CONVERTING RFACTOR TRACKS TO GTL/GTR

RACERM,

Let me first say that the reason, I am writing this tutorial is because of the many requests that I have gotten for it. This I understand because at one time I had no idea on how to do it myself and yet there were so many tracks I wanted that weren't out there or were banned or no one would teach me how to do it.

The guide I am writing is very basic. I am showing you how to convert a track from Rfactor to GTL and GTR2. I by no means am the leading authority on track conversion. There are many other converters, scratch builders and mod teams who have far more experience than I do and far better skills. Some people feel that track conversion should be keep to a few, but I feel that the more people learning how to do it the more projects and greater people with skills to bring to the game. So if you don't agree with the idea of doing a tutorial on track conversion don't call me or just issue on yourself.

TOOLS:
3DSIMED: Your primary tool for track conversion, its not free you have to pay for it. Its worth the money.

http://www.sim-garage.co.uk/

DDS CONVERTER2: Your primary tool for converting TGA and BMP files to DDS files so that they can run in GTL and GTR2. Both games will not run bmps.

http://eliteforce2.filefront.com/file/DDS_Converter;29412

GEDITOR 3.5: This is the tool you need for packing and reading the files in the GTL format. 3Dsimed also has a Geditor packing and unpacking tool within but this one you can use so that you don't' have to go thru simed.

Don't have the link but anyone in the RSC forum can point you to the a site with the program.

RFACTOR: You will need a copy of Rfactor (the latest version) THAT YOU BOUGHT AND OWN!. If you have a copy of Rfactor that belongs to you on your computer and a copy of GTL and or GTR2 on your computer and the conversions are for your personal use, then what you do with the two properties after you purchase them is your business legally. As long as you don't distribute them for profit!

WHAT ELSE WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE:
Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator: The are especially good for altering image files like making adverts, textures etc. Also you may want to use them for making menus and icons.

OK SO NOW LETS START CONVERTING TRACKS!

I am going to do this the easy way; number step by step. You may want to print this out so that you can read this while you are doing it. If you miss a step all you have to do is work backwards.

STEP 1. BRING UP THE MODEL

Open 3Dsimed. When you do you will see a large frame that is blank with a menu at the top. Go to the FILE menu click it a drop down will open. Under that menu you will see "IMPORT MODEL" click that. A window will open. At the bottom you will see different formats, click on Rfactor SCN. Now in the upper folder window locate your Rfactor game program or track. Go to the locations sections in Rfactor and find the track. Click on the track until you see the scn file show up in the main window. Now hit open. Wait a second and then the model of the track should show up in the main window! Congratulations!

STEP 2. VIEWING THE MODEL
You will see a large dome in the center of the track. This is the track sky. Right click on this. You will see -edit sky, - hide sky. HIT HIDE SKY. (This removes the sky out of your way so you can see what you are doing.) You will also see a ring in the center where the sky was. This is your skybox. Do the same thing. (That is if it is in your way).

Now go to the edit menu. Hit edit and in the drop down you will see CENTER MODEL. Click that. This centers the model in the program so that you can get all of your accurate xyz references.

Cursor. On the screen your cursor is a square. This is what you use to highlight an object. Place the square on an object and double click. It will center the object. Now roll your scroll wheel. You can zoom in and out on the object. Holding the left button down and moving your mouse right to left will move the entire map. (Please see the instructions in 3dsimed for movement) learn how to do all of this before you make a serious attempt to convert a track or else you will be very frustrated.

STEP 3. EDITING MATERIALS
Now go to the Edit menu again click it and hit EDIT MATERIALS. You will now need to edit the materials so that they will now run according to the proper names in GTL and GTR2.

In Simbin games all of the:

Grass has to start with GRAS
Gravel - GRVL or GRAV
Roads\Tarmac\Asphalt - ROAD

If these are mis-named you will have the quicksand effect that we are all fond of. Rfactor does not use this naming convention. Some of the scratch builders do. So every track that you are going to convert you have to check and make sure before hand.

When you open the edit materials you will see a box open that say " Material Dialogs". This box is all of the textures that the games uses to skin the gmt.s. Push the box to the side so that you can see the model at the same time. When you click on a texture, you will see it light up in pale blue on the model. This is to show you what you are editing. (This depends on how big you have the model enlarged.

Now when you highlight one of the names a small picture of the texture will come up on the panel with the texture info so you can browse better. Some of the tracks have all of the grass textures in the same naming group, which makes it easy. You may have to click thru all of the textures to make sure you find all of the grass, gravel, sand and road textures. When you do here is what happens next.

EXAMPLE:
You see the texture with the material name GOO1. It is a grass because in the preview window and model it is grass. To keep down confusion go to the MATERIAL NAME window at the top, click you cursor inside (DON'T DELETE THE NAME).

Rename it from GOO1 to GRAS_GOO1 Then hit ok. It will take you back to the rest of the textures. Do it this way so if you have a problem you still have got the original name in the texture. If you have more than one grass texture keep it organized:

GRAS_GOO1
GRAS2_GOOB
GRAS3_GOOK

The first four letters are the most important in the name. This is what tell the Simbin game what the tex is suppose to do and be. Do the same for gravels, sand and roads textures.

After you finish editing the materials you are now half way home.

STEP 4. CONVERTING THE TRACK FORMAT

EXPORTING TEXTURES
After you finish editing the materials you will need to dump the files in a temporary place to pack them. I use two empty folders. Ill illustrate this using the unzip and temp folders.

Now when you finish editing the materials exit the material editing window. (WHATEVER YOU DO DON'T CLOSE 3DSIMED!) As long as the app is open it retains the new names for the materials until your finished. Now go to the file menu. At the center you will see a command that says "EXPORT TEXTURES". Click that. When you do it will give you another window so that you can pick a file folder to dump the textures. Make sure both of the work folders are empty! We pick unzip. Hit ok. It will ask you do you want to rename textures, blah, blah. ... say ok. It will spit all of the textures into the unzip folder.

Now if you are lucky and the track is using all DDS files they you can go straight to the Tools command in the menu. Hit pack files. It will give you a drop down, CLICK GTL! NOT GTR. The GTR is the old GTR format. The GTL format is the current format.

When you hit GTL a window will open. Go to the unzip folder where all of your textures are stored. When you do you will see all of the textures. The easy way is to hit ctrl-a. Now put in the name box the track name plus MAPS - MONZAMAPS. One word. Now you know why the file is named that in your folder! Then hit ok. When its done packing you, later when you go to the unzipped folder you will see your little blue MONZAMAPS.GTL folder. Take this and lay it to the side somewhere safe.

CONVERTING THE GMTS
Now go back to the file command and find 'SAVE AS GT LEGENDS. GMT" click on that. Now hit "SAVE OBJECTS, ADD TO GTL.". Now when you do this, the command will automatically convert the Rfactor gmts to GTL gmt format and pack them. Now the browse for folder box will come up. Point it two the TEMP FOLDER. Always use a separate folder for saving gmts. If you put them all in the same folder it could get confusing. When you hit ok and select the output folder the pack window will come up. Name the folder just the name of the track - MONZA. It will save the pack file as MONZA. GTL. Later you will go to this folder and get the MONZA.GTL and store in with the MONZAMAPS file.

Now you are done converting the track, but as a safety measure DON'T CLOSE 3DSIMED!!!!!!!!! Minimize it so that you can come back to it if you can't find the files, or they didn't pack or you need to do it over again. Or else you will have to restart the process from step one.

NOTE:SKY GMT AND SKYBOXI GMT. For some reason 3dsimed will not convert these two gmts. You will have to do this manually. You will have to do this or your track will

CTD. At the end of the tutorial see how to do this.

STEP 5. MAKING THE TRACK FOLDER

Go to explore and make a new folder lets call it MONZA. Now take the MONZA.GTL and the MONZAMAPS.GTL "COPY THEM". Do this so that if you mess up....................yea ok! Now place them in the Monza folder.

Now go to the Rfactor orginal track folder that you converted from and get all of the track ingredients. You will only need the AIW, CAM, GDB and SCN files. Take them all and drop them in your new Monza folder. The only two files that you are going to need to alter for now are the GDB and SCN.

GDB

First, go to GTL or GTR2 and open a GDB file that is already converted in the game. Copy the text of that GDB and past it in your GDB replacing that track info with Monza info. Now save.

SCN.

First rename the SCN to TRK..

Now change the searchpath from this:

SearchPath=.
SearchPath=Monza
SearchPath=Monza\Monza

to this the GTL/GTR2 style

SearchPath=GameData\Locations\Shared
SearchPath=GameData\Locations\Monza

Now change the mas entries from this

MASFile=Commonmaps.mas
MASFile=Monzamaps.mas
MASFile=Monza.mas

To the GTL\GTR2 style

MASFile=skies_central.gtr
MASFile=Monzamaps.gtl
MASFile=Monza.gtl

SKYBOXI ENTRY

Rfactor does not use the same skyboxi entry as GTL and GTR2. So while you are still in the trk file of your new track. Go to a trk file of another GTL or GTR2 track in the game you are try to put your new track in. Now go to edit in the command and hit find. In the find box type 'SKYBOXI". Now hit ok. It will take you to the skyboxi entry. Copy the entire skyboxi entry. Now go back to your new track trk file and do the same thing. You will see the old Rfactor skyboxi entry. Highlight it entirely and then paste over it. The new skyboxi entry from the other GTL/GTR2 track should appear. Now save. Thats all you have to do for the trk. File.

CONTENTS
In your new track folder you should have six files:
Example:
MONZA.AIW
MONZA.CAM
MONZA. GDB
MONZA.TRK
MONZAMAP.GTL
MONZA.GTL

Double check all of the track names on the folder in the GDB (track name), in the TRK(search path and in the .gtl masfile path) to make sure they all match. This is one of the common causes of CTDs.

Don't worry about the LOD and icons you can add all of that pretty stuff later *AFTER* you get your track up and running.

CONVERTING THE SKY GMT AND SKYBOXI

While you still have 3dsimed open go to the command bar at tools. Hit expand. Click rFactor. Mas. You should see the mas files for your rfactor track you are converting. Click the mas file not the map.mas. You will get a browse box.

It is best to do this proceedure after you have done everything else and cleaned out the two folders of debris.

Chose the temp folder and hit ok. This will dump all of the gmts -UNCONVERTED- into the temp file. Now go to the file command and you will see IMPORT OBJECTS, not model, IMPORT OBJECTS! Now click on this and find your temp folder and the sky and skyboxi gmts. Import sky in, once you have it in you will see it in the main window as a big pink dome. Now go back to file and 'SAVE AS , GT LEGENDS GMT, - **SAVE DATA**. Hit ok. It will ask you something about light at night hit ok. It will put it back in the temp file and overwrite the original gmt. Now it is a GTL Sky. Repeat the same proceedure for the skyboxi.

Now go to the new track folder and double click on the MONZA.GTL folder. It will give you an error message. Thats ok. Hit ok. It will enventually open. When it does, you will see a bent arrow at the top. This is your import button. Hit that. Find the temp folder with the sky and skyboxi gmts. Highlight them. Now hit open. It will drop them in there quick. WAIT! Now you hit the arrow that's pointing straight down. That's the save button. Look at the meter at the bottom left, when it's done then close. That's it.

STEP 6. PUTTING THE TRACK IN THE GAME

Now "COPY" the new track folder and place it into your GTL or GTR2 locations folder. Always copy you folder so that if you lose it or something goes wrong you still have the original.

Start your game up. If it CTD's don't be discouraged this always happens on the first time. You will have to just go back and see what the problem is. Here is where you need to look if you have a ctd:

1.Mismatching files names - check and make sure that all of the names for the track match; the folder name, gdb, trk , search path, masfile search path. Look at the Monza.gtl and Monzamaps.gtl. If there is even no s on the end of maps it will ctd. It all has to match.

2. You forgot to convert and put the sky and skyboxi gmts in the main .gtl file. Go to that section.

3. You didn't make and update the entry for the skyboxi in the Trk file. Go to an established trk file (in the game you are installing the track in) and copy the skyboxi entry and paste it over the old Rfactor entry in your new track folder.

4. You forgot to change the search path to the new GTL/GTR2 style in the trk file.

5. You forgot you are illiterate and so you can't read any of this tutorial so it looks like blah...blah....blah....blah.......................just kidding!

I hope that you are successful in converting your first track. If this helps you please let me know I would really like to know if you do convert. You can find me in the Racesimcentral forum. If you have any further questions or problems please contact me at the forum and I will do what I can to help you. I want you to contact me in thread because others may have the same questions.

There is a lot more to converting tracks than what you will learn here but this should get you started.

I hate to have to say this but you know why. This information is for converting game properties that are wholly owned by the user and not used to distribute or infringe on the copyrights of the game developers, publishers, programmers or distributers. This is to further the personal use of the purchased product by the owner amongst himself.

Blessing to you!