

# Expressions and Drivers

This article refers to PFM v0.4.3 and newer and may not be representative of older versions.

## Math Expressions

Any animatable actor property (color, radius, position, etc.) can be animated with a **math expression** (Similar to SFM's [expression operators](#)). The implementation is based on the [high-performance exprtk library](#), which includes support for:

- Logical operators (and/or/not/etc.)
- Conditions (if/ternary/etc.)
- Loops (for/while/etc.)
- Vectors

## Examples

As a basic example, let's say you want to animate the position of your actor, so you move it to [0,30,0] at timestamp 0, [0,50,20] at timestamp 1 and [30,0,-20] at timestamp 2. You can then apply the math expression `value *2` to the property, which will double the values, meaning your actor will move from [0,60,0] to [0,100,40] and then to [60,0,-40] instead.

Here are some other basic examples:

- `var newValue[3] := {0,value[1],0}; return [newValue];`: Returns [0,value.y,0], which means the actor will only move on the y-axis.
- `var newValue[3] := {time *100,0,0}; return [newValue];`: The channel value will be ignored, and the actor will move on the x-axis depending on how much time has passed since the start of the animation.
- `var f := time /duration; var newValue[3] := {sin(f *pi *2) *100,0,cos(f *pi *2) *100}; return [newValue];`: The channel value will be ignored, and the actor will move in a circular motion depending on the time passed.

## Inputs

These are the variables available for use with math expressions:

- **value**: The current value
- **time**: The current time in seconds
- **timeIndex**: The index into the `times` array of the channel for the current timestamp.

- **startOffset**: The channel's start offset in seconds.
- **timescale**: The channel's time scale.
- **duration**: The duration of the channel (i.e. max time value in the `times` array).

### Constants:

- pi
- epsilon
- inf

## Base Functions

- All built-in [exprtk functions](#)
- `float noise(float v1, float v2, float v3)`: Perlin noise.
- `float[X] value_at(float time)`: Returns the value at the specified timestamp. The return value is either `float`, `float[3]` or `float[4]`, depending on the channel value type.
- `float sqr(float v)`: returns  $v * v$
- `float ramp(float x, float a, float b)`: returns  $(a == b) ? a : (x - a) / (b - a)$
- `float cramp(float v1, float v2, float v3)`: returns  $\text{clamp}(\text{ramp}(v1, v2, v3), 0, 1)$
- `float lerp(float x, float a, float b)`: returns  $a + (b - a) * x$
- `float clerp(float l, float v2, float v3)`: returns  $\text{clamp}(\text{lerp}(v1, v2, v3), v2, v3)$
- `float elerp(float v1, float v2, float v3)`: returns  $\text{ramp}(3 * v1 * v1 - 2 * v1 * v1 * v1, v2, v3)$
- `float rescale(float x, float xa, float xb, float ya, float yb)`: returns  $\text{lerp}(\text{ramp}(x, xa, xb), ya, yb)$
- `float crescale(float v1, float v2, float v3, float v4, float v5)`: returns  $\text{clamp}(\text{rescale}(v1, v2, v3, v4, v5), v4, v5)$
- `print(...)`: For debugging purposes, prints the specified arguments to the console.

## Quaternion Functions

- `q_from_axis_angle(float[3] axis, float angle, float[4] out)`
- `q_forward(float[4] quat, float[3] out)`
- `q_right(float[4] quat, float[3] out)`
- `q_up(float[4] quat, float[3] out)`
- `q_slerp(float[4] q0, float[4] q1, float factor, float[4] out)`
- `q_lerp(float[4] q0, float[4] q1, float factor, float[4] out)`
- `q_dot(float[4] q0, float[4] q1)`
- `q_mul(float[4] q0, float[4] q1, float[4] out)`
- `q_inverse(float[4] quatInOut)`
- `float q_length(float[4] quat)`

Contrary to SFM's expression operators, PFM's math expressions **cannot** reference anything outside of the animation channel for the property it's assigned to. To create dependencies between properties, you need to use [animation drivers](#) instead.

# Animation Drivers

Animation drivers are similar to math expressions, with a few key differences:

- Lua expression instead of a math expression
- Can be used to create dependencies between arbitrary properties (this is their primary purpose)
- Similar to [Blender's driver system](#)
- Slower to compute than math expressions, use sparingly

Since animation drivers are Lua-based, that means you have the entire [Lua API](#) available, making them much more powerful tools compared to math expressions. Their purpose is to animate a property programmatically with dependencies to other properties. To do so, animation drivers can have input variables, which can be references to actors, [components](#) or component properties.

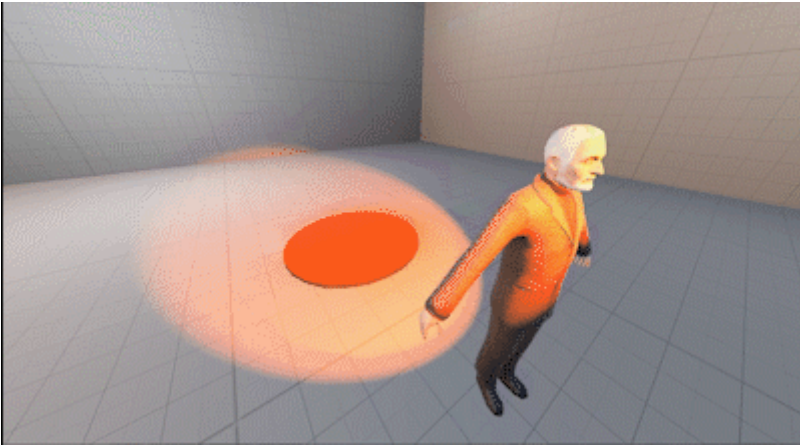
## Examples

Animation drivers cannot be created through PFM yet, so the following are Lua-based examples. These may seem a little daunting, but once the system is integrated into the interface, drivers will be much easier to use.

- Changing the color of a light source depending on its distance to an actor (red = actor is close, green = actor is far away):

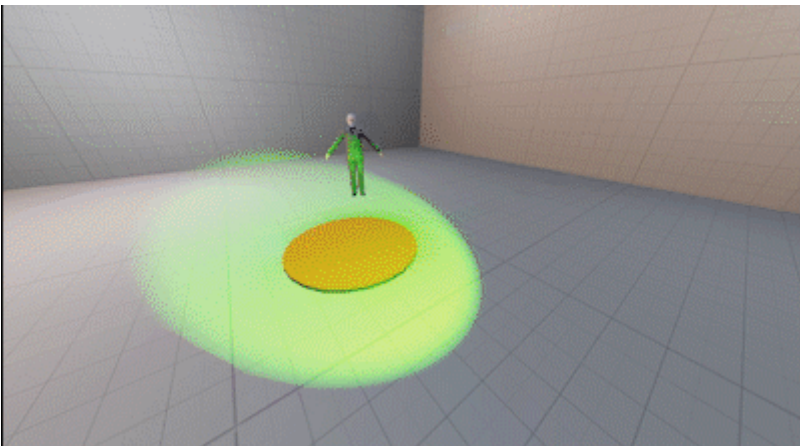
```
local actorId = "327b5bb8-74ae-400e-bbf7-61a2ad2020d3" -- Id of the actor for whom we check
the distance
local expr = [[
    local dist = trLight:GetDistance(trActor)
    return Color.Red:Lerp(Color.Lime,math.clamp((dist -120) /150.0,0.0,1.0)):ToVector()
]]
lightSource:AddDriver(
    ents.COMPONENT_COLOR,"color",
    game.ValueDriverDescriptor(expr,{
        -- 'trActor' variable referencing the transform component of the actor
        ["trActor"] = "pragma:game/entity/ec/transform?entity_uuid=" .. actorId,
        -- 'trLight' variable referencing the transform component of the light
        ["trLight"] = "pragma:game/entity/ec/transform"
```

```
})  
)
```



- Making an actor always face the camera:

```
local camId = "6f964743-faa6-4b2b-b781-41a258e2f7d1" -- Id of the camera actor  
local expr = [[  
  local angToCamera = self:GetAngles(trCam)  
  return EulerAngles(0,angToCamera.y,0)  
]]  
actor:AddDriver(  
  ents.COMPONENT_TRANSFORM,"angles",  
  game.ValueDriverDescriptor(expr,{  
    -- 'trCam' variable referencing the transform component of the camera actor  
    ["trCam"] = "pragma:game/entity/ec/transform?entity_uuid=" .. camId  
  })  
)
```



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