Adding Metadata to Products *

To Do: Review for accuracy.¹

Summary

The new Content Management System (CMS) for DAZ Studio 4 provides huge usability enhancements to end users. Once metadata for products has been created, the “My Stuff” tab automatically displays only content that is compatible with the content selected in the viewport, greatly speeding scene creation by helping the user identify matching accessories, materials, and poses. Tools to create metadata for new products are provided with DAZ Studio 4. In the future, this may become automated as part of QA, but for now, this needs to be done by content creators for new products.

Process Overview

- Create Product Database Entry
- Categorize Product and Files
- Link SceneID and Compatibility Base
- Finalize Metadata in Content DB Editor
- Add Product Icon

Foundation

Before beginning to add metadata to content, be sure all files are arranged in an appropriate Content/Runtime folder structure. The process will be easiest if you create a custom Content/Runtime directory for your product. If so, be sure it is added to the Content Library tab, either from Preferences, or by right-clicking the “DAZ Studio Formats” and “Poser Formats” sections in the library.

- Remember that for both Poser and DAZ Studio content, the Runtime that will be added is IN the selected folder.
- If there is a base product (e.g. a figure or a clothing set), be sure it is also installed and added to the Content Library.
- If there are both DAZ Studio and separate Poser folders, add them both. Not DS files in the Runtime, a separate content folder.
Step By Step

Create Product Database Entry

If your product is isolated in a separate Content/Runtime folder, Create a Product by right clicking on the Content/Runtime folder and selecting, “Create a Product...”.

- Use the exact name used in the store when possible.

- If there are both Poser and DAZ Studio folders then you will need to use this procedure for both, using the same name for each. DAZ Studio will combine them into the same product folder.
To create meta-data for a product installed into a Content/Runtime structure containing other products, follow these steps:

**Start Product Entry**

Find a folder containing some of the product's assets in the Content Library tab, e.g. in the Poser Formats folder, open the context menu on it, and click “Create a Product...”. A small dialogue will pop open, prompting you for a name, and after confirming it with “OK” a new product folder will be created in the correct alphabetical sub-folder of the top-level “Products” folder.

All contents of the selected folder and all sub-folders will be added to the Product. Try to find a folder that contains only items from the Product you wish to create, if possible.

**Add Product Files**
Now locate all the assets that belong to this product in the various folders/categories of the Content Library tab, in both DAZ Studio Formats and Poser Formats. Select and copy the references, then return to the product folder and choose to “Paste Reference” from the context menu.

Create a temporary root category and assign the assets to it, as you locate them inside the folder tree, so that you can copy and paste them all in one go from that new category folder at the end, rather than jumping back and forth to the Products folder.

Categorize Product and Files

Once all assets have been added to the product, they need to be categorized. This can be done either from the Product folder or from the “DAZ Studio Formats” or “Poser Formats” folders. The DAZ Studio and Poser formats folders have the advantage that the files are already sorted by type, which makes categorizing them easier. However, if you don't have a separate runtime for the product, it may be easier to use the Product folder.

If you are categorizing weight-mapped content, i.e. content with the .dsf extension, you have the opportunity to set the categorization and other information when the .dsf file is saved.
Navigate to the folder you have chosen, and select the thumbnails of the items you will categorize. Then right-click and select “Categorize…”

In the Select Categories window, select all categories that apply.
Only check the most specific applicable sub-category in the tree. However, if a product fits multiple sub-categories, go up one level in the category tree.

For files that apply specifically to a product (lights for a specific scene, clothes for a custom figure, all materials, and anything that is not for general use), create a new category where applicable using the exact product name of the compatible product. The main determination is how many files could conceivably wind up in there, not just in your product.

**Link SceneID and Compatibility Base**

In order for DS4 to recognise an asset when it is selected in the viewport or the scene tab and know what content is compatible with that asset, its internal “Scene ID” must be associated with its Compatibility Base, so that the My Stuff tab can filter its contents appropriately.

To link the Compatibility Base with the Scene ID, the item must be loaded into the current scene. However, all items for a product can be loaded at once, and need to be fit to or parented to anything.
Load an object into the scene
Switch to the Scene tab
Select the object (if it is not already selected)
From the tab menu select “Edit > Scene ID Editor…”,
Click Compatibility Base

In the dialogue window, select the base that you created for this asset and click OK. From now on, whenever this object is loaded into a scene, DS4 will know what it is and which objects and presets are compatible with it.
Create Bases

Right-click in the Select a Compatibility Base window and create a new root base by the product name.

For products with more than one object, you will create a new sub base under that root base for each item, using the item name.
Finalize Metadata in Content DB Editor

To add meta-data to a file or set of files select the Products folder, click on the tab menu icon in the corner of the Content Library tab, and select “Content DB Editor…” A dialogue window will pop open.

Product Tab

In the Product tab you set the meta-data for the product (collection of assets), such as the store, description, and artists. The latter two are shown in the “Info” area of the “My Stuff” tab - but sadly, they're not included in the search function at this time, so you can't search for all products by one
specific artist. Details of each field are listed below the sample image.

- **Store**: For products being submitted to the DAZ 3D store, choose “DAZ 3D.”
- **Global ID**: This is the database-internal ID - and is automatically set.
- **Token**: This is the store's ID for the product. In the case of DAZ3D, this is the item number found in the URL of the product's page, not the “product code” shown on the page, such as “ps_ac3159”. This will need to be set by QA when the token number is assigned to the product.
- **Description**: This is optional.
- **Artists**: Right click in the Artist field to add the artist names. These should use the exact same spelling as on the DAZ 3D store page. You can copy/paste the names one at a time.
- **Support**: This points to an XML file containing the collected information of this dialogue, which is written when either the “Export” button at the bottom is clicked or the dialogue is closed while “Auto Export” is checked. If “Auto Fill” is checked, the name of the support file is generated automatically from the Store, Token, and Name value.

This is a relative path, and will save to the first .../Runtime/Support directory recorded in your Content Library. If that directory does not exist, you will be unable to save this file without manually changing the directory here or creating the directory in .../Runtime/Support. You may wish to change this to the custom Content/Runtime file structure for your product, if you have one.

- **Files**: This will contain a list of all files that belong to the product, irrespective of whether they have anything to do with the visible assets. The files can be added one by one or by entire folders.

This is simple if you have a custom Content/Runtime folder: Add your product's files to the Files list by right clicking in that box and selecting “Add fromDirectory (Recursive)”
If you have both a Runtime and content folder, or other files that should be included, make sure to add them as well. Be sure to select the correct level directory. Check that the paths start with Runtime or Content as appropriate.

- **Scene IDs**: This data cannot be altered from the Product editor. It automatically shows the scene IDs that have been assigned to compatibility bases declared by assets in this product. For example, the Product “Victoria 4.2” would contain the asset “Victoria 4.2.cr2”, which has a declared compatibility base of “/Generation4/Victoria 4”, which is associated with the scene ID “#blMilWom_4b_68498” (the name of the .obj file and the number of vertices) - therefore a line
showing this relationship will appear in the “Scene IDs” area of the Product tab.

After filling in all the information you wish and exporting the support files (either manually or automatically), the product will be visible in the Products view of the “My Stuff” tab, just as its individual assets are in the Files view.

**Assets Tab**

Switch to the “Assets” tab. Make sure that “Sync Product and Local Database” is checked. Your files listed in the top half of the tab can be sorted by filename or extension to simplify selection.

The Content DB Editor will list all files defined in the currently selected Product as “Assets” in the top half of the window, showing in a table what kind of meta-data is associated with each. Selecting one or more of the listed assets will make them show up in the bottom half of the editor window, where you can assign or edit the data. This needs to be done on a per-file basis, although multiple similar files can be selected and edited at the same time, as appropriate.

- **Path**: Lists the path to the specified Asset file
- **Type**: Used for Content Swapping, if the user has that feature enabled. With Content Swapping, if the figure is wearing an Asset of a particular Type, and another of the same Type is loaded (e.g. hair), DAZ Studio removes the first asset from the scene and replaces it with the new asset. Only one type can be selected, so select the one that best applies to the asset.
• **Audience:** DAZ 3D has not yet implemented an audience filter within the DAZ Studio application, but may provide this as a user-configurable option in the future. QA provides the following guidelines:

  - *Child:* Appropriate for all ages, e.g. many Toon characters, animals.
  - *Teen:* Superheroes, dance clothes, costumes, most content by default.
  - *Adult:* Nude skins, Genitals, Thongs, etc.

**Asset Sub-Tabs**

• **Categories** “Categories” govern when and where these assets will appear in the My Stuff tab and the preset lists of the Posing, Shaping, and Surfaces tabs. These should already have been set from the Content Library in a previous step, but you can also right-click assets in this window and select additional categories.

Additional Root Categories can be created from this menu. Use with caution. Attempt to match how the product will be categorized in the DAZ 3D store as closely as possible.

• **Tags** These are search terms that can be used from the Content Library or My Stuff tabs, in
addition to the asset name. At the present time, QA recommends adding the artist name, supported figures etc. because these aspects are not automatically included in the search criteria. Other search terms should be added as applicable. Add whatever tags you feel will help users find your assets more easily, remembering that users can add their own also.

- **Description** In most cases the individual asset descriptions should be left blank. Exceptions would be for files that do something 'nonstandard' or need more explanation. The description shows when you have pop-up tool tips enabled, or in the “Info” panel at the bottom of the Content Library. This might be a good place to note licensing restrictions.

- **Compatibility** See next section.

- **Userwords** and **User Notes** are provided for the use of the end users and should be left blank by the Content Creator.

### Link Assets to Compatible Bases

Switch to the “Compatibility” sub-tab, where you can specify the relation between assets, i.e. which of them are modifiers for which other assets. Declare a compatibility base for each asset that represents a selectable, modifiable viewport object, such as actor figures, props and clothing figures. Assets that share all the same modifiers (e.g. a long and short version of the same pants, which both take the same material, morph and pose presets) can share the same base for simplicity. The declared “Compatibility Base” tells DAZ Studio 4 what the asset is, and the asset can also have one or more “Compatibilities”, which tell DAZ Studio 4 what other assets it can be applied to. This is the information that allows the My Stuff tab to show only the materials or clothes that fit the currently selected figure in the viewport.

The bases you created in the scene tab with Edit→Scene ID are declared here.
Any file that works with or on an asset is compatible with that asset. If the asset is not included with this product, you should have already set it up enough for it to be available as a compatibility base. Clothing is compatible with the base figure, presets are compatible with whatever they apply to, etc.

The DAZ Studio 4 Content Management System comes with several Bases already pre-defined in the database (such as all human DAZ figures from Generation 1-4 and Genesis), but for most objects, e.g. new clothing in your Product, you will need to create new root and sub-bases from the context menu of the Compatibility Base dialogue.

**Add Compatibilities**

Add compatibilities to all assets that modify other objects, such as material presets, poses, morph injections, auto-parented props, clothing figures. Some presets can be compatible with multiple bases (e.g. generic material presets or multi-fit clothes or hair).

After assigning categories, compatibility bases and compatibilities to all assets where appropriate, you can now close the Content DB Editor dialogue. You will now be able to see Assets in the My Stuff tab.
Add Product Icon

In order for the Product to display icon, an image file of the *same base name* as the support files has to be placed *in the same Support folder* as the .DSX support file. The default location is “<Path to My Library>/Runtime /Support/”. For new Products, this image should be 114×148. If you are creating metadata for older products, you may use the 100×143 product thumbnails in the DAZ 3D shop website.
You may need to select different folders in the Content Library or My Stuff tab to force the Product view to refresh.
Wrap-Up

The metadata as defined here doesn't populate the store categorization at this point. DAZ 3D hopes to have them work together eventually.

Next Steps

Defining Content Presentation

1) Initial draft