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The Sims 4

Maxis molds Sims like clay

After a handful of sequels and a truckload of expansions, you might think that EA is running out of new ways for gamers to create and interact with their sims. However, The Sims 4 aims to reimagine the game's design interface. Maxis' streamlined creation tools and emotionally driven sim interactions should fundamentally change how gamers play out their wildest dreams and sickest fantasies with The Sims. Here are the most important new features of The Sims 4.

Simplifying Sim Creation

The previous Sims games were full of preset body parts and sliders, which made sim creation a little clunky. Now, players start with a basic sim and then tug on the sections of the body that they want to reshape. Pull on the top of the eyebrows to give your sim an arched brow or push on their snout to give them a button nose.

"The tactile feedback is something that we're still playing with right now," says producer Ryan Vaughan. "You grab onto your sim to do all your adjustments, but we want to make sure that it still feels easy and looks right when you're done."

This level of customization extends beyond a sim's physique. Now you can select the style of voice your sim speaks with and change the hairstyle they keep while wearing a hat. You can even change your sim's gait, giving them the walk of a snooty heiress or the swagger of a cocky teen.

A Stronger Foundation

The game's building mode features many of the push-and-pull upgrades featured in the character creator. After placing a room on the ground, you can pull on the walls to expand them or even pick up whole rooms and set them on the other side of the building. These tools are smart enough to know what you're trying to accomplish. For example, take the porch tool and drag it across a corner of your house and it automatically wraps around the building creating a wraparound porch.

Moving into your new home is faster than ever. Furniture comes in preset collections which are displayed like magazine ads in your creation toolset. You can pick one of these sets and drop the whole thing into a room and the furniture will auto populate in the room. However, Maxis isn't restricting players' choice; if you want to mix and match sets or select specific item from a group, you're still able to do that.

The Sims 4's new building mechanics allow you to drag and pull on your structure, allowing you to more quickly construct the home of your dreams



A Moody Bunch

Sims now have a variety of emotional states, and these states affect how they interact with the world around them. Confident sims will notice that they have more flirty options when conversing with a love interest, while an angry sim might only want to complain about their problems.

"There are a lot of different emotions in the game," says producer Ryan Vaughan. "And most of them go through intensities too. So you could go from flirty to passionate or go from angry to furious. You can even die by embarrassment, if your sim gets pushed too far down that hole."

Players can use these mood shifts to their advantage. In previous games, it was bad for your sim to be angry, because that caused poor performance at work and in social exchanges. Now, there might be times when you want to be angry. For example, angry sims who are burning off steam at the gym will work their way up the athletic track faster than normal, happy sims. Much like in real life, succeeding in The Sims 4 will require careful management of one's emotions in every situation. — Ben Reeves



- Platform PC
- Style 1-Player Simulation
- Publisher Electronic Arts
- Developer Maxis
- Release 2014