SitePal™

Quick Start Guide

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Introduction to SitePal

SitePal is an avatar-creation application for businesses and professionals that allows you to implement compelling animated speaking characters for your web & mobile sites and applications. SitePal characters can be embedded in your web pages, email messages, mobile apps, or any other web-based content.

A SitePal speaking character -

- Adds a personal touch to your web site;
- Enhances your visitors' experience & gets their attention; and
- Increases the profile of your brand

SitePal is designed to be easy to use. An online speaking character can be created and deployed in just minutes. Yet it provides professional features that allow you to meet your creative needs and implement your business logic.

Note that while SitePal requires no programming skills to use, a rich API is provided that allows programmers to tap advanced functionality.

The SitePal Environment

The SitePal editing environment centers around the SitePal *Scene*. A *Scene* is an embedable unit, comprised of:

- A speaking character
- An (optional) background image or video
- An (optional) audio to be spoken.

The SitePal Editor, allows you to edit a Scene. That means that the Editor allows you to select, design or create your character, to select or upload your background, and to select or add your audio.

Note: You might wonder why the audio might be an optional attribute for a Scene. Isn't the whole point to enable a speaking character? Why is the audio not required? The answer to that is that in some applications the SitePal character is called upon to speak dynamically, as a result of user action for example. Or to provide personal information to the visitor, for example their account balance, or information related to choices or selections that the user made. In such cases the speech would be generated or invoked via API calls (programming), and the embedded Scene need not have any audio pre-assigned to it. Programming & using the API will not be covered by this Getting Started guide.

There are two types of SitePal Scenes, and there are two different Editors available to edit them: Full Body and Classic. Full Body Scene configuration has less options and is

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much simpler then Classic Scenes. Consequently the Full Body Scene Editor is simpler. We will only discuss editing a Classic Scene in this guide, but the steps and the objective are the same: selecting character, background and audio to create/edit your Scene (though, being simpler, Full Body Scenes have no background...). Henceforth when we mention the Editor, we will be referring to the SitePal Classic Editor unless otherwise noted.

The sequential steps used for creating & publishing a Classic Scene are:

1. Selecting a Model
2. Selecting Accessories for the Model
3. Selecting a Background for the Scene
4. Adding Audio to the Scene
5. Publishing the Scene to your Web Page

Clicking on a link for one of the steps above brings you to that point in the document. We suggest though, that you first go through the entire process in order.

Additional Documentation & Resources

You can find additional documentation and reference material on the SitePal Support page. Additional resources available on the support page include:

- *SitePal Community Forums*
- *Embed Instructions for Popular Platforms*
- *API Reference & Examples*
- *Tech Notes*

Note that All SitePal plans include unlimited email support. If you have questions or encounter a problem – contact us. A contact form is available on the support page.

Advanced Features

Not covered by this guide, SitePal's more advanced features allow you to further extend the capabilities of your avatars. These include:

- The JavaScript Client API to extend the functionality and flexibility of SitePal Scenes.
- Dynamic Text-to-Speech (TTS) to determine which text your character speaks when your Scene plays.

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- The AI Knowledge Base to bring your SitePal character to life with the power of artificial intelligence (AI).
- Publishing your SitePal Scene to be used in commercial mailings.

Terminology

- In this guide, the terms “avatar” and “character” are used interchangeably.
- The term “model” refers to the base character – before being customized.
- A Scene is the embedded unit you publish, and includes a speaking character, an audio, and a background image (for Classic Scenes).
- “Classic Scenes” refers to Scenes using 2D and 3D “half body” speaking characters.
- “Full Body” refers to the full body characters that are embedded in or overlaid on your Web page.
- “3D” or “3D Photoface” refers to photorealistic half body speaking characters created from a facial image. The Editor allows you to create such characters yourself.

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This document provides a quick tutorial for using SitePal. It covers the basic tasks needed to create your own SitePal speaking character and to publish it to your web page.

SitePal Subscriptions

The functionality you may access is determined by the level of your subscription. SitePal offers four subscription levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. The pricing table lists the features included with each subscription level.

Note: This Quick Start Guide describes the features of a Bronze-level account, unless noted otherwise.

Editing a Classic Scene

Several pre-configured Scenes are provided with your SitePal account. To design your own speaking avatar, with your own audio and background, start by editing one of these Scenes.

Lets start with a 2D Illustrated Classic Scene. To edit a Scene, you click on the Scene thumbnail in your Scene list. The Scene Editor opens, and allows you to select a model, adjust its features, select a background, and add audio for your Scene. In the next few sections, we will cover these steps in some detail.

To start,

- Go to the SitePal site at http://www.sitepal.com.
- Click **Login** at the upper-right of the page. The SitePal Login Page now displays:.

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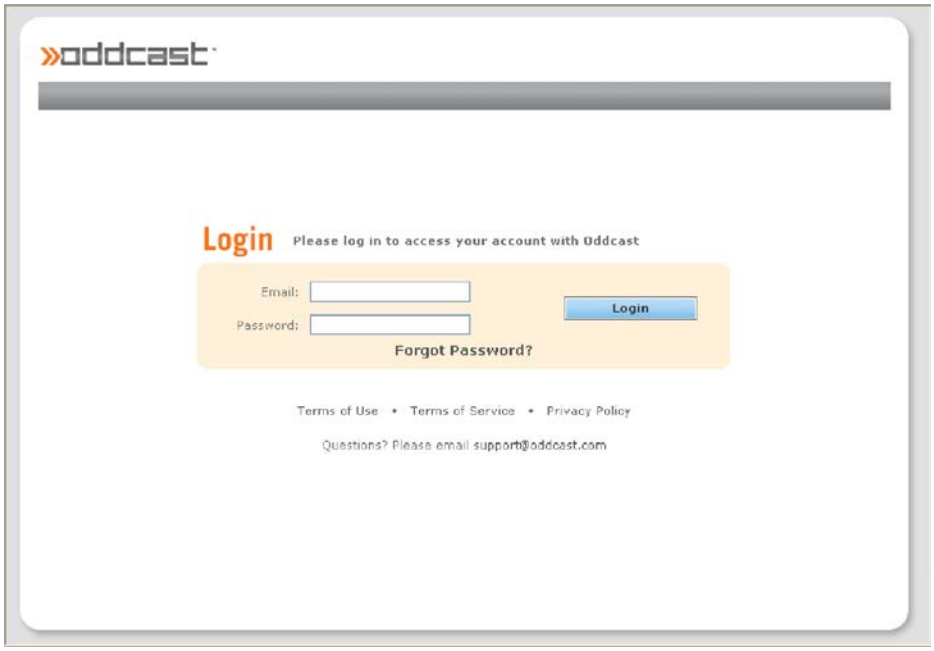

Figure 1 SitePal Login page

- Enter the email address and password for your SitePal account, and click **Enter.**

The home page for your SitePal account is now displayed. Your home page lists your account type, usage metrics, and some specific account information. Options are also provided for upgrading your account, extending your license, and adding audio streams.

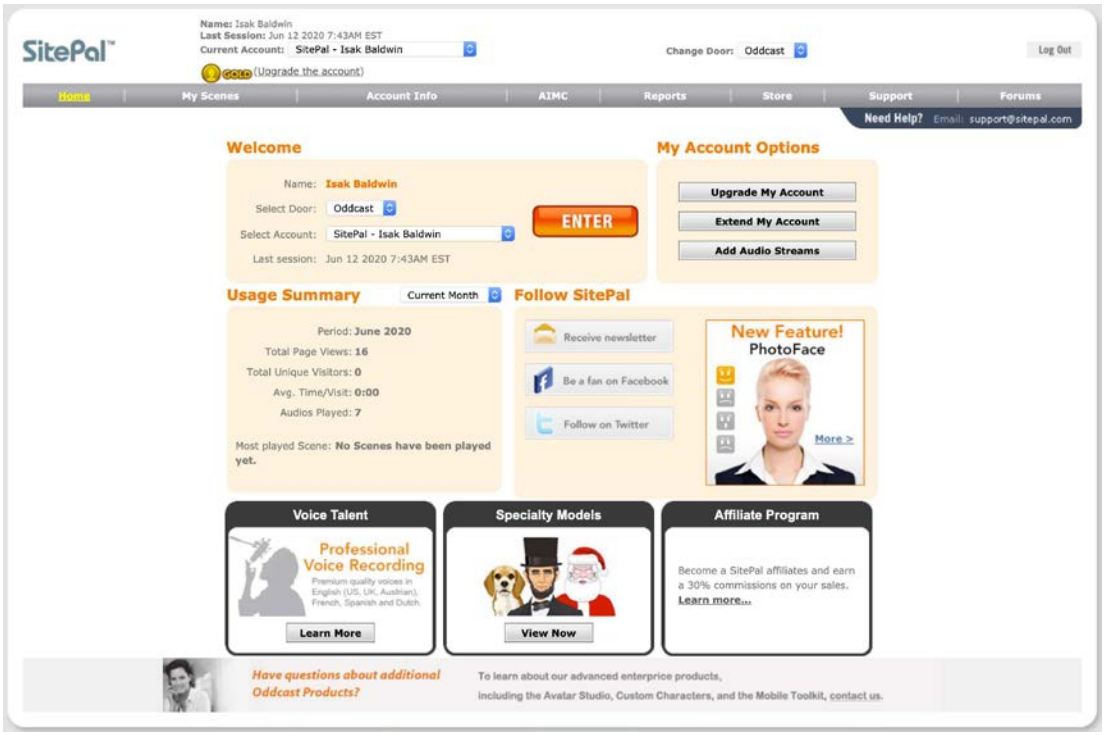

Figure 2 Account Home page

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Click **Enter** to proceed. Your *My Scenes* page now displays. This is your main console within the SitePal environment, from which you manage all your assets.

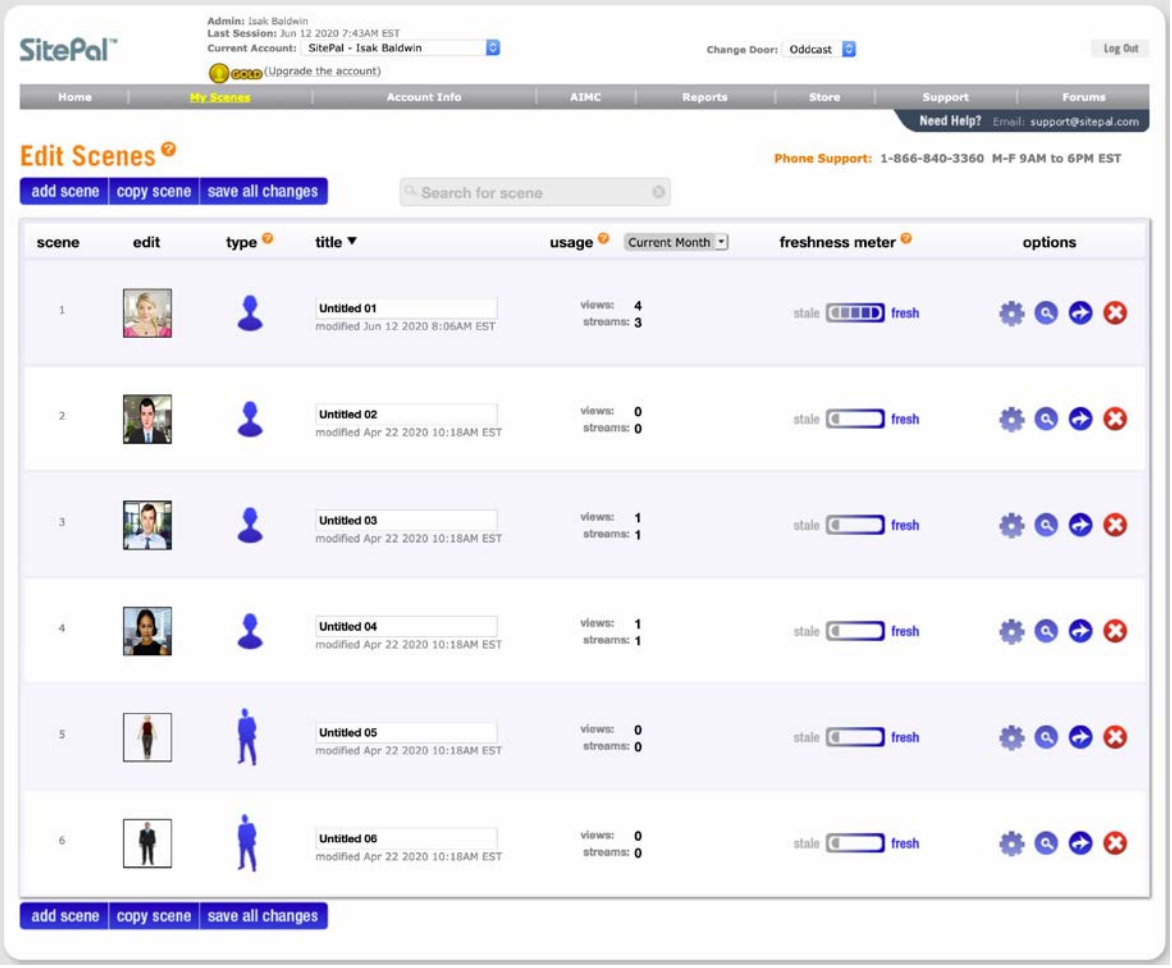

Figure 3 My Scenes page

Here, features are provided for editing, previewing and publishing your Scenes, as well as managing the Scene's options. A freshness meter reflects the last time the Scene was modified. A stale Scene should serve as a call to action – it is best to frequently update the avatar, the audio, or both, to keep the user experience fresh.

Clicking on a Scene's thumbnail opens the Scene Editor for editing overlaying the My Scenes list. You may edit any of the existing Scenes, or create a new Scene by clicking on the 'Add Scene' or 'Copy Scene' buttons.

Note: All subscription levels support an unlimited number of Scenes .

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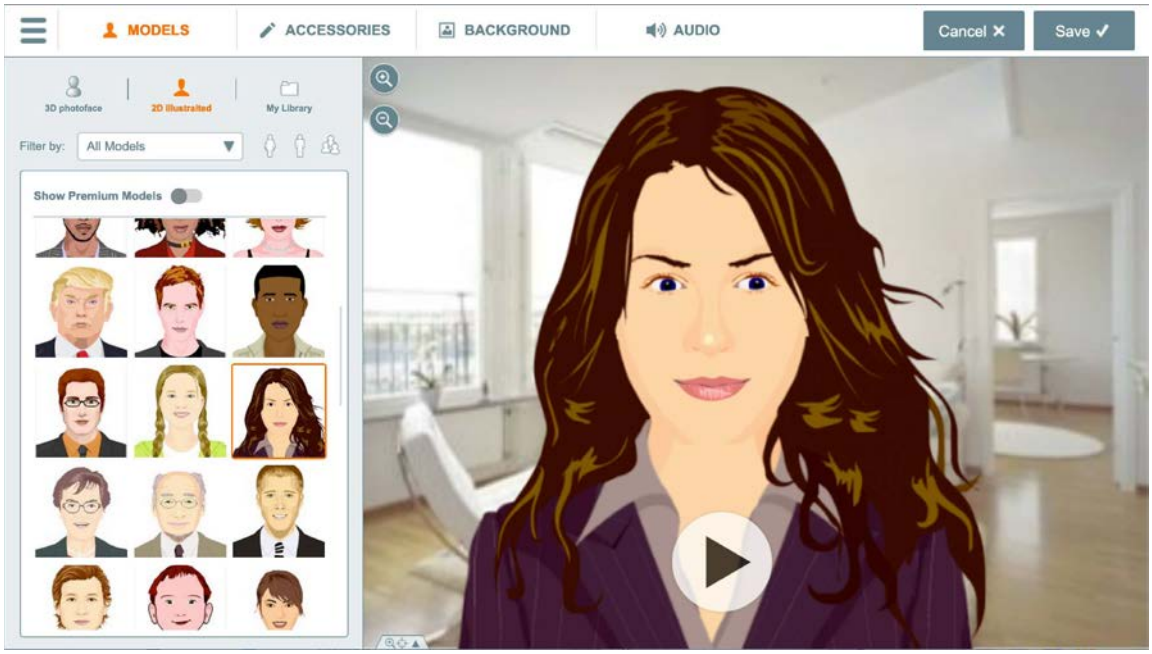

Figure 4 Scene Editor window

All modifications to the selected Scene are performed here.

Step 1: Selecting a Model

You create a character by selecting a pre-configured SitePal model and customizing its accessories, attributes, and color.

Note: You can go to any stage in the creation process by clicking on one of the buttons at the top of the Scene editor.

Your first task is to select a model. Click on a model's thumbnail image to select it. The display area on the right displays the selected model.

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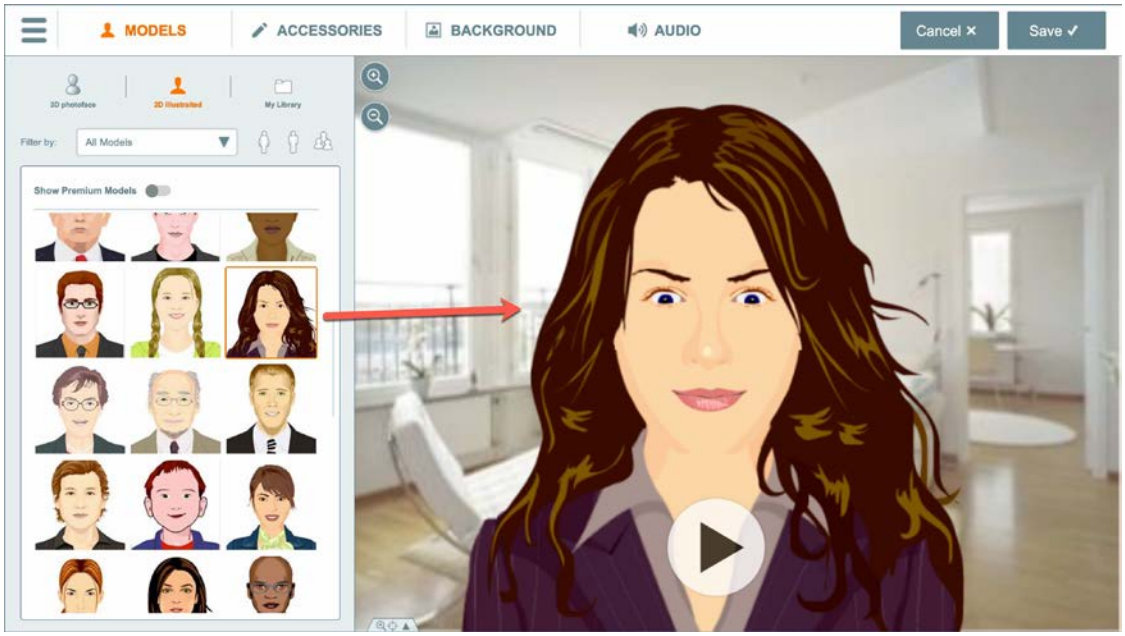

Figure 5 Models Edit page

- You can filter the models by category or gender. You can also navigate to other model listings by selecting the 3D PhotoFace, 2D Illustrated, or My Library tabs. Options will vary depending on whether you select a 2D or 3D model.

	Note: In this guide we will describe the selection and options of a 2D model. A 3D model has fewer options and is therefore simpler to configure.

- After the model is selected, you may change its placement & scale by dragging the Model around the stage and using the Zoom buttons. The Zoom buttons are on the upper left corner of the Model stage. You may also open the Scale / XY coordinates dialogue by clicking the Scale/XY coordinates tab on the lower left of the Model stage.

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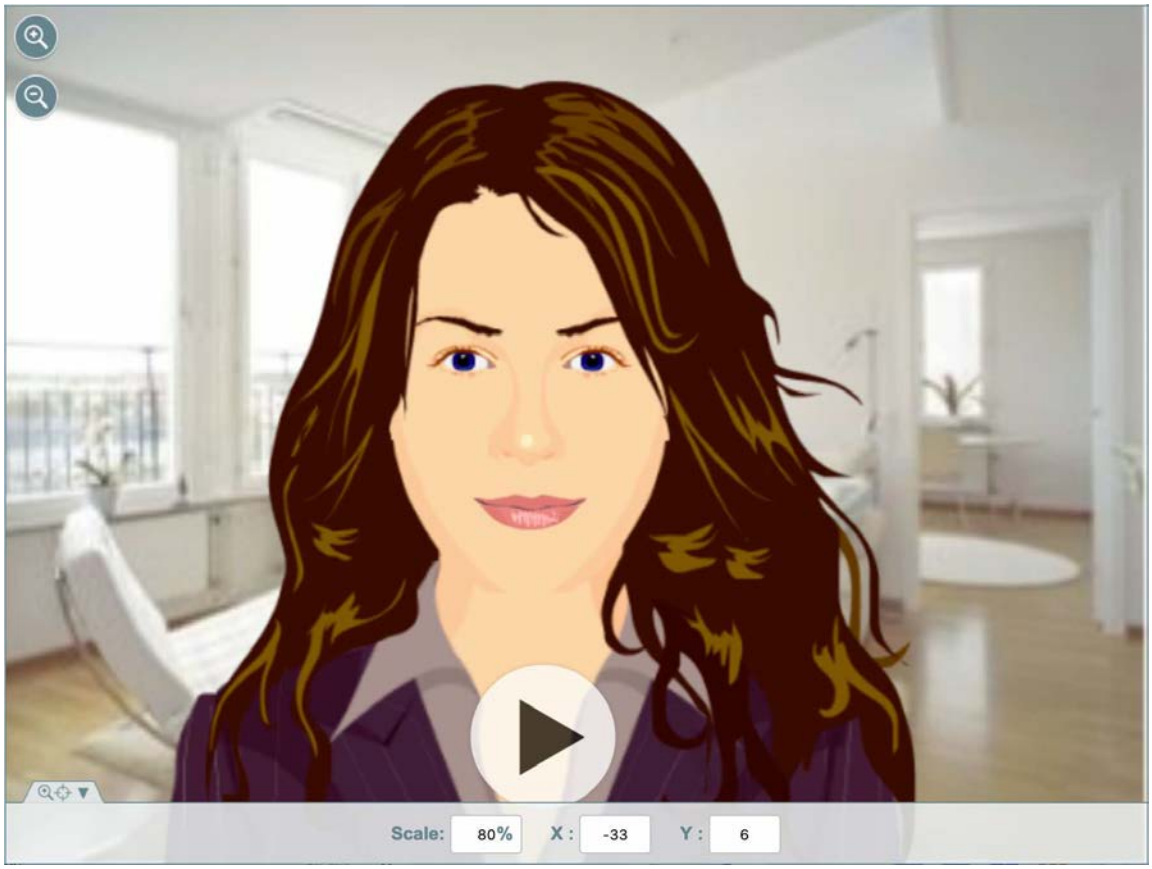

Figure 6 The Scale/XY coordinates dialogue

- At any time, clicking on **Save** saves the Scene with the defined characteristics. The saved Scene will subsequently display on the Edit Scenes page in alphabetical order by name.
- Clicking the play button plays the Scene with all of its assigned characteristics to this point.
- Clicking **Cancel** stops the process and gives you the opportunity to leave the editor without saving.

Step 2: Accessorizing the Model

After selecting and positioning your model, clicking the **Accessories** tab to the left of the Model stage displays the Accessories dialogue:

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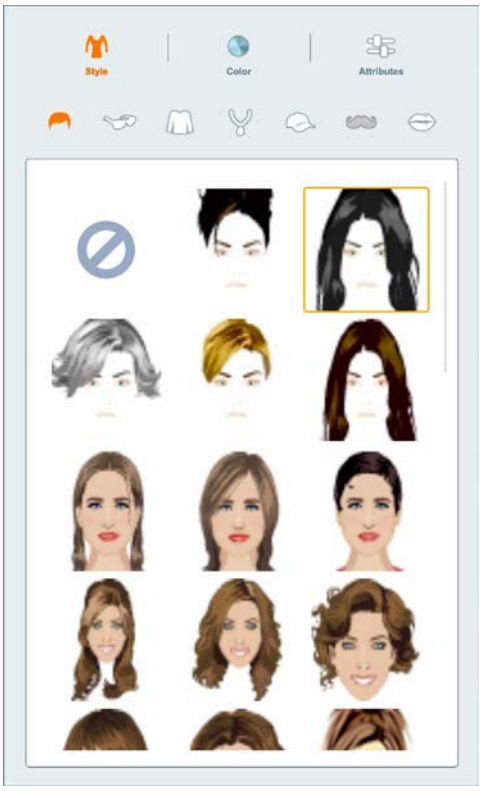

Figure 7 Accessories: Style Tab (Hair selection)

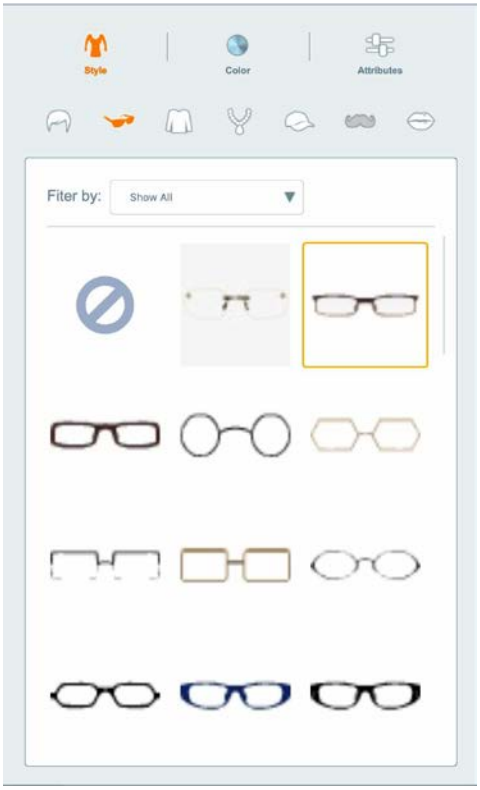

Figure 8 Accessories: Style Tab (Eyewear selection)

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The Accessories tab enables you to select unique features for the model and to modify its characteristics. 3D Photoface models do not have Accessories. An Expressions tab takes their place allowing you to apply emotions to your character.

For 2D Models, depending on the model you have selected, you may see options for changing its Style (hair, eyewear, clothing, jewelry, headwear, facial hair, and lip expression); Color (hair, skin, eyes, make-up, mouth); and Attributes (physical dimensions for mouth, head width, head height, shoulders, nose, and age representation). Use the tabs at the top left of the Scene editor to select the displayed Accessories and customize your model.

Note: Two-dimensional models support accessories and colors, but do not support facial expressions. Three-dimensional models support facial expressions, but do not support accessories or colors.

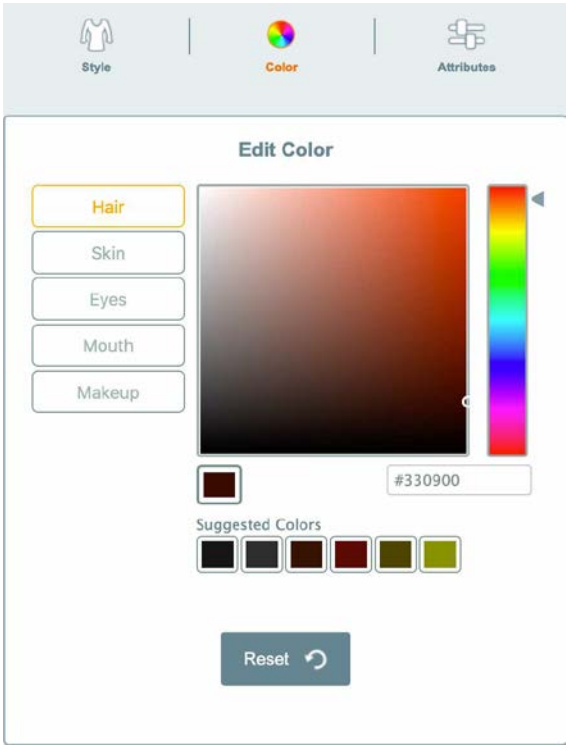

Figure 9 Accessories: Color Selection Tab

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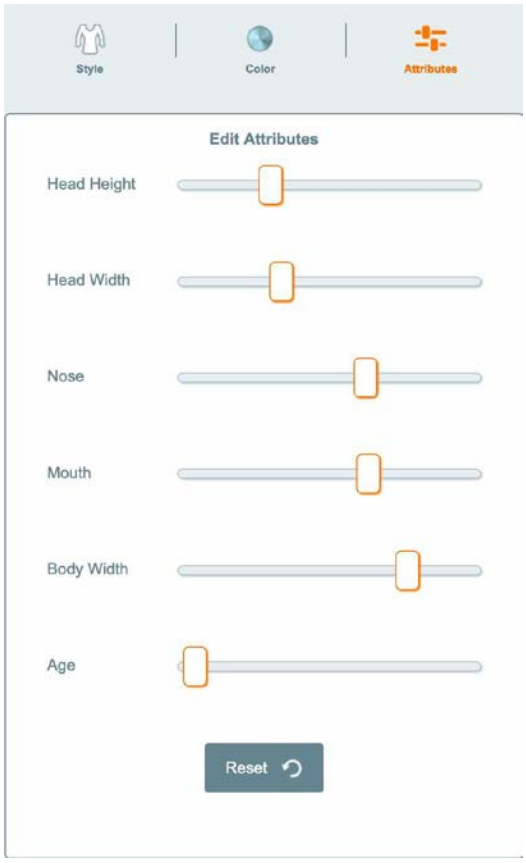

Figure 10 Accessories: Attributes Tab

The example in Fig. 11 below reflects changes made to the model:

Figure 11 Modified Accessories Example

When you are done, proceed to the next step in the Scene Editing process, **Backgrounds.**

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Step 3: Selecting a Background

The **Backgrounds** tab allows you to select a pre-existing background to apply to the Scene, or to import your own image.

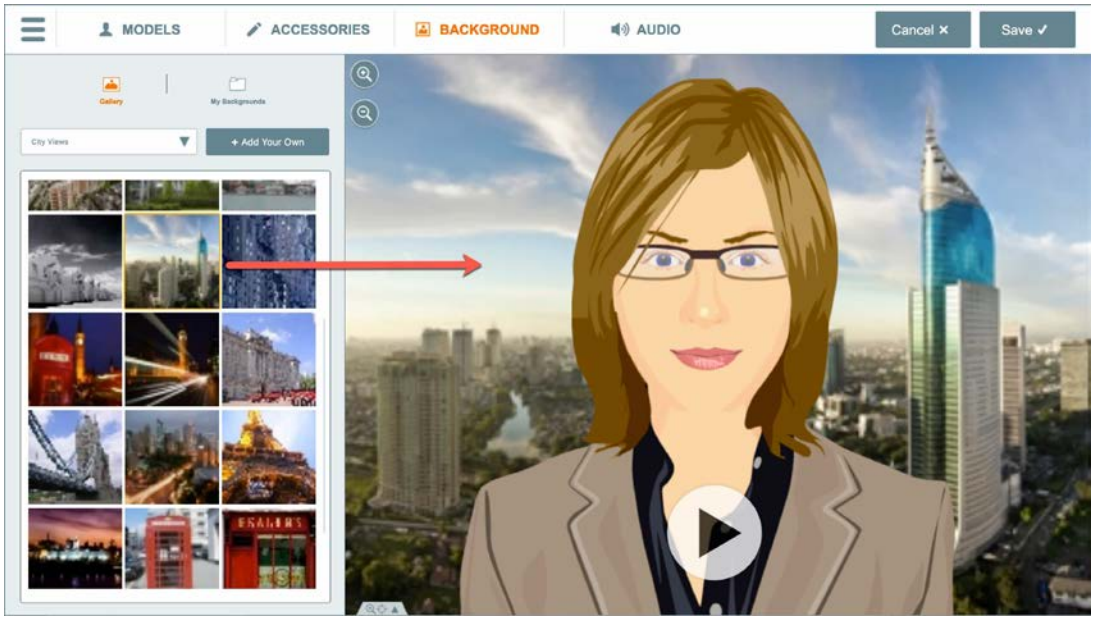

Figure 12 Scene Background Example

Fig 12. above shows our model with a background selected from one of the available categories.

Select a background category to view available backgrounds, or upload your own background by selecting the My Backgrounds tab, clicking Add Your Own, clicking Upload and selecting an image or video from your local drive. That image/video will thereafter be displayed in the My Backgrounds tab for subsequent selection. The Add your own background dialogue also allows for the adding of images from Facebook, Instagram, Pixabay, and Google Drive. Pixabay is a large searchable database of royalty free images that you may import and use however you like.

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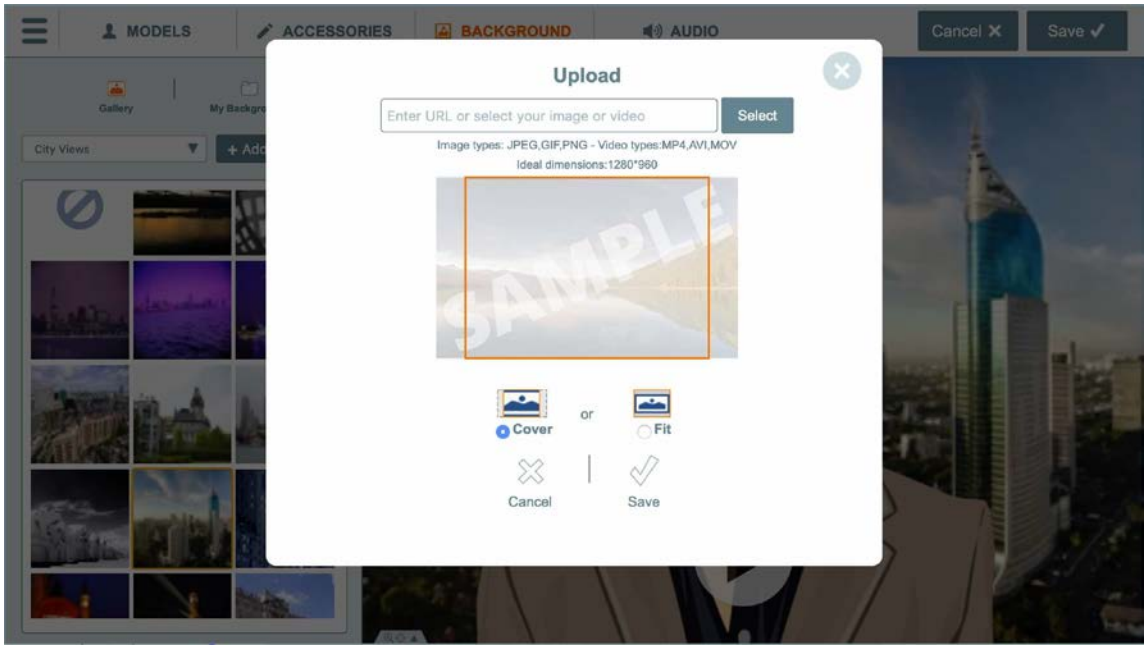

Figure 13 Uploading a Custom Background

Guidelines are listed in the Upload window for image characteristics supported for background use. Decide if you want to cover or fit the image if the image does not have the same aspect ratio of a Scene (ideal dimensions are 1280X960 pixels.)

When the appropriate background has been applied, click the next tab button in the Scene editor, **Audio**, to apply an audio track to the Scene.

Step 4: Adding Audio to a Scene

The Audio panel provides six different means by which to add audio to the Scene: Previously saved audio in the Library, Uploading Audio in the Library tab, TTS (Text to Speech), Record By Microphone, Record by Phone, and custom Voice Talent. Each of these options is available at the top of the Audio panel.

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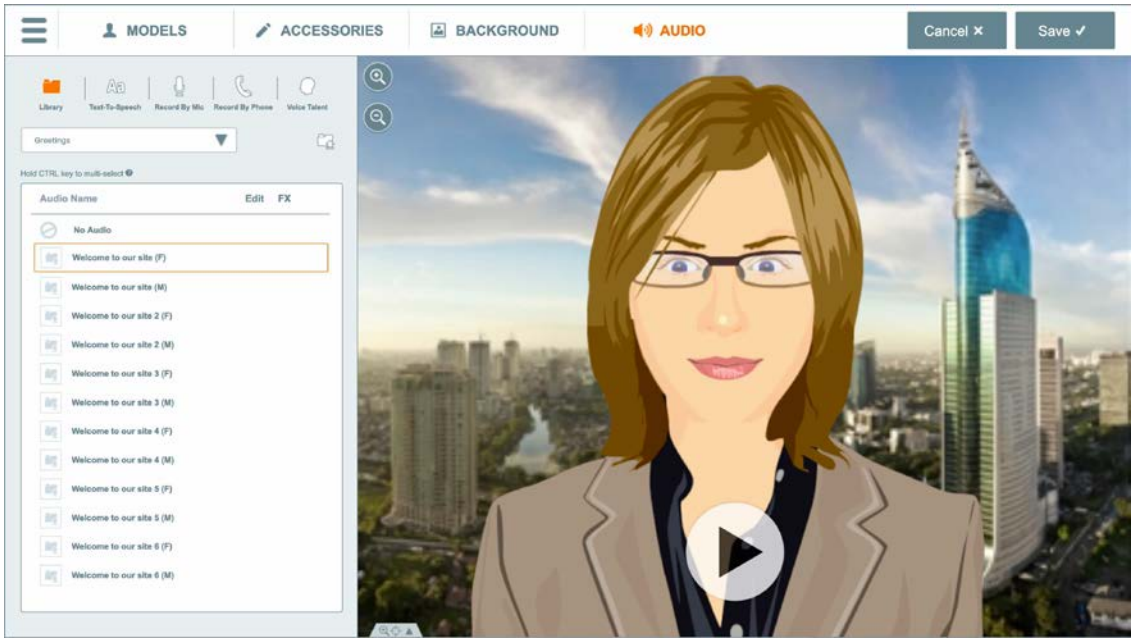
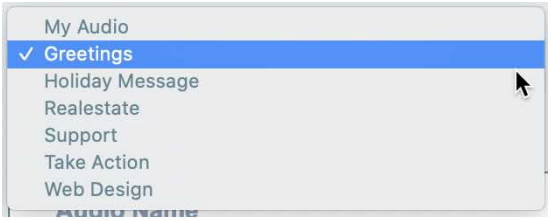


Figure 14 Audio Edit panel

In this Quick Start Guide, we will include a description of using two of these methods: Assigning a previously saved audio, and creating a new Text-To-Speech audio.

Saved Audios Library

The **Saved** audio option is displayed by default when the Audio Edit page is accessed. It lists all built-in audio tracks included with your SitePal account, as well as any audios which you have added to your account. Audios are classified according to category. The "My Audio" category contains those audios which you have added to your account, and is initially empty. Select a category from the drop-down list:



When the panel reloads and lists the audios of the category you selected, click on one of the audios to preview it. The character in the Scene will speak the audio.

Go ahead and sample several audio clips before selecting one. Alternatively you can also select multiple audio tracks to play randomly by selecting the "Select Multiple Audios" checkbox. This feature enables the animated character to randomly speak one of the selected audios each time it is displayed on your web page.

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Tip: Select multiple audios to enhance the user experience on your web page. One of these audios will be randomly played in the page in which the avatar is embedded. Using a random selection in this way creates a more interesting experience for your web site visitors.

TTS Audio

SitePal's text-to-speech facility allows you to enter a message in text format and convert it to audio on the fly.

Note: This feature is only available to Silver subscribers or higher.

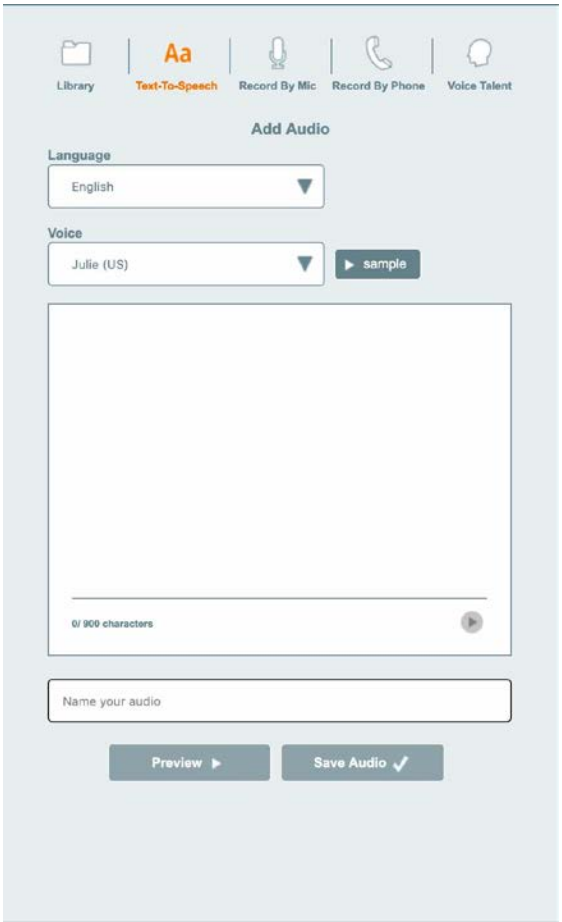

Figure 15 TTS Audio tab

The message input cannot exceed 900 characters (or 225 Chinese or Japanese characters). Options at the bottom of the Edit pane allow you to select the speaking voice and language. Type in the message you would like your character to speak, select a language and a voice and click on the Play or Preview buttons to hear the text spoken. Click on the Sample button to hear a short voice sample for the voice you selected.

After previewing the audio, enter a name for the audio in the field at the top of the

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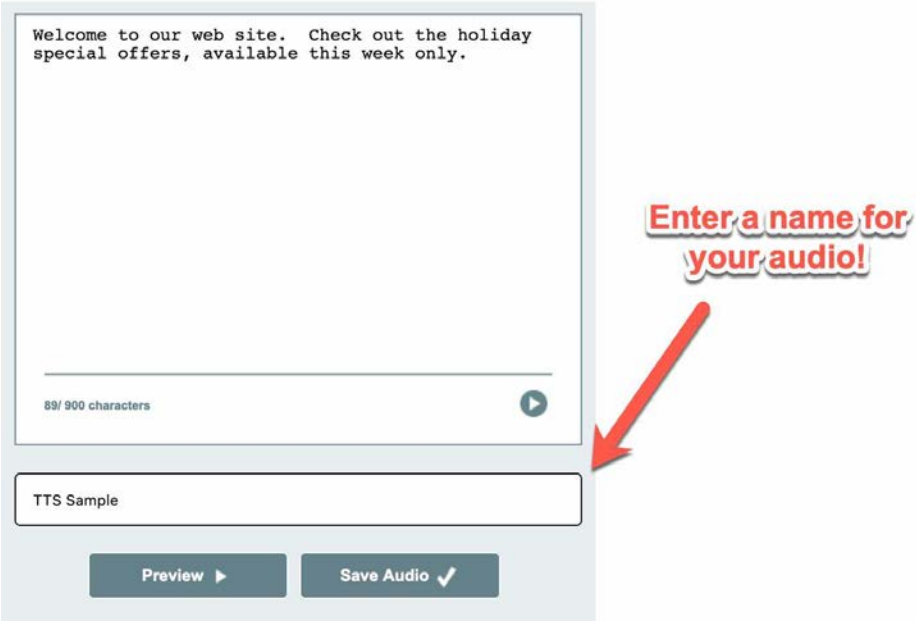
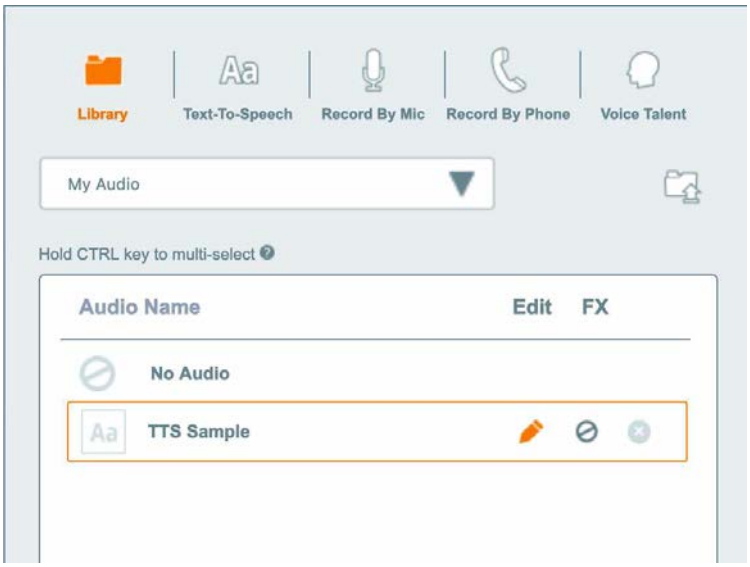
page, and then click on the **Save** button**.**



The Library list now displays the new audio in the My Audio category:



The new audio is available for use in this and any other Scene you create.

Note: The Text-To-Speech option is available only for subscribers with Silver accounts and above.

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Other Methods of Creating an Audio

Additional audio creation methods are not described here but are self-explanatory. Please experiment by creating audios on your own.

After you have created and previewed your audio by clicking the play button, go ahead and click **Save Scene.** The Scene now displays on the My Scenes page. From here, you can select it for further editing, specify the Scene's playback options, preview the Scene, and publish it. We'll discuss these options in the next section.

Managing and Publishing Your Scenes

The following functionality is available for each of your Scenes, on your My Scenes page*: Scene Options, Preview, Publish,* and *Delete*.

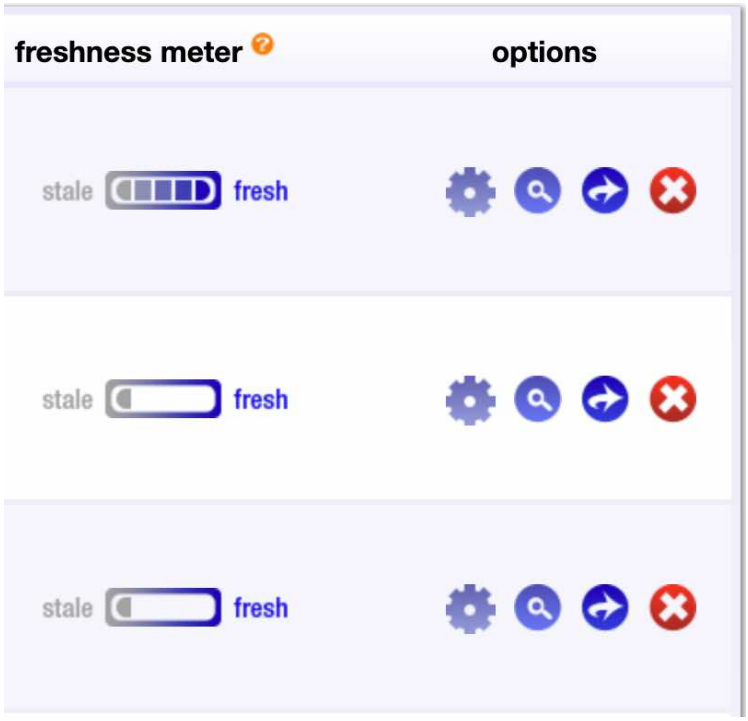

Figure 16 Functionality on the Edit Scenes Page

Scene Options

Edit Scene options to configure the playback attributes of your Scene.

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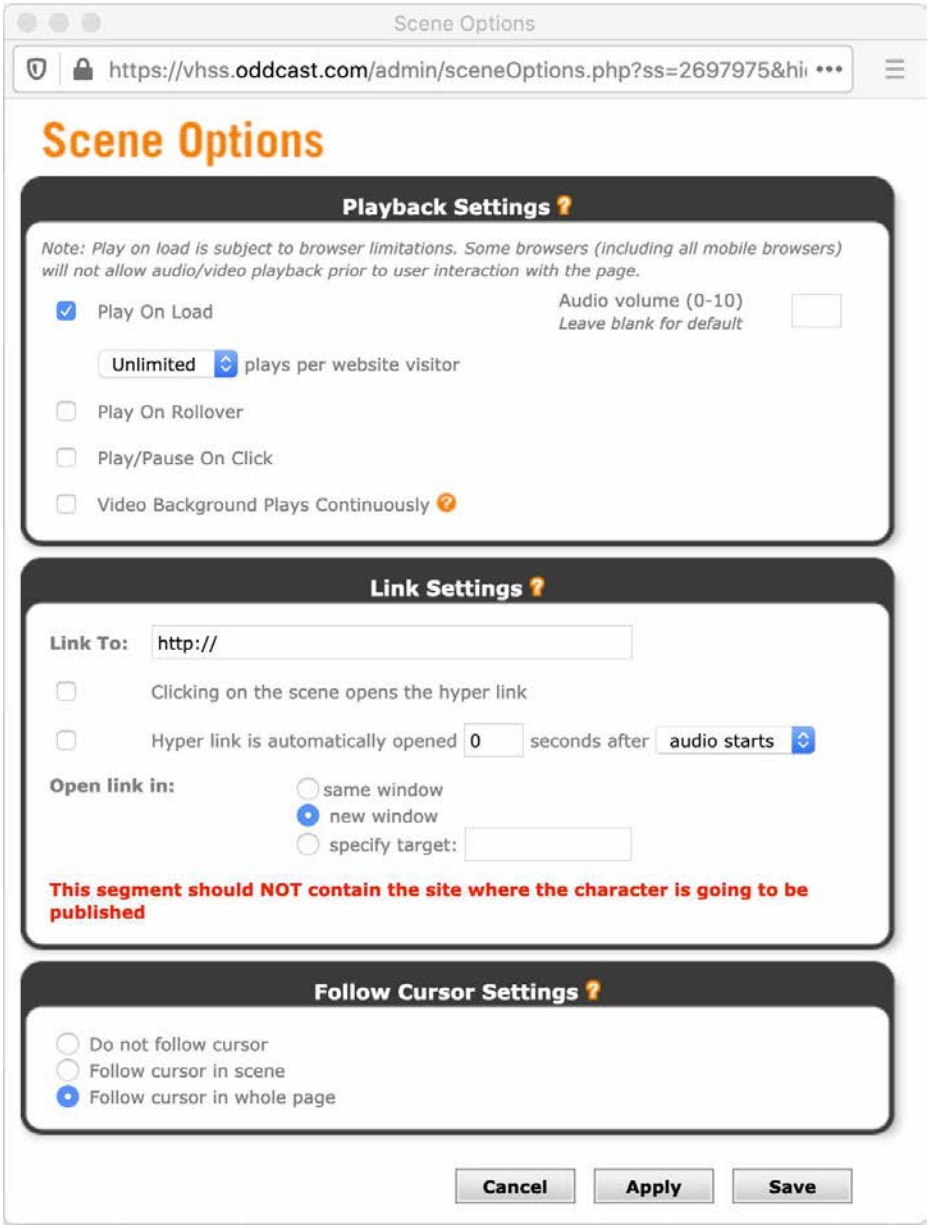

Figure 17 Scene Options window

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Scene Options available here. Playback Settings allow you to configure your Scene to Play on Load, Play On Rollover, Play/Pause On Click. Play on load can be limited to a number of times both per month and per session. Audio volume can be adjusted (blank is the default volume of 7 out of 10). Video backgrounds can be configured to play continuously or not. Link Settings can associate hyperlinks with your Scene that can be triggered when the Scene is clicked or automatically before or after speech. Finally Follow Cursor settings determines if the character follows the cursor in Scene, in page, or not.

Preview

Clicking the Preview option opens the Scene in a separate window, for you to evaluate

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whether it is ready to publish.

Figure 18 Preview window

Delete

Click **Delete** to remove the selected Scene from your Scene List:

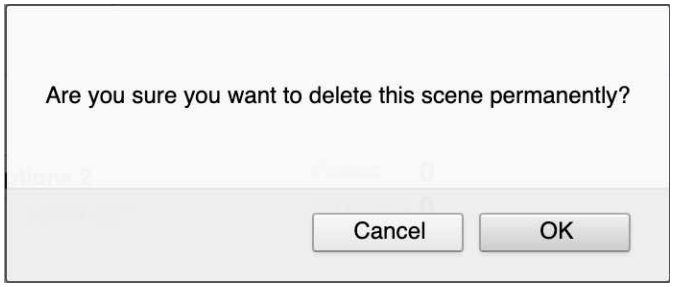

Figure 19 Delete Scene alert

Click **OK** to proceed; click **Cancel** to stop the action.

Publish

Last and certainly not least, clicking **Publish** begins the process of embedding the selected Scene into your web-based medium.

When the Publish icon is invoked the following alert displays to remind you to double-

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check your Scene settings before proceeding. Check 'Don't show me this notice again' to repress this dialogue in the future.

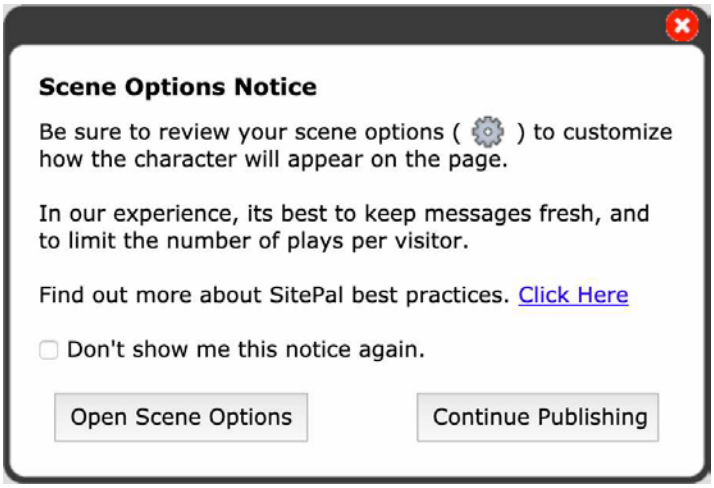

Figure 20 Publish alert

Clicking **Open Scene Options** opens the Scene Options window described earlier. If you chose to proceed, the Publish Your Scene window is displayed. Below is the Publish your Scene dialogue for a Classic Scene.

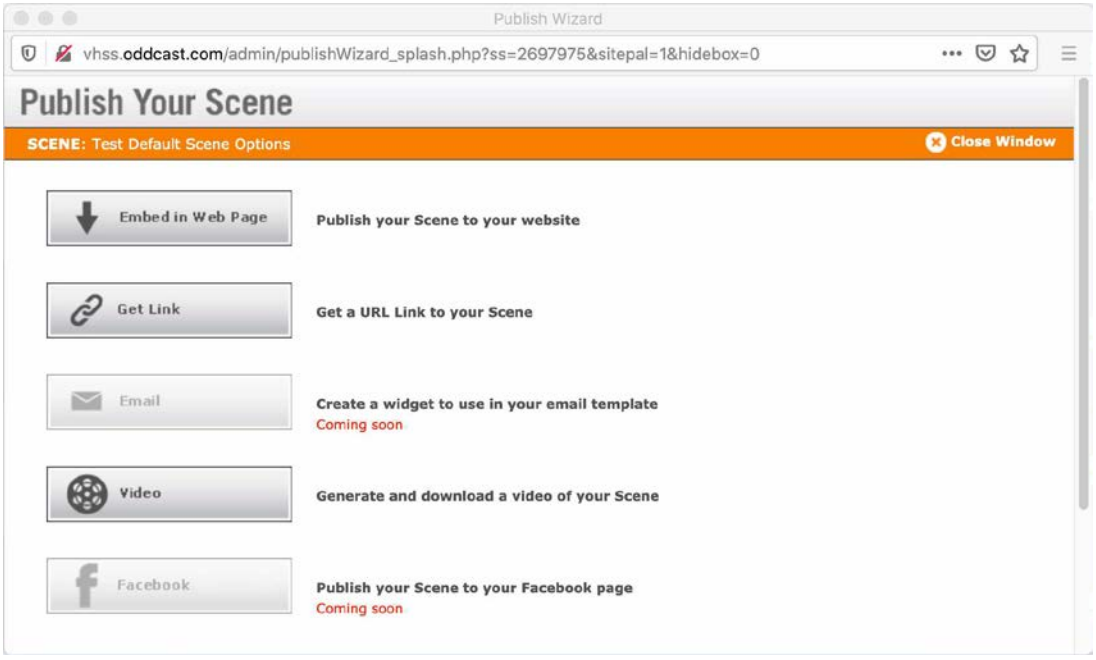

Figure 21 Publish Your Scene window

Options are provided for publishing the Classic Scene in the following mediums:

- Embed in Web Page
- Get Link

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- Email
- Video
- Facebook

Full Body Scenes have the same options except for Video. Video publishing is available for Classic Scenes with annual Gold and Platinum accounts. We will only describe the Web page procedure here. The other options are self-explanatory. For instructions how to embed in mobile apps contact support@oddcast.com .

- Click the **Embed in Web Page**. The page refreshes. Full Body Scenes have two options: one for In-Page Embedding, the other for Overlay Embedding". Overlay Embedding overlays the Scene on top of the Web page. Classic Scenes only have In-Page Embedding so this dialogue is skipped. Below is the Embed in Web Page choice dialogue for Full Body Scenes:

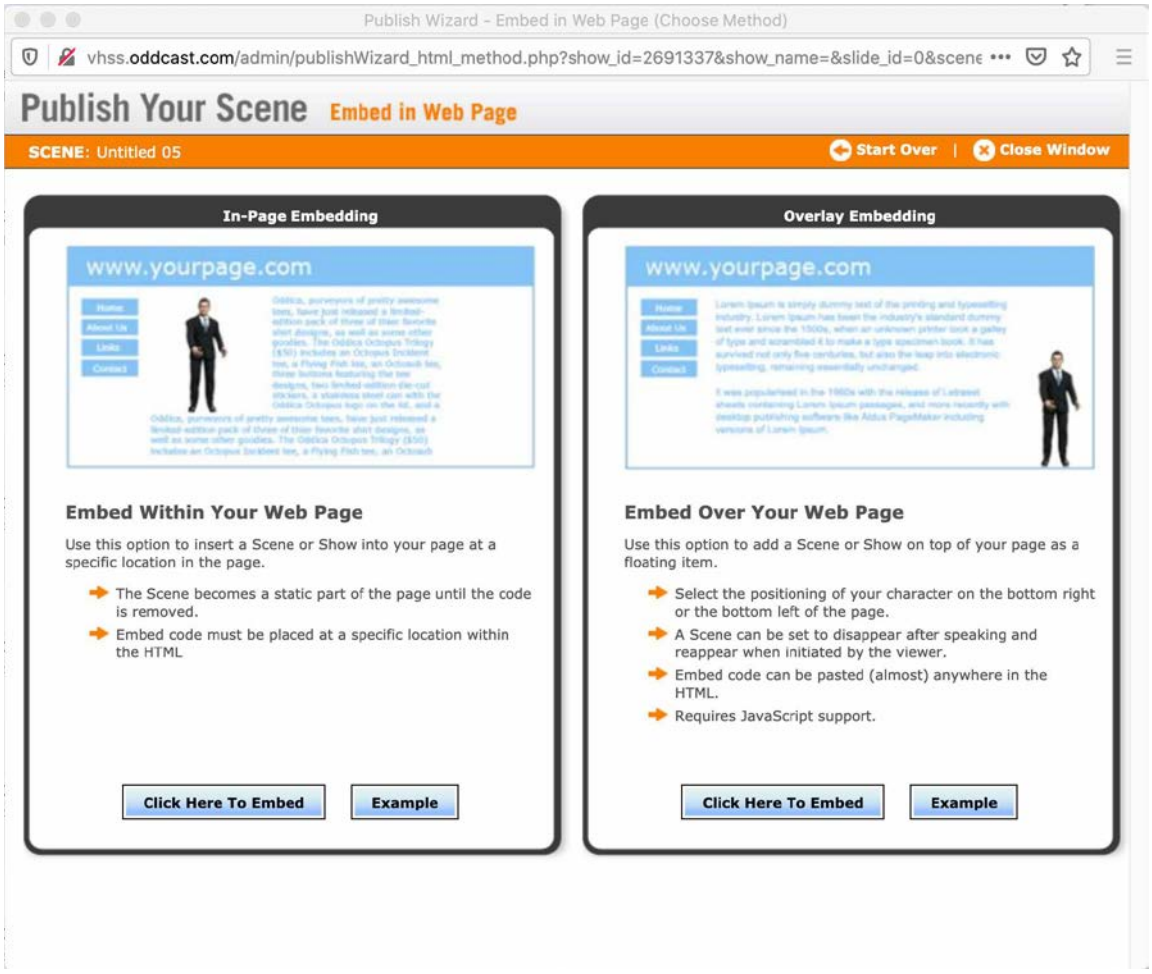

Figure 22 Embed in a Web Page window for Full Body Scenes

We'll select the static placement option. Clicking **Click Here To Embed** opens the

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following page:

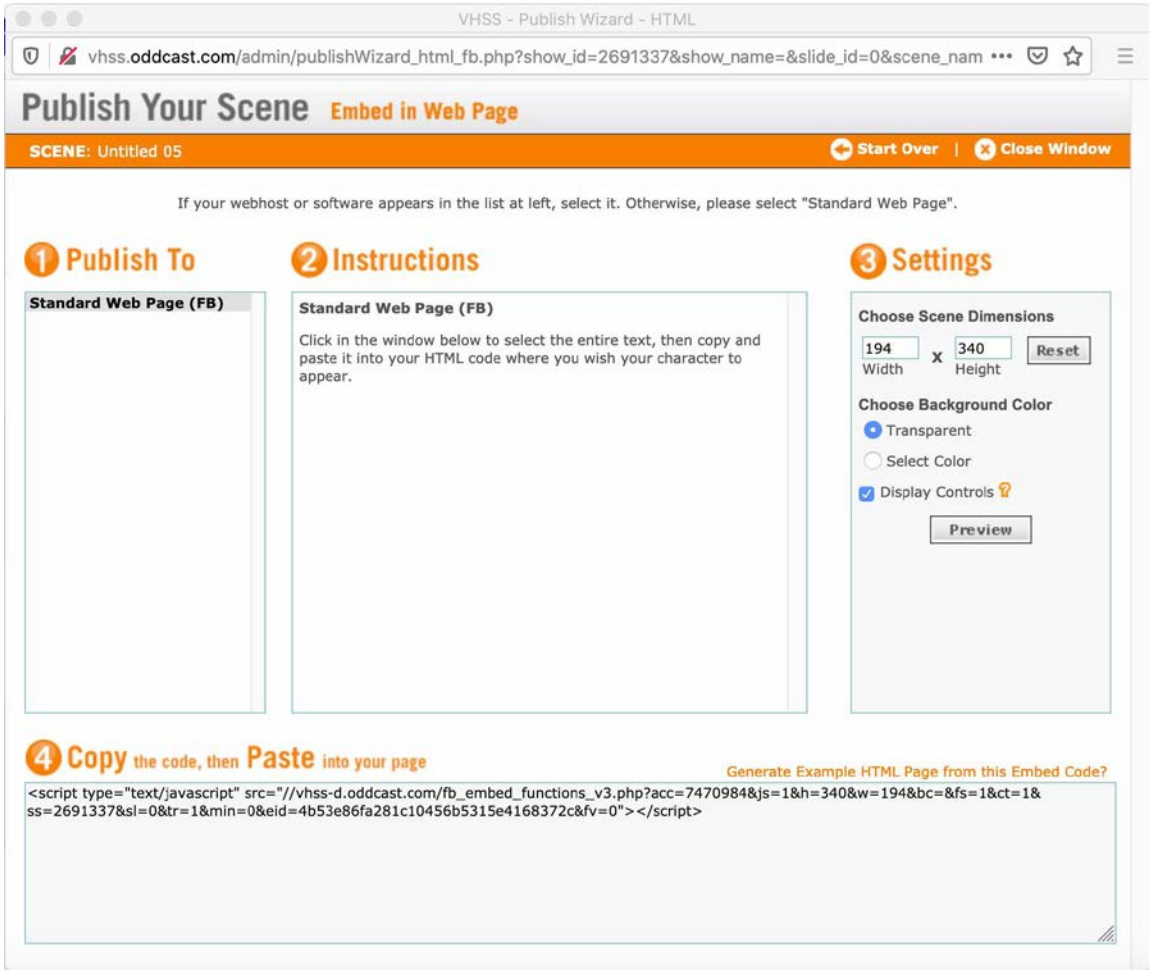

Figure 23 In-Page-Embedding window for Full Body Scenes

Now check the Settings on the right side of the page, and edit according to your needs. The only difference in the Classic Scene Embed in Web Page dialogue is that the aspect ratio for Scenes is 4X3. Clicking **Preview** opens the Preview window with these settings applied.

Finally, copy the code listed at the bottom of the page to your clipboard, and insert it in the source code of your site at the precise point you wish the Scene to be displayed. That's it!

Thanks for reading the Quick Start Guide. Now go to your SitePal account and create and publish speaking characters to enhance your web pages!

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