

Why did I create the Request for Comment (RFC)

That goes back to my working on Metadata and helping out on a little project. These two things brought a series of things to a head and one of them was Studio's Folder Structure (or lack there of) and the need for a published standard for everyone to follow.

While working on Metadata for DAZ Studio, I learned the easiest way to deal with creating Metadata is to load the product into its own Content Folder, clean of other content. This way you are only working with the content for that product. It is also the best way to find errors, because you load everything (or should) to make sure the smart content works.

Using this method, I found errors which pointed to Content Creators making mistakes, right from the off.

- Not following the implied DAZ Studio Folder Structure
- Document and Tutorial Files strewn across the Content folder
- Poser content outside the Runtime
- DAZ Studio content inside the Runtime
- Extra Runtime/Content folders found as subfolders within other folders
- Content not working properly due to file location errors or missing files
- Inconsistencies in naming across the Product or a series of products
- Product not using the Store name within content folder
- Unrelated or unused files within the Content installer

Seeing the problem I decided to create this document to get comments from Content Creators on a proposed folder standard.

So the purpose of this document is to:

1. Discuss the DAZ Studio Folder Structure
2. Use the output of this discussion to create a Published Folder Structure Standard
3. Create guidelines to help Content Creators work within the Standard, as they create content

Why should you contribute to this Request for Comment (RFC)

You might be asking why you should contribute to this document or help with the creation of an application to help content creation.

First DAZ3D is presently discussing the issue of a defined Folder Standard. Seeing these talks are not complete at this time, it is my hope to give them a little user input.

----- Added Saturday 22nd of June 2013-----

First, let me thank everyone who has read and responded or will respond to this thread.

Second: I want to remind you, we are talking about the raw Content (My Library) Folder only. This is also a Studio centric, the Runtime folder will only be discussed as it relates to DAZ Studio. Yes, I realized the Content Management System (CMS); Metadata (MD), and Smart Content (SC) solve some, if not all, the issues mentioned below, but they do not solve the root of the issue of the mess inside the Content folder. That is why they are being left off of this discussion.

Third: Please if you find an error in this text or feel I have forgotten something however small, please tell me. I will correct or add your corrections. I have already done this several times before it even got posted.

Forth: This is a Request for Comment, this document will change as comments are posted and accepted by the community. A good standard is dynamic and flexible, able to be molded for a new content reality easily.

Five: No comment, not even ones apposing such a standard, is unwelcome. I will read all of them and hopefully respond to each or in groups. (Save for those making general complaints about the lack of Documentation.)

It is my hope this will be a Community effort, for I believe as a community we help DAZ 3D make Studio better experience for all users newest to most veteran. Those using SC to those using only the raw Content folder.

There are those inside DAZ 3D watching this and your comments could help them, help us.

So let's Dive.

The problem as I see it

Most of the issues above would be solved with a well-defined and published Folder Structure Standard for DAZ Studio Content. The rest could be solved with training and document of DAZ Studio Content Creation Best Practices. We are here discussing the Folder Structure Standard but we will in the process touch on some of those best practices, for both Content Creators and Consumers.

Before we begin, let me say that all of the listing and content you will see is from the 'My Library' folder; all the content is from the DAZ3D Store; and it was installed via the DAZ Install Manager (DIM), no standalone installers or manual file moving was use. (NOTE: Everything you see in the next image was installed with the DAZ3D DIM.)

So let's take a look at the problem. Here is a untouched image of my 'My Library' folder. I have added Colors to the listed to show what each of the folders actually contains.

9295_Daz_Intro_gui_complete.wmv	5/24/13 4:31 AM	10.1 MB	Vide...edia
9296t_Content_Lib_overview.wmv	5/24/13 4:30 AM	12.6 MB	Vide...edia
9297_ebook_Cho...roductMarket.pdf	5/24/13 4:31 AM	14 KB	Port...(PDF)
9298distantlight.wmv	5/24/13 4:30 AM	59.7 MB	Vide...edia
aniBlocks	5/11/13 4:49 AM	--	Folder
Animals	5/11/13 4:49 AM	--	Folder
Architecture	5/11/13 4:52 AM	--	Folder
bin	5/11/13 4:52 AM	--	Folder
Bonus Files	5/11/13 4:52 AM	--	Folder
Camera Presets	5/11/13 4:52 AM	--	Folder
Cameras	5/11/13 4:52 AM	--	Folder
Canary3D	Today 2:39 AM	--	Folder
Codeman Studio	5/24/13 4:29 AM	--	Folder
Codeman Studios	5/30/13 10:38 PM	--	Folder
content	5/30/13 10:38 PM	--	Folder
Data	Today 1:38 AM	--	Folder
DAZ Studio Tutorials	5/24/13 3:27 AM	--	Folder
docs	5/24/13 3:31 AM	--	Folder
Dreamlight	Today 2:40 AM	--	Folder
Dystopia	Today 2:42 AM	--	Folder
Environment	5/11/13 4:55 AM	--	Folder
Environments	5/11/13 5:04 AM	--	Folder
Fugazi	5/11/13 4:56 AM	--	Folder
Hair	5/11/13 4:56 AM	--	Folder
include	5/11/13 4:56 AM	--	Folder
InstallManagerFileRegister.ini	Today 3:01 AM	784 KB	Text...ent
italia	5/11/13 4:58 AM	--	Folder
KittysTavern	5/11/13 4:49 AM	--	Folder
LadyKassie	Today 2:32 AM	--	Folder
LaurieS	Today 2:35 AM	--	Folder
lib	5/11/13 4:49 AM	--	Folder
Light Presets	Today 1:34 AM	--	Folder
Lights	5/24/13 4:42 AM	--	Folder
LisaB	Today 2:51 AM	--	Folder
Maclean	5/11/13 5:01 AM	--	Folder
Materials	Today 2:53 AM	--	Folder
Merlin	5/11/13 5:04 AM	--	Folder
PaladinParagon PDF	5/11/13 5:43 AM	--	Folder
People	6/4/13 7:10 PM	--	Folder
Pose	5/11/13 5:10 AM	--	Folder
Poses	4/29/13 9:36 AM	--	Folder
Presets	5/5/13 9:23 PM	--	Folder
product	Today 2:55 AM	--	Folder
Props	Today 1:37 AM	--	Folder
ReadMe's	Today 3:01 AM	--	Folder
resources	4/29/13 8:16 AM	--	Folder
Runtime	5/8/13 7:55 PM	--	Folder
samples	5/9/13 9:56 PM	--	Folder
Scene Subset	4/30/13 6:06 AM	--	Folder
Scenes	6/6/13 4:26 AM	--	Folder
Scripts	5/11/13 5:43 AM	--	Folder
Shader	5/11/13 5:43 AM	--	Folder
Shader Presets	5/11/13 5:43 AM	--	Folder
Shaders	6/5/13 9:58 PM	--	Folder
Templates	5/5/13 9:21 PM	--	Folder
Tutorials	5/24/13 4:25 AM	--	Folder
Vehicles	Today 1:38 AM	--	Folder

Green highlighted folders are actually part of the implied standard as it is at the time I created this.

The Yellow highlighted folders have content that should be in Green folders of a similar name; i.e. Camera Presets should be in Cameras and Shader and Shader Presets should be contained within Shaders.

But those are rather minor. The red highlighted Content Folder shouldn't exist at all and it's content should be in other locations. The Orange highlighted 'Bonus Files' are actually Poser Scene files, which should be within the Scene folder inside the Runtime folder. In one of these folders is a Runtime Folder, which will never be seen by either Studio or Poser due to it being out of place.

The Purple highlighted folders are part of the SDK and should be gathered together in a folder called SDK. The Blue Folders actually contain files that are not Studio or Poser Content. And the Gray Folders are either Documentation for content or Tutorials. All of the remaining highlighted folders contain content, which should be within one of the Green folders.

Now that we have seen the messy room, but let's pause here so we can agree on a few Terms definition, so we are all on the same page before we push ahead.

Content	A general term for anything used within Poser or DAZ Studio.
Asset	This could be any single content item within a product, including objects.
Object	A placeable Geometry. Could be a figure, prop, clothes or other.
Surface/Texture	This is an asset placed on an object's geometry, used to give the object color. (I would say visually pleasing but some Surface Textures are anything but visually pleasing.)
Set	A collection of Objects placed as if they were one object. (This could also include other parameters as well.)
Pre-set	A pre-defined collection of settings, such as material settings, applied to a figure or prop with a single click. (thanks to icprncss)
Product	A group of Assets sold under a single SKU at the store.
Product Bundle	A several Products sold under single SKU at the store. These products may or may not be associated or have a theme.

More later, but these should be enough to begin this process.

Note: For the moment we are only looking the raw Content Folder Structure, not Smart Content or even the Content Manager System. My reason for ignoring the Smart Content Management System emanates from the reality that Content Creators do not work within SCMS or even with Metadata when creating content, for they do not use Poser or DAZ Studio as their content Creation Tool; that all comes after a majority of the creation process has been completed. This being the case, Content Creators do not work within the Folder Structure until they prepare their creations for market.

The Two Sides of the Coin

The next thing we need to discuss; are the two different directions to approach the issue of grouping or sorting content. There are only two ways of looking at this sorting, Little Sort or Big Sort. Little Sort doctrine would group all like parts together, so in an auto part store all of the engines would be on one shelf, alternators on another, and crankshafts on yet another. Big Sort Doctrine would group part that work together. So in an auto part store we put all the Ford parts on a shelf and the Jaguar parts on a shelf.

In virtual 3D photography studio software world there are two content management doctrines; the Poser Method and the Daz3D Method.

Poser Method:

Poser uses the Little Sort method. Poser groups similar content together, in the same Root Folder. Figure with figures, Hair with Hair folder, Props with Props, and if there isn't a specified folder, then it goes in the Pose Folder. (It is the only logical explanation for how Morphs, Mats and other content, which are not Poses, end up in the Pose folder?)

A note regarding Material poses (Mat poses) and Morph poses (Mor poses). These are user hacks that Poser users discovered back in the days of Poser 4. ERC and JCM's are another user hack that is now common practice. DAZ didn't discover these and neither did Curious Labs or eFrontiers. (Thus proving Content Creators and Content Consumers are a powerful force, what were Hacks in Poser 4 are now the Norm, due to users forging into new areas and developers following.) [Thanks to icprncss for this explanation]

So your work flow is to place your figure from the Figures, then go to the Hair folder for Hair, the Figure Folder for Clothes and then the Pose folder to apply Morphs, Mats and Poses, save for Hand and Expressions poses which have their own folders.

The advantage to the Little Sort is the ability to get to the content type you want very quickly, but this is where the apparent advantage becomes a disadvantage. The Content Consumer spends time searching for the Content compatible with the figure you have loaded; for folder mislabeling can send them down the wrong path. So Poser Content Creators have to be very careful how they label their content.

DAZ Studio Method:

DAZ3D Studio uses the Big Sort method. Studio groups content that works with a Figure or Object under the same folder tree. A Dress for Genesis would be in the clothing folder of the Genesis folder and the Surface Textures for the Dress would be in a materials folder in the Dress' folder.

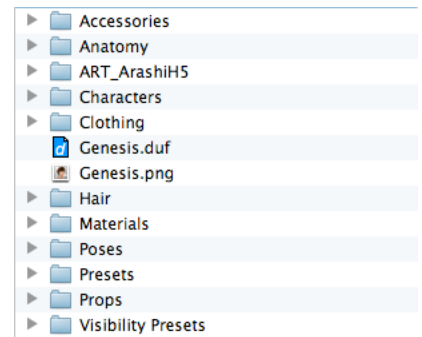
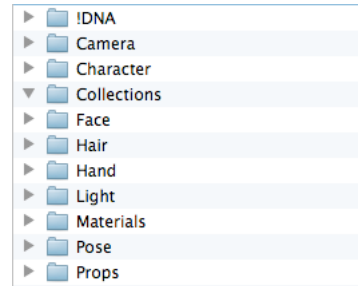
So the your workflow is to go to the Genesis folder, place the Genesis Figure, then without moving out of the Genesis folder you can find Hair, Clothing, Poses and the like that work with the Genesis figure.

The advantage of the Big Sort is that the Content Consumer knows that everything with in the Root folder of the product will work with that product. The Disadvantage comes from misplaced content, outside the Root folder. Another possible disadvantage comes from a possibility of content duplication, for those assets that work with more than one Figure, but this can actually be controlled.

So which is better? That is personal choice; and it may be one of the reasons people chose Poser over Studio or Studio over Poser. And for the most part DAZ Studio users work with both systems, for most Poser Content works in DAZ Studio and the Runtime Folder is contained within the Studio Content Folder.

In either method the Folder/File Placement is very important, for if the assets are not placed within the correct folder, they will not be seen by the application and therefore will not be presented to the Content Consumer. As an example, the Poser Scenes that are outside the Runtime folder, Poser can't see. The content, in the 'Content' subfolder, isn't going to be seen by Studio. And if the user is expecting all the items compatible with Genesis to be contained within the Genesis folder, and you place your Genesis Hair in the Hair Folder, then they may believe the Hair is not loaded.

Again we are talking about the RAW folder/file structure and placement, not Smart Content.



The Issues with the DAZ Studio Method

First: The lack of Published Documentation

The DAZ Studio Method is not some new idea that boys and girls at DAZ 3D just pulled out of their hat for 4.x. It has been around since Studio had Studio specific Content. The problem appears to be a lack of Published Documentation about the standard for the way content was to be placed in the content folder.

NOTE: This 'Request for Comment' (RFC) is an attempt to gather **Constructive Comments** and to help get a Standard Published, we all can agree on, for everyone to follow, so that New Content will be placed correctly. This Thread will not be a platform for complaints about the lack of hard documentation up to this point. I would like to request the Forum Monitors to delete all such Documentation Complaints from this thread. The idea is to help DAZ 3D build the missing Documentation by a Community Effort.

Second: Placement of Derived / Supporting Content Folders

Let's step back to the Generation 3 humanoid **Figures**. Where was a plethora of them: Victoria 3, Aiko 3, David 3, Hiro 3, Michael 3, Young Teens and Child. All of these had different geometries and therefore content had to be created for the specific figure or have morphs (Fits) to make the content compatible.

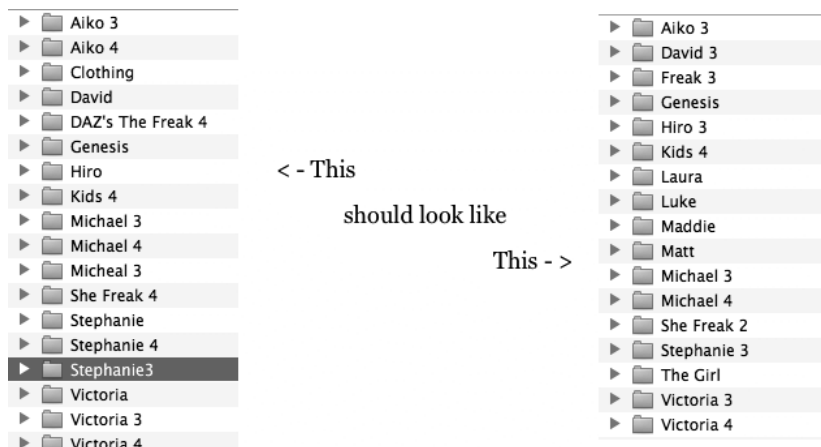
Things changed with the Generation 4 **Figures**. There are only three Generation 4 humanoid figures, Victoria 4, Michael 4 and Kids 4. All other Generation 4 Actors were derived from one of these three figures by the use of morphs. The **Actor** Aiko 4 is a set of morphs for the Victoria 4 Figure. When you request to load Aiko 4; you are loading Victoria 4 and applying the Aiko 4 Morphs. The **Character** 'Nomi for V4 and A4' obtains a different physical appearance, by manipulating these the Victoria 4 and Aiko 4 morphs. Nomi cannot be loaded directly into the scene; she must be **applied** to the already loaded A4/V4 figure.

More changes came with the Generation 5 Figure, for all humanoid actors and characters are based off the single Genesis figure. Victoria 5 is a Genesis Actor, so are Aiko 5, Hiro 5, Michael 5; but the characters within the product 'Enticing Ladies' are a set of parameters to be applied to the Victoria 5 Shape (morphs).

So why did I take us through the history of the DAZ 3D humanoid Figures, we know that and what does it have to do with Content folders. It is the best example of the Root Problem. Let's look at two versions of the People Folder.

The Problem really started with Aiko 4, the first Gen4 Actor. People understood you needed Victoria 4 to use Aiko 4, but it appears the Content Creators thought she was like Aiko 3, a separate Geometry, so they made an Aiko 4 Folder. But she and all her DAZ Studio specific content should be located within the People/Victoria 4 folder, for she is **derived** from the Victoria 4 Figure, this mean that most A4 Content will also work with V4. Bonus points if you can find an A4 Hair that does not work also with V4, you shouldn't find any because V4 is the base Figure at the Root of A4.

Therefore most if not all A4 content is also V4 content and by virtue of this fact should be within the V4 Folder.



Third: Figure based Content

There is content that is made to work with a Figure and its derived children. Anything made for Genesis will work on genesis no matter what shape you have placed on it. So all Genesis content should be in the Genesis folder under the People Folder.

To illustrates this a little further and let's look at my Genesis folder again to see how it should be done.

Notice, there are sub-folders for content types and all of the content contained within those folders will work with the Genesis Figure. In Characters you will find Victoria 5 and Aiko 5.

Let's drill down in the Clothing and find Priestess for Genesis Female.

Notice at the bottom of the image is the folder path and Priestess is within the Clothing Folder inside the Genesis folder.

Here we find the assets that make up the Priestess product, as well as the assets that will modify or can be applied to the Priestess Geometry. So we would expect that all of the Material Sets that work with Priestess would be contained within the Priestess Product folder, and they are. Also Notice that there is a Materials Folder. It is part of the Priestess for Genesis Female Product we will talk about that more in Best Practices.

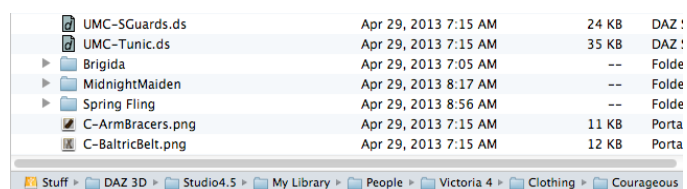
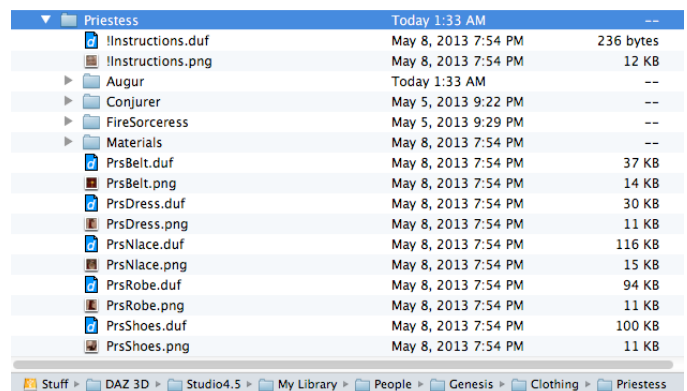
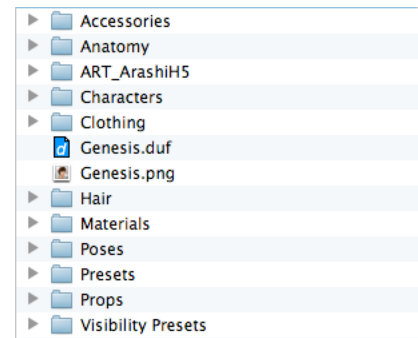
This works just great for clothing made for Genesis, but what about things made for Victoria 4 that have Uni-mesh Fits? The same thing applies or should. The Base product goes in the Clothing for V4 and the Uni-mesh fit are placed within that folder and the materials for both are place in the folder as well. (Now this is for the DAZ Studio versions of the Content. The Poser Versions are still within Runtime and are subject to the Poser standards, if any, for content placement.)

So lets look at the Victoria 4 Courageous:

If you open up the Courageous Folder with in the v4 Clothing you will see, there are C-*.ds files for the original Courageous and UMC-*.DS for the Uni-mesh fits. There are also several folders for texture sets: Brigida and one called 'Spring Fling'. This illustrates another issue, bad folder naming. The store product is now called 'Spring Dance for Courageous', but when it was released it hand the name Spring Fling. While the Store name was changed the Folder name was not. Midnight Maiden is another Texture set for Courageous but it has Textures for another V4 products; the V4 Morphing Cloak and Cape. In the case of Midnight Maiden all of its DAZ Studio Materials are within this single folder. But Courageous is also a Poser product so its geometry files are located in the Runtime folder under Geometries.

So from this we have learned: if you create a product which support/modifies/textures a Product, your product should be within the Base Product's Folder. Textures would go into the Materials Folder, in a folder with the Texture Products Name. So the DAZ Studio Content for Brigida, a Courageous texture set, would be within this tree: People/Victoria 4/Clothing/Courageous/Materials/Brigida.

The same is true for all content that is tied to a base Figure, no matter what it is: Props, Morphs, Clothing, Materials, Hair, Poses, Characters, Add-Ons, Anatomy, Accessories and all the rest.

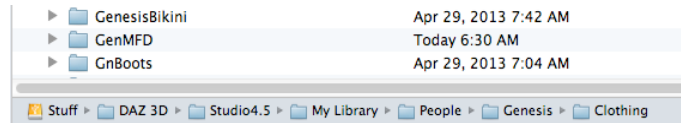


Fourth: The Standard must contain the rule for exceptions

So you are thinking, this is easy, but what about something like Morphing Fantasy Dress. There is an MFD for every DAZ Female Figure or Actor since Victoria 3 and all of the Textures since the original MFD work with the Genesis MFD. If there was a more perfect example of a problem that could spin out of control into a rotating cluster, I'm not sure I seen it.

Before we get mired in that tar pit, let's take a look at the Genesis MFD folder:

Notice that while Morphing Fantasy Dress for Genesis had three expansion products, there is only one folder; GenMFD. If you go open yours GenMFD folder, you will find the base Dress and all three expansions products are in the GenMFD folder.



But you will also find a single Materials Folder, and here is where we have to make a choice and where Smart Content can help the Content Consumer.

Fifth: Exceptions still have to follow the rules!

There are two ways of handling an exception like the MFD;

- You put the Textures in a Materials Folder in Content Folder
- You make duplicate copies of the materials in each MFD folder

Out of the two, the first choice wins Hands Down. The reason is simple, there are Seven MFD Geometry Products, if you were to place a copy the textures in each folder you are taking up Seven times the Hard Drive space against using a Shared Copy in a Materials Folder. Also if you need to make a correction to the Surface Texture product, you have only one place to update.

So the way to handle this is to create a Materials Folder in the root of the Content Folder and inside this you would create a 'MFD Textures' folder and inside it would be a folder for each Texture Product. So the path to Heaven Sent would be: Materials/MFD Textures/Heaven Sent.

Sets, Set Props, and Set Poses

Okay I better **Set** some things, at the point. As we all know words have various contextual meanings. If I am on a Movie *Set* it means the area that is being used as a Stage, by the actors, to perform for the camera. There is also a *Set* of Glasses meaning a collection of them. And you can *Set* things down, meaning placed them. In Studio, *Set* can refer to several things, the items you *set* in the View port. Studio can also be a Movie Set, which we call a Scene. But Studio also uses the word Set to mean, a Collection of single placeable assets that are loaded into the scene as if they were one item. Books, ladder and a tall bookcase, placed in the scene as a single **Preload**, are a **Set**. This will make more sense when we start talking about Metadata.

The supporting and modifying content rules still apply to Environments; like Carnival Tent and Millennium Environment.

While the Geometry and most of the Textures are contained within the Runtime folder, you will find a Millennium Environment folder in the Environments folder and within it the various supporting content, which is DAZ Studio Specific.

Carnival Tent has several material sets, to give the tent a different look and feel. It also has Poses to place actors in the stands as spectators and as performers in the ring. It has props for the performers to manipulate, the set dressings the ring and the stands, as well as the text itself. And let us not forget there are Lighting placement and settings and Camera positions, made for those looking for a Ready to Render Scene. All of those should be contained within the Folder called Carnival Big Tent.

Before you go saying that is wrong, let me repeat, any and all content made specifically to be used with, support, or modify another piece of Content, should be within that Content's folder. Yes, the Big Tent Poses are applied to various figures, (v4, K4, & M4) but they were made specific for the Big Tent and they are not *normally* used without the Tent Set; therefore we would place in a DAZ Studio versions of the Big Text Poses in a Poses folder inside the Carnival Big Tent folder. The Poser version would be placed in the Runtime folder with the other Poses.

So if you create a DAZ Studio version of a supporting product, which is specific to a Base Product, the DAZ Studio version of your product should be in a Folder within the Base Product's Folder, even if it used to manipulate other content besides the Base Product.

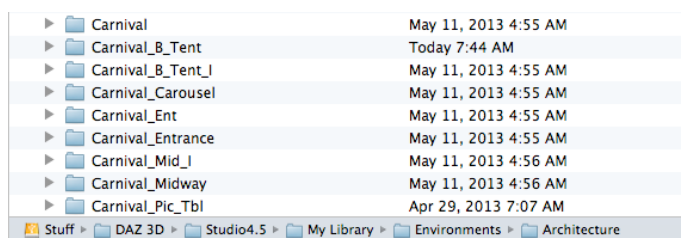
This is great, but there is an issue when you take the next step:

The Carnival Big Tent is only one of several products that were released to build a Carnival ground. So I'm going to build a Carnival Set for a series of Scenes I am creating, and so I go to? This is where the present DAZ Studio Folder Structure falls flat on its face. Everything is based around the Product and there really isn't a next handhold on the slippery rock face. We handle this issue by giving products, which work together, similar names. But again the lack of a standard creates issues.

To illustrate this, let us look for Carnival, but as you can see only some of the products start with or contain the word Carnival.

Notice that within the Environments folder, there is a Carnival folder, but we can also see that not all the Content is located inside it. Even the texture Products folders not within the base content folder and they use various names for the same product.

Some people would call these products, Themes. But a Theme is a setting intended to evoke a particular concept. I would say Steampunk, Victorian, and Art Deco are themes. At first glance the Carnival products do seem to be a Theme, but when you dig a little deeper, they are more than a collection of disparaging pieces, which look good when placed together, they were made to interlink and work in concert. So if Carnival is not a theme what is it and how should we handle such products.



▶ Carnival	May 11, 2013 4:55 AM
▶ Carnival_B_Tent	Today 7:44 AM
▶ Carnival_B_Tent_I	May 11, 2013 4:55 AM
▶ Carnival_Carousel	May 11, 2013 4:55 AM
▶ Carnival_Ent	May 11, 2013 4:55 AM
▶ Carnival_Entrance	May 11, 2013 4:55 AM
▶ Carnival_Mid_I	May 11, 2013 4:56 AM
▶ Carnival_Midway	May 11, 2013 4:56 AM
▶ Carnival_Pic_Tbl	Apr 29, 2013 7:07 AM

There is one product, at the DAZ3D Store, which exemplifies this issue – of reaching beyond ‘Theme’ to an interlinking assembly, with a multitude supporting products, which create a single environment. I am of course talking about the Platinum Club’s Dream Home. If there is a larger collection of products, which could be used to build a single massive set, in the DAZ3D Store, I haven’t seen it.

Dream Home is a collection of more than eighty products. Only nineteen of these products create the Base House and Yard, but there are more than seventy additional supporting products specifically created for the Dream Home. Among them are thirteen Pose products, thirteen Furniture prop products, one bathroom fixtures prop product, one Kitchen Appliances prop product, one lighting preset package for the Great Room, and more than thirty-four texture products.

The Dream Home collection could benefit from an additional folder.

What Products like Dream Home needs is a Master Folder, under the best heading for it. In the case of Dream Home that would be Environments/Architecture/Dream Home. If you have been using the DIM and getting the Updates you will find that there is a Dream Home Folder in that location and several of the Dream Home Products are contained within it and others will be added, as they are updated.

A Rose by any other Name would be Harder to Find

Another large issue I've had is finding the content in the Folder system, as a direct result of inconsistent folder and file naming. In the Character folder, there are twenty-seven folders for Dream Home Content. Twenty-two of these start with DH_ ; while the remaining five are: one is "Dream Home – Product Name", three are "Dream Home Product Name", and the last is "Dream Home" with a subfolder for the product.

Dream Home is not the only product to suffer from this inconstant naming affliction. Remember I told you that the Courageous texture set 'Spring Dance for Courageous' has it's content in folders named 'Spring Fling'. There is content that uses different folder names between the all the runtime folders, even though they are for the Same Product.

So being consistent with File and Folder names would be a really big help.

Vendor or Vanity Folders (or that is what I was told they were)

Okay I know Vendors want to tell us product X was made by Vendor A; and in some cases they make sense. Say I make a Pretty Dress and you make a Pretty Dress, our products won't clash in the Genesis clothing folder. But here is the issue, the Content Consumer is looking for Pretty Dress, not Vendor A. So lets keep it simple just use the Product Name.

'Okay Bright boy, what happens if two or more people make a product called Pretty Dress.' The first one gets the Name and the second has to change the name of their product. There are several utilities out there that can do this with a few clicks of the button, renaming folder names and files if need be.

As one of the poster to the Form told me, in some cased having the Vanity Folder makes Sense. If you know Products X, Y, and Z were made by A, and they are going to share some common vendor resources, then it makes sense. There are also Vendors who have multiple products, which can both work alone or in concert with their other products. And there is one other thing, the Vanity Folder concept is out of the bag and getting everyone to drop the concept could be problematic and painful. So I am going to say, if you are going to use Vanity folders, Please use them within the base structure. If you products are say Architecture then you should placed your vanity folder in Environments/Architecture/Vendor Name. If you then create a Hair for Genesis 2 Female, it should be in Genesis 2/Genesis 2 Female/Hair/Vendor Name.

Next suggestion, if your are going to have both Studio and Poser support, then use the same idea for the Poser content as you did for the Studio content. In the various folders make a Vanity folder and place all your products/assets within it. Remember one of the Larges annoyances is naming inconsistencies.

Now you might notice that several vendors have a Logo rather than a Folder and this is how they mark their products as theirs and it is simple. If you make PNG of you logo and name the same as the Folder Name.png, it will replaced the standard Folder icon with your logo. (Yup that is how easy it is and how vendors get their Logo in there.) That would be better than trying to remember that Pretty Dress is X's product.

Products that Aren't Content

There are a host of Products that are not 3D Content usable by Studio or Poser: Tutorials, Documentation, Readme's, the SDK and even raw Texture Images. These need to be placed somewhere and not spread across the Content Folder. So Let's deal with these next. I am going to make it Simple:

Studio Supporting Content

SDK	All SDK materials or Samples for building a DAZ 3D Tab or Plugin
Tutorial	All Manuals, Video or Webpages that shows someone how-to-do something
Documentation	This is for General Documentation, Product Documentation goes with the Product. Note: DAZ 3D has the DAZ Studio Tutorial Folder, It is theirs Don't Mess with it.
ReadMe's	Where Readme's go. These are HTML Pages. These may be going away. Most New Products do not have Readme's, they use the Wiki Doc's at the DAZ 3D Site. There are several good reasons to do it either way. But if you do make a Readme then here is where it should go.
Templates	Going to distribute the UVMap of your product, this is where it would go, with the product name. Or you could put it in the Product's Folder with the materials.

Other Stuff

Photoshop Brushes	Yeah not sure how they got into my DAZ 3D folder, but Let's put them in a separate Folder.
Hexagon Content	Yeah again, not sure how a Hexagon tutorial got in the Content folder but Hey, let's put them in their own folder.
Resource Textures	If you are distributing a Merchant Resource of images, goes in here. It's not a material it is just a component of one. Not all Merchant Resources should go in here, just raw images or Textures.

Let's Talk about the Ideal Folder Tree

I have been using shots of the of how folders are set up but when expanded the Folder Tree would make an image either several pages long or on compressed so small that you couldn't read it. I thought about using a Listing, but that won't work either, it become a mindless column of names that is hard to visualize. So I decided instead to hit on a few subsections, which seem to be the most troublesome.

While investigating this I learned that some of us have no idea where thing should be placed and I am about to drop a bunch of Bug Reports on the DAZ 3D team. Like the person who put their total clothing product in the Genesis Materials folder or the person who has a Runtime folder in Animals. And I am still trying to figure out the logic use to place the Support folder, where the Studio Metadata folder is placed, being inside the Runtime folder, Maybe DAZ 3D was hoping Poser adopt their Metadata method. Nope, they have there own it appears.

So in a perfect world this is what the Studio Folders would look like list.:

So okay there were a few of these folders that I had a real debate on. Hair was one of them. This is because Hair should be with under the Figure it is made for.

Cameras, Lights, Materials, and Props are for standalone items. For instance: A product that is general purpose Light Shaders should be in Lights. Camera Shaders should be in Camera, but only if they are a standalone product. If they are attached to a Scene, which is part of a Set, like say Dream Home, they should be in the Dream Home Folder.

In truth I almost wanted to say that Lights and Cameras should be in Shaders. My reason: you use the Shader Mixer or Shader Builder Tabs to Create Lights and Cameras with specific properties, therefore they could be placed under Shaders. If we did this there would be Child Folders for Cameras, Lights, & Surfaces.

Animals	- Base Folder	
Animation	- Base Folder	
Cameras	- Base Folder	
Data	- Base Folder	
DAZ Studio Tutorials	- Base Folder	
Documentation	- Base Folder	
Environments	- Base Folder	
Hair	- Base Folder	
Lights	- Base Folder	
Materials	- Base Folder	For Multi-Generation Materials ONLY
People	- Base Folder	
Props	- Base Folder	
ReadMe's	- Base Folder	
Resources	- Base Folder	For Merchant Resources like images
Runtime	- Base Folder	
Scenes	- Base Folder	
Scripts	- Base Folder	
Shaders	- Base Folder	
Templates	- Base Folder	
Tutorials	- Base Folder	
Vehicles	- Base Folder	

Then there is the Content, which is actually a resource, like Dark Designs Vol 1 and 2. They aren't really Textures, they can be used to make Textures. So they go in Resources.

Scenes are for the thing like Ready-To-Render scenes, where it is a set of presets not actual geometry or materials. Scenes that come with a Product should be with that product.

I know what you are thinking, ‘What about all those other folders?’ All those other folders are not part of the standard. Let’s look at the rest of the folders and files that were in my ‘My Library’ folder and I will show you where the things they contain should be. I have sorted this by where they would go.

aniBlocks	-> Should be in ->	Animation
Camera Presets	-> Should be in ->	Camera
PaladinParagon PDF	-> Should be in ->	Documentation
Architecture	-> Should be in ->	Environments
Dystopia	-> Should be in ->	Environments
Environment	-> Should be in ->	Environments
italia	-> Should be in ->	Environments
Maclean	-> Should be in ->	Environments
Merlin	-> Should be in ->	Environments
Light Presets	-> Should be in ->	Lights or the Product they support
product	-> Should be in ->	Readme’s
Codeman Studio	-> Should be in ->	Resources
Codeman Studios	-> Should be in ->	Resources
LadyKassie	-> Should be in ->	Resources
LaurieS	-> Should be in ->	Resources
LisaB	-> Should be in ->	Resources
Bonus Files	-> Should be in ->	Runtime/Libraries/Scenes
Scene Subset	-> Should be in ->	Scenes
bin	-> Should be in ->	SDK
docs	-> Should be in ->	SDK
include	-> Should be in ->	SDK
lib	-> Should be in ->	SDK
samples	-> Should be in ->	SDK
Shader	-> Should be in ->	Shaders
Shader Presets	-> Should be in ->	Shaders
9295_Daz_Intro_gui_complete.wmv	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
9296t_Content_Lib_overview.wmv	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
9297_ebook_ChoosingProductMarket.pdf	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
9298distantlight.wmv	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
Canary3D	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
Dreamlight	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
Fugazi	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
KittysTavern	-> Should be in ->	Tutorials
Pose	-> Should be in ->	with the Product they support
Poses	-> Should be in ->	with the Product they support
Presets	-> Should be in ->	with the Product they support
content	BAD folder!	Z it just keeps coming back

Correcting what we have now

How can we clean up the mess? That would be up to the Content Creators to create the updates for each of their products and submitting for distribution. But getting the updates out and the user installing them is not the drudge it used to be, thanks to the DIM making the distribution and installation of those updates easier.

I also happen to know the Platinum Club Products are being updated, with both new and more consistent Metadata; as well as having file locations updated. If you use the DIM then some of those updates, you have been seeing, are to clean up and in some case repair those products.

Most of those updates have been due to the Dim Beta Team checking to make sure that the Content they received via the DIM installed and worked correctly. Believe me a lot of changes were made before the general DAZ Studio user saw any of those products. Hundreds of Bug reports were made about content not loading or working correctly, being in the wrong location, or even content buried within other content. And as far as I know they are still making corrections and changes.

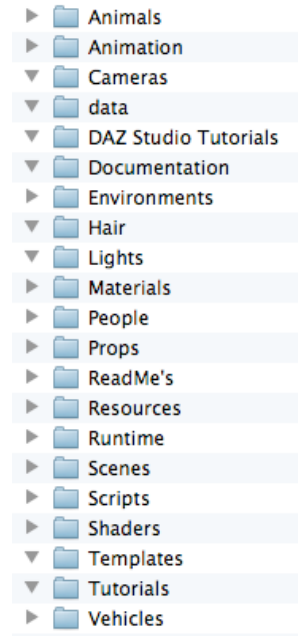
So cleaning up the mess we have now is going to fall on the either the Creators or DAZ 3D Content team. But Let's wait until we have a concise document, which lays out all the guidelines for content placement.

Conclusions

Ideally if everything got cleaned up our Content folders would have 21.

So to make it easier for your Content Consumers, you should:

- DAZ Studio Content should be grouped by the products not Content Types
- Content that supports, modifies, and is specific to an actor should be located with the base Figure
- There are only Three Base Figures for the Gen4 Family of actors; Victoria, Michael, and Kids. All others are Actor Figures are Derived from these three.
- Materials for Clothing go in the Clothing's materials folder, in a sub-folder of the product's name
- For multi-figure content: Materials should go in the Root Materials Folder, in a folder for the Content, the follow the rules for sub-folder.
- Architecture and Environment content are treated the same as Figures, all supporting content is located within the their folder, even if is Poses actors.
- Large Multi-Product Sets, like Dream Home, should have a Master Folder, which contains all the Set's content that is specifically made for the Set.
- Be consistent with Folder and File Names, cross all folders
 - Name folders should bear a resemblance to the store product name
 - Use Commonly accepted abbreviations like V4 and MFD



Well there are my suggestions for a Folder structure Standard and Content Creation Best Practices, which is the logical follower.

I will be putting up a ZIP file with a Folder Layout and will post that location as soon as I have it.

This is a Request for Comment (RFC), so please add your two cents as long as it pertains to the material presented. I know there are several people at DAZ 3D watching this and it is my hope we can come up with a good Documented Standard, which will then be published.

Again I ask the Forum Moderators to remove any General Complaints and Gripes about the Lack of Documentation, it is not the focus of this request.

Glossary Terms

Content	A general name for anything that is used within Poser or DAZ Studio.
Geometry	This is the wire mesh which gives an object its shape. A Plane is the simplest Geometry. A Cube is six planes welded together.
UV Map	This is like those special concept problems where they lay out four cubes and then one odd looking T shaped thing and ask you to select the cube the T represents.
Diffuse Map	This is the image file layer over the UV Map. It is often called a Texture Map, but that is a misnomer. Texture means the feel of a surface and Diffuse Maps are just color. (This is NOT to be confused with a Shader or Material. Texture are the Pretty colored part.)
Bump Map	This is an eight Bit gray scale image that adds non-geometry texturing to a surface. Bump Maps look great until they render from the incorrect angle and then it just vanishes.
Displacement Map	This is an eight Bit gray scale image that adds geometry texturing. Displacement maps actually modify the base Geometry when you render. They will increase your render time, as the system calculates out the Geometry.
Normal Map	This is a Color image that acts much the same as a Bump Map, but has much finer resolution.
Surface Preset or Texture	a combination of the previous five items and settings, which were created to be applied to a specific Geometry.
Shader	A combination Shader Mixer Blocks or Real Code (which the Shader Mixing Blocks are) that control how an object's surface and camera react and interact with the light being emitted but the Lighting Shaders. Shaders are not made for a specific Surface, Light or Camera, but can be applied to any Surface, Camera or Light.
Surface Shader	A shader that can be applied to any surface and may contain a Surface Preset or Texture.
Asset	This could be any single content item within a product, including objects.
Object	A placeable Geometry. Could be a figure, prop, clothes or other.
Surface/Texture Asset	This is an asset placed on an object's geometry, used to give the object color. (I would say visually pleasing but some Surface Textures are anything but visually pleasing.)
Set	A collection of Objects placed as if they were one object. (This could also include other parameters as well.)
Pre-set	A pre-defined collection of settings, such as material settings, applied to a figure or prop with a single click. (thanks to icprncss)
Product	A group of Assets sold under a single SKU at the store.
Product Bundle	A several Products sold under single SKU at the store. These products may or may not be associated or have a theme.
Figure	This is the unmorphed Geometry of an Actor. Genesis and Victoria 4 are Figures.
Actor	This is any 3D Object that Acts, i.e. perform actions. Genesis and Victoria 4 are Actors. A helipad or rock is not an actor, unless they suddenly sprout movable parts.
Character	This is collection of parameter Presets that are applied to an Actor shape and cannot be displayed correctly without the actor.
Figure vs. Actor	Figures are the unmorphed geometry. Actors are Figures with Morphs (shaping) added. This is why Victoria 4 is both a Figure and an Actor.
Actor vs. Character	Actors in Studio have an added meaning. Actors can have morphs applied to them, which change the Base shape. Victoria 5 is an Actor, for you can apply additional morphs. Whereas Aislynne, part of 'Enticing Ladies', is a Victoria 5 Character, created by manipulating the parameters of the Victoria 5 Shape (Morph).

Camera	The Eye on the set. This Eye has settings that can modify how it reacts to light and the objects on the Set.
Lights	They bring illumination to the stage, the set. Just like lights on a movie set they can have colored gels and other attributes attached to them.
Stage	The Stage is where the Set is built, the Set Dressing is placed, and the Actors use Props to convey and idea, emotion or action to the viewer. In a Theater the Stage is a Fixed size, what you see beyond the curtain. On a Movie Stage refers to the area they are filming it. It could be confined to the inside of a building, like a TV Home set; or the size of a Village, as the Camera moves with Actions of the actors.
Sets	These are the walls, window, doors, hard surfaces normally your actors cannot pass through. (Yes Doors can be opened, but a living actor cannot pass through a door.)
Props	Props are those objects on a Set, which the Actors interact with. The Sword, Wizard's wand, and witches broom are all Props.
Set Dressing	This is the stuff; which transforms a floor, two walls and a ceiling; into a Living Room, Throne Room, Dungeon; or the front of a building into an Inn Yard, Farm, family home.
Props Vs. Set Dressings	Props and Set Dressings appear, at first glance, to be the same thing, but they are not. Actors interact with Props, as mentioned above, but Actors do not interact with Set Dressings, therefore they are not Props. But there is a grey area, there are Set Dressings which can become props. For instance when the actor sits on the bar stool it is a set dressing; but when he picks up that stool and used it to bash another actor in the back, during a fight scene, then it becomes a prop.
Scene	In still work a Scene is the collection of Actors, Poses, props, sets, camera, and Lighting. In Movies and theater a Scene is a collecting of actions, Actors, props, sets, camera and lighting settings, which are conveyed in a single location. In DAZ Studio a Scene can also refer to the File, which saves these settings.
Theme	A group of loosely associated products, which are intended to evoke a particular concept but may or may not be made to work together.
Environmental Kit	A collection of Products used to build anything from small vignette to large area environments, including everything from plants, rocks, building, ruins, sky-domes and even weather planes.
Construction Set	A tightly associated collection of products, which were created and sold in pieces, but were crated to work both independently and in concert as one Set. These could have preload locations, which interlink the parts of the whole.