Load Screen Tutorial
for
Star Trek: Armada
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This tutorial will describe how you can create your own custom load screen for Star Trek: Armada 1. You will learn about the logo and the background, but there is no way to change the status bar on the bottom of the screen (yet).

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Terminology
-Logo - The model that consists of the words Star Trek Armada and a line. Also contains the emblem.
-Emblem - The sprite in the logo that looks like a Federation combadge.
-Storm3D - A basic 3D modelling and model viewing program created by Activision for use with
      Armada.
-Storm - Storm3D
-Background - The image behind the logo and emblem. It is a nebula with a few stars behind it by
      default.
-Status Bar - The orange bar that extends across the bottom of the screen. The longer it is, the closer the
      game is to being loaded.

Getting Started
First you will need a good graphics editing program. I personally use GIMP, but Paint.NET, Photoshop, and Paint Shop Pro are also very powerfull image editors.
GIMP and Paint.NET are free ware, but Photoshop and Paint Shop Pro are not. GIMP can be found at the following address: www.gimp.org Paint.NET requires the .NET Framework. .NET Framework is already installed on Windows Vista and Windows Server 2008 but must be downloaded for Windows XP and Windows Server 2003. The .NET Framework is not compatible with other versions of Windows or other operating systems. The .NET Framework can be found at the following address: www.microsoft.com/net Paint.NET can be found at the following address: www.getpaint.net
You will also need to get Storm3D, a basic modelling and model viewing program created by Activision for Star Trek: Armada, designed especially to make modding easier. Storm3D can be found at the following address:
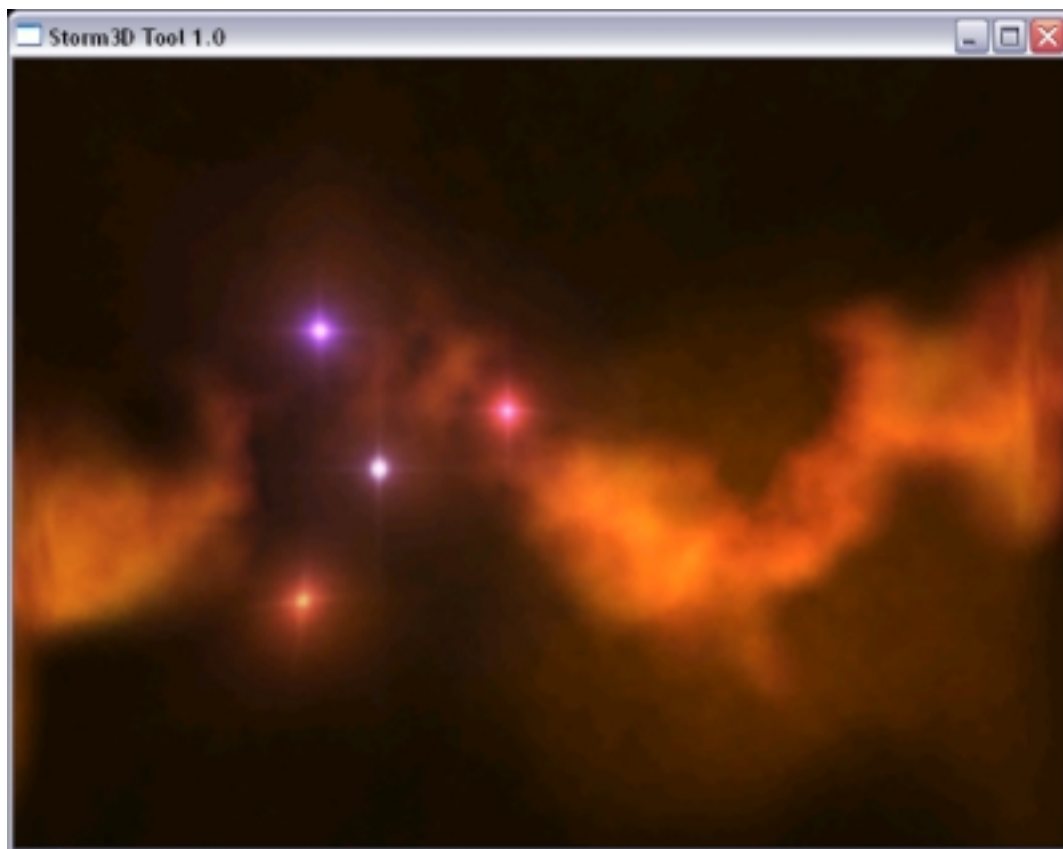
Once you have downloaded Storm3D, unzip the folder and place the contents in your Armada root directory. This should be C:\Program Files\Activision\Star Trek - Armada by default.

The Status Bar
      You can't do anything with this. Skip it. Move on. Don't look back. But if you find a way, I would love to read your e-mail.

The Background
      Probably the easiest thing to start with. Double click on the Storm3D Tool icon that is now in your Armada directory. With Storm open, you can press F1 to look at a list of controls. Press F1 again to close it. Press Delete to remove the logo from your screen in a fiery explosion. Now press F8. This will open a load screen for models. Find and select the one called MbgBaku and click open. Center your mouse in the Storm window and press Spacebar.

      This is the background used for the loadscreen by default. Press Delete again. Now look through the other files that begin with "Mbg" and find one that you like. For this example I will use MbgGlxy.
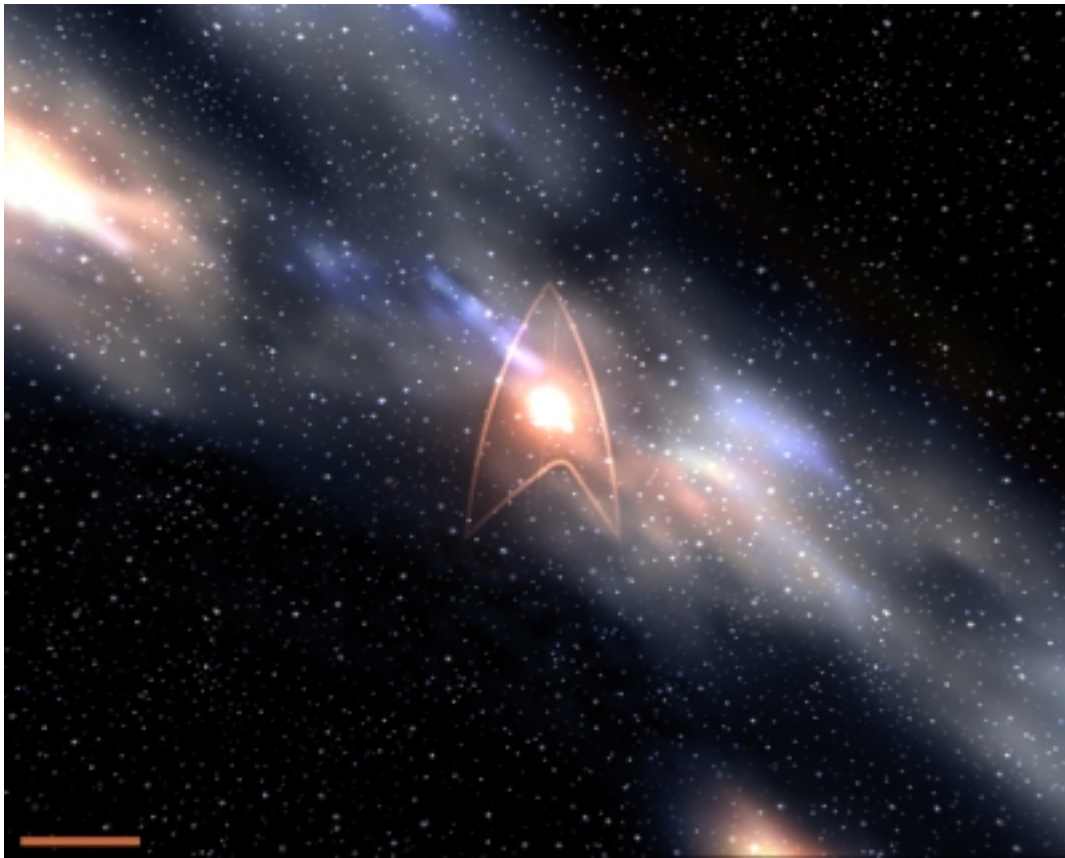
Once you have found one that you like, write the name down and close Storm3D. Go to your Armada directory and open the folder labeled SOD. Find MbgBaku.sod and delete it. Find the name of the file you want to use for your background and copy it. Name the copy MbgBaku.sod. Now start Armada and begin a game. The result of changing the background should be clearly vissible as the game loads.

As you can see, changing the background had a drastic effect on the loadscreen. Next we will explore how to change the logo and emblem.

The Logo

The best thing to do with the logo, I have found, is to use the texture included in this folder to make the logo invisible, with only the emblem showing. Place the blank.tga in this folder into the Textures/RGB folder in your Armada directory. Open up Storm3D and do not remove the logo from the screen. Press F2 to go into advanced mode. Press M to activate the mesh tool and press F6 repetatively to increase the size of the selection circle. Select the entire logo and press T. Find blank.tga in the window that appears and double click on it. Press F9 to save the logo. Your new loadscreen should look something like this.

Now let's move onto the emblem.

The Emblem
      First, find the Sprites folder in your Armada directory. In the sprites folder, open lights.spr with any text editor. Look for the line that says:

@sprite_node stabadge badge const (16,16) (1,1,1)

and change it to:

@sprite_node stabadge badge const (32,32) (1,1,1)

      This will make the emblem larger and take up much more of the screen. After that, open up STALogo.tga in your Textures/RGB folder with your graphics editor. Play around with the texture however you want. The only thing that I suggest is that you start with the background as black. The sprite uses 'additive blending'. This basically means that black will be invissible and dark colors will be transparent. That should be everything you need to know to make a new loadscreen for Star Trek: Armada.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, my e-mail is frostmourne4@yahoo.com. I can also be found at the forums at Armada Fleet Command (http://www.armadafleetcommand.com/afc/index.php) by my username cabal.