

Main help file for AutoRename

'AutoRename' is a simple plugin for Cinema 4D. It arose from a request on CG Talk for a COFFEE script to rename a group of objects which all had the same name. (Thanks to Kokosing for the idea!)

The resulting script worked okay, but a plugin was always going to be more convenient as it would allow users to set more options more readily. This is the result.

What it does

Imagine the following scenario. You have used something like Mograph's Cloner, and now you have a group of objects all of which have the same name. A list of (say) 20 objects all called 'Sphere' isn't very intuitive, so you'd like to rename all these objects and maybe also give each of them an individual name rather than all being the same.

Of course, you could do it manually, but how tedious is that? This is where AutoRename comes in. You can either set a whole new name for your objects, or keep the original name and append an incrementing numerical suffix to each one (so you get Sphere_01, Sphere_02, etc.). Once the options are set, just hit the OK button and your objects are renamed.

AutoRename also works for materials. You just need to specify that materials, rather than objects, are to be renamed by using the Edit menu and selecting the appropriate option.

Installation

Simply unzip the supplied archive into your Cinema 4D plugins directory. Then restart C4D. You will see a new entry – AutoRename – in your Plugin menu in Cinema.

Using AutoRename

First you need to select all the objects (or materials) you want to be renamed. Objects don't all have to be the same kind of object, and they don't need to be at the same hierarchical level in the object manager. Just pick and choose the objects and those which are selected will be renamed.

(In most cases it's likely that you will want to rename a group of objects inside another one, such as a null object. You can right-click the parent object and click 'Select children' to select all the child objects very quickly. If you do this watch out that you don't rename the parent object as well – unless you want to, of course. Deselect the parent before clicking OK to avoid this.)

Now open the plugin. By default, the options are set to use the object's (or material's) original name plus an incrementing numerical suffix. For a group of five objects all called 'Sphere' for example, AutoRename will rename them to Sphere_1, Sphere_2, etc. up to Sphere_5.

The options

1. Rename objects or materials

Most of the time you'll probably want to use AutoRename to rename a group of objects rather than materials. But you can choose to rename selected materials instead. You can switch between objects and materials by using the Edit menu – the selected option is checked and by default this is set to rename objects.

If you do switch to materials, be careful! If you don't close AutoRename, then go back later and try to rename a group of objects while rename materials is checked, nothing will appear to happen to your objects. But if you also had some materials selected, you may inadvertently rename them without noticing. Hitting the 'Rename' button several times in frustration could cause your objects to be well and truly renamed!

2. Use original or new object name

The first choice you can make is whether to use the object/material's original name or specify a new one. For example, if you have five objects called Sphere, keeping the original name will leave them called Sphere but with an added suffix (Sphere_1, and so on). If you opt to use a new name, you can enter the name in the text entry field below the option 'Use new root name'. Using the above example, if you selected this option and typed 'Rivet' into the text field, your spheres would be renamed Rivet_1, Rivet_2, etc.

3. Enable Undo before renaming

Normally, after you rename an object or material in Cinema, this can be undone by hitting Ctrl/Cmd-Z or using the Undo button or menu option. However, AutoRename can rename many objects/materials at once, and this may cause a problem.

C4D has a finite number of 'slots' in which to store the previous state of a scene before an action which changes something. If this number is set to (for example) 30 and you automatically rename more than 30 objects, all the undo slots will be filled with renames, overwriting what was already there. This means that you could lose the ability to undo other changes you previously made to your scene, changes which might be more important than just renaming an object.

For this reason, AutoRename by default does not store the changes it makes in the undo slots. This preserves the ability to undo other changes you have made to the scene, but it does mean that you cannot undo the name changes you make – you'd have to go back and undo the renaming manually.

If you would prefer to make the renaming undoable, just check the option 'Enable Undo before renaming'. Note that you can also increase the undo depth in Cinema's preferences if you would like to make auto-renaming undoable while preserving previous changes, but even then it would still be possible to overwrite the stored state if you renamed a sufficient number of objects.

4. Strip dot extension from name

With some functions, Cinema itself applies an incrementing number to the name. If you use an Array object (and make it editable), or the Duplicate function, you will get a series of objects named, for example, Sphere.1, Sphere.2, etc. If you use AutoRename to rename these objects, you might not want that extension as well as the suffix AutoRename adds. In other words, you might not want a final name of Sphere.1_1, Sphere.2_2, and so

on. You can therefore opt to strip off the dot plus whatever follows it when you rename the objects.

Note that only the final dot in the name is removed – so for example, Sph.ere.1 would, using the default settings, be renamed Sph.ere_1.

This option is on by default. If you choose to use a new root name, the option to remove the dot extension becomes irrelevant (the dot extension is really not an extension at all, it's just part of the object name and so is discarded along with the rest of the name) and this option is therefore disabled.

5. Add suffix/prefix to name

You probably want to do this most of the time. But if you have a group of objects all called 'Sphere', and you just want them to all be called 'Rivet' instead, then opt to use a new name and uncheck the 'Add suffix/prefix to name' option.

5.1 Suffix and prefix options

If you are going to use a suffix/prefix, then there are several options for how this is constructed.

5.1.1 Use as

You can choose either to have the numerical increment appended to the object/material name as a suffix (the default) or for the name to be preceded by the increment (i.e. a prefix). Choose the desired option from the drop-down list.

5.1.2 Separator

The separator is anything which separates the object root name (new or original) from the incrementing number. There are several predefined options in the drop-down list, including an underscore, single space, and no separator at all.

If you don't like any of the presets you can choose 'Custom' from the list and then type your preferred separator into the 'Custom separator' field. You can enter whatever you like here, and it isn't limited to one character. Just one note of caution: the pipe character (on a Windows keyboard, that's on the key to the left of the 'Z' key) seems to be problematic. I don't know why, but it's probably best avoided.

5.1.3 Increment start

By default the numeric increment starts from 1. But you can choose whatever you like here (well, up to 1,000,000 anyway). So if you enter 537, your first object will be given the suffix of _537, the next _538, and so on (assuming you chose the default underscore separator).

5.1.4 Add leading zeroes

This is really just cosmetic. Say you have 15 objects to rename. By default leading zeroes is off, so with the default setting objects would be renamed with the suffix _1, _2, _3, etc. up to _13, _14, _15.

You might prefer that the first 9 were renamed _01, _02, etc. then up to _09, _10, _11, and so on. It just makes things look a little neater.

To do this, check the option 'Add leading zeroes'. This enables the field 'Max. number of leading zeroes'. What does this mean? Well, in the example above you wouldn't want leading zeroes to be added to the suffixes with a double-digit number – just the single digit ones. But what if you had 107 objects to rename? You would then want the single-digit suffixes to have two leading zeroes (_001, etc.), the double-digit suffixes to have one leading zero (_010, etc.), and all those with three-digit suffixes to have no leading zeroes (100, 101, and so on).

How many leading zeroes will you need? It's pretty easy to work out. If you have less than 100 objects to rename, one leading zero is all you need, though you can certainly add more if you like. For 100 to 999 objects choose two leading zeroes, and so on for larger numbers. You can have up to 10 leading zeroes although I'm not sure if you would ever need (or be able) to rename a billion objects...

6. Option combinations which are not permitted

There are two combinations of options which are not allowed and one which generates a warning.

Firstly, if you opt to use the object's original name but you turn off the suffix, you can see that this would just give the object the same name as it did before the renaming. This is pointless, so AutoRename will not take any action if you do this. You will get an appropriate message so you know what has happened.

Secondly, if you opt to give the object a new name but don't enter anything in the text field, and you turn off the suffix, this would cause the object to have no name at all! This also isn't allowed and you will be so informed if you choose these options.

Finally, if you opt to give the object a new name and don't enter anything in the text field, but you leave the suffix enabled, this would cause the object to be renamed only with whatever is in the suffix. So you could have objects named _1, _2, etc. This might be what you want, and if so you can do this, but you might have done this in error so the plugin gives you the chance to change your mind before renaming anything.

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As always comments are very welcome as are suggestions for improvements and bug reports.

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