Hexmap 3.0 Documentation

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the deluxe version of Hexmap, now at version 3.0. Improvements over the public domain version are significant, and have been driven by user feedback. If you have any suggestions on what would make Hexmap a better tool for your use, please send me a note at the address at the end of this document.

A Quick Tour of New Features

Place the hexmap.exe, hexmap.dll, and the *.dat and *.def data files in the same subdirectory. Start hexmap from inside Windows 3.0. Go to the "File:Open Map" menu choice, and double-click on the file HUNT.DAT. This will load in the data for a modified version of the map for a board game called Elefant Hunt. Enlarge the Hexmap window to cover most of your screen. Select "Utility:Zoom:50%" so the map will fit on the screen. Select "File:Draw". The HUNT.MAP file has the following features:
- a custom title in user-specified font and size
- the numeric labels on the hexes have been turned off
- Hexes have three attributes:
- hex fill pattern
- symbol
- symbol fill pattern

In HUNT.MAP, the triangles represent hexes with animals in them, with the orientation of the triangle used to encode a number from 1 to 6. The hexagons are city hexes, and the other patterns are used for quicksand, rivers, swamps, and special hexes.

To edit a hex fill pattern, click with the left mouse button on a hex. A floating menu will pop up, letting you select from a variety of fill patterns. There are two special fill patterns, "nil" which means the hex should not be drawn at all, and "invisible" which means the hex should not use a fill pattern (i.e. a normal white hex). To change the fill pattern of several hexes, drag with the left button down to mark the hexes of interest with the bounding box. The new fill pattern will apply to all hexes inside the box. To change the symbols in a hex, click the right mouse button. This will pull up a dialog box (presently user-hostile), which will ask for the numeric values for the hex fill pattern, symbol, and symbol fill pattern. The numeric values for the 20 fill patterns are the same as their position on the left button menus, e.g. nil == 0, invisible == 1, ten == 2, ..., thinHorz == 8, ..., thinPebble == 19. The numeric values for the 10 symbols

are:

      0: no symbol
      1-6: triangles, clockwise, starting at 12 o'clock
      7: hexagon
      8: square
      9: square with rounded corners
      10: circle

When you are finished playing with the map, select "File:Close Map" and answer "No" when asked if you wish to save the changes.

Steps to make a new hexmap

To create a new hexmap, you need to define several settings. (An easier way to make a new map is to load in a similar map and use the "File:Save As" function to create a copy of a map, and then make any changes to the new copy). The following section guides you through the menu selections step by step in making a new map.

File:New

Enter a filename for your new map, without an extension. For example, "mymap". There will be a brief wait while the data files are created and initialized.

Settings:Map Size

Set the scale to the size of the smallest radius of the hexagons (one half the center-to-center distance between two hexagons)., measured in 1/300 inch units. A hex size of 75 will give you a standard 1/2 inch grid. Set the number of rows and columns you want visible. A hex map data file always contains information for hexes numbered 0101-9999, so the max number of rows or columns is 99. You can change this setting later on without losing any information. It only affects how many hexes are drawn or printed.

File:Draw

Drawing a large hexmap takes a bit of time, enough time that if the program redraws the map every time something erases or changes part of the window it gets annoying. Therefore, the map is only redrawn when the "File:Draw" or the "Utility:Redraw Screen" menu items are selected (Redraw Screen is faster). If you have a fast machine, you might want to select the "Utility:Auto Redraw" item. Future versions of Hexmap will try to improve redrawing speed.

Mouse Editing

Initially, all hexes in a new file are marked with the "invisible" fill pattern (i.e. no pattern, just a normal hex

outline), with no symbol. You can now edit the map using the left and right mouse button functions by clicking on hexes you wish to change. Some limited redrawing is done when you change a hex, but at times the display may not be perfect.

File:Save

Saves the datafiles. Hexmap works on temporary copies of maps, only saving when told. If you wish to exit without saving a map when you close the program, answer "No" to any questions about saving files.

File:Print

Printing does not depend upon the map being drawn on the screen, and the zoom level for the screen drawing has no effect on the printout. Printing to a laser printer is very fast. Printing to a dot matrix printer, or some other sort of printer which uses "banding" is very slow. This is a function of Windows, although I am working on improving the printing speed. Time to print increases linearly with the number of hexagons in the map.

Printing to a file

It may be convenient to print a map to a file rather than to the printer. This way you can copy the file to the printer whenever you need a new copy of the map. This is faster than going through the whole printing process every time you need a new map. Printing to a file can be very useful, for example, when running a play-by-email wargame. To print to a file, refer to your Windows manual, or try and follow these directions:

In the Control Panel -- Printers program, select one of your installed printers, and click on "Configure". Change the "Port" selection to "FILE:". Now every time you print a file, Windows will pop up a dialog box asking for the filename to print to, rather than sending it to the printer. Hit "OK", then "OK" again to get out of the Printers program.

Notes on Postscript files:

Not many people have postscript printers in their home, but you can easily set up windows to print postscript output to a file. Install a postscript printer, Configure it with "FILE" as it's port, and you're set. Warning: windows puts a Ctrl-D character at the beginning and end of postscript files. If you copy a file with Ctrl-D's to a printer on, for example, a unix network, it may not recognize the file a a set of postscript commands, and instead print out 100

pages of text instead of your map! Use an editor (like emacs) to delete the first and last Ctrl-D characters of the file.

Datafiles

Hexmap uses two data files for each map. The first file is 10000 words long, and the hex number 0101-9999 is used as the offset into this file. Each word has three fields for the fill pattern, symbol, and symbol fill pattern. Version 2 of hexmap introduced a second file (while still using the version 1.0 file) to store the Title, size, font, and hex label information. If Hexmap comes across a *.dat map file from version 1.0 that doesn't have a *.def file, it will create a *.def file automatically.

Settings Reference

This section contains a thorough description of the Settings items:

Map Title

The "Settings:Map Title" Dialog box allows you to change the default title. There are three fields:

Font Name: This is the name of the font you wish to use for the title. Eventually it will be a list box you select from. You can get a list of font names from a program like Write or Word. Hexmap also can translate the following font names into something appropriate:

propSanSerif   (Translates to Helvetica)
fixSanSerif (old Win 2.0 system font)
propSerif   (Times Roman)
fixSerif   (Courier)

You may use these names, or enter your own font name. (Hexmap handles ATM fonts with no problem).

Title Size: Specified in units of 1/300 inches. A "-1" produces the default size (1/10" high, usually).

Title: Should be 40 characters or less in length.

Map Size

Scale: an integer in units of 1/300 inch. Represents half the distance between hex centers on the printed map.

Rows & Columns: These settings are for efficiency only. When drawing or printing hexes, if the row number of the hex is greater then the "rows" setting, Hexmap assumes the hex has a fill pattern of "nil" and doesn't draw it. This speeds up the drawing of the map, since the data files don't have to be queried for those

hexes.

Hex Labels: See the Map Title section for information on how to set the font and size. Hex labels are always 4 digit integers corresponding to the standard hex numbering layout, starting with 0101 in the upper left corner.

Line Width: A positive integer, setting the width of the lines used to draw the hexagons, measured in pixels (I think). A width of 0 will make the lines as thin as possible.

Line Color: Sets the color of the lines used. May not work on some printers. Try setting the width to >0 and setting R,G,B to be the same. This might get your printer to print out a gray line. For an interesting effect, set the border to be thick and white, and set all hexes to have a grey fill pattern.

Where to Reach Me:

All comments (and orders) are welcome. Registered users get free upgrades to all new versions. Hexmap is currently at version 3.0. A public domain version which only prints standard undecorated hex maps is freely available. Source code for hexmap is available to registered users. Hexmap is written in the Actor language, version 3.1 using the ObjectGraphics library and the EDEN project management extensions.

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