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Author

Topic: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard (Read « on: 03 December 2012, 16:02 »)

User profile for Nona Mena, Moderator, 768 posts.

Introduction

Part One: Mod Types

In order to understand conflicts, you have to understand the different types of mods. These explanations should help, but if you have any questions, please feel free to post.

- Script Mods
Script mods are written in the programming language C# and are used to add additional game play/interactions, fix EA bugs, or simply alter the way EA does certain things. There are three main types of script mods:
- Core mods
- Scripted object mods
- Pure Scripting mods

Tuning Mods

- Tuning mods can also be called overrides. They alter some resource in the game data, and the game uses the altered resource instead of EA's resource.
- OBJD overrides
- JAZZ overrides
- CASP overrides
- AUDT overrides

Part Two: Custom Content

Custom Content (CC) is typically defined as new objects, clothes, EA, chair, or makeup that you can use in your Sims 3 game. Custom Content can be created by third party entities.

Part Three: Game Resources

There are many different types of game resources in the Sims 3, and, as I've stated earlier, all of them can be overridden. However, the purpose of this article is not to explain all the game resources. The goal here is that you are familiar with the concept of a game resource.

The most important thing you need to know to about game resources to understand a conflict is that every game resource must have Type-Group-Instance ID, also known as the TGI or Resource Key (RK). Every game resource must have a unique TGI, but only the Instance ID (the 1 in TGI) is entirely unique.

Let's take an XML Tuning mod for example. We'll use my No/Fewer/Always Extra Days from Gourmet Pet Food for the example. This mod alters the Ingredient_0x76df356197fd4b81 XML in the GameplayData.package.

Let's take an XML Tuning mod for example. We'll use my No/Fewer/Always Extra Days from Gourmet Pet Food for the example. This mod alters the Ingredient_0x76df356197fd4b81 XML in the GameplayData.package.

No other resource in the game can have this exact TGI, unless, of course, you are specifically overriding the resource, such as when using a mod. If you have more than one mod that overrides the same exact resource, you have a conflict.

Next Section: Mod and CC Conflicts

Last Edit: 16 January 2013, 09:22 by Nona Mena

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #1 on: 03 December 2012, 16:38 »

Mod and CC Conflicts

Part One: Identifying a Conflict

Script mods
Conflicts among script mods are not easily identifiable by users. The exception to this are core mods. As mentioned in the Introduction, Core mods have a good chance of conflicting with each other, so do not use two different core mods at the same time unless a creator has told you it is safe.

Pure Script Mods

The good news about scripting mods is that most pure scripting mods have very little chance to conflict with each other. You won't be able to use a tool such as Delphy's Dashboard to check for conflicts though, so make sure you read about the script mods before you install them.

Object Script Mods

Object script mods have almost 0% chance to ever conflict with anything. I say "almost" because well, never say never. But really, the most that could happen is that somebody creates a modded toilet that doesn't work with Nraas Shoesless (or something similar). It's not a conflict, but more like Nraas Shoesless wouldn't recognize the toilet. Something like this would not implore your game. In fact, this exact problem happened when EA created the UberToilet. The UberToilet was not affected by Nraas Shoesless, but was entirely usable and did not produce any errors.

Tuning Mods
Identifying a conflict in Tuning mods is easy. Any two (or more) mods that both alter at least one game resource with the same exact TGI will conflict with each other. This is valid for all override mods. Whether it's XML, ITUN, OBJD, OBJK, CASP, JAZZ (No Foot Tapping/No Idle Animations etc.), TRIG (No Q to Quit), AUDT (TFM's STFU mods), etc. If it's an override (see: Introduction, Part One), it will conflict with any other override that alters the same resource (i.e. resource with the same TGI/RK).

Custom Content (non-scripted objects, aka just plain ol' CC)

When it comes to non-scripted custom content, like game objects or CAS Parts, you really have no worry about conflicts. Some Custom Content, whether it comes from EA or from other creators, share resources, and will come packaged with resources you may already have from other pieces of custom content. Only one copy of the resource gets loaded into the game, so it's really not a big deal.

Part Two: What is a Conflict?

Now that we know how to identify a conflict, we're probably going to have to know what it means when two mods conflict. First let's talk about what it doesn't mean:

- Tuning mod conflicts do not mean your game will explode.
Tuning mod conflicts do not cause your game to lag.

Before we move on, allow me to elaborate. The game will only load one resource with the same TGI. That's why mods work in the first place. Whatever is in the mods folder will get loaded with higher priority over what is in the GameplayData, JazzData, FullBuild packages etc. However, this brings us to next part:

Tuning mod conflicts can produce unreliable results. Let's say you install "Learn Skills faster" and you forget about it. Later on you decide you want your sims to learn skills slower, so you download a "Learn Skills slower" mod. Now you have two mods that alter the same XML. It might be that the game doesn't load the "Learn Skills slower" mod last, so it will look like the mod doesn't work, because the game is still using the "Learn Skills faster" mod.

Similarly, let's say you install a "Children can ride horses" mod. Then you also install a mod that make riding horses more fun. These two mods will conflict with each other. What you might notice is that the child won't be able to ride horses, or that riding horses still isn't as much as fun as you wish it would be. In order to have both, you'll need one of the mod creators to create a combined version of both mods.

So what can tuning mod conflicts do to your game?

- Tuning mod conflicts can produce unreliable and possibly seemingly bizarre results.
Tuning mod conflicts will increase game load time, as the game sorts through too many extra files during load up.
There may be unpredictable consequences from conflicting tuning mods, so do try to make sure you don't have any conflicts.

Remember that using outdated tuning mods can cause your game to behave unpredictably and may cause game corruption. Never use an outdated mod in your game.

Part Three: Priority

Loading priority plays a huge role in how the game handles seemingly conflicting game resources. I've touched on the concept a couple of times in this article, but now I want to go a bit further in depth.

Game loading priority looks like this, in order of Highest Priority to Lowest Priority:
1. Mods Folder (Documents\Electronic Arts\The Sims 3\Mods)
i. Overrides Folder (assuming you have a properly configured Resource.cfg)
ii. Packages Folder
iii. Note: If you have customized your Resource.cfg, priority will be affected by your alterations (obviously)

2. DCCache Folder (Documents\Electronic Arts\The Sims 3\Mods)
2. Next of the files in the Sims 3 Installation Directory (in Program Files. Includes the GameplayData, JazzData and FullBuild packages)

What does this mean about Conflicts?
Overrides folder: If you put a mod in the Overrides folder, you can ensure that the game will always use the mod in the Overrides folder. So, any conflicts reported between something in the Overrides folder and the Packages folder is a non-issue. BUT, and this is a big BUT, pay attention to what you put in your Overrides folder. Remember, you want your mods to work properly, so if one mod edits multiple XMLs to achieve a certain outcome, you should avoid putting a mod that edits one of those XMLs in the Overrides folder. In general, most mods do not require the high priority that comes with the Overrides folder, so use the Overrides folder only when a modder recommends it.

Packages Folder: Mods for EA Custom Content that you install via the launcher can be safely placed in the Packages folder. The Packages folder has higher priority over the DCCache, which is where all content you install via the launcher is stored for the game. However, if you install your Store content via package files, place any Store content mods in the Overrides folder.

Next Section: Using and Understanding Delphy's Dashboard

Last Edit: 16 January 2013, 09:31 by Nona Mena

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #2 on: 04 December 2012, 13:23 »

Using and Understanding Delphy's Dashboard

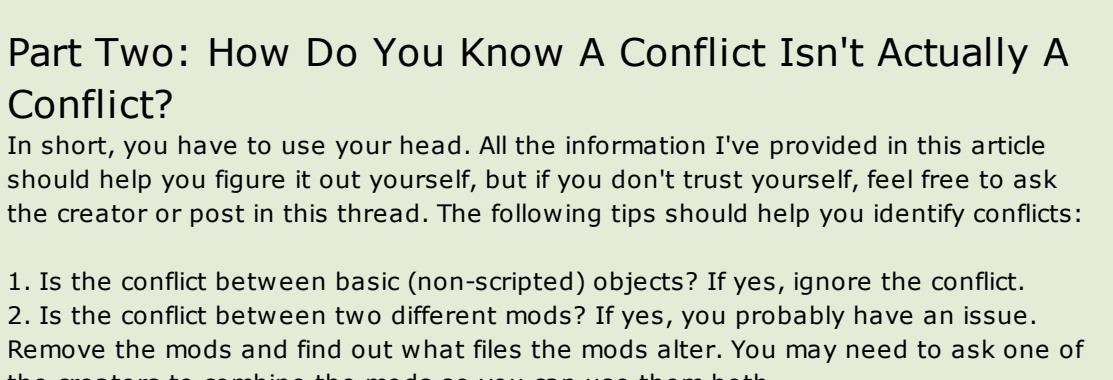
Delphy's Dashboard is the most popular tool used to identify potential conflicts (as well as duplicates and corrupt packages) in Sims 3 CC and mods. The tool is a valuable resource, but understanding what it tells you is important. Delphy himself states that his tool errs on the safe side, meaning it is likely to report false positives (i.e. conflicts that are not conflicts). With all the mods that have come out to help customizing, and even my custom food script, Delphy's Dashboard may report false positives much more often than it is useful. Knowing what is a false positive will help you keep your Mods and Overrides folders clean.

Part One: Scanning with Delphy's Dashboard, or you can

You can tell Delphy's Dashboard to scan only your Mods folder, or you can tell it scan your entire Sims 3 Folder in Documents\Electronic Arts\The Sims 3. Personally, I only scan the Mods folder, but that's because I never put mods anywhere else. Some people might feel safer scanning their entire Sims 3 folder. There's nothing wrong with that, but you should know that if you scan everything in Documents\Electronic Arts\The Sims 3 you run the risk of finding a boat load of false positives that might make you panic for no good reason at all.

What is a false positive?

When the Dashboard tool reports a conflict that is a non-issue, it is called a false positive. Here are two examples of false positives (click for a larger picture):



In the picture above, Dashboard is reporting a conflict between my Custom Food OBJK Overrides (1) and my Custom Food package (2) (merged by CC Magic). This is happening because the OBJK overrides are using resources that are also in the Custom Food objects. However, since the OBJK overrides are installed in the Overrides folder (green circle), it is a non-issue and you can ignore the report.

Notice there is a second conflict, however. Dashboard shows the merged Custom Food package (2) is conflicting with a package in the AT33_Objects folder. This is because some of the objects in the two packages are using the same resources, and those resources are provided in each package. This is a non-issue because the game will only load one of the resources. If I wanted to, I could merge the Custom Food package with the AT33_Objects package and Dashboard would no longer report a conflict.

Part Two: How Do You Know A Conflict Isn't Actually A Conflict?

In short, you figure it out your head. All the information I've provided in this article should help you figure it out yourself, but if you don't trust yourself, feel free to ask the creator or post in this thread. The following tips should help you identify conflicts:

- Is the conflict between basic (non-scripted) objects? If yes, ignore the conflict.
Is the conflict between two different mods? If yes, you probably have an issue. Remove the mods and find out what files the mods alter. You may need to ask one of the creators to combine the mods so you can use them both.
Is the conflict between a package in the Overrides folder and another package elsewhere? If yes, you are probably safe, but you should investigate anyway. Make sure that the two mods (or packages) are not trying to go in two different directions.

If you find a conflict between two, another great idea is to go back to the false positive thread for the mods and re-read each. If mod has a chance to report a false positive, most likely the creator will let you know. If that isn't the case, you can at least find out what files the mods alter to see what might be going on.

Part Three: More Examples of False Positives

- You use a custom hair re-texture that you put in the Overrides folder, and install the hair via the launcher or as a package file.
You use a mod for EA Premium Content. Dashboard will say this mod conflicts with the DCCache files, or with the package itself. When in doubt, put the mod in Overrides and you're safe.
You install new CC from a creator and the CC conflicts with each other. This is a non-issue as the CC objects are just sharing resources.

More examples? Share them in the comments!

Last Edit: 04 December 2012, 15:24 by Nona Mena

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #3 on: 04 December 2012, 15:11 »

Related Articles and Tutorials

Tutorial: How to Create and Use an Overrides Folder

Additional Credits

This article would not be possible without the following people:

- Jane Jones
Delphy
SimAd
Twaillan
Craxie
Zedrael/Cmo/Bloom

Last Edit: 04 December 2012, 16:00 by Nona Mena

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #4 on: 04 December 2012, 15:11 »

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #5 on: 04 December 2012, 15:12 »

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #6 on: 04 December 2012, 20:50 »

Excellent article Nona, Thank you! Bookmarked!

Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #7 on: 06 December 2012, 07:36 »

Quote from: Deesim on 04 December 2012, 20:50:
Excellent article Nona, Thank you! Bookmarked!
Thanks, Dee Please don't forget to make suggestions or ask questions, if you have any.

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #8 on: 06 December 2012, 19:25 »

Nona,
Excellent article; very well done! And thanks for posting the link over at NRaas; otherwise, I might never have seen it.
Just one suggestion:
Back in part 3, where you are explaining core mods, you mention to change

If you had three core mods, each overriding only one specific S3SA resource, you could use all three core mods without problem.
to
If you had three core mods, each overriding only one specific different S3SA resource, you could use all three core mods without problem.

I know that's what you meant, and I'm sure most readers would get it, but, but I've seen those incredibly dense people on some discussion sites; best to be precise, especially if it only requires one word.

Last Edit: 25 July 2013, 01:56 by coolkips

Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #13 on: 23 July 2013, 19:32 »

The short answer is: yes, this tool is perfectly reliable, even with the release of EPs and SPs. It will never require an update to continue working, unless EA completely overhauls the game (highly unlikely, depending on zero chance probability).

The long answer is: Mod conflicts do not change with patches, EPs, or SPs. If you read the guide, you will learn that a tuning mod conflict is present when two or more mods override the same resource. Patch level is irrelevant in this case.

Remember, this tool cannot detect conflicts with scripting or core mods, and it cannot tell you if a mod is compatible with a certain patch level.

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Re: Understanding Mod and CC Conflicts with Delphy's Dashboard « Reply #14 on: 01 October 2013, 15:23 »

Hi Nona, thank you for this thread!
If you don't mind, I have a question. In part 1 under the section tuning mods where it says it will conflict with any other override that alters the same resource (i.e. resource with the same TGI/RK). Does that mean a tuning mod conflict with a script mod if they altered the exact same resource? I just want to make sure I'm correct in thinking tuning mods can't conflict with script mods.

Last Edit: 01 October 2013, 15:32 by JustAnotherSimsFan

If JustAnotherSimsFan is too long then just call me JASF or SimsFan. You can find my Sims 3 mods at TFM's Sims Asylum (free registration required).

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