

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page. It features three blue circles of different sizes, each composed of concentric rings of varying shades of blue. Two thin blue lines intersect at a point between the top two circles, extending towards the top-left and bottom-right corners of the page. A third thin blue line extends from the bottom-right corner towards the bottom-right circle.

Distant Worlds Customization Guide

Learn how to customize Distant Worlds to create your own unique gaming experience

1/17/2010

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the content in Distant Worlds can be modified, allowing you to customize your game experience.

Want to add your own alien races to the game? Or do you have a cool ship picture you want to use in the game? Or maybe you just want to hear different music while playing the game? All of these changes are possible in Distant Worlds.

This document describes which content you can customize, and explains how to do it.

THEMES

A theme contains a full set of customized content, including images, alien races, music, etc. You can switch between all of the themes on your computer from the “Change Theme” screen on the Main Menu.

Themes are stored in their own folder, with subfolders for specific types of content.

A finished theme should be placed in its own folder under the Customization folder. The theme will then be available for selection from the “Change Theme” screen in the game.

Listed below are all of the types of resources that can be customized in a theme:

- Ship and Base pictures (shipImages folder)
- Alien race pictures (racelImages folder)
- Troop pictures (troopImages folder)
- Star system names (systems.txt)
- Ship design names (designs.txt)
- Intelligence agent names (agentNames.txt)
- Player ship names per type (shipNames.txt)
- Music (music folder)
- Alien races (races.txt)
- Dialog for each alien race (dialog folder)

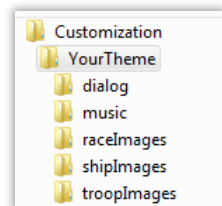


Figure 1. Theme folder structure

Name	Type
dialog	File Folder
music	File Folder
racelImages	File Folder
shipImages	File Folder
troopImages	File Folder
about.png	PNG Image
about.txt	Text Document
agentNames.txt	Text Document
designs.txt	Text Document
races.txt	Text Document
shipNames.txt	Text Document
systems.txt	Text Document

Figure 2. Theme folder content

THEME DESCRIPTION

To introduce your custom theme in the Change Theme screen, you may optionally include some descriptive files in the root of your theme folder.

To display some introductory text describing your theme, include the file **about.txt**. The text in this file will appear when your theme is selected in the Change Theme screen.

You may also add an image to accompany your description. To do this, include a PNG image file named **about.png**. This image will be displayed to the right of your introductory text.

ALL ITEMS OPTIONAL

Note that all customizable items are optional – i.e. you only need to supply the items that you want customized, all other items will be loaded from the default resources. Thus it is possible to customize a single image, while loading the remaining images from the default Distant Worlds images.

This principle holds true for all other items: customized name text files, etc. You do not need to customize everything to have a valid theme. Just customize what you want to change.

CUSTOMIZING IMAGES

The following images can be customized in your theme:

- Ships and Bases
- Alien races
- Troops

All images should be stored as PNG image files (Portable Network Graphics). Image backgrounds should be set to full transparency. To improve performance, the usage of partial transparency (variable-level alpha channel) within images should be kept to a minimum.

SHIP AND BASE PICTURES

Customized ship or base images should be placed in their own ship family subfolder under the shipImages folder. Thus there can be subfolders named “family0”, “family1”, etc – mimicking the structure found under the images\units\ships folder.

Each image should be named by its ship- or base-type, e.g. destroyer.png, explorationship.png, mediumspaceport.png, etc.

Only supply the images that you want to customize – you do not have to supply a complete family of images. Any missing images will fall-back to the default Distant Worlds ship images for that family.

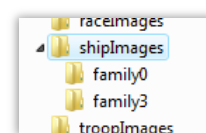


Figure 3. Ship images folder structure

SIZE AND SHAPE

All images for ships and bases should be perfectly square in shape, i.e. the width and height should be the same length. This will ensure proper appearance when rotating the image.

Ship and base images should be less than 200 pixels per side, i.e. up to 200 x 200 pixels wide and high.

ENGINE EXHAUST

Some colors have special meaning when used in ship and base images.

Pure blue (RGB 0,0,255) is used to indicate the location of engines on the ship, allowing engine exhaust to be displayed when the ship is moving. Paint a pure blue line (single-pixel width) on the ship to indicate the location of each engine.

RUNNING LIGHTS

Pure yellow (RGB 255,255,0) is used to indicate the location of ‘running’ lights on the ship or base. Paint a single pixel of pure yellow anywhere on the ship or base to indicate where a flashing light should appear.

ALIEN RACE PICTURES

Customized alien race images should be placed in the raceImages folder under your custom theme.

Alien race images should be named "Race_0.png", "Race_1.png", etc. You do not have to supply all 20 alien race images in your theme. Any missing images will fall-back to the default Distant Worlds race images from the images\units\races folder.

All alien race images should be perfectly square in shape, i.e. width and height should be the same length. These images should ideally be at least 200 pixels wide and high, with the head and shoulders filling most of the frame.

TROOP PICTURES

Customized troop images should be placed in the troopImages folder under your custom theme.

Troop images should be named "Troop_0.png", "Troop_1.png", etc. You do not have to supply all 20 troop images in your theme. Any missing images will fall-back to the default Distant Worlds troop images from the images\units\troops folder.

Troop images can be any size or shape, and each individual troop image can have a different size or shape from other troop images.

CUSTOMIZED NAME FILES

Various sets of names in the game can be customized.

These name files generally contain simple comma-delimited values. Each file contains specific instructions for customizing its contents. Simply copy the original files from the root game folder into the root of your customized theme folder and edit these copies with your desired values.

Customizable name files include the following:

- **systems.txt:** used to assign star system names when generating a new galaxy. If there are insufficient names, then they will be reused, but with suffixes like "Major", "Minor", etc.
- **designs.txt:** default names for new military ship designs. Multiple sets of names are present in the file – one set per line. Each alien race is assigned one of these name sets using the value "Design names index" in the file races.txt.
- **agentNames.txt:** First and last names for intelligence agents. These are arranged by alien race family – the first line contains a comma-delimited list of first names, the second line contains a comma-delimited list of last names.
- **shipNames.txt:** optional set of comma-delimited names used to name each new ship or base in the player's empire. The names are arranged by ship- or base-type, e.g. Escort, Frigate, ExplorationShip, MiningStation, etc.

MUSIC

Music can be customized by adding MP3 files to the music subfolder under your custom theme.

If at least two MP3 music files are present in the music subfolder then these music files will be used instead of the default Distant Worlds music.

You can place as many MP3 files in this folder as desired – they will be played in random order. To specify which music file is played as the theme, name the file "DistantWorldsTheme.mp3".

Note that the music files must be in MP3 format, no other format files will be played (WMA, MIDI, OGG, etc).

ALIEN RACES

You can customize the alien races in Distant Worlds by editing the file **races.txt**. Copy the original file from the root game folder into your customized theme folder and then edit this copy to create your own customized alien races.

Do not add or remove races from the file – there must always be 20 races present. Simply edit an existing race to create a new one.

Each line in the file records all of the details for a single race. The distinct values in the line are separated by commas. These values are defined as follows:

- **Name:** the name of the alien race. The name may be any length, but usually only the first 15 characters or so will be displayed in the game.
- **Picture index:** the index number of the picture used when displaying the race, e.g. if this has a value of 12 then the image “race_12.png” will be used to display this race
- **Race family:** which family the race belongs to. Races of the same family are friendlier towards each other. Valid values are:
 - 0 = Humanoid: human-like aliens
 - 1 = Ursidian: bear-like aliens
 - 2 = Insectoid: insect-like aliens
 - 3 = Reptilian: reptile-like aliens
 - 4 = Amphibian: amphibious aliens that live in water and on land
 - 5 = Rodent: rodent-like aliens
- **Reproduction rate:** how fast the race grows. Valid values from 1.0 to 1.5. While this is the base colony growth rate for the race, other factors modify the actual growth rate, such as how large the colony is (small colonies grow much faster) and the favorability of the colony (continental planets much better than volcanic, etc)
- **Intelligence:** influences research speed and the general smartness of interaction with other empires. Normal value is 100. Valid values from 50 to 150.
- **Aggression:** influences behavior towards other empires, how strong troops are and how many military ships are built. Normal value is 100. Valid values from 50 to 150.
- **Caution:** influences behavior towards other empires and how many military ships are built. Normal value is 100. Valid values from 50 to 150.
- **Friendliness:** influences likelihood of forming treaties with other empires and how well the race gets on with other empires. Normal value is 100. Valid values from 50 to 150.
- **Loyalty:** influences how likely to stick to treaties with other empires. Normal value is 100. Valid values from 50 to 150.
- **Designs picture family index:** index of ship pictures used for this race from the ship pictures in the folders “images\units\ships” or “customization\YourTheme\shipImages”. Valid values from 0 to 8.
- **Design names index:** index into default ship design names in the file designs.txt. Valid values from 0 to 13.
- **Ship Maintenance savings:** percentage savings on maintenance costs for ships and bases. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Troop Maintenance savings:** percentage savings on maintenance costs for troops. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Resource Extraction bonus:** percentage speed increase for all mining operations. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **War Weariness attenuation:** percentage of reduction in war weariness. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Satisfaction modifier:** percentage bonus for happiness at all colonies. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Research bonus:** percentage speed increase for research. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Espionage bonus:** percentage skill bonus for all successful intelligence missions. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Trade bonus:** percentage bonus for colony income. Valid values from 0 to 100.
- **Native planet type** for the alien race. Valid values are:
 - 0 = Continental
 - 1 = Marshy Swamp

- 2 = Desert
- 3 = Ocean
- 4 = Ice
- 5 = Volcanic
- **Special Component.** Unique super technology that can be used in building ships and bases. Valid values are:
 - 0 = None
 - 1 = Death Ray (high power beam superweapon)
 - 2 = Devastator Pulse (high power area superweapon)
 - 3 = Super Laser (planet-destroying beam superweapon)
 - 4 = StarBurner XX-12 (very fast engine)
 - 5 = TurboThruster ER7 (very efficient engine)
 - 6 = Swift Vector 5000 (very agile vectoring engine)
 - 7 = Megatron Z4 (fast regenerating shields)
 - 8 = NovaCore NX-700 (very efficient, low-fuel consumption reactor)
 - 9 = VelocityDrive ST3 (very fast hyperdrive)
 - 10 = ShadowGhost ECM 2000 (powerful countermeasures)
 - 11 = Shaktur FireStorm (powerful torpedo weapon)
 - 12 = High Density Fuel Cell (high capacity fuel tank)
 - 13 = S2F7 RepairBot (advanced damage control and repair component)
- **Default primary color:** valid values from 0 to 19. These values correspond to the colors displayed in the Main Color dropdown in the Start New Game screen (Your Empire step)
- **Default secondary color:** valid values from 0 to 20. These values correspond to the colors displayed in the Secondary Color dropdown in the Start New Game screen (Your Empire step)
- **Default flag design:** valid values from 0 to 38. These values correspond to the shapes in the WMF files found in the game folder “images\ui\flagshapes”
- **Home system name:** name of the home star system for the race
- **Troop unit name:** default name of the race’s troops, e.g. if ‘Strike Battalion’ then troops named ‘1st Strike Battalion’, etc

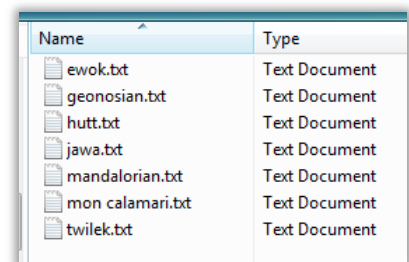
ALIEN RACE DIALOG

The default speech of each alien race is supplied in text files in the dialog folder. This is the text that appears in conversations with other races initiated from the Diplomacy screen (F2).

To customize dialog for an alien race in your theme, add your own dialog subfolder under your custom theme. Then for each alien race you wish to customize, add a new dialog file named after the race, e.g. human.txt.

The file **base_dialog.txt** in the default game dialog folder contains all of the conversation messages used in the game for each race. This file can serve as a useful template for making your own custom dialog files. Simply copy the base_dialog.txt file to your theme’s dialog folder, rename it for your new alien race, and then modify the messages for your race.

Note that all messages in dialog text files are optional – if you omit a message then the alien race will fall-back to using the matching message from the base_dialog.txt file.



Name	Type
ewok.txt	Text Document
geonosian.txt	Text Document
hutt.txt	Text Document
jawa.txt	Text Document
mandalorian.txt	Text Document
mon calamari.txt	Text Document
twilek.txt	Text Document

Figure 4. Customized dialog files in the Dialog subfolder