

# Bunchball Developer Wiki: Creating Avatar Assets

## You can create your own Avatar assets and enable your users to buy and wear them with their points.

Avatars can be created using the [Avatar Catalog Widget](#) and viewed via the [Avatar Viewer Widget](#) or flat graphic files.

- This documentation assumes that you're using Flash CS3 Professional.
- Nitro Avatars are also referred to as Tofoos.

### Setup

Download the following materials:

- [assetsCreation.zip](#) (372k)

This contains the following two files:

- **AvatarAssetTemplate.fla**

This is the template used to create avatar assets; it has the library structure and support assets you need to get started. Install this file as a Flash template by opening it in Flash and selecting File->Save as Template.

- **ExportCatalogItems.mxp**

- Run this package to install a Flash extension that will enable you to export your assets. You will need to close and restart Flash after installing this.

- [assetsSamples.zip](#) (12MB)

This zip file contains many sample assets in Adobe Flash CS3 format that you can use as the basis for your own.

### Basic Steps to Create an Avatar Asset

#### • Start with the Avatar Asset Template

- Make sure you have installed AvatarAssetTemplate.fla as a Flash template by opening it in Flash and selecting File->Save as Template. Put it in any Category.
- Create a new Flash document from the Avatar Asset Template, by selecting New->Templates->Tofoo Template from the File menu.
- Familiarize yourself with the template. On the stage of the template you should see a tofoo guide, which will aid you in creating assets, allowing you to see the asset on a tofoo body and also providing outlines of where tops, bottoms, and facial features should fit on the tofoo. There are layers for each asset category. Placing assets on the appropriate layer will let you see your assets in action on the tofoo.
- There are also library folders for each top level category, and within those for each asset category. Completed assets have to be placed in the appropriate category folder for the asset to be exported. Note that the number on the right hand side of each category folder name indicates the layer that the category belongs to.

#### • Create your base asset. This will be used as the basis for the version that appears on the Avatar as well as the version that appears in the catalog.

- Create a normal movie clip that will be used as the asset. Design and create your asset in this movie clip. Your asset can use multiple layers.
- Name the movie clip without using spaces, underscores, or hyphens. Separate words using capital letters (ex: "ExampleAsset").

#### • Create the "full-size" asset. This is the version of the asset that will appear on the Avatar.

- Duplicate the "Empty Full" movie clip from the library. Rename it with the same name as the base move clip and append "-full" to the end of the name (ex: "ExampleAsset-full").
- Add this new movie clip to the stage on the appropriate pre-existing layer (ie Hats if your asset is a hat) and position it at (0, 0).
- Edit the movie clip in place and add your base asset. Position the base asset as it should be positioned on the tofoo. Make sure the base asset fits within the 300 x 300 box.

#### • Create the thumbnail asset. This is the version of the asset that will appear in the catalog.

- Duplicate the "Empty Thumb" movie clip from the library. Rename it with the same name as the base move clip and append "-thumb" to the end of the name (ex: "ExampleAsset-thumb").
- Add the base asset, sizing and positioning it to fit snugly within the 200 x 200 box.

#### • Put the assets in the proper location.

- Move the "-full" and "-thumb" movie clips just created into the correct category folder in the library.

- These movie clips MUST be in a category folder to be exported.
- It does not matter where in the library you put the base asset, but it is a good idea to keep it together with its "-full" and "-thumb" movie clips.
- The numbers on the right hand side of a category folder correspond with a layer on the stage. The layer you wanted the asset to be in determines which category folder you should place these movie clips in.

## Colorable Assets

The avatar catalog widget allows users to customize the colors of avatar assets that have been designated colorable. Avatar assets must be specially created to take advantage of this functionality:

- In both the "-full" and "-thumb" movie clips, name the instance of the base movie clip "asset". This is how the avatar catalog widget knows where to look for colorable items.
- Select a movie clip within your base asset that you want to make colorable (you will need to convert the part you want to make colorable into a movie clip if it is not already). Name this movie clip instance "color1", "color2", or "skinColor".
  - Users are able to customize up to two colors for assets. The first color applies to the movie clip named "color1", and the second color applies to the movie clip named "color2".
  - Only have one movie clip for each color. If multiple parts of the asset should share the same color, make sure they are grouped in the same movie clip.
  - Only use "color2" if you have another movie clip using "color1".
  - Users are also able to customize the skin color of the tofoo. If the asset is connected to the tofoo body and should be the same color as the tofoo's skin (ex: ears, hands, tails), name the movie clip instance "skinColor".

## Exporting Assets

Make sure that you have run the ExportCatalogItems.mxp package to install the Flash export catalog items extension. You will need to restart Flash after installing the extension. After the extension is successfully installed, there will be an option under the Commands menu called "Nitro Export Catalog Items". Run that command when you are ready to export the catalog items. You must have saved your FLA file first in order for this to work. All the items in your library will be exported.

The exporter compiles a full and thumbnail swf for each asset and puts them into an "output" folder in the same directory where the FLA is located. When compilation is complete, a preview of all exported assets is shown. The item on the left is the item as it will appear in the catalog. The item on the right is as it will appear on the avatar. Use this to verify that all of the assets were exported, that the assets are correctly placed on the tofoo, and that the assets are colorable as expected. Note that if you go back into your assets, you'll see that they have been moved and that code has been added to their timelines. This is necessary to enable your assets to be used by the Avatar Widgets.

If you do not use the Exporter to create your assets (not recommended), make sure you publish your assets using AS3. You will need to add the code **Security.allowDomain("assets.bunchball.net")** to each asset to give the widget access to the asset.

Once your assets have been successfully exported, the compiled swfs need to be uploaded to a server. The avatar assets can then be added to the avatar catalog using the [Admin UI Catalog Module](#).

## Different Avatar Sizes

Our tofoo assets are all 300x300 for the full assets, and 200x200 for the thumbnails. You can use any size for thumbnails, though they should always be square. If you are creating new tofoo avatar assets, the fulls need to be 300x300. If instead you are designing your own avatar library from scratch, you can use the size of your choice for the avatar, and there is no reason the full needs to be square. Note that the area the avatar is displayed in the widget always has a width of 250; if your avatars are wider, the sides will get clipped. The height of the area where the avatar is displayed in the widget is configurable using the 'avatarHeight' [parameter](#).

## Asset Design Tips

The asset creation and preview tools give you the ability to experiment and try out various methods of designing avatar assets. Look at the samples provided to see how other designers have constructed their assets. Below are some tips that will help make your assets look good:

- Avatars can be rendered at various sizes, so all assets should be vector artwork so that they scale properly.
- If importing from Illustrator or another drawing package, make sure to convert all paths to outlines (Illustrator) or fills (Flash). This is so they scale properly.

- Outlines that extend outside the body should be at least 2 pixels wide, to match the default Tofoo outline.
- Outlines inside an asset should be no smaller than 1 pixel wide.
- Make outlines on colorable objects a percentage of black so that the outline appears to have the same color as the asset. (The base Tofoo has a 30% Black outline)
- Add tint and shades to a colorable asset by using percentages of white or black. Follow the same light source with your asset that you see demonstrated on the guide Tofoo.
- Avoid creating assets where the outline is colorable.
- Avoid the over-use of gradients in an asset.
- You can add simple looping animations to an asset.