The Monster Truck Madness Guild

Giving You The Tools To Raise The Standard

COWPOD 1.O

Cowpod 1.0
(Intro)

Basic Info

At its core, Cowpod is a pod mounting utility just like many others that have come before it. Place it in your mtm2 folder, double click it (or put a shortcut on the desktop) and you can easily add and remove track and truck pods from your game.

Note. If you do not know how to mount addons, then please see the beginners help page which you can find at "http://cownap.com/~mtmg/helpfile.shtml".

Cowpod differs from other pod mounting programs in many ways. Here are some of them.

Features

1. **Easy to use interface**
   - o Two viewing and selection modes (F8)
     - ▪ Side by side
     - ▪ Checked list
       - ▪ Both views can be refreshed (F5)
       - ▪ Both views can be sorted
   - o Toolbar (toggle it with F4)
   - o Menu
   - o Command buttons
     - ▪ Launch the game right from Cowpod

2. **Sorting Options**
   - o Unsorted
   - o Alphabetically
     - ▪ Leave user specified number of pods at the top of the list

3. **Smart restore**
    - Reset the default mtm2 pods
    - Reset the minimal mtm2 pods only
        - Both will put fixmore4 on top
        - Both will check a "fixes" and a "stock" subdirectory (if they exist) for the stock pods.
4. **Extra path options**
    - Place pods anywhere on your computer
    - Read subfolders many levels deep
5. **INI File options**
    - Normal Save (as pod.ini)
    - Save as... any file name you want
    - Open a previously saved list
    - Send the list to notepad for direct editing
    - Error checking and cross referencing
        - Never write a bad ini file
6. **List swapping**
    - Save lists without hassle
    - Open any list directly into cowpod
        - Use Open
        - Right click in windows explorer
    - Install any list without opening cowpod
        - Use special shortcuts
        - Right click in windows explorer
    - Create a quick-change shortcut on the desktop
        - Right click in windows explorer
        - Drag icon from desktop to 'quick launch' taskbar
7. **Monster.ini Editor**
    - Change the game fonts
        - Includes 6 presets
        - Or use any fonts on your computer
    - Turn on extra horns
    - Turn off Torture Pit
    - Use digital latency display

8. **Registry Editor**
   - MTM2
     - Reset
     - Fix
     - Repair
   - Traxx 1.4
     - Delete traxx registration key
     - Reset it without typing
   - C-pod
     - Remove startup location problem
     - Or reset it to a viewable location
9. **Lots of extras**
   - Create shortcuts right from cowpod
     - on the desktop
     - on the startmenu
   - Copy to clipboard
     - Pod.ini list
     - Unused pod list
     - Selected check list
     - Unselected check list
   - Automatic game version detection
     - Displayed in the title bar
     - Automatic pod limit detection
   - Minimal nags
   - Does many things automatically
   - Ultimately leaves choices to the user
10. **Open Source**
   - Contribute to the project
   - Learn for your own projects

Cowpod 1.0
(User Interface)

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Viewing and selection modes

Two of the most prominent styles of selection in all pod mounting programs are the side by side arrangement where clicking a name in one list will send it to the other, and the all-in-one list where you check and uncheck the names you want to use. Cowpod allows you to work with either style selection you like. Use one or use the other, whichever you're most comfortable with, the outcome will be the same in the game.

Side by side selection lists

The side by side style is the cowpod default. The first time you run cowpod, the side by side arrangement is the one you'll see.
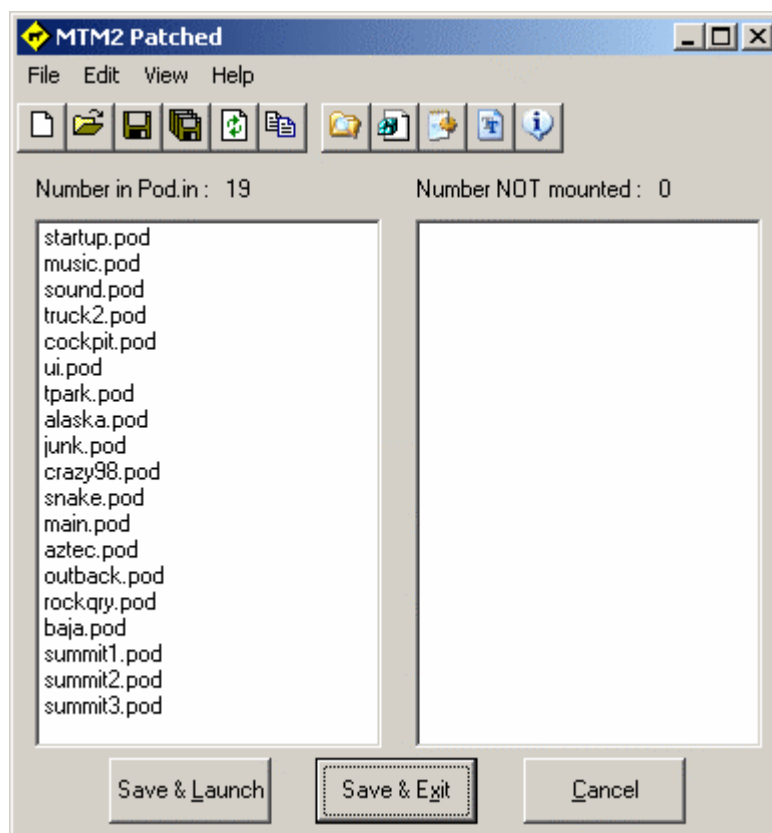
The names in the left list box are the pods that will be included in the pod.ini file when you save. The names in the right list box are the pods that are available to mount. Clicking a name in either box will send it to the other so that you may include or exclude any addons you want. The number of pods in each list is displayed in the text boxes above each list respectively.

Checkbox list

If you would rather see all names in a single list, then press the F8 key to toggle between the two viewing styles. You can also change the viewing style from the menu (menu > view > side by side).
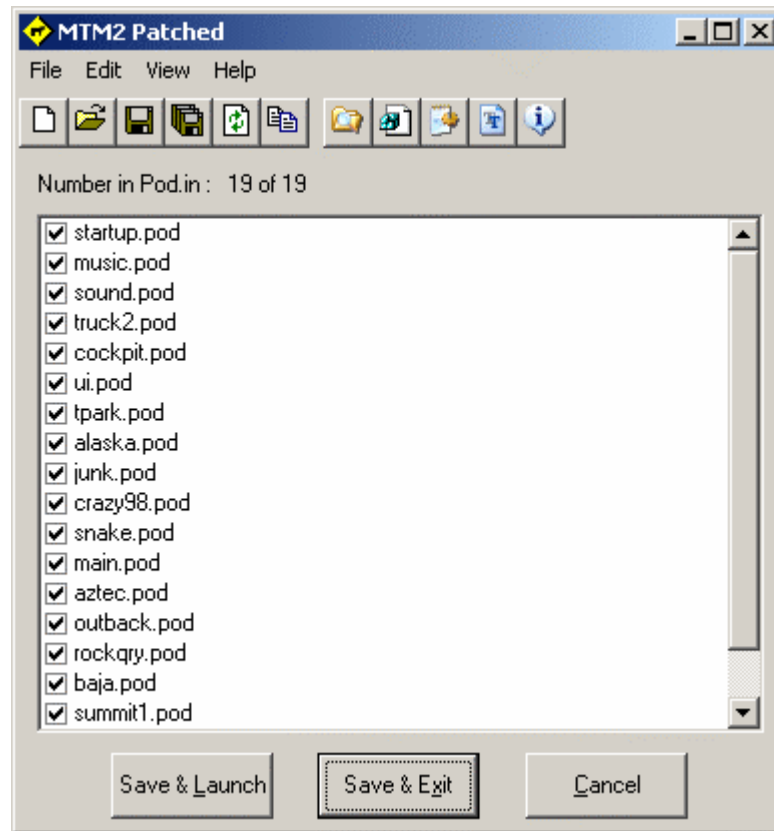
The names with a checkmark beside them will be included in the pod.ini file. The names without the checkmark are the pods still available to mount. Using the checklist can sometimes be easier to read long file names. When you close either list, cowpod will remember which one you were using so it will start up the same way next time.

The Toolbar

Unlike most pod mounting utilities, cowpod has a toolbar which allows quick and easy access to many of the program's features.

However, if you choose not to use some of those features or you just don't want the toolbar taking up space, then you can toggle it off by pressing the F4 key. You can also toggle the toolbar on and off from the menu (menu > view > toolbar).

The Menu

All of cowpod's features are accessible through the menu. We will talk about those features in the next pages. For now, the menu is the main access point for anything you might want to do beyond simply selecting and unselecting addons.

Three Buttons

The primary reason for using cowpod is for mounting and unmounting your addon tracks and trucks. For that reason, there are three main buttons on the bottom part of the window that cannot be removed. (1) Use the "cancel" button if you change your mind and decide not to make any changes, or you want to use the other features of cowpod without making changes to your pod.ini file. (2) Use the "save and exit" button after you've made your selections. The updates will be made and the program will close. It is rare when anybody wants to save and leave it open. However, should that be your choice, you can use the toolbar or menu to have your wish. (3) If you know you want to try out that new track or truck right away, you can spare yourself some extra clicking by using the "save and launch" button. The updates will be made, the program will close and the game will start. All automatically.

Notes

Your game version is displayed in the program's title bar. It will say whether or not it is patched.

The program window can be maximized so you can read file names more easily.

Switching viewing styles reloads the pod.ini file. If you've made changes, then be sure to save before switching.

Refreshing the checkbox list will put all selected pods at the top of the list for easier viewing. You do not need to close and reopen. Just press the F5 key to refresh. You do not need to save before refreshing.

And that's pretty much it for the basics.

Cowpod 1.0
(Sorting)

Changing sort options

The sort option only effects the pod.ini list - whether in the side by side view or the checked list view. The pods that are available on the hard drive are read by the operating system which reads them alphabetically, so there is no real choice there. But for the pod.ini list, you have the choice of sorted or unsorted. You make this selection on the menu > view > alphabetize pod.ini
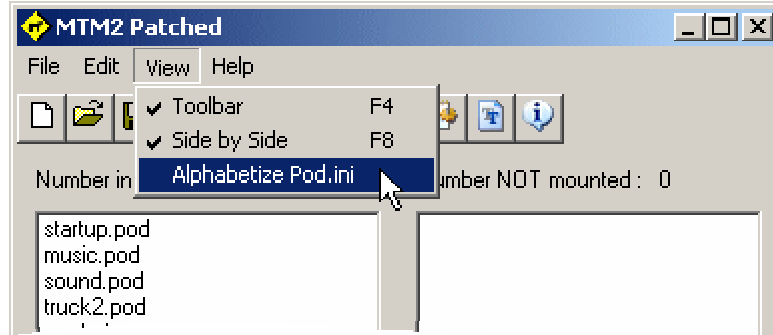
When you see the checkmark, it means the list will be sorted. When there is no checkmark, the list will not be sorted.

Note. The first time you choose to sort your list, it will not automatically be sorted. You must refresh the list (press F5), or make changes to it, before the sort will take effect. This is just a precaution in case you change your mind. However, once sorted and as long as the checkmark is beside "alphabetize pod.ini" on the menu, the list will remain sorted without further input from you.

Keep on top

Obviously, we cannot have the entire list sorted alphabetically or things like the fixmore4 pod will not be able to do their job. We need several stock pods, and maybe our favorite trucks, to always remain on top of everything else. So, by default, the first 24 items in the list will not be effected by the sorting option. The rationale for 24 is as follows.

```
Fixmore4         1
Required files   6
Fav trucks       2
Fav tracks       2
Stock tracks     13
                 --
Total            24
```

Naturally, that 'exact' scenerio will not apply to everybody. Maybe you use custom check-in screens, or maybe you have more trucks, or maybe you use a seperate smoke effects pod. Either way, the exact number you want to keep on top might be a few more or a few less than the cowpod default number of 24. No problem. You can adjust how many remain on top to match your needs.

To change the "keep on top" number, either goto the menu > edit > set paths or click the path button [icon] on the toolbar. This will bring up the path options box.
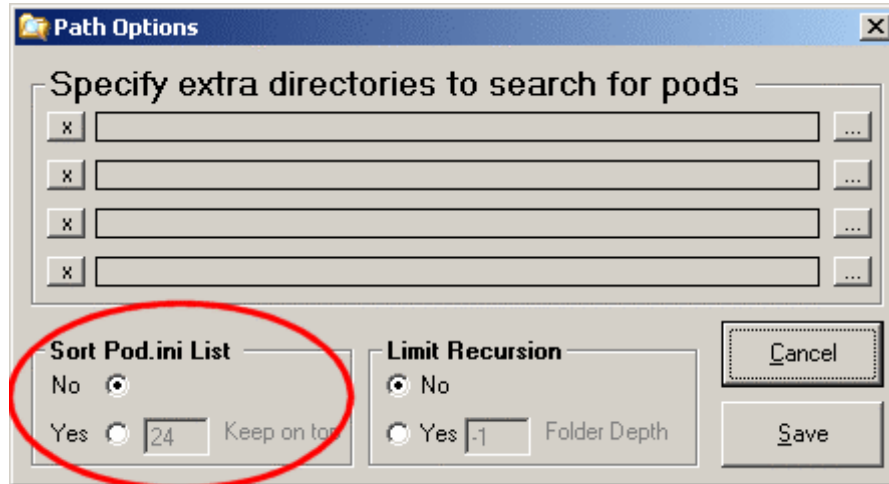
Note. You can do a few things here, but for sorting we're only concerned with the lower left hand corner.

To change the number of pods that are not effected by sorting, click the 'Yes' radio button. The box to enter a number will become activated and you can enter any number you like. Any number higher than 6, that is. You need the minimum number of game pods to always stay on top, so you can't set it to lower than 6. When you have entered the number you want, click save. And that's it. Now the keep on top number is set to what you want.

How it works

For the sake of demonstrating, I set the keep on top number to 20 (the 19 stock pods plus fixmore4), then I added 10 addons to the list. The picture on the left shows the unsorted list. That is, the stock pods and below them are the 10 tracks I added. Notice they are just randomly added. When saved, that's how the pod.ini file will be written, and in the game they will be similarly scrambled. On the right is the same list but this time it has been sorted. Notice that the stock pods are unchanged. They have been kept on top. The addons, however, are now sorted alphabetically.
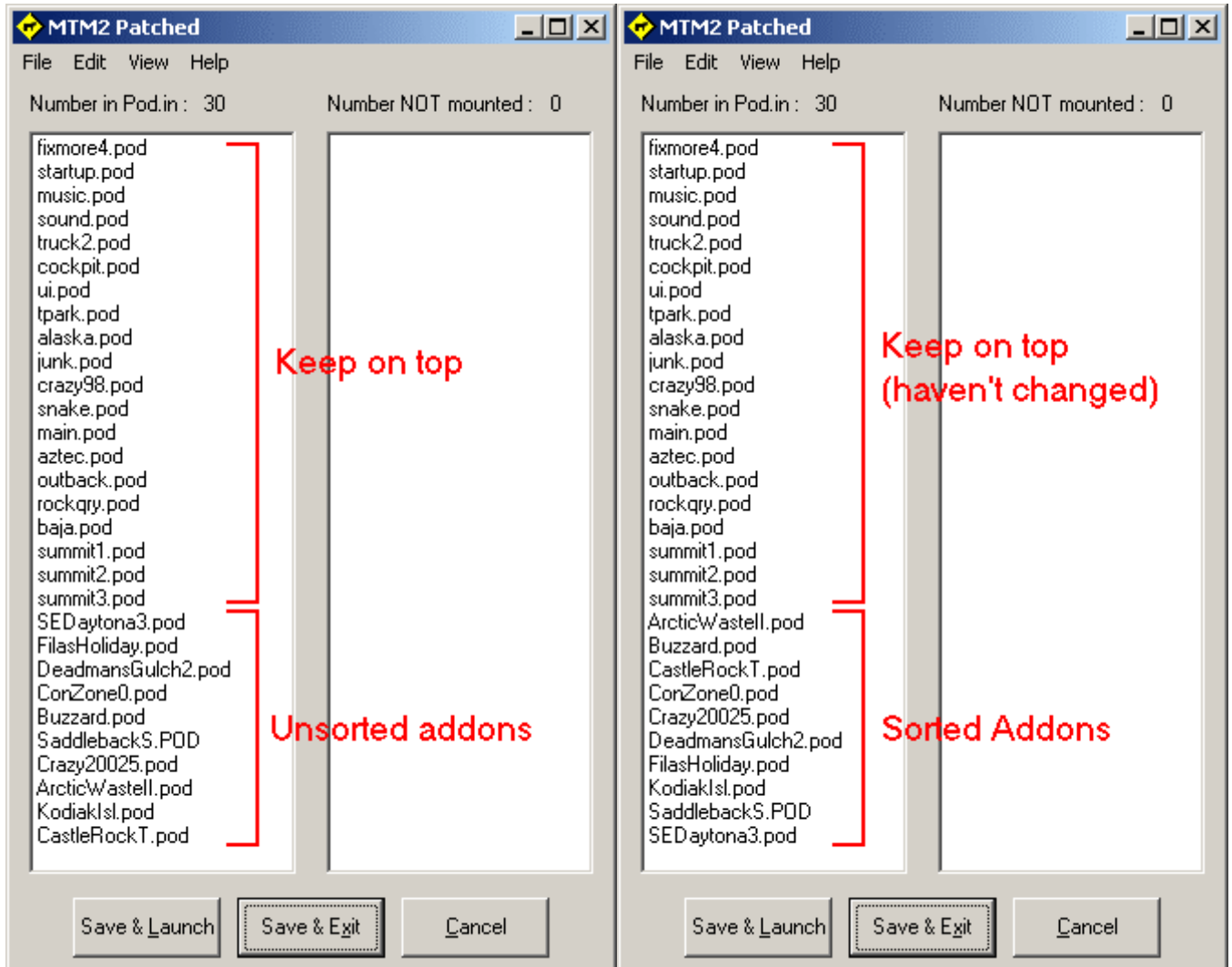
Sorting the pod.ini list isn't for everybody. And when you are dealing with just a few tracks like this example, the addon you want isn't really that hard to find. But when you have fifty, sixty or more pods in your game, finding the one you're after in an unsorted list can be quite the challenge. In those cases, sorting the addons can make finding your track a little bit easier. And cowpod let's you do it without disturbing the game files and the extras you want to keep on top.

Note. Sorting works exactly the same for the checked list view. When you make selections and refresh the list, it will be sorted according to the keep on top number.

And that's pretty much it for sorting.

Cowpod 1.0
(Smart Restore)

What is restoring?

From time to time you may want to completely change all the addons in your game. Or, occassionally you will find that you have accidentally removed a required game pod and get errors because it's missing. Or, you have built a list of tracks to use and now want to build a second or third list. In each of these cases you will want to know what pods are necessary to make the game run its best (ie. without errors), the same pods that are included when you originally installed the game. Well, you needn't trouble over it. The restore feature will take the guess work out of the problem.

Caution. Using the restore feature will replace your whole pod.ini list. If your current list is one you'd like to keep, make sure you save it using "save as" first.

To restore the stock pod list, goto the menu > edit > mtm2 stockers > default or minimal. The default option will restore all 19 game pods plus the fixmore4.pod if you have it. The minimal option will restore the game pods but no track pods. That is, it will restore all the files the game needs to work, but nothing extra. Any non-game pods on your hard drive, will be moved to the 'available' list in the side by side view, or will be unchecked in the single list view.

Note. Every effort has been made to make sure cowpod does not create bad pod.ini files. So, if pods are missing or have been deleted or are otherwise gone, they will not be added to the list.

Restoring can help ensure your game works correctly, and it can serve as the basis for new lists. It's quick, easy, and should be without error.

What is smart restoring?

Smart restoring (and later when we talk about custom paths) is all about how you manage files on the hard drive. If you keep all your pod files in the mtm2 game folder, then you will never notice smart restoring at all. It works behind the scenes and there is nothing you need to do to make it work. However, if you are like me, or like many other people, who keep very few pods in the game folder, then smart restoring will prove to be a standout.

Cowpod designates two special folders for "game" pods. They are "fixes" and "stock". In order to avoid cluttering up the game folder, I create these two extra folders in order to better organize and keep track of where things are. So, for example, if you install the game to the default location, it would be in:

`C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2`

What I then do is create two extra folders, like this:

`C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\Fixes`

and

`C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\Stock`

In the "fixes" folder, I will put fixmore4.pod, a drivercheckin.pod, dustsmoke.pod and any extras that I might use to customize the game. In the "stock" folder, I move all the stock pods. All of them. I don't have any pods in the mtm2 game folder.

Note. This method of working is not for everybody. If you have trouble keeping track of things, or have troubles of any kind, then you shouldn't use it. For those of us who do, however, smart restoring will be an invaluable aid.

Okay, so I have all the game pods moved into appropriately named sub folders. However, with an ordinary restore feature, a pod mounting utility will look in the game folder, not find the pods and give up... thinking they are bad or missing or whatever. Not so with cowpod. When you click the restore option, cowpod will look for fixmore4.pod in the "fixes" folder. If it finds it, it'll add it to the list. If it doesn't, it will next look in the "stock" folder. If it finds it there, it'll add it to the list. If not, it'll look in the game folder. If it's there, it'll add it. If not, cowpod will assume you don't have it around and move to the next file to look for (eg. startup.pod). It will not add fixmore4.pod three times, it will only add it once. But it'll keep looking until it's found. Likewise for the game pods. Cowpod will look in the two special sub folders before looking in the game folder. If it doesn't find it right away, it will continue looking. It will add the first version it finds, and then move on to the next file that needs to be restored. So, when you're finished, you end up with a pod.ini list that looks something like this:
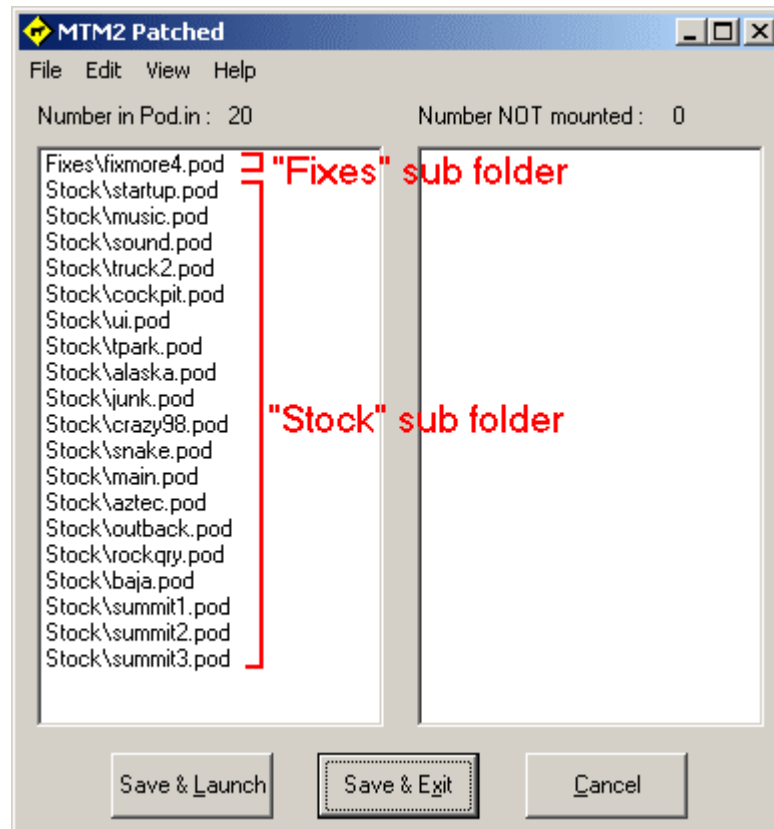
This may not seem like a big deal at first glance, but when you have hundreds of addon pods on your computer, it is very helpful to be able to identify which are the game pods and which are the addons and which are the fixes just by looking at where they are located on the hard drive.

Note. Arranging pods like this has no impact on the game whatsoever. It is strictly a way to organize and keep track of your files.

And that's pretty much it for smart restoring. You don't need to do anything except organize your files to your liking. Cowpod does the rest.

Cowpod 1.0
(Path Options)

Why extra paths?

If you have 800 pods in your mtm folder, then it's very likely you will never need the extra paths feature of cowpod. However, I know many people, myself included, who have zero pods in the mtm directory. Some people even have pods saved on the desktop, of all places. I have separate locations for traxx, binedit, tracked2, and the game. Using the paths, I can easily mount up and test whatever I'm working on without the need to copy files all over the place and waste space with two and three (or more) copies of the same thing. Or, maybe you're just an organizational fiend who has all sorts of weird working configurations for your pods. The path feature in cowpod will cater to even more strangeness. The game can be on drive c: and your stock tracks on d: and your favorite list on e: and some beta tests on g: or whatever. And you can do it without notepad and without programs like "pathcopy". The path option adds flexibility and ease, if that's the sort of thing you do. It's that simple. If, on the other hand, you don't slice up your hard drive like a pizza, or you keep all your pods in sub folders off the game folder, then you can safely ignore the extra paths options. It's there if you want it. But it's not a required option. It's all about organization, how you work, what you're doing, and personal preference. This stuff, extra paths, could always be done before, but it was always a pain to do. Now, it's as easy as using any other pod mounting program.

About sub folders

Before getting down to the nitty gritty, a word about pods in sub folders might be helpful. Some programs, like PodIt, will read pods in the game folder and it will also read pods in sub folders in the game folder. This is a very handy way to help organize your pod files. Cowpod will do this too. However, while Podit will read files in the next level of folders, Cowpod will read the files in all sub folders, no matter how far away from the game folder they are. For example, Podit will read pods in an "addon" folder.

```
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\addons
```

And it will read pods in a "trucks" sub folder

```
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\trucks
```

In fact, it will read pods in as many sub folders as you have. But, it only goes one layer deep. Cowpod, on the other hand, will read pods anywhere below the game folder. For example:

```
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\addons\circuits
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\addons\rallies
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\addons\drags
```

Or, again...

```
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\trucks\replicas
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\trucks\customs
C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\trucks\repaints
```

And cowpod can read deeper than that, if you want it to.

```
C:\Progra\....\Madness 2\trucks\replicas\bigfoots
C:\Progra\....\Madness 2\trucks\replicas\gravediggers
C:\Progra\....\Madness 2\trucks\replicas\theRest
```

So, if this extra little bit of folder depth offers enough pod file organizational choices for you, then you don't need the extra paths of cowpod. However, if after all that flexibility you still want more, then the extra paths are just the ticket for you.

How it works

Open cowpod like normal. Notice the stock pods on the left and the empty selection list on the right. You of course may have more pods in your game folder than I currently do for this tutorial.
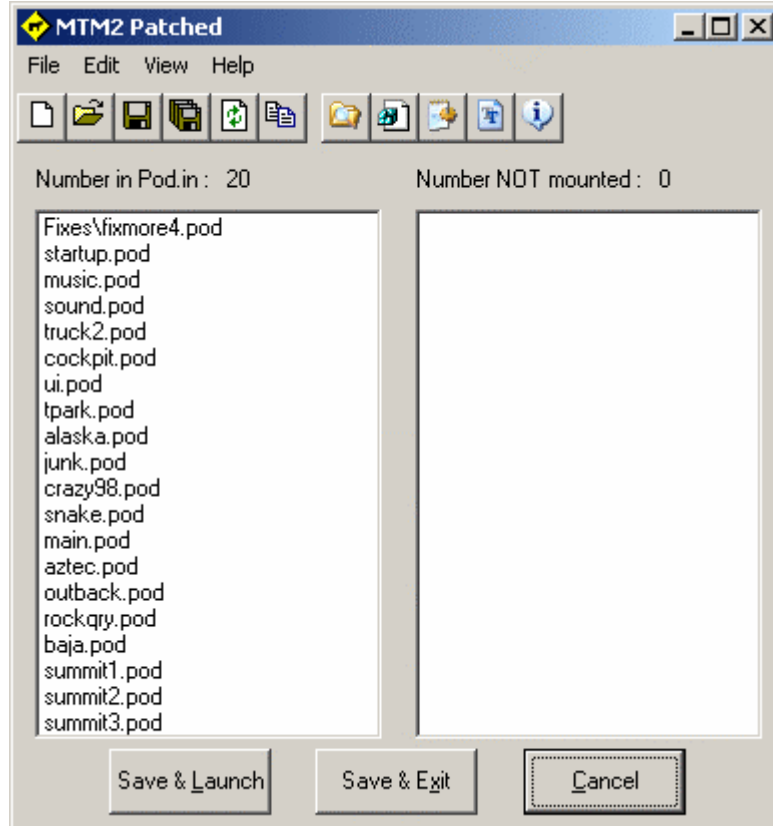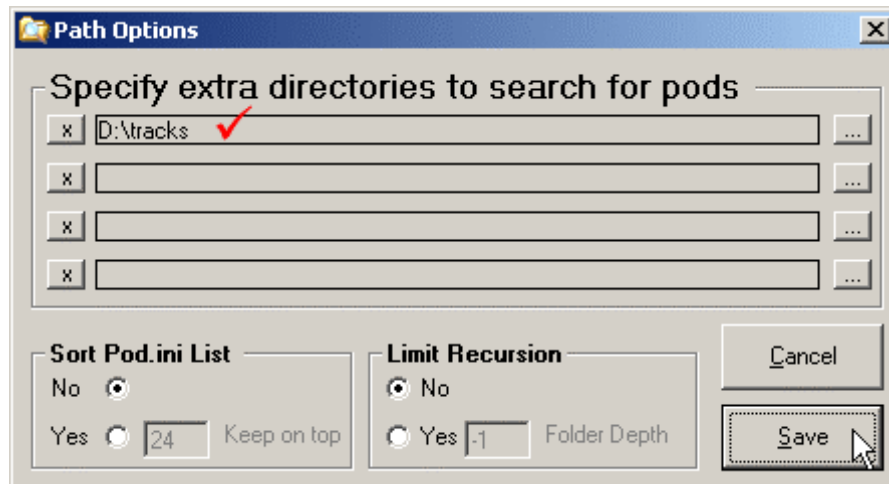

Now, goto the menu > edit > set paths, or click the path button on the toolbar. The path options box will come up. Click a [...] button.
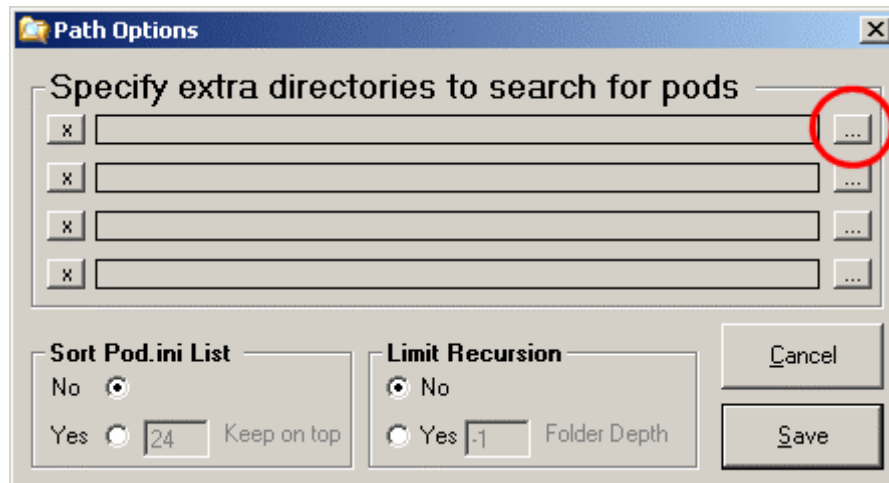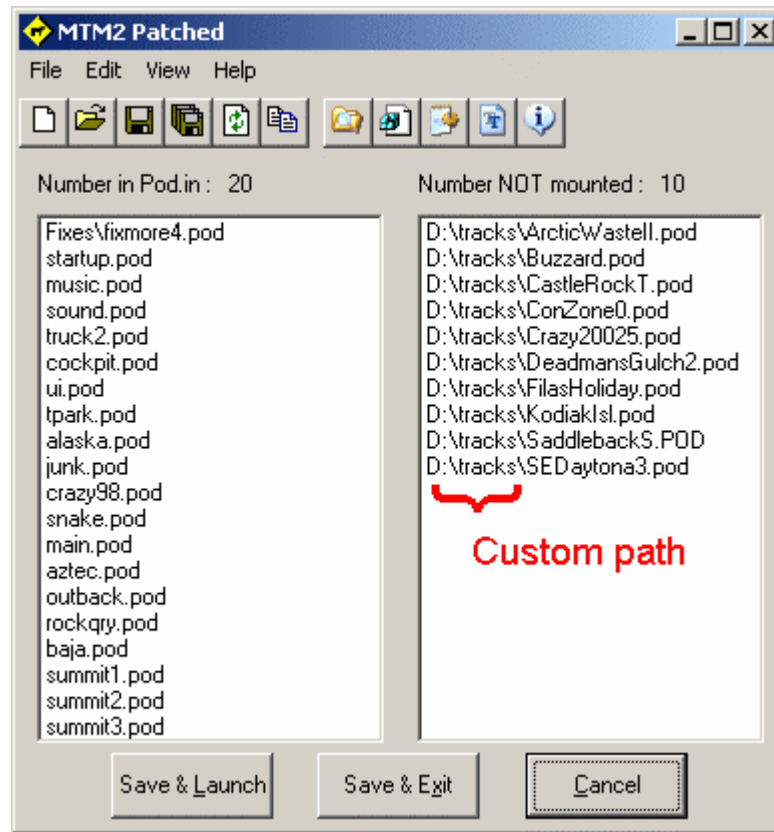
Browse to the folder you want (the one where your pods are) and click OK.
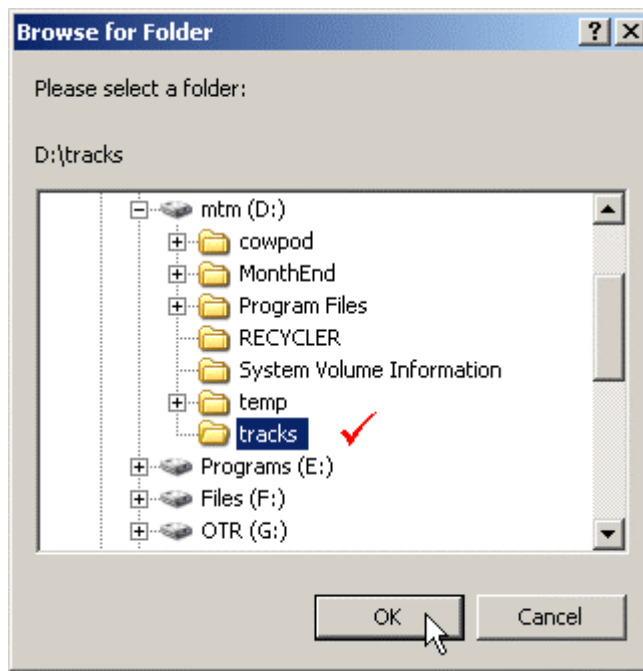
You will see the full path to the directory you just selected appear in the path options box. Click the save button.

Voila, all the pods in that folder will now be available to cowpod and to the game.

Select the tracks and trucks you want to use and start your game.

Infinite recursion (aka too many files)

Recursion is just the techeze word that means to read sub folders repeatedly. When making the change to cowpod you may discover that pods show up in the list that were previously hidden from view because they were too deep in sub folders to be detected by other pod mounting programs. But since cowpod reads multiple sub folders they are now in full view. Sometimes, this may not be what you want and so you might rather cowpod not read so many sub folders after all. The fix is easy. Open the path options box. In the lower middle section, you will see options marked "limit recursion."
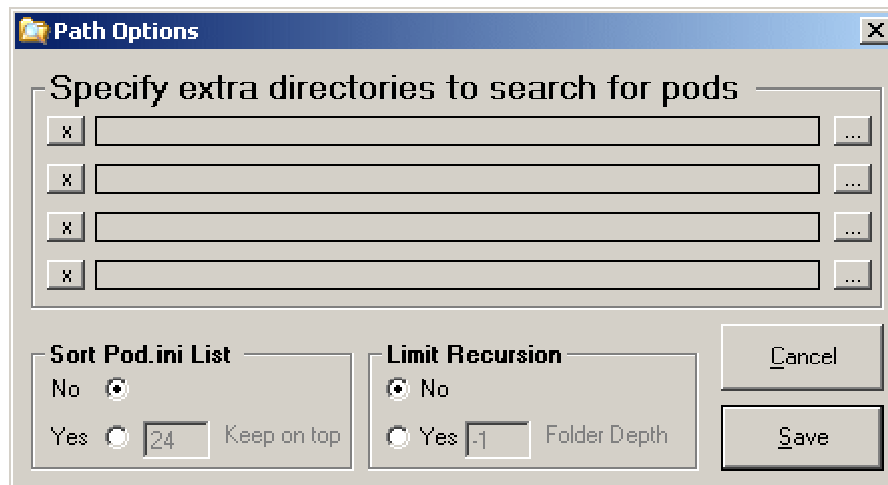
When you first run cowpod, it is set to read ALL sub folders. That is, don't limit anything. But if you click the "yes" button you can limit how far cowpod will look for pod files. Setting it to zero will restrict the pod file search to the current directory (and the root of user paths). Setting it to one, two, or three, etc. will indicate to look that many sub folders beyond the currect one but to look no further after that. The limit is set for the program folder and for user paths too. The bottom line, however, is that you have complete flexibility and control over what you do.

Notes

To delete a path click the [x] button to the left of the one you want to get rid of.

The path(s) you set can be anywhere.

Monster truck madness 1 and 2 will NOT read files, folders or directories with spaces in the name. Therefore, cowpod will truncate the path to the shortened DOS version. This is nothing you need to be concerned about. It's all done automatically in order to make things work properly.

When you click a pod name from a path that you set, the whole path and all will be added to the pod.ini list. This is as it should be. Cowpod will sort out what is in the game folder and what is in your custom paths. The game will work with it all.

Just as cowpod will read sub folders off the game folder, so it will do the same thing for user set paths. You do not need to set all sub folders individually. Just set the main one, and let cowpod do the rest. For example.

- Say, you make a folder c:\trks and in that folder you make a few more "apl" "alt" "rox" etc. and in those you put your tracks. Okay. From the game folder, start Cowpod. Set one of the paths to c:\trks and that's it. All those tracks will appear in the pod list from which you can now mount them and save. The sub directory names will make them easy to identify.

- I am currently working on a project on the H:\ drive. I set a path to that, and any time I want to check work, I just mount up the latest version from right there in the working directory. Easy peasy. No looking for files, no copying things and making sure old versions are deleted, and no sifting through multiple copies of the same thing.

- I use a ram disk. I use it for nearly everything. All downloads go to the ramdisk first. In the case of tracks and trucks, I unzip them there too. I set a path to b:\ and now my game can see whatever it is I'm looking at. Beta, new, whatever. Except for unzipping, I don't even have to open windows explorer.

Is it for everybody? No. But it's easily ignored too.

Cowpod 1.0
(INI File options)

Pod.ini

The crux of using addons in mtm is the pod.ini file. A simple text file that can be edited in any text editor, including notepad, but one single mistake will wreak havoc on the game. So, many pod mounting programs have been made to try and take the sting out of updating the pod.ini file. Problems arise, however, when some utilities, despite the best of intentions, will still create a pod.ini file with errors in it after it's been saved. Or, an mtmer deletes a pod but the utility doesn't detect it's missing and writes the pod.ini file despite it's absence. Older programs often exhibited these kinds of problems. Newer programs have become more sophisticated and often compensate for these shortcomings. It's my hope that cowpod falls into this latter category and will always write error free pod.ini files. Toward this end, no file with spaces in the name will show up in any of the list boxes, and any file in a current pod.ini list that is not also on the hard drive will likewise not be displayed or re-written. Furthermore, cross references are case insensitive, so there should be no duplicate names in any list. And if a pod is moved or deleted while cowpod is open, refreshing the lists should detect the change and make the appropriate adjustments for display. And, while no system is fool proof (fools are quite ingenius) and I will not make claims to perfection, it is my hope that cowpod has built on the tradition of all previous pod mounting programs and will now serve as the defacto standard for creating problem free pod.ini files. Or, at least, until somebody comes along and improves on what cowpod is currently doing.

So, to save the pod.ini file in cowpod, you simply click the save button. There are of course a few to choose from. The large "save & exit" button on the bottom of the main program window will likely be the one most frequently used. You can also just save from the file menu without exiting or click the disk button ![disk icon] on the toolbar too. If you're looking to spare yourself a click or two, you can also "save & launch" the game all in one shot. No matter which button you use the result should be the same. A good pod.ini file.

Saving a list

One aspect of previous pod mounting programs that stands out to me is that none of them open or save files in the normal way programs open and save files of their native type. This is probably due to the fact that the pod.ini file is the sole target of all editing, and running the game is the only reason for even bothering with that. However, with near four thousand tracks and almost five thousand trucks available to use in mtm, the situation has now become such that it's desirable to use preconfigured lists that contain a variety of different addons. Lists that can be shared and that save the trouble of constantly updating the pod.ini file one addon at a time. So, it is with using multiple lists in view that cowpod will save an ini file not only as the pod.ini file, but also as an ini file using any name you like. Obviously, the game will not recognize files with just any old name, but the ability to save pre-set lists should make the task of list management easier.

Saving a list in cowpod is much like saving a file in any program. On the menu, goto file > save as... or click the multi-disk button ![multi-disk icon] on the toolbar. A save box will open where you can give it a name and browse to wherever you want to save the file.

Note. It is recommended that you make an "INI" folder in the game folder. The reason for doing so is that you can save all your ini lists in one easy-to-find location. If an "ini" folder exists, cowpod will automatically open there. If one doesn't exist, it will just open in the game folder. Either way, saving extra ini files should be problem free and very easy.

Opening a list

There would be no point in saving ini files if you couldn't reopen them. So, on the menu, goto file > open, or click the file folder button on the toolbar. An open file dialog box will open and you can browse for the file you want to use.

Note. When opening, cowpod will correct any errors that it finds.

Note. If an "ini" folder exists, cowpod will open there first. If one doesn't exist, it will open in the game folder.

Important. If you open an ini file and then click save, cowpod will save it as the new pod.ini file. It will not resave it using the same name that you opened. The reason for this is simple. Our game uses the pod.ini file only. Additional lists saved in other ini files are for convenience and for sharing and for easy restoration of alternate groups of addons. But the primary goal of any pod mounting program is to create a pod.ini file, and that's what cowpod does. If you wish to open a saved ini file, make changes to it and then resave it, you can do so by clicking the "save as" button on the toolbar or using "save as" on the file menu. But please let's be perfectly clear, when anything is open in cowpod it is without exception the pod.ini file regardless of where it started out.

Notepad

Finally, there is usually always a reason to edit the pod.ini file in ways that cannot be done in any program except a text editor. Rearranging the pod order, for example. In those situations, you can send the current pod.ini file directly to notepad (or the default text editor) right from cowpod. Add or remove the files you want, then on the menu goto Files > Notepad or just click the ini icon button on the toolbar. The current list will be saved, cowpod will close, and notepad will automatically open with the pod.ini file already displayed and ready for you. Quick, fast and easy. Make your changes, save them, and close notepad. You can then return to cowpod for any last checking or changes.

But that's not all there is to INI Files. See List Swapping for more details.
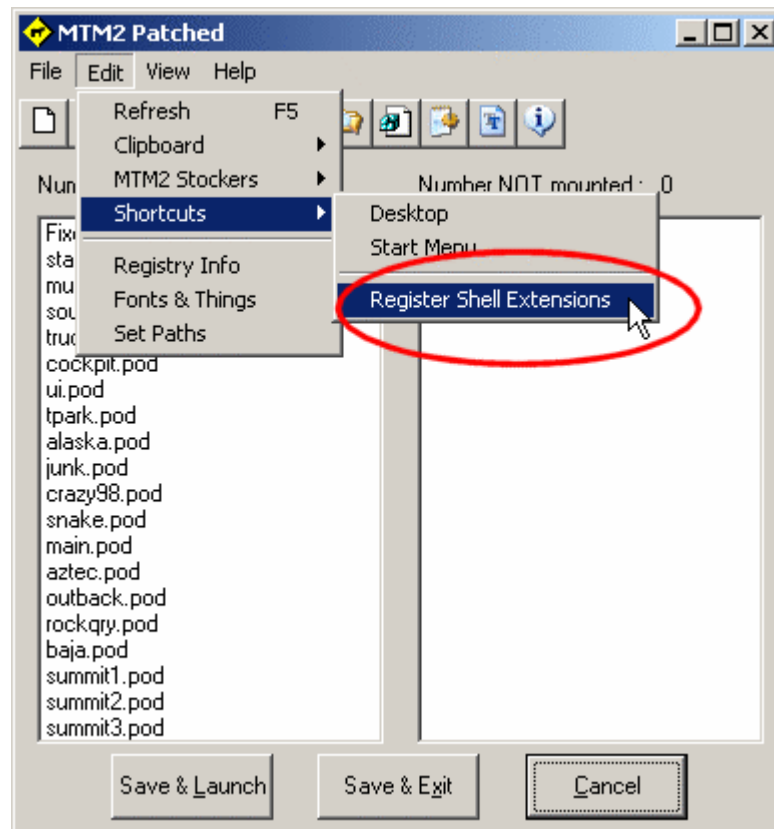
Cowpod 1.0

(List Swapping)

The idea of using pod lists has been around almost since the beginning of our game but the trend lately has become increasingly popular and so utilities have been developed to aid in the task of switching between lists quickly and easily. The oldest among these is podbatch (a pod.ini copying batch file) to the more recent PodSwap, RipIt and MTMstarter. Each of these share a number of common characteristics and at the same time differ in many respects. While it is tempting to try and enumerate their strengths and weaknesses, I think it's probably best to just forge ahead and explain how cowpod attempts to do the job.

Set up

Cowpod tackles the pod list swapping task by using features common to many windows applications. There is no complicated files to make or edit, and no esoteric programming languages to learn. Anybody who can right click a file can use cowpod to install any list they want.

Since cowpod does not use an installer, and it does not impose on your computer system any more than what is absolutely necessary to make it work, the ability to switch lists is not turned on by default. After all, if you don't use list switching, there is no need to have that part of it turned on.

So, to activate list switching, start cowpod like normal. Then, on the menu > edit > shortcuts, you will see an option called "Register Shell Extensions" which is just a technical way of saying "make this thing work for me."

Click the register shell extensions option on the menu. You should get a confirmation prompt that looks like this.
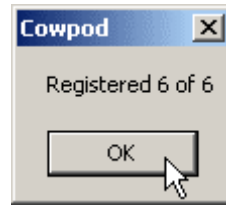
You are now ready to take advantage of cowpod's list switching features. The program will still look and feel the same when it's open. No real changes that way. Okay? Now close cowpod.

Go to wherever you keep your saved ini list files. Hopefully, in an INI folder off the game directory. But wherever it is, right click on one of them. You should now see cowpod entries in the menu that pops up. Like so.
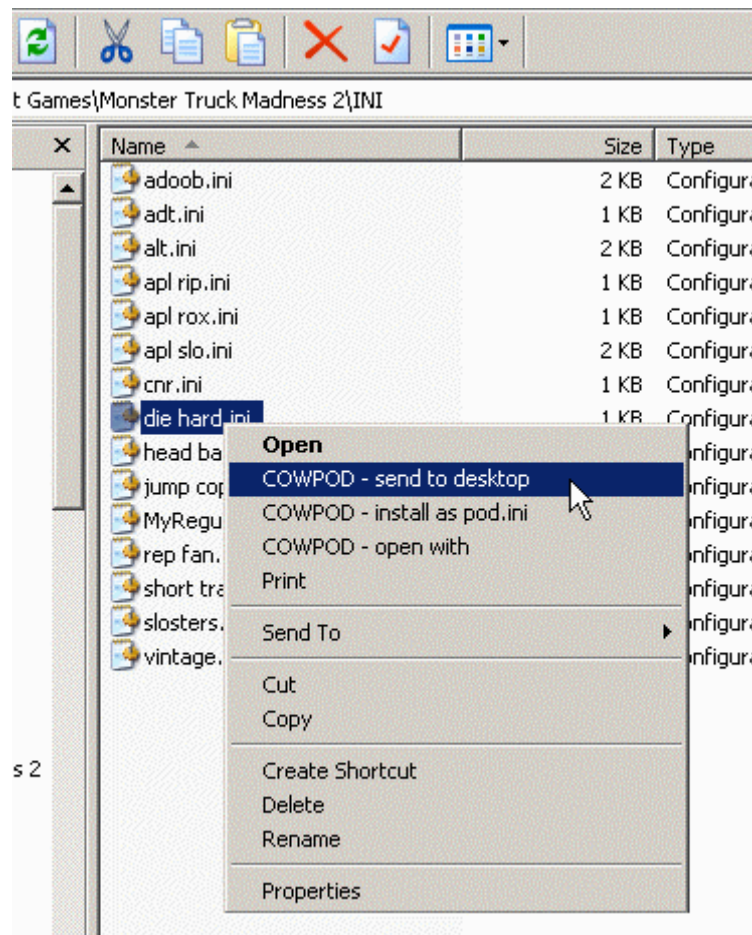
You should see three options.

- COWPOD – send to desktop
- COWPOD – install as pod.ini
- COWPOD – open with

If the names are not obvious, let's take a minute and run through them.

COWPOD - open with

This will open the highlighted file in cowpod. Just the same as if it was already the pod.ini file. With it open, clicking save will save it as the new pod.ini file. The whole process is just three clicks. Eg. Right click, open with, save & exit. Your list is ready to go. While it is open, before you click save, you can review and make changes if you want.

COWPOD - install as pod.ini

This will work exactly like above only you don't need to open the program and click save. It is all done automatically for you. Cowpod will check the file, make sure all entries are valid (eg, you didn't delete any pods) and save it as your new pod.ini file. Cowpod will not even open on the screen. It will just save the designated file as pod.ini and that's it (checking for errors while it works). The original file that you right click on remains unchanged. You can edit it later or leave it the same forever or whatever. Everytime you want to use that list, just install it again and again as many times as you want, no fuss no muss. The whole process is just two clicks. Eg. Right click, install.

COWPOD - send to desktop

This will created a "special" desktop shortcut. When you send a file to the desktop by right clicking, that shortcut will now work exactly the same as if you right clicked the file and chose 'install as pod.ini'. That is, clicking on the shortcut will install the file it's linked to. If you send all your lists to the desktop, you can switch to any list you want without ever opening windows explorer or cowpod. Furthermore, if you drag the icons to the taskbar...
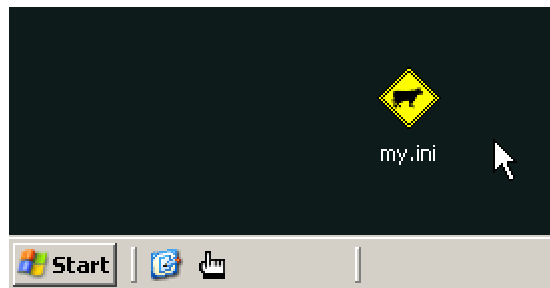
... you can switch with one click. No batch files, no programs to open. Just click and go.

Notes

Cowpod does not copy the selected file over the pod.ini file. Rather, it opens it, verifies it's all correct, then saves it as pod.ini. The difference may not seem like much, but there is a difference. The point here being that cowpod does not work blindly, so that any file you click to install should be valid and the game should always work (without errors) when you install it. This is true for all three right click methods.

If you move the game folder or move cowpod, the shell extensions will have to be reset, and the shorcuts will have to be remade. Not a big deal, but it's something to note.

Cowpod must be closed before you right click a file. This is a safety feature to prevent you over writing your own work. No harm will come if you do right click while cowpod is open. It's just that nothing will happen.

If you decide you don't want to use cowpod, or you don't want to use the list switching part of it, then goto the registry screen, and on the menu select clear shell extestions and the cowpod options will no longer show up in the right click menus.

Cowpod 1.0

(Monster.ini)

Making changes in the monster.ini file has nothing to do with mounting pods in pod.ini but it *is* MTM's other ini file so it seemed appropriate that it be included in cowpod. To open the monster.ini editor, go to menu > edit > fonts & things, or use the font button [icon] on the toolbar. You will see a screen like this:
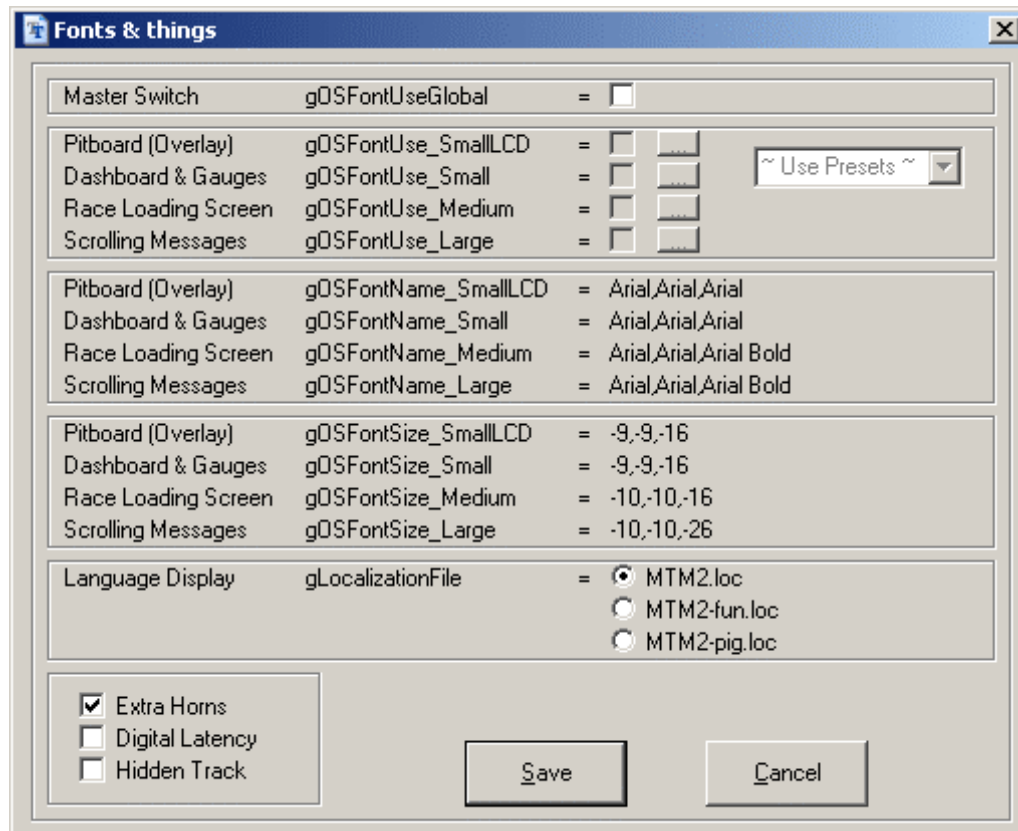
At first glance, that can appear a little bit intimidating but, don't worry it's really quite easy, and, by the time we're done this page you'll be an expert. There is only really three parts to edit so let's take a look at them one at a time.

Fonts

The font part of the monster.ini editor is the top half, and can be viewed in three columns.
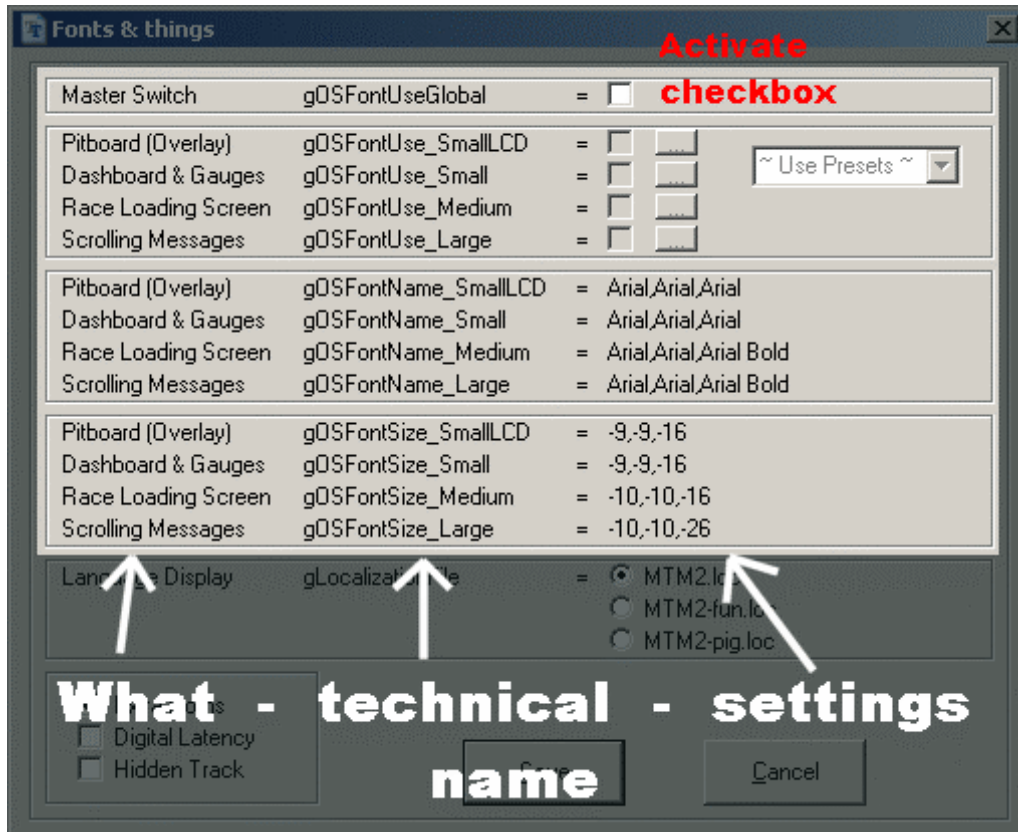
The "what" part

The best way to explain this is to just show you a picture in the game.
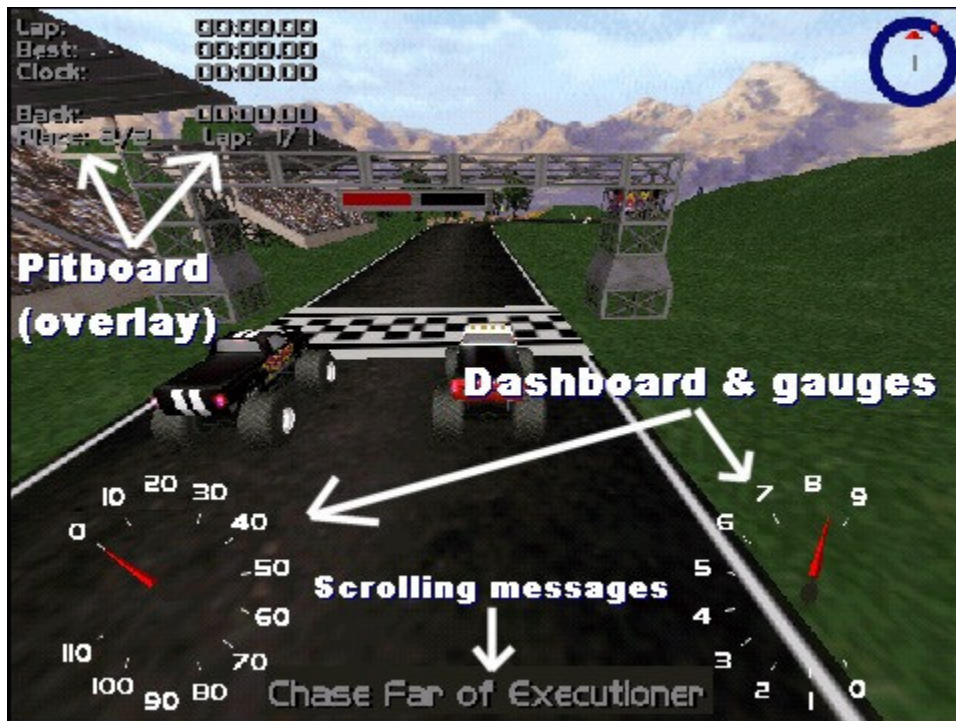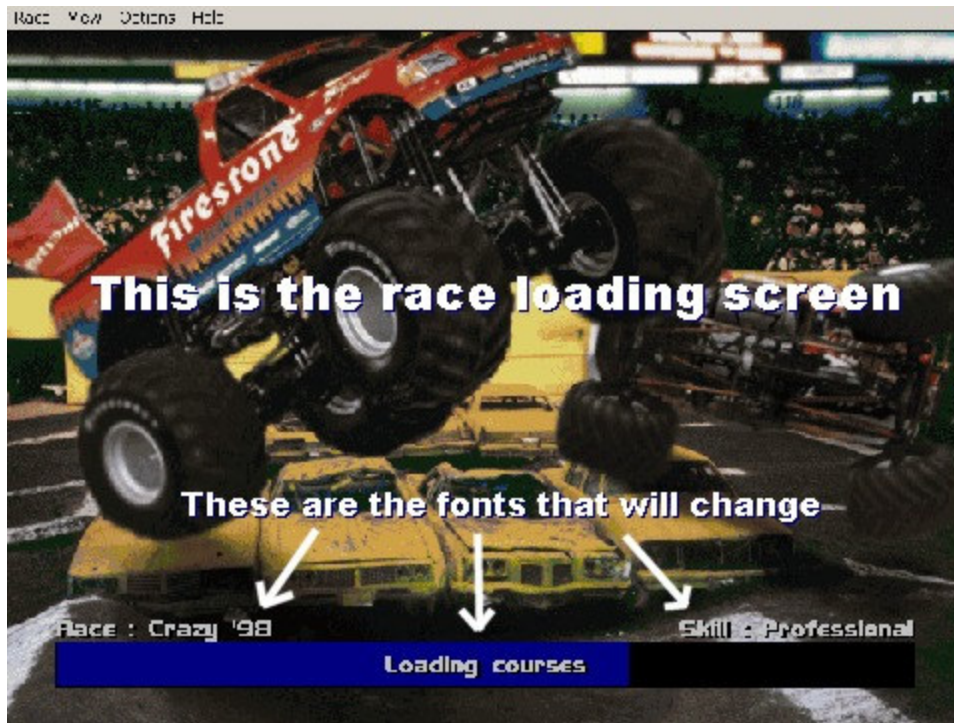
When you change a font, the parts that are identified in the images above are the places where the changes will take place.

The "how" part

Before the game will use anything but the default fonts, you have to tell it you want to use custom fonts. To do this, check the checkbox beside the "master switch" (the 'use global') label. The rest of the font options will then be activated.

Suppose you want to change the pitboard fonts. Place a checkmark beside the pitboard option, then click the [...] button to open the font browser.

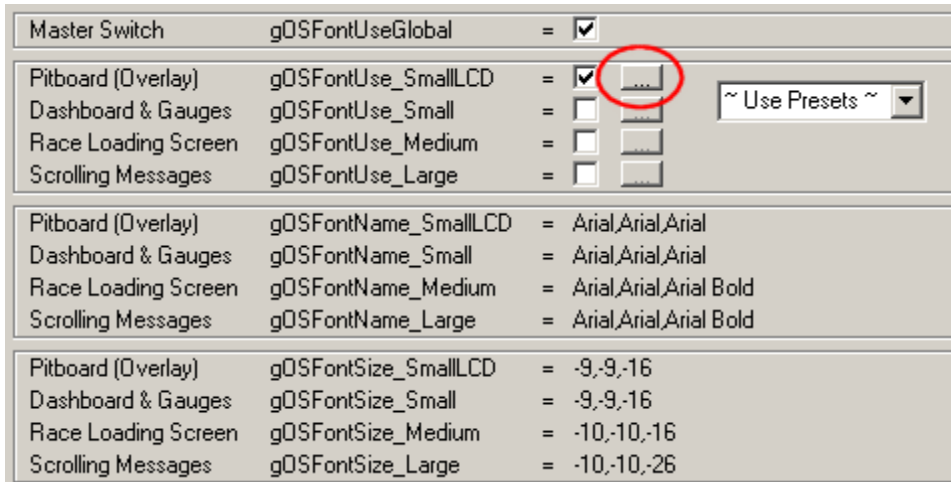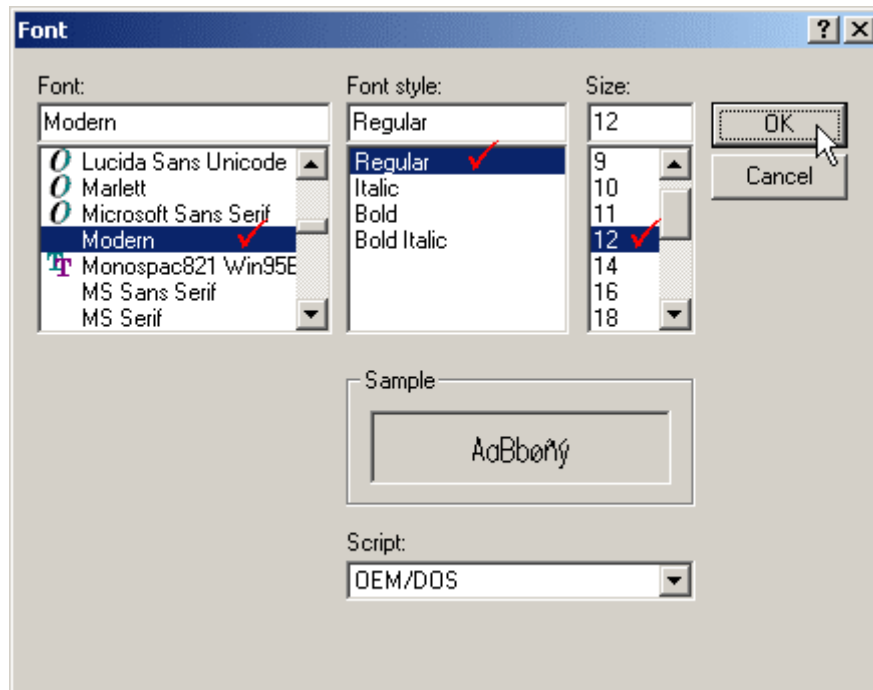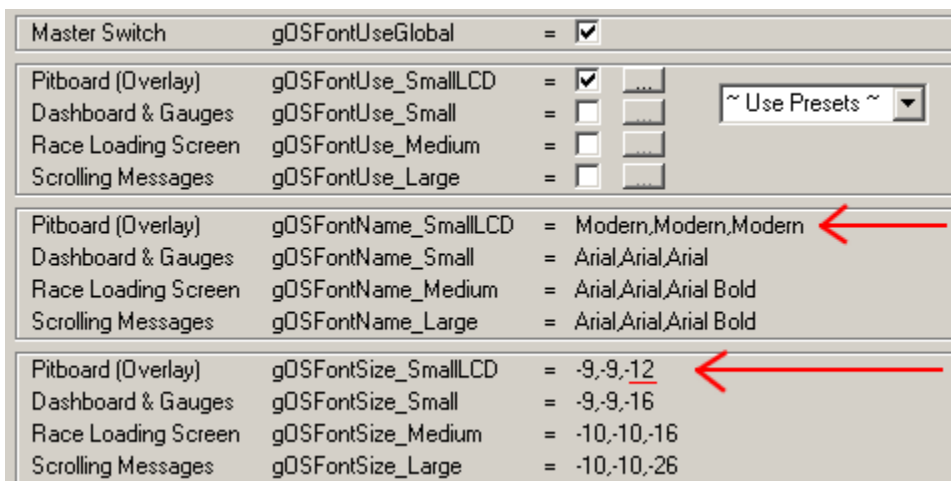|			
Master Switch	gOSFontUseGlobal	= ☑	
Pitboard (Overlay)	gOSFontUse_SmallLCD	= ☑ [...]	~ Use Presets ~ ▼
Dashboard & Gauges	gOSFontUse_Small	= ☐	
Race Loading Screen	gOSFontUse_Medium	= ☐	
Scrolling Messages	gOSFontUse_Large	= ☐	
Pitboard (Overlay)	gOSFontName_SmallLCD	= Arial,Arial,Arial	
Dashboard & Gauges	gOSFontName_Small	= Arial,Arial,Arial	
Race Loading Screen	gOSFontName_Medium	= Arial,Arial,Arial Bold	
Scrolling Messages	gOSFontName_Large	= Arial,Arial,Arial Bold	
Pitboard (Overlay)	gOSFontSize_SmallLCD	= -9,-9,-16	
Dashboard & Gauges	gOSFontSize_Small	= -9,-9,-16	
Race Loading Screen	gOSFontSize_Medium	= -10,-10,-16	
Scrolling Messages	gOSFontSize_Large	= -10,-10,-26	

Choose any font you want. You can also choose a font style and size. When you're done, click okay.

Font

Font:
Modern

Font style:
Regular

Size:
12

OK
Cancel

Font list:
- O Lucida Sans Unicode
- O Marlett
- O Microsoft Sans Serif
- Modern ✓
- Tr Monospac821 Win95E
- MS Sans Serif
- MS Serif

Font style list:
- Regular ✓
- Italic
- Bold
- Bold Italic

Size list:
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12 ✓
- 14
- 16
- 18

Sample
AaBbXyYy

Script:
OEM/DOS

The changes will be displayed in the font editor.

|			
Master Switch	gOSFontUseGlobal	= ☑	
Pitboard (Overlay)	gOSFontUse_SmallLCD	= ☑ [...]	~ Use Presets ~ ▼
Dashboard & Gauges	gOSFontUse_Small	= ☐	
Race Loading Screen	gOSFontUse_Medium	= ☐	
Scrolling Messages	gOSFontUse_Large	= ☐	
Pitboard (Overlay)	gOSFontName_SmallLCD	= Modern,Modern,Modern ←	
Dashboard & Gauges	gOSFontName_Small	= Arial,Arial,Arial	
Race Loading Screen	gOSFontName_Medium	= Arial,Arial,Arial Bold	
Scrolling Messages	gOSFontName_Large	= Arial,Arial,Arial Bold	
Pitboard (Overlay)	gOSFontSize_SmallLCD	= -9,-9,-12 ←	
Dashboard & Gauges	gOSFontSize_Small	= -9,-9,-16	
Race Loading Screen	gOSFontSize_Medium	= -10,-10,-16	
Scrolling Messages	gOSFontSize_Large	= -10,-10,-26	

Repeat these steps for the other parts (dashboard, loading screen and messages) you want to customize. You can do all four parts, just one of them, or a combination of each.
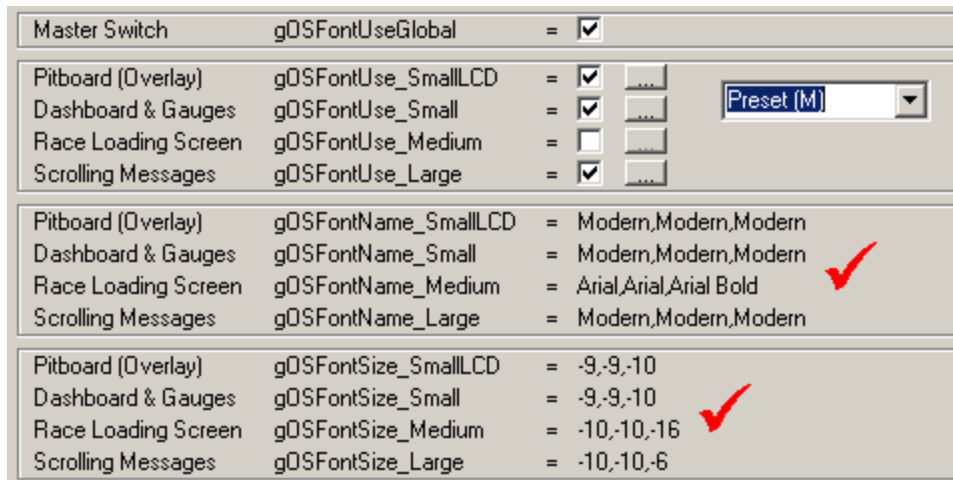
Presets

The topic of changing fonts manually was first explained by Malibu350 on the mtmg forum. At that time, several people posted their preferred font settings and I have included those in cowpod for quick and easy reference. If setting all the fonts manually is not for you, then maybe you'd like to try out some of the suggestions by others.

To use presets, check the activation checkbox, click the preset dropdown menu, and click one of the choices listed there.
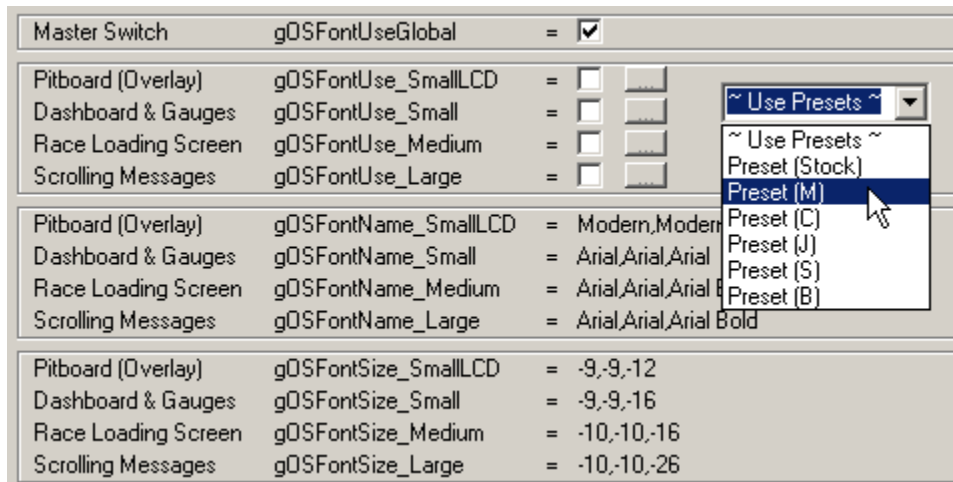
All the font choices will automatically be filled in for you.

Tips

To turn off custom fonts, uncheck the activate checkbox.

You can use any font installed on your computer.

You can start with a preset and then make your own changes.

Some styles (italics, for example) will work, others may not.

Experiment and have fun.

Language(s)

The game's display language is typically English. However, there is an option to use other languages. In North America, however, the game only ships with English (and two extras just for fun). Cowpod's monster.ini editor allows you to switch between these three choices.

On the lower half of the screen, stretching its full width, is where you choose among these options.
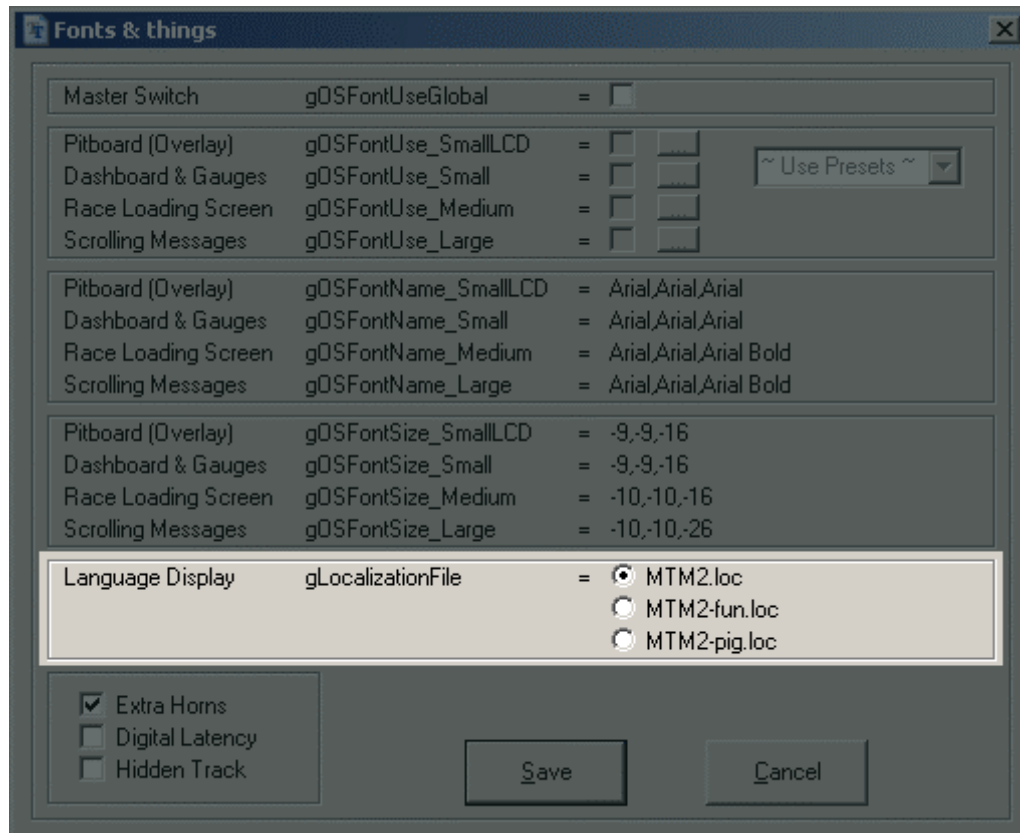
If you've never seen the output display from anything other than the default MTM2.loc selection, then give the others a try. They are a lot of fun.

Extras

Finally, in the lower left hand corner of the monster.ini editor are three more tweaks for your game.
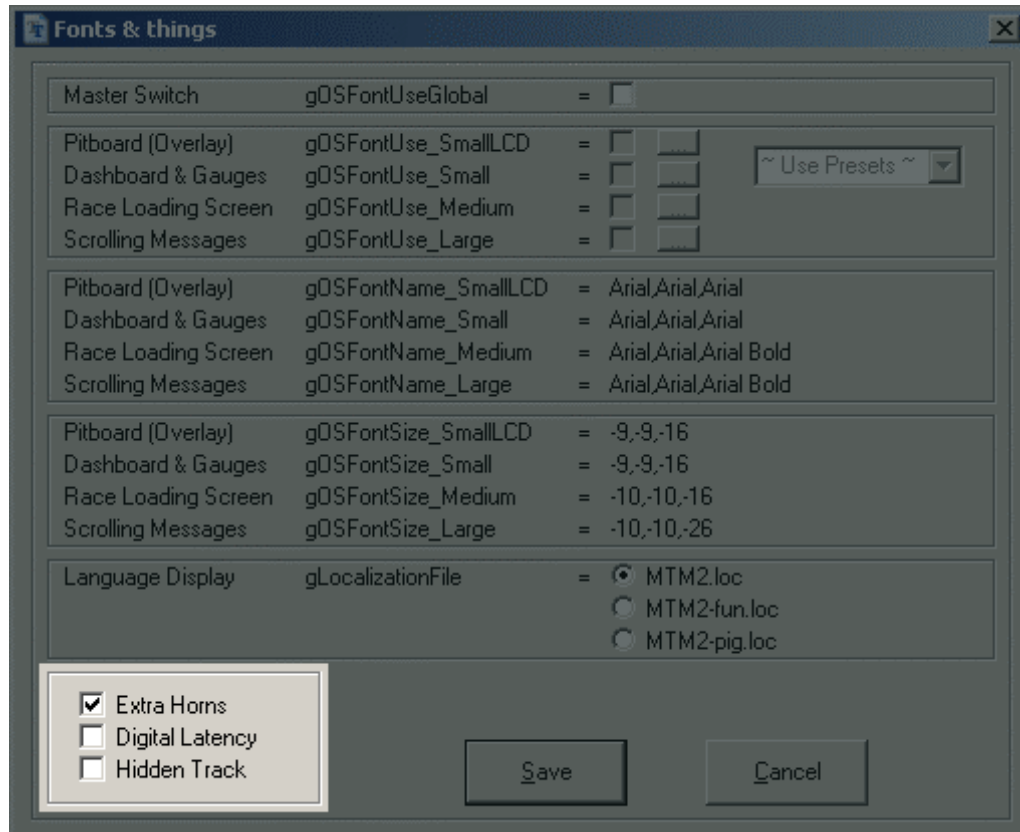
Extra horns

Checking this option enables a few horns in addition to the standard General Lee horn.

Digital latency

This enables a digital read out rather than the default graphic display in the multiplayer screen.

Hidden track

The hidden track is Torture Pit. If you ever turn it on accidentally, you can turn it back off here. If you like the torture pit track, then I suggest you try the fixed version in Lord Cap's Pack.

Summary

None of these items can be configured directly in the game. It is true, they can be edited manually in the monster.ini file, but the cowpod editor should make for fast, error free changes. None of these things effect racing in the game. They are for fun. So, please enjoy them.

Cowpod 1.0

(Registry)

Under normal circumstances you should never need the registry part of cowpod. When the game installs, everything should be good to go. And in an ideal world that would be the end of it. Unfortunately, however, we do not live in an ideal world. So, for those times you run into problems, the cowpod registry tool can be a real headache saver.

Two common problems

By far, the two most common problems are the following:

Can't install the patch
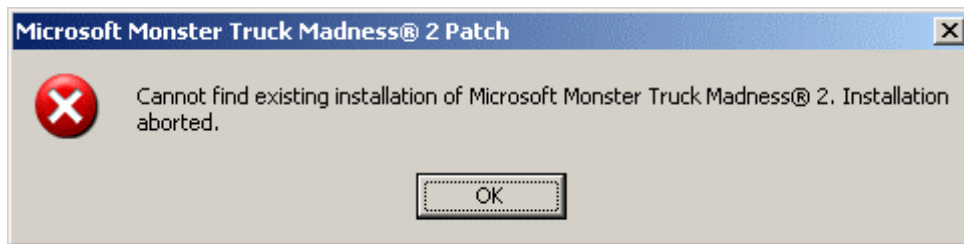
Can't play on the zone

Both these problems usually result from either moving the game folder or reinstalling windows without reinstalling the game. Regardless of the cause, encountering these situations can be quite frustrating, annoying and aggravating. But cowpod will fix you up.

A normal registry

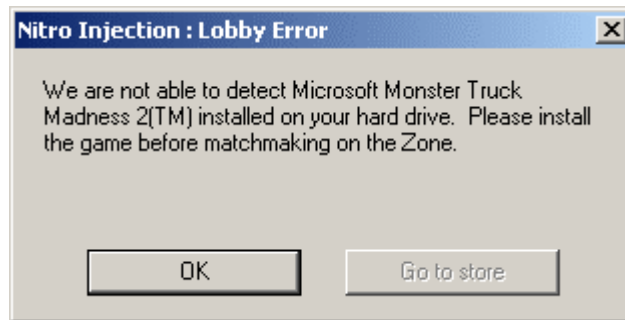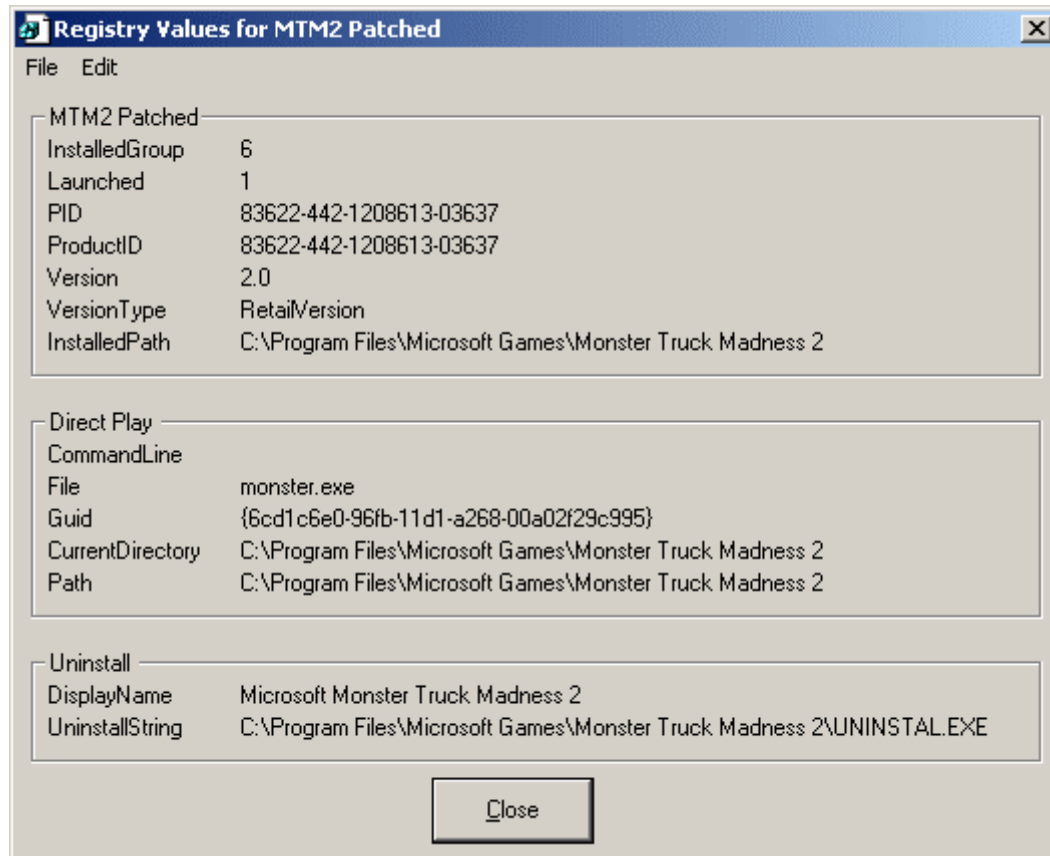To open the registry tool, go to the menu > edit > registry info, or click the registry button on the toolbar. The info window will appear.

```
Registry Values for MTM2 Patched                              [X]
 File   Edit

 ┌MTM2 Patched─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
 │ InstalledGroup    6                                          │
 │ Launched          1                                          │
 │ PID               83622-442-1208613-03637                    │
 │ ProductID         83622-442-1208613-03637                    │
 │ Version           2.0                                        │
 │ VersionType       RetailVersion                              │
 │ InstalledPath     C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2 │
 └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

 ┌Direct Play──────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
 │ CommandLine                                                  │
 │ File              monster.exe                                │
 │ Guid              {6cd1c6e0-96fb-11d1-a268-00a02f29c995}     │
 │ CurrentDirectory  C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2 │
 │ Path              C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2 │
 └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

 ┌Uninstall────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
 │ DisplayName       Microsoft Monster Truck Madness 2          │
 │ UninstallString   C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Monster Truck Madness 2\UNINSTAL.EXE │
 └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

                           [  Close  ]
```

You'll notice that you can't do anything except look at it. That is by design. Messing up the registry can cause you more problems than you want. So, be advised, only tamper with the registry if you are experiencing problems. If everything is fine, looking is okay but don't touch.

The information displayed will tell you what version of the game you have, whether or not it has been patched, if direct play is installed properly, and the uninstall information. If any of this information is missing or wrong, then you can probably expect to encounter problems.

A problem registry

If you open the registry info window and there are mistakes, or it is blank, then you will need to fix it up.
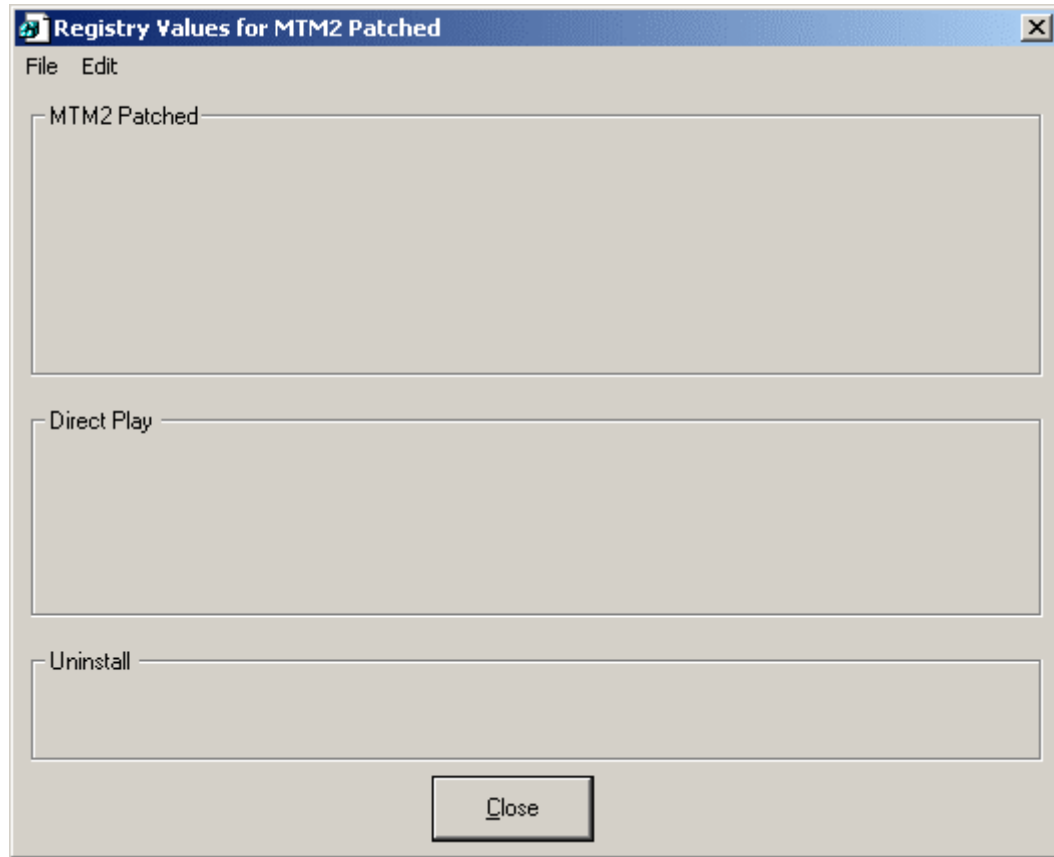

Resetting the registry

Make sure cowpod is in the game folder. If it is not, then the registry will not be reset correctly. Then, while the registry info window is open, goto the menu (yes, it has it's own menu), then to edit > reset as, and then choose the available option.
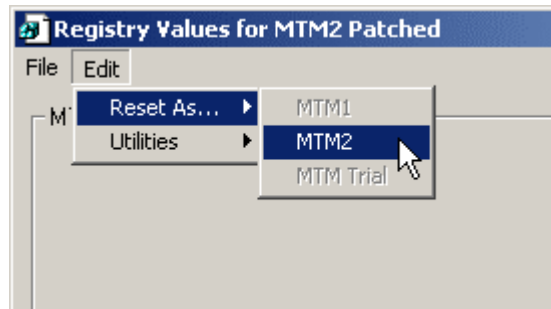
Since cowpod detects your version of the game, it knows what registry settings you need and will set them accordingly. A lot of effort has went into making this work properly, but I'm confident if you try hard enough you can mess it up. For the rest of us, clicking the available option will be all that you need to get rolling again. There will be no bells or whistles. Just the proper information will be entered into the registry and then displayed on the info window, like this:
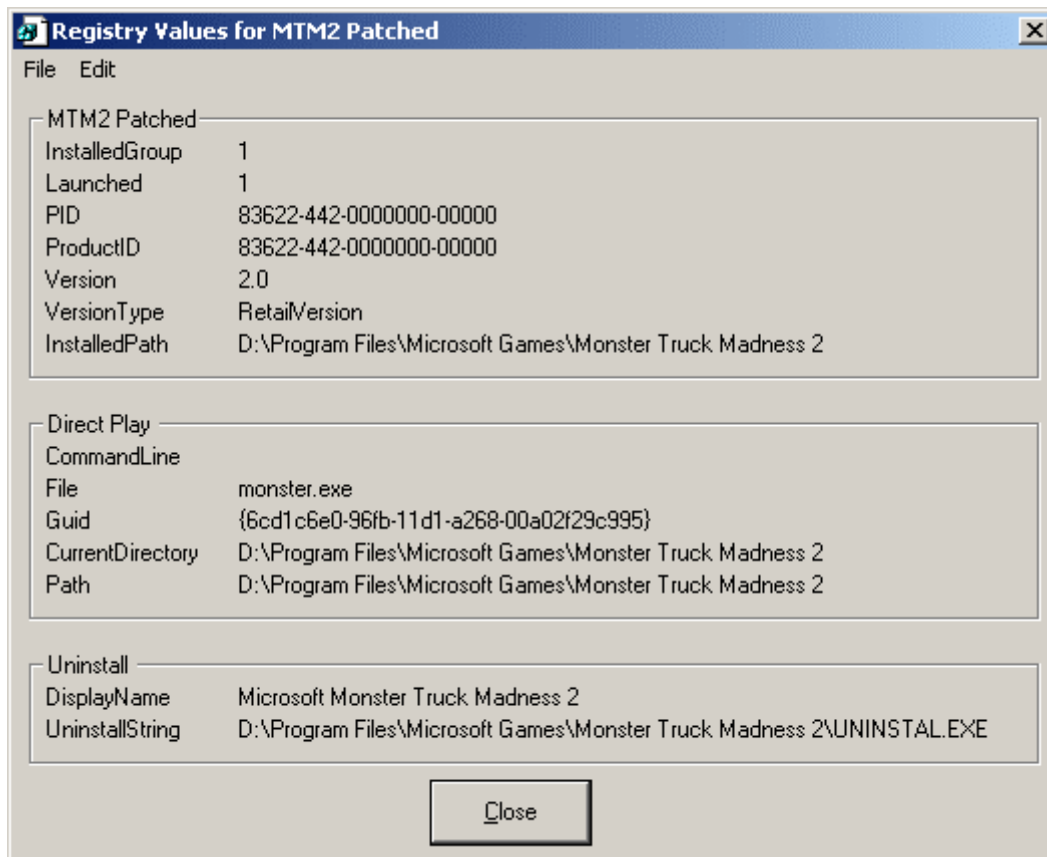
Notes

The path information for your computer may be different than what is depicted on this page.

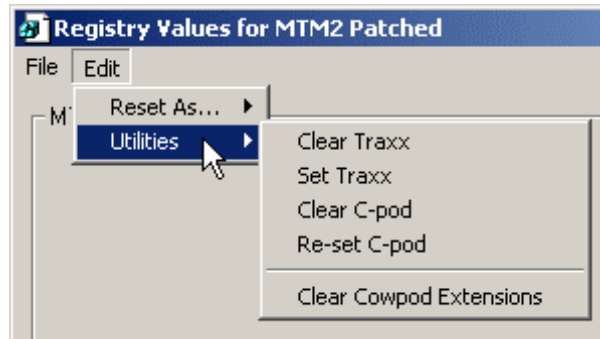If you've followed these instructions, you'll be able to patch your game and access the zone.

All versions of mtm are supported.

If this does not work for you, then you have no alternative but to do a complete reinstall.

Other registry tweaks

You will notice there are a couple other options on the registry edit menu.

These should be seldom, if ever, needed, but from time to time they may prove handy to have. So, let's quickly run through them.

Clear Traxx

If you enter the traxx name or password incorrectly, this will remove it so you can re-enter it.

Note. This is for Traxx v1.4 and earlier. Traxx 1.5 does not require registration.

Set Traxx

This will set the Traxx name and password so you don't have to type it.

Clear C-pod

Windows has a habit of messing with the c-pod start up position. Using this option will delete bogus entries.

Re-set C-pod

If you want to keep the c-pod entries but just start it up back on screen, then use this one.

Note. The above four options will one day be obsolete. Until that time, these can serve as easy fixes.

Clear Cowpod Extensions

If you have set the cowpod "register shell extensions" so you could try list swapping but decide you no longer want to use it, you can remove the cowpod entries on the "right click" menu. Clicking "clear cowpod extensions" will get rid of the cowpod options.

Summary

If all goes well, you will never need to visit this part of cowpod. But for those days, and we all have them, this should prove handy. Please note, however, that you must have the proper game or none of it will work. In fact, you won't even be able to open the window. In those cases, there's no avoiding a reinstall. However, I've been going on a few years now and never had the need to reinstall yet. I just keep updating the registry. Now, it's even easier to do.

Cowpod 1.0
(Source Code)

This page is for programmers. If you are not a programmer you may safely give it a pass.

Cowpod was written using visual basic 6.0. It uses no extra controls but does use three classes and makes several system calls.

Acknowledgements

While the three classes were drawn from the listed sources and reference was made to several resources, the core of cowpod was written entirely by myself.

cReadWriteEasyReg (6/6/1999) by Riaan Aspeling
http://www.planet-source-code.com/vb/scripts/ShowCode.asp?txtCodeId=1987&lngWId=-1

CDLG.cls (3/14/2003) & Browse For Folder (10/14/2004) by DaVBMan
http://www.vbcity.com/forums/faq.asp?fid=9&cat=Common+Dialog

cShortcut.cls pulled from VB6 Project Consolidator (2/13/2004) by David Ross Goben
http://www.planet-source-code.com/vb/scripts/ShowCode.asp?txtCodeId=51722&lngWId=1

Sorting resources by Rick Meyer
http://trixar.com/~makai/

File association information from Winterkill
Private communications

Visual Basic Shell Programming By J. P. Hamilton (O'Reilly press)
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/vbshell/chapter/ch04.html
recommended by RedLeif
http://p077.ezboard.com/fvisualbasicexplorergeneralvisualbasic.showMessage?topicID=18075.topic

Command line enlightenment from CH_2005
Private communications

FindFilesAPI by Steve Anderson
http://mentalis.org/tips/tip59.shtml

Recursion limit suggestion by Gruff
http://www.xtremevbtalk.com/showthread.php?t=224177

iniFileAPI by unknown
http://cuinl.tripod.com/Tips/inifile.htm

Icon Extractor Utility by Todd Morrow
http://www.zexersoft.com/products.html

Strings and Project Analyzer
http://www.aivosto.com/vbtips/stringopt.html
http://www.aivosto.com/project/project.html

Optimization standards
http://windows.oreilly.com/news/vbshell2_0901.html
http://www.programmers-corner.com/article/37

Usability

While cowpod is obviously influenced by previous pod mounting utilities, the base design and functionality are of my own creating. The list swapping configuration arose in conversation with Meth as result of topics raised by Scrooch. Extra paths have been a long standing issue, the registry editor was for my own personal needs and completed with input from JustMight, and the font/monster.ini editor was just because it was there to be done. Thanks go to Malibu350 for sorting it all out to begin with.

The code

Terms of use

The code for cowpod is being released under conditions "similar" to those outlined by the gnu project (gnu.org). That is, you may use it to study and learn. You may use it to make your own projects. And you may use it to contribute to, refine or improve cowpod. However, you should acknowledge the above sources and references where appropriate and you should post (preferrably on the forum here) any changes you make so that they may be considered for inclusion in future versions of cowpod as well. Also, any project you make that draws on the source code here should be similarly released as an open source project so that others may share in the same benefits and take advantage of the same opportunities that you have yourself. Lastly, the code contained here must not be sold or resold under any circumstances whatsoever.

Components

Cowpod is comprised of

Five forms

- Form1.frm
- Form2.frm
- FormAbout.frm
- formDirectory.frm
- formMonster.frm

Three classes

- CDLG.cls
- cShortcut.cls
- RegStuff.cls

And nine modules

- availablePods.bas
- commonFunctions.bas
- cShortcutsPlus.bas
- dirBrowse.bas
- mCommandLine.bas
- myRegStuff.bas
- podini.bas
- RegStuff.bas
- resize.bas