. On the **Edit Concepts** page, click **Add**.

    The **Add a New Concept** page appears.

Figure 140 - Add a New Concept page

4. In the **Keywords** box, type a keyword or a list of keywords.

    Separate each keyword with a comma.

5. In the **Response** box, type the responses for the keywords.

6. Click **Done** when you are finished adding responses for the keyword or keywords.

    You must enclose each response in quotes.

    You can enter multiple short responses in one Response box. Each discrete response in a Response box must be on a separate line.

    You can enter one longer response in one Response box and then add additional Response boxes. Click **Add Response** to add an another Response box

7. Click **Done** when you are finished adding responses for the keyword or keywords.

📖	To save your keywords and responses for a concept and continue to work on the concept, click **Update**.

📖	To edit your keywords or responses for a concept, or to add more responses to a concept, on the Edit Concepts page, click the concept and then click **Edit**.

12.3 Edit the AIML file system

AIML code contains the underlying logic and Knowledge Base which governs your Bot's responses. In the AIML File System, you can create new AIML files, edit existing files, or upload AIML files from your computer.

!	Editing AIML Code is **optional**! In most cases teaching your Bot by adding and editing Concepts is sufficient for achieving the desired result. Only in cases where detailed control and fine-tuning of your Bot's responses is required is editing the AIML source code necessary. To learn more about AIML, see the AIML Primer.

To edit the AIML file system:

1. On the main menu bar, click **AIMC**.

    The AIMC Home page appears.

2. On the top menu bar, click **Edit**, and then click the **[Advanced] Edit AIML File System** link.

    The AIMC Home page appears.
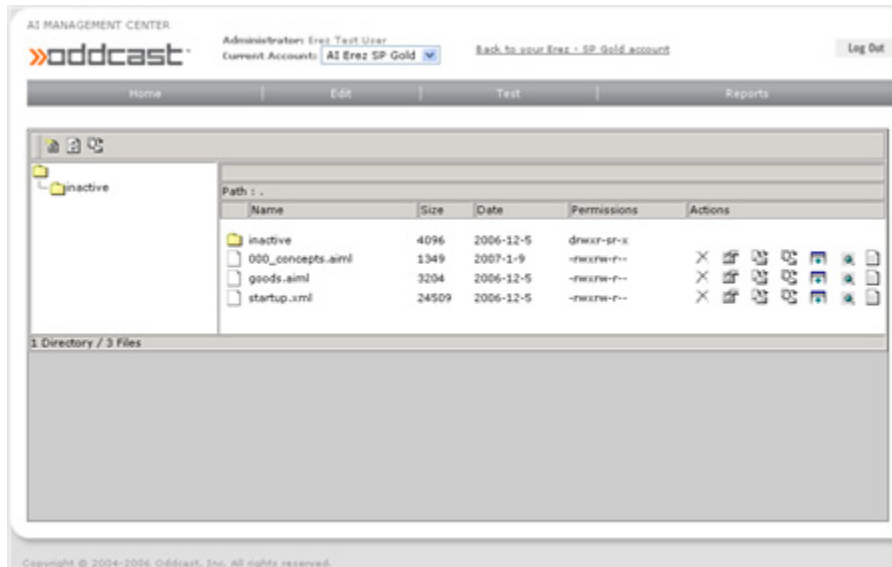
Figure 141 - AIML File System

In the **AIML File System** window, do any of the following:

To	Do this
Create a new AIML file	Click the **Create a file** button .
Refresh the list of AIML files	Click the **Refresh** button .
Upload an AIML file from your computer	Click the **Upload** file button .
Perform an action on an AIML file	Click on one of the buttons for the file in the **Action** column. Hold the mouse pointer over a button to show the button name.

!	It is important that you backup AIML files before you modify them. The AIML files that are included with your account cannot be restored should you accidentally damage these files.

12.4 Compile your AI Knowledge Base

When you change Bot's properties or add new concepts, you create new AIML code. You need to compile this new code for these changes and additions to be activated and recognized by your Bot. The AIMC automatically generates a Staging Bot when you compile the AIML for your Bot. The Staging Bot is created and you can test your changes before deploying your Bot on a live Web page.

To compile the AIML for your Bot:

1. On the main menu bar, click **AIMC**.

   The AIMC Home page appears.

2. On the top menu bar, click **Edit**, and then click the **Compile AIML - Generate Staging Bot** link.

   A window appears displaying the AIML files that are being compiled. Depending on the extent of the changes or additions being compiled, this process can take up to 30 minutes.

   The AIML files are compiled to the Staging AI Engine; the live AI Engine is not affected.
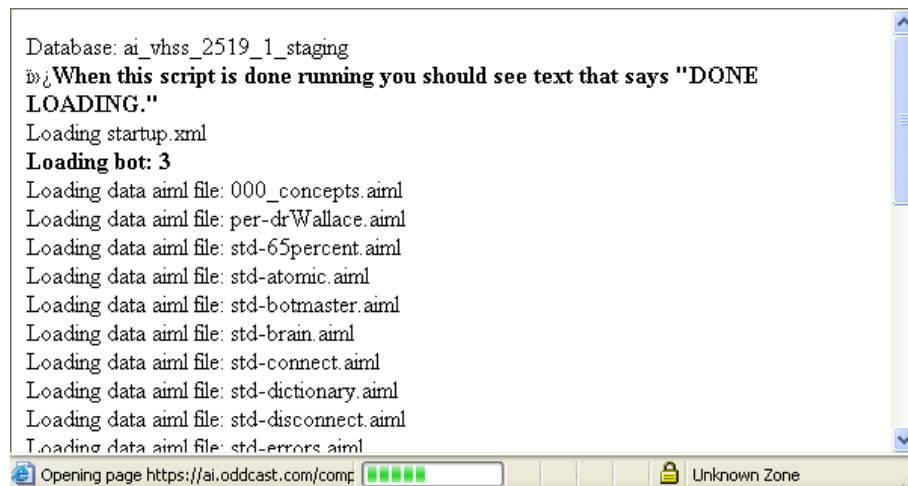
Figure 142 - Compiling AIML Files

3. Click the Test your **Bot** link.

4. Click **Test Staging Bot**.

   The testing environment does not include your VHost Character since just the Bot or personality is necessary to test your changes and additions in its behavior.
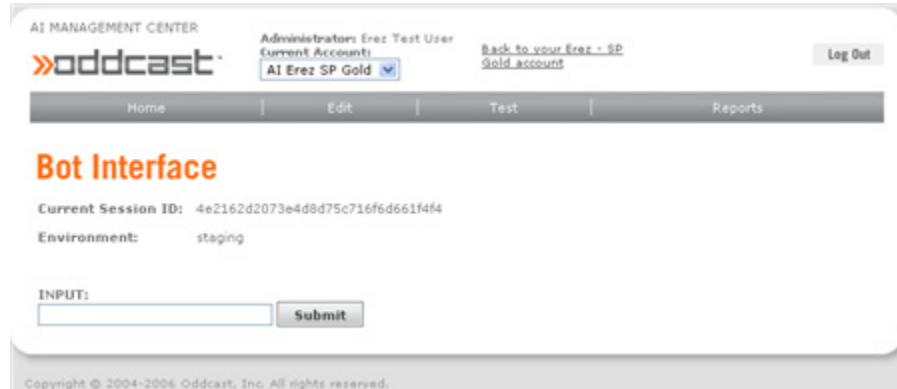
Figure 143 - Testing a BOT

5. In the **Input** box, type a question that will test your changes to the Bot, and then click **Submit**.

   When you are satisfied that your changes are working correctly, deploy your Bot to a Web page.

12.5 Implement your AI Knowledge Base

To use the AI Knowledge Base with the VHost Character on your Web page, you need to use the API *sayAIResponse* function along with the API *vh_aiResponse* event function. The response returned to the *sayAIResponse* function triggers the *vh_aiResponse* event function, which returns the text that the AI engine generates.

> ✓ To implement the AI Knowledge Base on your Web page you should be familiar with general programming concepts and JavaScript.

Perform the following steps to implement the AI Knowledge Base into your web page:

1. Insert the following code into the <HEAD> section of your page:

```
<script language="javascript">
var tempText;

function vh_aiResponse(args) {  // args = AI text response
   var aiString = args;
   document.myForm.message.value += ("Q:  " + tempText + "\n" + "A:
" +
aiString + "\n \n") + document.myForm.message.value;
   document.myForm.textToSay.value = "";
}
</script>
```

2. Insert the following code into the <BODY> of your page under the code that calls your VHost Character:

```
<form name="myForm"
onSubmit="javascript:tempText=textToSay.value;sayAIResponse(textToSa
y.value,
5, 1, 1); textToSay.value=''; return false">
<input name="textToSay" value="">
<input type="button" value="Ask AI Engine"
onClick="javascript:tempText=textToSay.value;sayAIResponse(textToSay
.value,
5, 1, 1); textToSay.value=''; return false">
<br><br>
<textarea name="message" value="" rows=6 cols=55 readonly
vscroll="true"></textarea>
</form>
```

✓	The above *sayAIResponse* function has a female voice (the second parameter is 5, the voice value). To see a list of possible values for the voice parameter, see VHost API Reference.

3. Go to your **Account Info** page and define your domain under the **Licensed Domains** section.

!	The Licensed Domain must match the URL of the Web site which is hosting the AI implementation. This step is required for your security so that malicious users can't steal your Audio Streams.

12.6 Deploy your AI Knowledge Base

You must implement your AI Knowledge Base on a Web site before you can deploy your Bot to a live environment.

1. On the main menu bar, click **AIMC**.

   The AIMC Home page appears.

2. On the top menu bar, click **Edit**, and then click the **Deploy Bot from Staging to Live** link.

   A window appears that informs you that that the AI Engine is being transferred to the live database.

12.7 Access AI Management Center report logs

You can view logs of the conversations visitors on your Web site have with your Bot. You can also view the logs of test conversations that you have with the Staging Bot.

1. On the main menu bar, click **AIMC**.

   The AIMC Home page appears.

2. On the top menu bar, click **Reports**.

    The reports page appears.
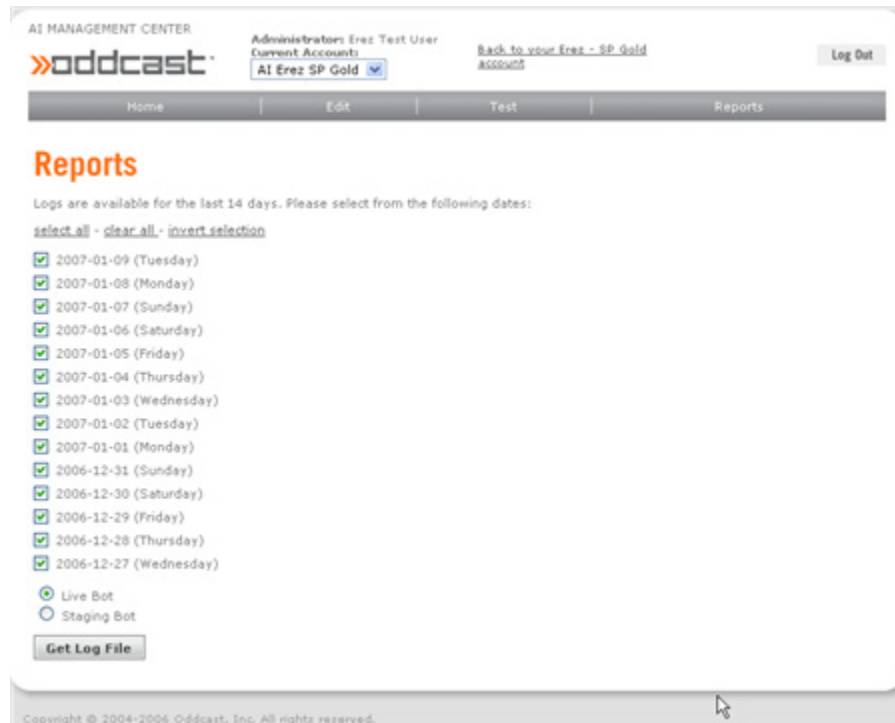
Figure 144 - AIMC Reports

3. Select **Live Bot** or **Staging Bot**.

4. Select the dates for which you want to view conversation logs.

5. Click **Get Log File**.

6. Click **Open** or **Save**.

    The File Download dialog box appears.

7. Click **Open** or **Save**.

    Extract the files from the WinZip file or save the Zip file. The log file is a CSV file that you can open in spreadsheet.

Appendix A

Avatar Studio Glossary

The following are definitions of the names and terms that are used in Avatar Studio and Oddcast's VHost technology.

AI Knowledge Base

The artificial intelligence (AI) that enables a VHost Character to respond to user questions with context-sensitive, spoken answers.

AIMC

Artificial Intelligence Management Center. You use the AIMC to edit the AI Knowledge Base (Bot).

AIML

Artificial Intelligence Markup Language. AIML is used to create pattern-based, stimulus-response knowledge content.

Audio

The message which your Character speaks in a VHost Scene.

Audio Enhancement

An option for analyzing an audio file that you record or upload to improve its overall quality.

Audio Stream

One playing of an audio message is one audio stream.

Avatar

An animated graphical representation of a person, animal, or object. VHost Characters are sophisticated speaking avatars.

Background

An image that appears as the background of a VHost Scene.

Bot

A VHost Character that uses the AI Knowledge Base.

Character

A VHost avatar. A VHost Character is based on a VHost Model, or a Model that Oddcast creates for you from an image that you provide.

Concept

Responses for a Bot to use when it encounters specific keywords or phrases that are entered by users

Custom Model

A talking, animated VHost character that Oddcast designs to your exact specifications. For example, you can create a VHost Model that looks exactly like you, or you can create a VHost Model from your company logo or mascot.

Dynamic Text-to-Speech

Text-to-Speech (TTS) that synthesizes text in real time. With Dynamic TTS, the audio that a VHost Character speaks is determined by what a user types as the Scene. You implement Dynamic TTS with a VHost API function.

Licensed Domain

The domain in which your VHost Scenes are embedded. When you activate Secure Playback option, the domain requesting the Scene is verified before the Scene is played. See Secure Playback.

Lip-synching

The synchronization of an audio message with your Character's lip movements.

Message

An audio message that your VHost Character speaks.

Model

A pre-configured VHost Character. You create your VHost Character by starting with a Model.

Off- line audio

An audio that is not available for a Scene. An offline audio does not play when the Scene is embedded in a Web site.

Off- line background

A background that is not available for a Scene. An offline audio does not appear when the Scene is embedded in a Web site.

On-line audio

An audio that you can select for a Scene.

On-line background

A background that you can select for a Scene.

Playback

The playing of a VHost Scene .

Player

The window in which your VHost Scene plays.

Player Skin

The frame of the Player window in which your VHost character appears.

Scene

The presentation of a speaking VHost Character in front of a background. A Scene is played in the VHost Player.

Secure Playback

A VHost feature that prevents unauthorized use of your VHost Scenes on Web sites other than your own. When you activate Secure Playback option, the domain requesting the Scene is verified before the Scene plays. See Licensed Domain.

Show

A collection of VHost Scenes. You can use a Show as a presentation by playing the Scenes the Show includes in sequence. You can also use a Show as a palette of related or themed Scenes that play based on an event or interaction with the user.

Skin

The frame of the Player window in which your VHost character appears.

Skin Editor

The tool that you use to edit and customize the Player skin for a VHost Scene.

SSML

Speech Synthesis Markup Language (SSML). SSML is a W3C specification and is based on the XML markup language that instructs a Text-To-Speech engine how to process text to generate audio.

Static TTS

Text-to-Speech. Static TTS is easier to use than Dynamic Text-to-Speech and does not require any programming.

Text-to-Speech

The process that VHost uses to synthesize typed text into an audio message that a VHost Character speaks.

VHost

A virtual host Character that you embed on a Web page or Web environment.

VHost API

The application programming interface that you can use to extend the functionality, flexibility and capabilities of VHost Scene.

Appendix B

VHost Best Practices Guide

You can maximize the effectiveness of your Web enterprise by understanding the concepts of Oddcast's VHost technology and by following these guidelines and best practices for implementing and maintaining VHost Scenes.

1. Strive to create VHost Characters that are unique and personalized for your business

Unique and personalized VHost Characters can help your business standout from the rest. A specialized VHost Character is appealing to prospective customers on both an *aesthetic* and *emotional* level. This type of customer-friendly Web environment can lead to increased traffic and better sales conversion.

With Studio you can create thousands of different Characters by adjusting various physical attributes. For example, you can change skin, eye and hair color, age, hairstyle, makeup, facial hair, and eye, nose and mouth shapes. You can also change accessories such as clothing and headwear.

Given this, you are *strongly* encouraged to experiment as much as possible with Studio's Character design capabilities. The end results will be more than worth it.

2. Create a VHost that matches your image and appeals to the audience you are trying to attract with your Character

This is simple common sense. If your Web site caters to specific socio-demographic groups or market segments, it makes sense to use a VHost Character that accurately reflects and engages that audience. Doing so will insure that you are projecting the right image while making your prospective customers feel more comfortable about doing business with you.
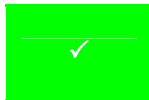
✓	Studio's incredibly flexible character design tools make it possible to design Characters that fit a wide variety of businesses, site designs, and audiences.

3. High-quality audio makes for a high-quality VHost Character

Studio is an audio-visual tool, so how your VHost characters sound when they speak is just as important as how they look. Since most Web sites get only one chance to make a good impression, having VHost Characters with inaudible or otherwise poor-quality audio is tantamount to turning away prospective customers. You can find guidelines for recording high quality, low bandwidth audio for VHost at http://www.oddcast.com/support/docs/vhost_Tech_Note_3.pdf.

The following are best practices for producing high-quality audio for your VHost Scene:

Tips for making your own audio recordings:

- Use a high-quality microphone and make sure that you are not too close or too far from the microphone when recording.

- Speak slowly and clearly while you record. Remember: haste makes waste!

- While recording, try to minimize any background noise that can diminish the quality of your recording.

- Keep in mind the requirements for uploading audio files to the Audio Library:

Channels	1 (mono)
Sampling Rate	22.050 KHz or 44.100 KHz (22.050 KHz recommended for best results)
Audio sample size	16 bit
Supported audio formats	WAV (PCM), MP3 (16, 32, 48, 64kbs), WMA (Windows Media Audio)
Maximum Audio Length	90 Seconds.

Tips for using pre-recording audio:

- If at all possible, use Oddcast's Professional Voice Talent services in lieu of making your own recordings. The difference in quality will far out-weigh the cost.

- Make sure the audio file is recorded at the proper volume level.

- Make sure that that your audio files meet the requirements specified by the VHost application as this will minimize problems. This includes uploading mono (not stereo) audio files for the best results.

Tips for using Text-to-Speech audio:

- Only use the best-sounding Text-to-Speech voices. Not all of VHost Text-to-Speech voices have the same quality and some are better suited than others for certain purposes. You will need to experiment to see which ones work for you.

- Take advantage of Text-to-Speech's Prosidy commands, which allow you to adjust various elements such as volume, the rate-of-speech and other Text-to-Speech features on a word-by-word basis. These commands are extremely powerful and can dramatically improve the quality and realism of Text-to-Speech messages if applied judiciously.

4. Be considerate when using audio with your VHost

Both research and experience tell us that many Web users find audio that they don't initiate to be annoying, especially if they aren't provided with a way to control it.

If you're using VHost for business purposes, the last thing you want to do is annoy prospective customers. Therefore, please be considerate when using audio with your VHost by allowing your site visitors to have control over the playback of your audio messages.

Although there are several ways to do this, the easiest is to simply publish your Scene with a VHost Skin. The VHost Skin provides the option to adjust he volume and pause the playback of the audio. The VHost Skin offers users a way to control your VHost Character without negating the impact of its audio message.

5. Use Studio's various audio capabilities wisely

Studio supports several different Audio technologies, with each being suited for specific situations. The following suggestions can help you to choose the right technology for the right application:

Audio type	Description
Recorded audio	Use recorded audio for simple messages where audio quality is not paramount. Recorded audio is also useful when time or budget prevent you from taking advantage of professionally recorded audio.
Uploaded audio	Use uploaded audio files for situations when you have access to a large library of pre-recorded audio files or when you want to use professionally recorded audio messages with your Oddcast account.
Text-to-Speech	Use Text-to-Speech audio to take advantage of interactive and dynamic messaging. Text-to-Speech can be controlled by way of a program to speak a certain message based on a visitor's action on your site, time-of-day or some other event. Text-to-Speech is also useful when you want some flexibility with regards to the sound of your audio messages but do not have the budget for creating professionally recorded audio.
Update by phone	Record a message by using a phone for those times when you need to change or update an audio message and you do not have access to a computer or are traveling.
Professional Voice Talent	Use a professional voice talent when you want to make the *best possible impression* to your audience. Oddcast's Professional Voice Talent services are provided by seasoned TV and radio voice-over specialists at very reasonable prices.

6. Avoid lengthy VHost audio messages

Currently Studio supports audio recordings up to 90 seconds long. This number came about from research that indicated that most people start to "tune out" when exposed to longer spoken audio messages.

Even though Studio supports recordings up to 90 seconds long, it is strongly suggested that you keep your audio messages under :30 seconds for maximum impact and to insure that your message was actually heard. Otherwise, you risk boring and alienating your audience.

7. Emphasize calls to action and always keep your Vhost's messaging fresh

Regardless of what you use your VHost's audio messaging for, always emphasize calls to action as much as possible. For example, use terms such as "buy now", "check out our special offer", "register now", or "available for immediate shipping." Ultimately, it is the specific call to action that get visitors to do things on your site, including important things like buying your products.

✓	Calls to action are most effective when placed at the beginning and at the end of your audio messages.

In addition, you should *always* keep your VHost's messaging fresh and up-to-date. Regardless of how good they are, older audio recordings will eventually lose their effectiveness as people get used to hearing them. Therefore, to catch people's attention and keep them interested, you should change your VHost's audio message frequently, at least every week or more often depending on the nature of your business.

8. Don't be afraid to take advantage of all of VHost's features

VHost is much more than a cool technology that features animated speaking characters. In fact, VHost is a complete environment for creating fully interactive Web sites.

For example, you can use the VHost API to create VHost Characters that can interact with your site's visitors and perform a wide variety of actions based on their input. You can create Characters that access artificial intelligence by using the VHost AIMC technology. VHost Characters that access artificial intelligence respond "intelligently" to user questions. And this only scratches the surface of what you can do with a VHost!

✓	You can view examples of what can you can do with the VHost API by viewing these links: http://www.oddcast.com/support/examples/API/ and http://www.oddcast.com/support/examples/practical_examples/

9. Don't devalue the potential of VHost by implementing it poorly

VHost, for all of its merits and features, is only as good as its implementation. If implemented well, VHost can produce impressive results for its users by improving site traffic, sales conversion, brand awareness, brand differentiation, and other benefits. However, if implemented poorly, VHost won't live up to its full potential.

Keep in mind the following issues to implement VHost effectively:

Where VHost will be used on your site

> The role or function of your VHost. Will it be used for promotional purposes, for pitching your goods and services or just for a "wow, that's cool" factor? VHost is good for many things but you must understand what you intend to use it for in order to see real benefits from it.

Where VHost will be used on your site

> Will it appear on the home page or in a specific section or sections of your site? Position on your site and its placement on the Web page are key variables when implementing your VHost. Your VHost should be visible to a user yet not obtrusive to their experience.

How VHost will integrate into your existing site design

> Are you going to artfully "graft" your VHost to blend seamlessly into your site's design or are you just going to "shoehorn" it in? VHost works best when time and thought are given to how it will work with your site's design.

How often will you update your VHost to keep it messaging fresh and unique

> Will you keep the both look of your VHost updated and its messaging fresh or will you let them go stale? VHost will quickly revert to a novelty on your site if you don't make the time or effort to keep it constantly updated with new messaging.

Although VHost was designed to be easy-to-use and compatible with virtually all Web sites, it *will not* implement itself. If you are wary about or uncomfortable with the prospect of properly implementing VHost there are many consultants available who will be glad to help you.

10.   *Don't panic! The answer is probably in the Avatar Studio User's Guide (a.ka. The Hitchhikers Guide to VHost)*

Believe it not, chances are that 95% of the issues that most users face when using or implementing VHost can be answered by reading the existing documentation. To that end, the team at Oddcast has invested a significant amount of time and resources to giving Studio customers access to professional quality documentation.

So when facing a problem, why not try looking in the Avatar Studio User's Guide?

Appendix C

Advanced Technical Resources

You can find additional technical resources for Studio and VHost technology on the Oddcast Product Support page.

Resource	Description
VHost API	This resources includes: • Reference manual • Flash examples
API HTML examples	This resources includes: • Facial Control functions • Speech functions • Manage Scene attributes • Navigation Flow functions • Events Speech functions
VHost practical examples	This resources includes: • Time Examples • Build an FAQ • Enhance Your AI Implementation • Trigger VHost Speech with JavaScript and ActionScript Events • Use VHost Events to Control Application Flow • Use Cookie Logic to Control VHost Playback
Tech Notes	These resources includes: • Using an Animated Background • Recording Audio for Internet Playback • Using the Text to Speech API • Fine-Tuning Text-to-Speech

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