

ANTONIO GOVELA

LEAD CHARACTER TOOLS / PRINCIPAL TECHNICAL ARTIST

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PROFILE

Lead / Principal Technical Artist with 26+ years of experience developing character technology, artist-facing tools, animation systems, and production pipelines. Nearly two decades at Obsidian Entertainment leading Character Technical Art and architecting the studio's Maya character and animation ecosystem across rigging, deformation, animation, motion capture, facial animation, automation, validation, and DCC-to-engine workflows. Hands-on tool developer and technical leader experienced in prototyping, building, deploying, and supporting production tools across multiple AAA projects.

CORE STRENGTHS

CHARACTER TOOLS

Maya ecosystem ownership • artist-facing tools • rigging • deformation • animation

AI DEVELOPMENT

Agentic AI for code creation, prototyping, refactoring, debugging, testing, documentation

PIPELINE / RUNTIME

DCC-to-engine workflows • Unreal Engine • metadata • validation • automation

CROSS-STUDIO

Xbox Game Studios Animation Summits • technical presentations • shared pipeline practices

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT / XBOX GAME STUDIOS | Senior Manager / Principal Technical Artist — Character Technical Art | 19 years

- **Maya Character Tools Ecosystem** — Conceived, architected, and developed interconnected, character-aware Maya applications for character setup, animation management/export, attachments, automated rigging, animation pickers, batch processing, mocap/retargeting, skinning, validation, metadata, and production utilities.
- **Character Technology** — Architected reusable proportional/stretch rigging and volume-bone systems supporting body variation, shared character foundations, reusable controls, rig data, animation compatibility, and skinning workflows.
- **Rigging, Deformation & Facial** — Developed and supported skeleton, control-rig, skinning, facial, and animation technologies including MetaHuman head/body workflows, Advanced Skeleton migration, JALI/Humain integration, and Unreal Control Rig exploration.
- **Animation & Performance Capture** — Supported Xsens motion capture, HumanIK retargeting, facial animation, animation conversion, export, and runtime-facing workflows.
- **Pipeline Integration** — Built metadata, validation, source-file tracking, authoring-artist tracking, export, attachment, and engine-facing workflows connecting DCC production to runtime requirements.
- **Production Support** — Partnered directly with artists, animators, engineers, technical artists, and production teams to prototype solutions, troubleshoot issues, harden tools, and support multiple concurrent AAA productions.
- **Cross-Studio Collaboration** — Assisted in organizing Microsoft Xbox Game Studios Animation Summits focused on animation, character, performance capture, facial rigging, and pipeline technologies; demonstrated Obsidian's character pipeline and participated in technical exchange across studios.
- **AI-Assisted Development** — Used agentic AI during Obsidian production to accelerate Maya/Python code creation, prototyping, refactoring, debugging, testing, and documentation while retaining human review and production safeguards.

CORE FLOW TOOLS | Independent Character & Animation Tools Development | Post-Obsidian • 2026–Present

- Developing a clean-room Maya character and animation tools ecosystem with shared character context and reusable foundations across artist-facing applications.
- Developing AnimHub for clip/take management and FBX export, including Time Editor synchronization, bookmarks, per-character export, animation-layer scoping, groups, batch workflows, and clip previews.
- Exploring embedded AI through an AI Companion that translates natural-language intent into controlled, reviewable, undoable production actions through defined application APIs.
- Using AI-assisted development to accelerate implementation while keeping generated intent separate from validated production actions and preserving artist control.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

MAYA / TOOLS

Autodesk Maya • Python • Maya API • PySide/Qt • MEL • artist-facing applications • automation
Rigging • deformation • skinning • skeletons • control rigs • facial animation • animation pipelines

CHARACTER / ANIMATION

MOTION / PERFORMANCE

Xsens • HumanIK • retargeting • performance-capture workflows • facial pipeline integration

REAL-TIME

Unreal Engine • DCC-to-runtime workflows • MetaHuman • Control Rig • runtime character

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AI / EMERGING TECH PRODUCTION

integration

Agentic AI-assisted development • embedded AI workflow R&D • controlled/reviewable tool actions
Perforce • Git • Jira • Confluence • metadata • validation • deployment • technical documentation

SELECTED CHARACTER & PIPELINE CONTRIBUTIONS

- Universal proportional control-rig framework carried across The Outer Worlds, Grounded, and Avowed, preserving familiar controls and reusable rig information across character variations.
- Skinning data workflows for storing and reapplying deformation information across compatible characters and production changes.
- MetaHuman head/body pipeline work and exploration of runtime rigging, pose deformation, and character-system modernization.
- Character-aware tool architecture in which setup, animation, export, attachment, and supporting utilities share character context rather than operating as isolated tools.
- Automation and validation systems designed to reduce repetitive work, improve consistency, and surface production problems earlier.
- Technical documentation and workflow standards supporting tool adoption, rollout, troubleshooting, and collaboration across disciplines.

EARLIER CAREER

NOESIS INTERACTIVE | Senior 3D Artist / Technical Artist / Project Coordinator | Pre-Obsidian

- Developed character and production workflows, technical art solutions, rigs, tools, and training content; worked with real-time game technology and presented production techniques at industry events including GDC and SIGGRAPH.
- Created and presented Maya-based character design and integration training for Valve Source Engine / Half-Life 2 workflows.

THE FICTION LAB | Founder / Technical & Creative Production | Earlier Career

- Led multidisciplinary interactive and digital production spanning art, animation, technical workflows, and project delivery.

ANIMATICA STUDIO / ANIMA STUDIO / TGI-SILICON GRAPHICS | 3D / Animation / Technical Production

| Earlier Career

- Built early-career experience across 3D production, animation supervision, digital content creation, and high-end graphics technology.

SELECTED SHIPPED GAMES

Fallout: New Vegas • Dungeon Siege III • South Park: The Stick of Truth • Pillars of Eternity • Pillars of Eternity II • Tyranny • The Outer Worlds • Grounded • Avowed