Chat Mapper 1.7 Documentation

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Welcome

What Is Chat Mapper?

Chat Mapper is an easy to use tool for writing and testing nonlinear dialogue and events for fields where complex problems are the normal, such as entertainment, e-learning, emergency response, diagnoses health care, sales and customer service, and strategic planning. Our goal is to help entertainment companies, government agencies, and educators world-wide not only see the bigger picture, but be able to create it, traverse it, and change it as they go.

What Is Non-Linear Dialogue?

Almost every video game or serious game that allows the player to interact with non-playable characters (NPCs) has a non-linear dialogue system where the player is allowed to chose what to say in a given situation and the NPC responds accordingly. The player's choices may affect the future decisions that the NPC makes and where the conversation leads. This allows the game to have branching story lines, which adds replay value and interest.

Traditionally this is done by creating a complex script using a word processor or screenplay development tool that is designed for linear story lines. Now, Chat Mapper provides an easy way to allow the writer to visualize the story and keep track of complex NPC behaviors.

Features

- Sleek and user-friendly graphical user interface
- Conversations visualized as a branching tree graph
- Define conditions using Lua for certain dialogue options to appear
  (e.g. never talked to this person, has a certain inventory item, etc.)
- Define how a dialogue selection affects the player-NPC relationship
  (e.g. the NPC may become more hostile in general if poor dialogue choices are selected, which affects future interactions)
- Link production files to dialogue entries
  (e.g. audio files, lip sync files, etc.)
- Automatically generate standard format scripts for voice actors
- Conversation simulation mode to test dialogue flow

Installation

Installation Instructions

To install Chat Mapper, first ensure that you meet the System Requirements, then run the installer and follow the on-screen instructions.

The installation will check to ensure that you have the Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1 installed on your computer. If you don't, the installer will attempt to install it automatically using your Internet connection. Note that Windows 7 and newer should have the .NET Framework installed by default.

If you still have trouble, please contact suppport@urbanbrainstudios.com.

System Requirements

Operating System: Windows XP SP2; Windows Vista; Windows 7; Windows 8

Processor: 500 MHz Pentium (Minimum); 1GHz Pentium (Recommended)

RAM: 512 MB (Minimum); 1024 MB (Recommended)

Display Resolution: 1024 x 768 or Greater

Software Prerequisite: Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1

What's New?

Version 1.7 (February 2014)

- Templates can now be applied to existing projects from the "Project" menu
- Added ability to import XML files to create a new Chat Mapper project
- Added [var=MyVar] dialogue tag to display variable values within dialogue text
- Introducing the play.chatmapper.com publishing platform
- User interface enhancements including:
  - Ctrl+ and Ctrl- zoom shortcuts keep selected node within view
  - Ctrl+Mousewheel can be used for quick zooming
  - Improved navigation between nodes with arrow keys
- Fixed a file corruption bug when adding file links
- Other bug fixes and stability enhancements

Version 1.6 (October 2013)

- Scripts defined on group nodes are now processed during simulation
- Main Chat Mapper editing windows remains active during simulation
- Link connector nodes can be mouse-hovered for node preview
- Node linking no longer is canceled by clicking outside the diagram
- Sort order and filters are preserved in asset selection dropdowns
- Added option to export all conversations with Advanced RTF exporter
- Other minor interface and usability enhancements
- Fixed a crash bug when using node command shortcuts with links selected
- Overall stability enhancements
- Numerous minor bug fixes

Version 1.5 (May 2013)

- Completely rewritten copy and paste system
- New reviewer tools and reviewer notes for license holders
- Improved XML and RTF export options
- Fixed auto save issue for some setups
- Tab can now be used to toggle through fields in new dialogue entry
- Improved simulator UI
- Conversation timer added to simulator
- Fixed problem when changing sort order of assets
- Scrollbars added to custom fields and long text fields
- Read-only and network projects can now be opened without issues
- Dialogue node pips can be mouse hovered for more information
- Connector nodes now show the title of the dialogue node linked to
- New error checking to avoid and automatically correct corrupted project links
- Links can now be added between files
- Fixed a bug with duplication of conversations
- Numerous minor bug fixes
- New and improved installation process

Version 1.3 (May 2012)

- New localization system for Commercial license holders
  - New "Localization" asset field type
  - Drop-down selection of active localization in main GUI
- New Excel export and import for all license holders

- New command line tools for Commercial license holders
- New conversation connector link for all editions
- GUI enhancements
  - Background image now tiles properly for large dialogue trees
  - New smaller splash screen with version information
  - Last opened folder location is remembered
- More efficient project loading
- Better repair of corrupted files when loading
- Improved conversion of one asset field type to another
- Fixed a crash on some projects when deleting nodes
- Fixed a crash when undoing deletion of user variables
- Fixed a bug with using the "File" asset field type
- Numerous minor bug fixes

Version 1.2.3 (September 2011)

- Improved logging system stores more debug information.
- Disabled code-wrapping in code boxes.
- Improved Lua error reporting.
- Fixed a simulation crash when using plus symbol in numeric asset field value.
- Fixed a crash on some systems when viewing custom asset fields setup screen.
- Fixed a crash when pressing the delete key with nothing selected in the dialogue tree.

Version 1.2.2 (August 2011)

- Fixed project packager to correctly include XML video marker files
- Fixed false validation errors when using videos with markers
- After packaging, there is no longer a prompt to save
- The global Lua script box now includes a scrollbar

Version 1.2.1 (August 2011)

- Find and replace function now allows for searching line breaks by typing [LB]
- Linking is now canceled when you click anywhere outside of the diagram
- Lua errors during simulation initialization are now logged to the log.txt file
- Fixed a crash when simulating dialogues that have line breaks
- Minor improvements to the welcome screen

Version 1.2 (August 2011)

- All custom asset fields now show up in the add new dialogue window
- You can now type newlines in the dialogue text by pressing enter
- Improved emphasis tags including bold, italics, and underline options. Check out the new project settings.
- A global Lua function can now be defined in the project settings that is run only once during simulation.
- A Lua script can now be attached to a root node.
- New template system... when creating a new project, choose from predefined templates, or make your own.
- Improved welcome screen
- Chat Mapper Project Packager... export your project to a single package file including all media (Commercial license only).
- Improved XML export
- Assets fields can be individually selected for XML export to reduce file size
- New option to exclude fields with empty values
- User variable types are now correct
- When validating a conversation, files are now checked for existence
- Fixed a crash bug when editing custom asset fields
- Fixed a bug when using Chat Mapper on a multi-monitor setup

- Changed fonts for better usability
- Numerous minor tweaks

Version 1.1 (January 2011)

- When a conversation is loaded, the view now starts centered on the root node
- MWV video playback is now supported for dialogue nodes
- A video browser was added to preview and add videos to dialogue nodes
- Zooming system was refined... zooming in and out no longer shifts the viewport
- Updated zoom keybindings: Ctrl+Plus now zooms in and Ctrl+Minus zooms out
- Default XML export encoding is now UTF-8 rather than UTF-16
- The window title now updates correctly on save
- Self-links are no longer allowed
- Enlarged size of node indicators and connector nodes
- Malformed dialogue links are now automatically repaired on project open
- Added undo/redo capability to Lua scripts and conditions editors
- Added syntax highlighting to Lua scripts and conditions editors
- Improved find function to limit results by various dialogue fields
- Added a "goto node" function accessible from the edit menu
- Added a replace function
- Added an autosave feature
- Fixed a crash bug that some users experienced on startup
- Fixed a crash bug when an actor in use is deleted and not replaced in a conversation
- Fixed a crash bug when closing the application while an audio file is playing in the simulator
- Fixed a bug where the actor and conversant labels on the root node would not update
- Fixed a bug with GetOutgoingLinks function with the exporter API

Version 1.0 (May 2010)

- Initial Release

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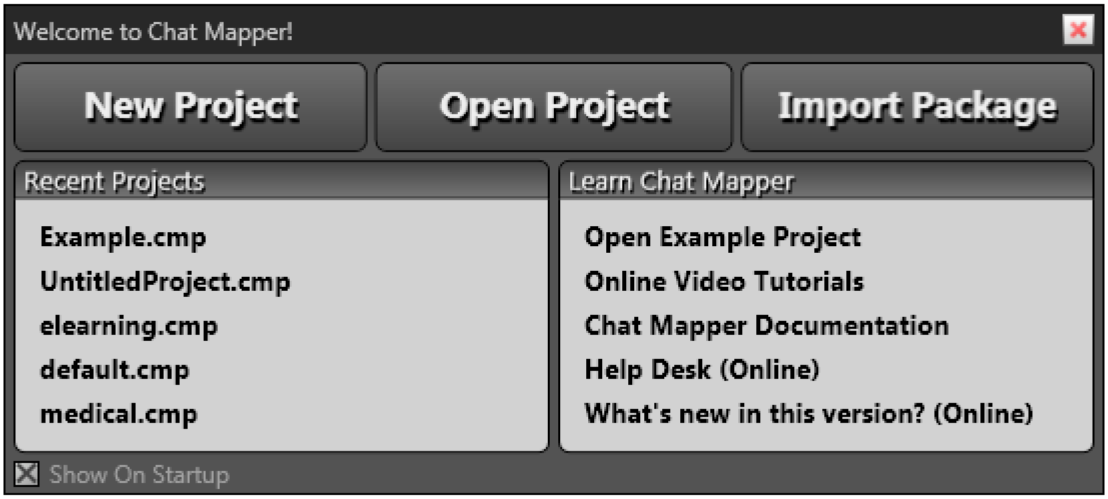
Welcome Screen

Upon running Chat Mapper, you are greeted with the Welcome Screen:



☒ Show On Startup

Welcome Screen

New Project
You will be prompted to save your new project right away because many operations depend on relative paths to the project file. When creating a new project, you are asked to choose a template as a starting point.

Open Project
Opens a project file on your hard drive that you have previously saved.

Import Package (Commercial License Only)
Imports a Chat Mapper Package (cmpkg) file including all media assets that the author used.

Recent Projects
Displays the five most recent projects that have been opened.

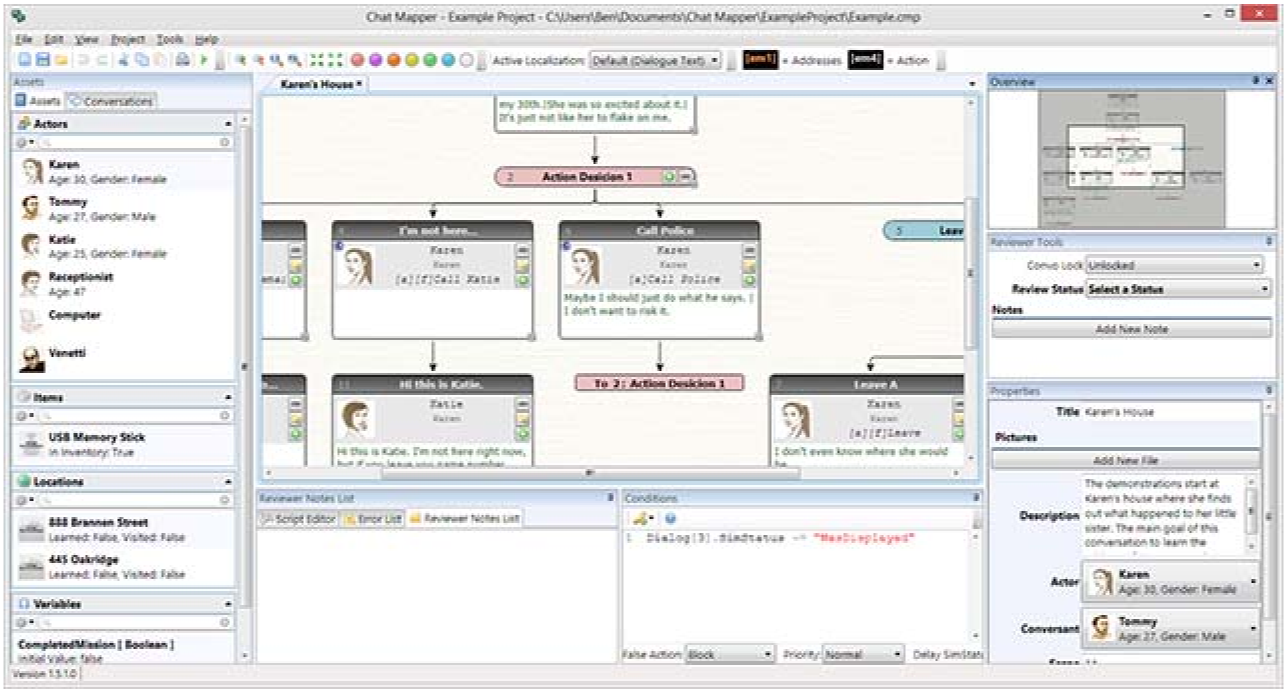
Learn Chat Mapper
Resources for getting the most out of Chat Mapper. The included example project makes use of many of the features of the software.

Show On Startup
Un-check this box if you would rather not display the welcome screen.

Application Window

Chat Mapper is easy to use and intuitive following current standards in Windows application development. In many cases, there are numerous ways to accomplish a task whether it be using the menu, tool bars, right-click context menus, or shortcut keys.

The window layout of the main Chat Mapper application is divided into several window panes as shown in the figure below.



```
1  Dialog[3].SimStatus ~= "WasDisplayed"
```

Chat Mapper User Interface

Assets Browser
This is where you will find all of your assets except for conversations. You may sort and filter assets here using any of the asset fields. Each heading can be collapsed for easy navigation.

Conversation Browser
Here you will find all of your conversations. You may also sort and filter conversations.

Main Workspace
A conversation can be opened in the main workspace by double-clicking the conversation from the list. Each conversation is opened in its own tab.

Conditions Editor
Each dialogue node can have conditions associated with them. The conditions are written in Lua and will described in detail later. Clicking a node in the tree will cause the conditions editor to display all conditions currently associated with that node.

Script Editor
Each dialogue node also has a Lua script that will run during simulation. The Lua script associated with the selected node is displayed here.

Properties Editor
All asset fields will appear here for editing. Properties of all assets and dialogue nodes are edited here.

Error List

Summary of all errors in your project. Double-clicking an entry from the list selects the corresponding node in the tree.

Reviewer Notes List
Summary of all reviewer notes in your project. Double-clicking an entry from the list selects the corresponding node in the tree.

Overview
Overview of the entire dialogue tree that provides a quick way to navigate around by clicking or dragging.

Reviewer Tools
Allows locking of the conversation for editing and setting review status of nodes. Also allows for lists of comments to be attached to nodes. This feature is available for license holders only.

File Browser (not shown)
Shows all files on your hard drive and network. These files can be drag-and-dropped onto several locations in the application window.

Video Browser (not shown)
Shows a list of video files and embedded WMV clips in a selected directory. These can be dragged and dropped onto a node's video file attribute and will play during simulation.

Configuring Layout

Each tabbed window element of the interface can be dragged around in order to configure a layout that works best for you. Once you begin dragging a tab, you are presented with a graphical menu of locations to dock the tabbed window element.

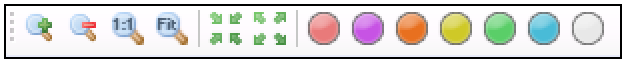
By hovering your mouse over the various docking options while dragging, a preview is displayed of where the window will be docked. In addition, the overview and file browser windows can be floated or auto-hidden by dragging them, or pressing the small pin icon respectively. If you happen to close the overview or file browser and need to get them back, simply go to the **View | Show** menu.

Various pre-defined layouts have been saved and can be accessed by going to the **View | Window** Layout menu and selecting the desired layout.

Each time the application is closed, your last layout is saved and will be restored the next time you run Chat Mapper.

Conversation Tree

The conversation tree view is where you will spend most of your time editing your conversations so that they flow exactly the way you want them to. Some other features that we have not discussed is the ability to zoom in and out using the tool bar at the top of the main panel. There are also buttons to expand and collapse all nodes as well as to color the nodes. You may learn what each of these buttons do by simply hovering your mouse over the toolbar buttons.



Navigating The Tree

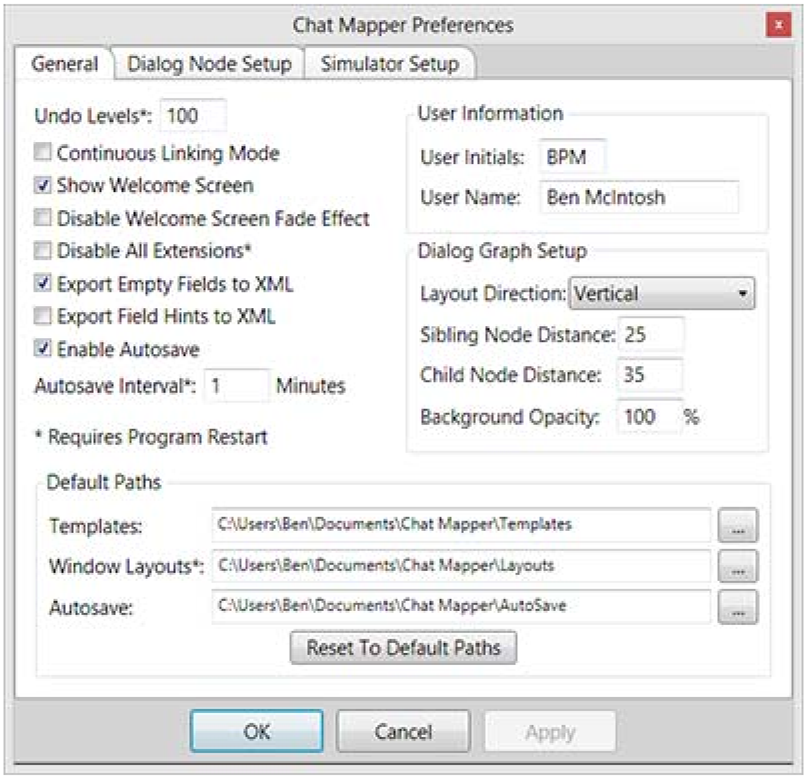
There are several ways in which you can navigate the tree to find and work with the individual nodes. You may scroll by either using the scroll bars on the side and bottom of the diagram, use your mouse scroll wheel to scroll vertically, click and drag the overview window, or middle-click the mouse and drag in the main workspace.

When your conversations trees start to get large, you may collapse and expand certain nodes by clicking the small [+] and [-] buttons in the bottom right corner of each node. Holding control while clicking will force all following nodes to expand or collapse.

If a dialogue node is currently selected, you may also use the arrow keys to navigate around the tree.

Application Preferences

Several application-level preferences can be set by selecting the **Tools | Preferences...** menu option.



Undo Levels*: 100

□ Continuous Linking Mode

☑ Show Welcome Screen

□ Disable Welcome Screen Fade Effect

□ Disable All Extensions*

☑ Export Empty Fields to XML

□ Export Field Hints to XML

☑ Enable Autosave

Autosave Interval*: 1 Minutes

* Requires Program Restart

User Information

User Initials: BPM

User Name: Ben McIntosh

Dialog Graph Setup

Layout Direction: Vertical

Sibling Node Distance: 25

Child Node Distance: 35

Background Opacity: 100 %

Default Paths

Templates: C:\Users\Ben\Documents\Chat Mapper\Templates

Window Layouts*: C:\Users\Ben\Documents\Chat Mapper\Layouts

Autosave: C:\Users\Ben\Documents\Chat Mapper\AutoSave

Preferences Window

Undo Levels
Sets the number of operations that are stored on the undo stack. If you have low memory problems, you may want to try lowering this number.

Continuous Linking Mode
When enabled, allows for many dialogue links to be formed at once. Learn more about this in the help section about dialogue linking.

Show Welcome Screen
If you have previously disabled the welcome screen by un-checking the "Show On Startup" box on the welcome screen, you may turn it back on here.

Disable Welcome Screen Fade Effect
Turns off the fade-in animation when the welcome screen shows.

Disable All Extensions
Prevents the 3rd party exporters from loading when the application starts.

Export Empty Fields to XML
When not selected, any field that has an empty value is removed from the exported XML file. This option should be disabled for the smallest possible XML file.

Export Field Hints to XML
When selected, field hint text is exported to the XML file. This option should be disabled for the smallest possible XML file.

Enable Autosave
When checked, the currently open project will be automatically saved to the Autosave path for backup recovery.

Autosave Interval
Sets the number of minutes between auto saves.

Layout Direction
Allows you to display the dialogue tree graph either vertically or horizontally.

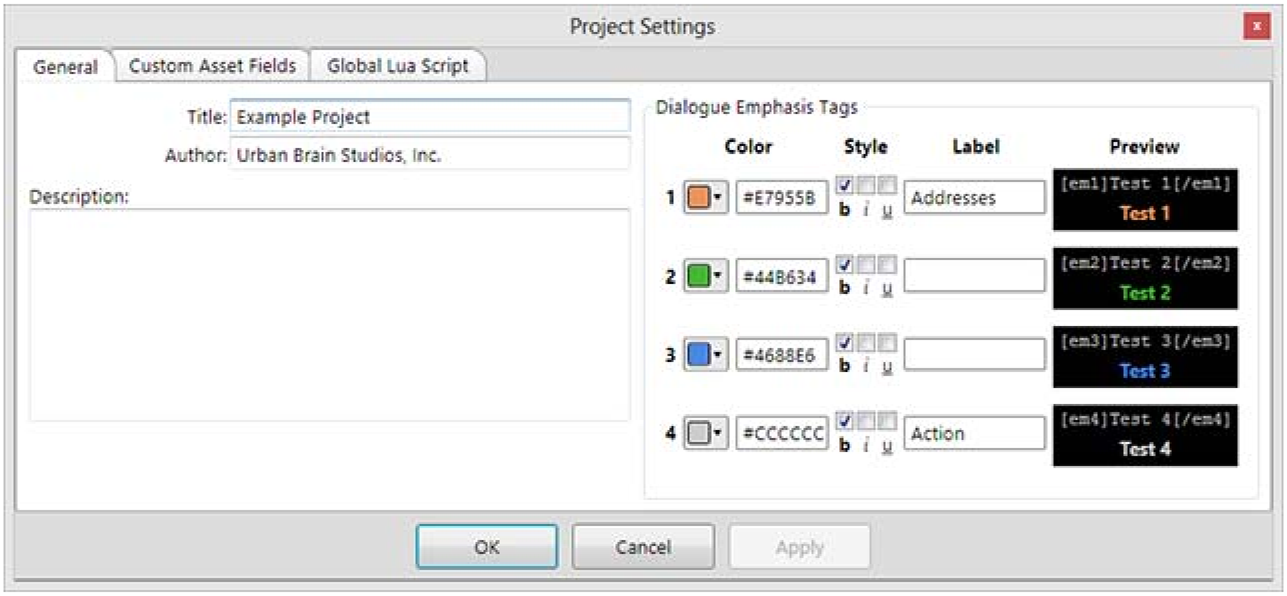
Sibling Node Distance
Adjusts the distance between adjacent dialogue nodes on the same tree level.

Child Node Distance
Adjusts the distance between adjacent levels of the tree.

Background Opacity
Sets the level of opacity for the conversation image that is displayed on the background of the tree diagram.

Project Preferences

Several other project-level preferences can be set by selecting the **Project | Project Settings...** menu option. Any settings here are saved with the project file and will be transferred to any computer opening the project.



Title: Example Project

Author: Urban Brain Studios, Inc.

Description:

Dialogue Emphasis Tags

	Color	Style	Label	Preview
1	#E7955B	☑ b ☐ i ☐ u	Addresses	[em1]Test 1[/em1] Test 1
2	#44B634	☑ b ☐ i ☐ u		[em2]Test 2[/em2] Test 2
3	#4688E6	☑ b ☐ i ☐ u		[em3]Test 3[/em3] Test 3
4	#CCCCCC	☑ b ☐ i ☐ u	Action	[em4]Test 4[/em4] Test 4

Project Settings Window

The dialogue emphasis settings are used when simulating the conversation. There are four emphasis tag that you may use when creating your dialogue node which correspond to the four colors here. Additionally, labels can be assigned to each of the emphases and a key of labels will appear above the main workspace as a reminder.

Types of Assets

Assets are basically any noun in your project including Actors, Items, Locations, Conversations, and Variables. Even dialogue nodes are considered assets. Any asset fields that are defined will be available for editing in the properties window. Assets may also be sorted by asset field, or filtered by keyword.

Actors

A fundamental requirement for each dialogue node is to have an Actor and a Conversant. The Actor is the player or NPC who is currently speaking and Conversant is the player or NPC who is currently listening. Using the Asset Browser, any number of actors may be added to the project, each of whom can act as an actor or conversant for a given dialogue.

To add a new actor, either press the gear symbol on the actors asset group and select "New Actor", select the **Project | Add New | Actor** menu option, or use the **Ctrl + Alt + A** shortcut key. To delete an actor, you may select the actor from the actor list and then press the delete key, or again use the menu from the gear button.

Items and Locations

A optional component of a project is to define one or more Items and Locations. The Items and Locations can be used when defining conditions. Using the Asset Browser, any number of items may be added to the project in the same way that Actors were added.

Conversations

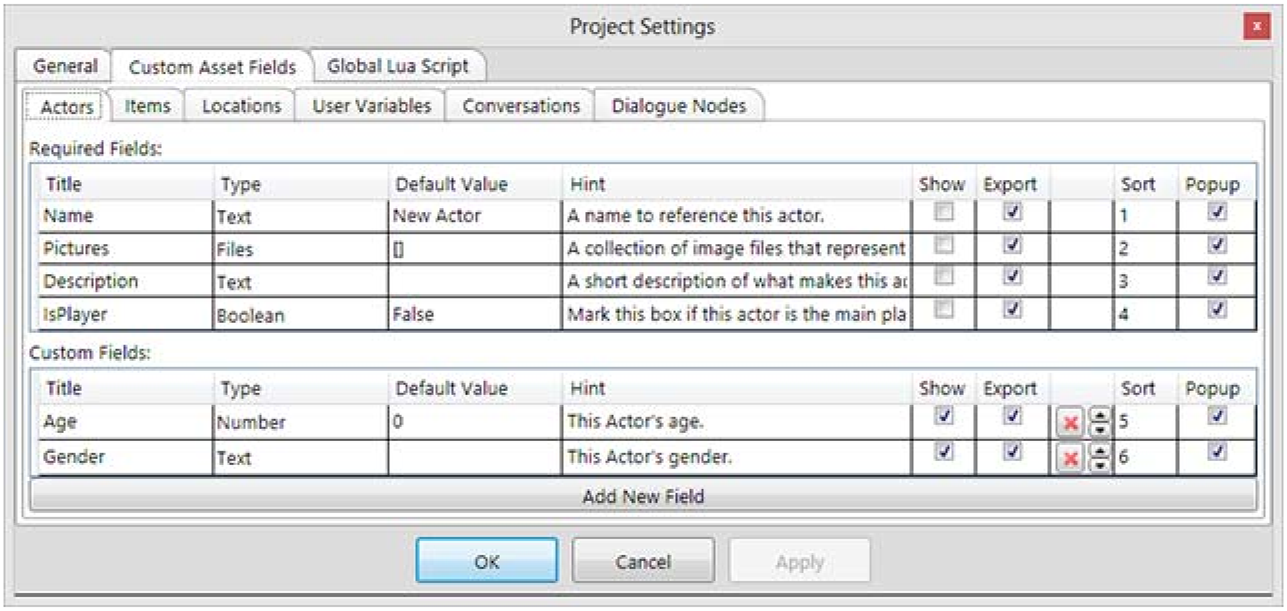
A fundamental requirement for each Chat Mapper project is to have one or more Conversations. The Conversations are used to hold dialogue nodes that make up the conversation. Each time a conversation is double-clicked on the list, a dialogue tree is opened in a new tab. Using the Asset Browser, any number of conversations may be added to the project. The conversations can be filtered or sorted just like any other asset.

Variables

Variables are another kind of asset that can be created to hold a piece of information to be used in conditions or scripts. A variable can also have a set of user-defined fields, but upon creation of the variable, a type must be assigned. The type can be **number** if the variable value is numeric, **text**, or **boolean** if the value will only ever be "true" or "false".

Custom Asset Fields

Asset fields show up in the properties editor when clicking on any asset or dialogue node in the conversation tree. All assets have a set of pre-defined fields that are required. In addition, you may define even more fields to fit the need of your project. For example, it may be useful to have a location asset field called "HasVisited" that is a boolean and is set to true when the player visits the location. All asset fields can be accessed through Lua in conditions and scripts. Custom asset fields can be added using the setup screen after selecting the **Project | Project Settings... | Custom Asset Fields Tab** menu item.



Required Fields:

Title	Type	Default Value	Hint	Show	Export		Sort	Popup
Name	Text	New Actor	A name to reference this actor.	☐	☑		1	☑
Pictures	Files	[]	A collection of image files that represent	☐	☑		2	☑
Description	Text		A short description of what makes this ac	☐	☑		3	☑
IsPlayer	Boolean	False	Mark this box if this actor is the main pla	☐	☑		4	☑

Custom Fields:

Title	Type	Default Value	Hint	Show	Export		Sort	Popup
Age	Number	0	This Actor's age.	☑	☑	☒	5	☑
Gender	Text		This Actor's gender.	☑	☑	☒	6	☑

Custom Asset Fields Setup

Custom Asset Field Types

Number
Choose this is you will be adding, subtracting, or doing any other numeric operation.

Text / Multiline
Just plain text that can be anything. Multiline fields may have multiple lines of text similar to the dialogue text field.

Boolean
The field will only ever be "true" or "false" and shows in the properties editor as a check box.

Files
The field is meant to be a list of files chosen from the computer. In the properties editor this shows as a file list with options to add, modify, delete, and reorder the file list.

Actor / Item / Location
The field references an existing asset in the project. For the default value, you can specify either an asset ID number, or an asset name.

Localization
Localization fields can be used to store dialogue text in different languages. All localization fields are displayed in a drop-down menu on the main window and if a Commercial license is purchased, the dialogue trees can be shown in any of the defined localizations.

Custom Asset Field Options

Title
The name of the asset field that will be referenced using Lua scripts. This should ideally be short and with no spaces.

Type
The asset type from the list above.

Default Value
The starting value of this field. Should be "True" or "False" if the field is defined as a Boolean or a numeric entry if defined as a Number.

Hint
Text that will be displayed when the mouse is hovered over the asset field in the properties editor or the new dialogue entry popup window.

Show
This field will be displayed in the asset browser on the left of the GUI.

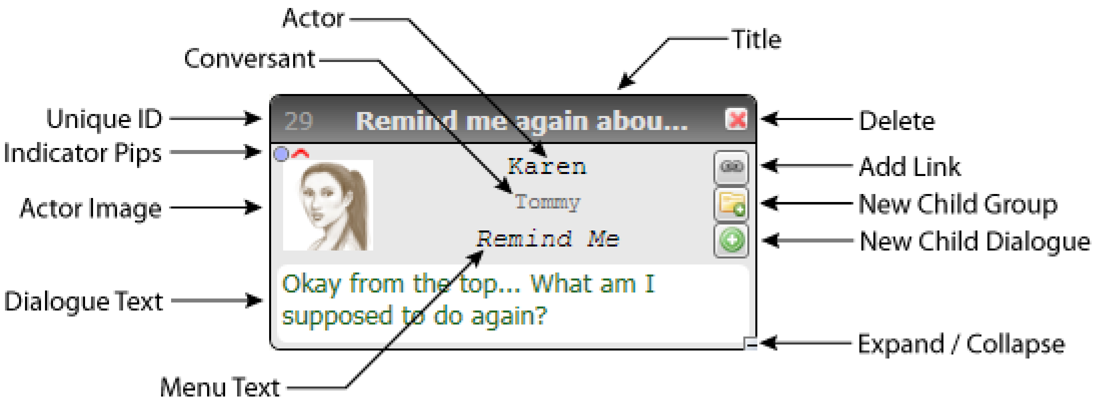
Export
This field will be exported to XML. De-selecting fields that are not needed in the XML file will ensure the smalled possible file.

Sort
Sets the sort order of the fields shown in the properties browser and the popup dialogue entry window.

Popup
De-selecting this option will remove the field from the popup dialogue entry window.

Anatomy

A dialogue node is displayed on the conversation tree as a small rounded rectangle showing the most important information in the dialogue as shown in the diagram below.



29 Remind me again abou...

Karen

Tommy

Remind Me

Okay from the top... What am I supposed to do again?

Unique ID
Each dialogue node in the entire project is assigned a unique ID to keep track of it in case two nodes have the same title.

Title
Displayed at the top of the node and in menus. This is not actually displayed during the simulation.

Actor / Actor Image
Shows the name and image of the actor who is speaking for this dialogue.

Conversant
Shows the name of the actor who is listening for this dialogue.

Menu Text
This is what is shown during the simulation as the menu option for the player.

Dialogue Text
The text that is displayed and spoken by the actor when this dialogue node plays.

Indicator Pips
Indication of whether there are conditions, scripts, or condition options assigned to this node.

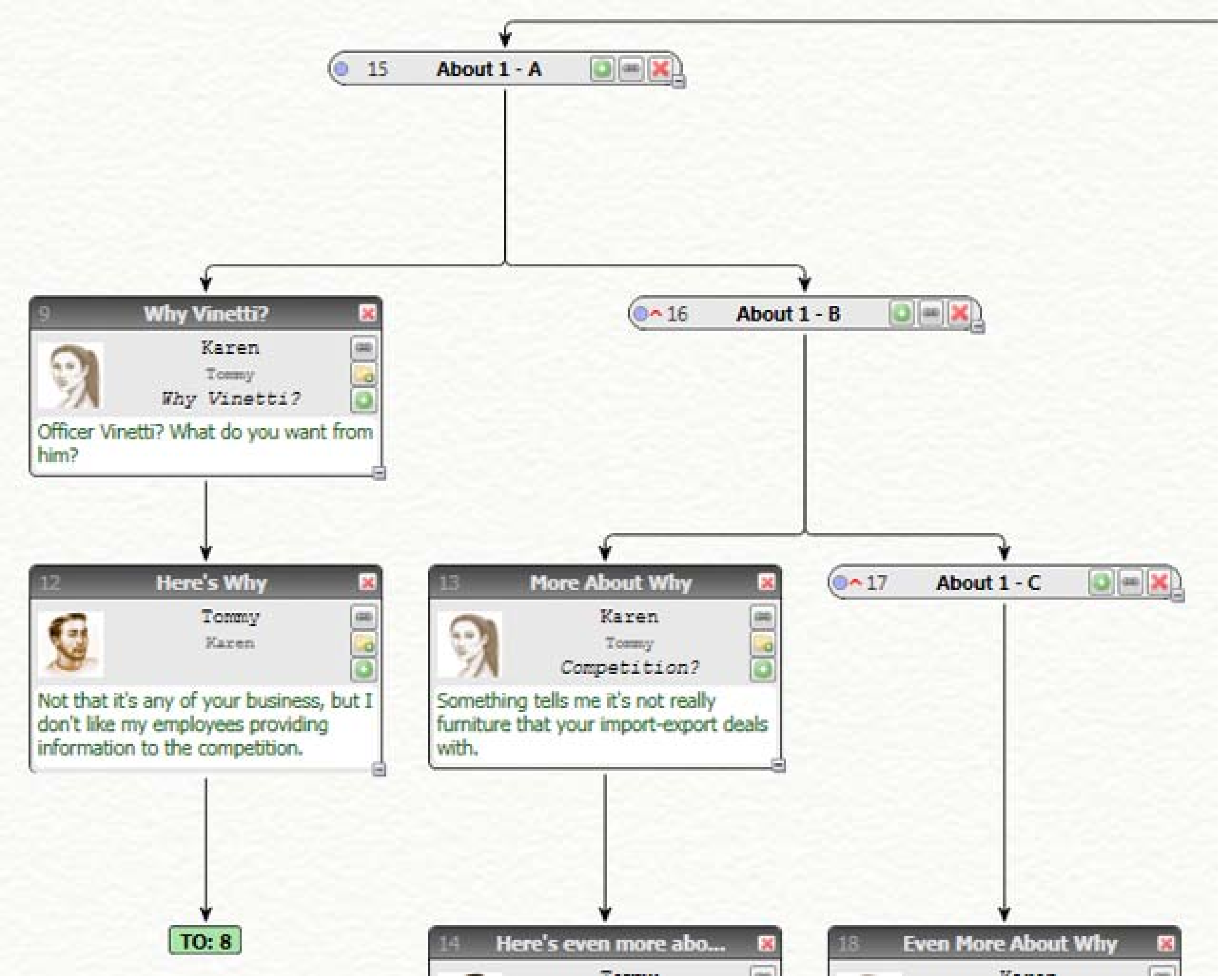
Delete
Clicking this button will delete the dialogue node.

New Child / Group Dialogue
Clicking this button will create a new dialogue or group that is the child of the current dialogue. Holding control, shift, and control+shift has various other effects.

Make Link
Clicking this button will allow a link to be created to collect this dialogue node to another one. This is described in detail in the section on dialogue linking.

Group Nodes

Group nodes are used to create sub-trees within the overall conversation tree. This is useful from an organizational standpoint but also becomes very valuable in defining conditions as you will see in defining condition priorities. Groups can be thought of as simplified dialogue nodes and contain some of the same fields. Group nodes can also be added, arranged, and linked just like dialogue nodes. As of Chat Mapper version 1.7, scripts defined on group nodes will be executed just like script assigned to dialogue nodes.



Officer Vinetti? What do you want from him?

Not that it's any of your business, but I don't like my employees providing information to the competition.

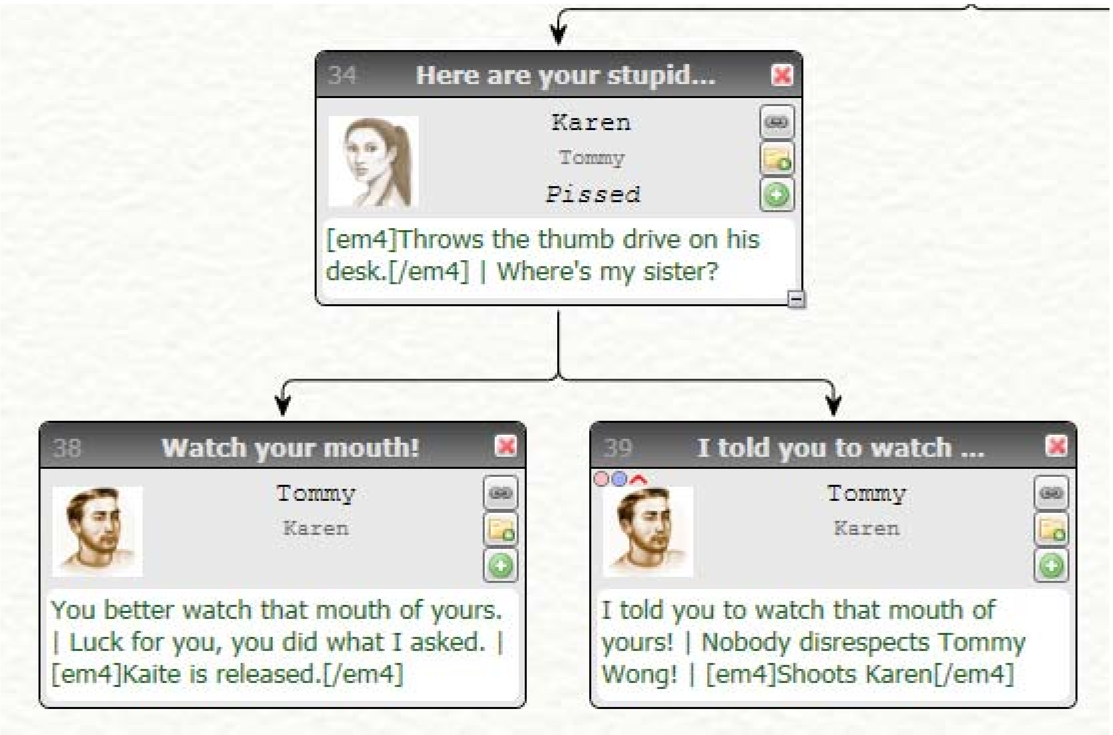
Something tells me it's not really furniture that your import-export deals with.

Group Nodes In A Conversation

Adding/Removing

When a conversation is added for the first time, the dialogue tree starts with a single Root Node from which all other dialogue nodes will link from. You may select the root node by left-clicking somewhere on the node that is not a button. To add a child node to the root node, or any other dialogue node, press the green plus button on the node that you wish to link from. Alternatively, you may use the context menu by selecting **Right-Click | New Child Dialogue**, or use the appropriate shortcut key with node selected. When first adding a dialogue node to the tree, you will be prompted to enter basic information about the dialogue node such as title, actor, conversant, and dialogue text.

Alternatively, you may add a sibling node to any node by selecting **Right-Click | New Sibling dialogue** or by holding shift while clicking the add button. The differences between a child node and sibling node are shown in the figure below. Nodes 38 and 39 are children of node 34, but they are siblings of each other.



[em4]Throws the thumb drive on his desk.[/em4] | Where's my sister?

You better watch that mouth of yours. | Luck for you, you did what I asked. | [em4]Kaite is released.[/em4]

I told you to watch that mouth of yours! | Nobody disrespects Tommy Wong! | [em4]Shoots Karen[/em4]

To delete a dialogue node, select the dialogue node and then press the **Delete** key. Alternatively, you may press the red X at the top right corner of the dialogue node. The link will be reestablished when removing a node.

Linking

Standard Links

When you create a new node, it will automatically be linked in some way to a parent node in the conversation. Sometimes you might want to reorder a node within its sibling nodes, or add new links. One simple way to reorder nodes of the same level on the tree is to move the nodes left and right by selecting **Reorder Node Left** or **Reorder Node Right** from the node's right-click context menu. It is important to pay attention to the order of the nodes, because if there are multiple dialogue options that can possibly be displayed during simulation, then they will be presented to the player in the order that they appear on the tree from left to right (or top to bottom in the case of horizontal layout).

To delete a link, simply select it and press the **Delete** key.

To add a new link, first press the small button on the dialogue node showing the icon of a chain link. This will cause the conversation to enter into linking mode indicated by the red frame. Once you have entered linking mode, the next node that you click will be linked to the node that initiated the linking. For example, if you start linking from node 5, then click node 1, node 5 will instantly be linked to node 1. If you have the **Continuous Linking** option turned off in the preferences, then linking mode will continue until you press the **Escape** key.

Connector Links

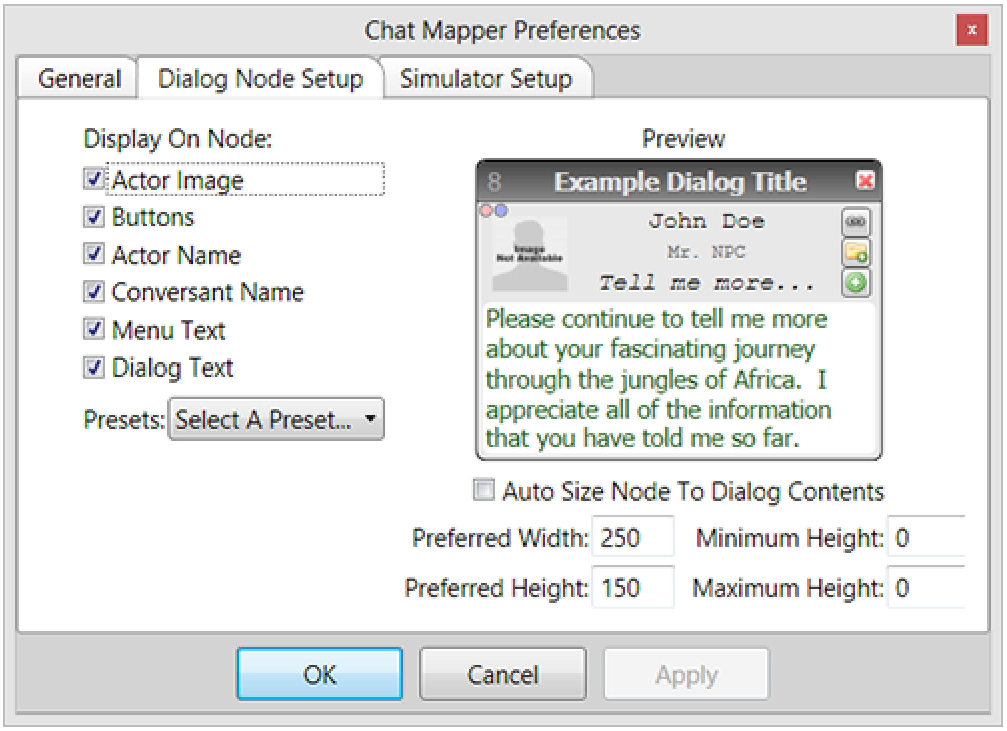
If a link is made to a node that already has a parent, then a small connector node will appear to indicate the link and to simplify the complexity of tree display as shown below. You may click this connector node to edit the node that it links to, and you may also upgrade it to the primary link by selecting **Right-Click | Promote To Primary Link**.

You may also link from one conversation to another by selecting **Right-Click | Link To Conversation...** on an existing dialogue node. A connector link will appear that can be followed to another conversation during simulation.

Lastly, you may link from a dialogue node to a different by selecting **Right-Click | Link To File...** on an existing dialogue node. A connector link will appear that can be followed to another conversation in a different file during simulation.

Configuring

Several display preferences for the dialogue nodes can be set by selecting the **Tools | Preferences...** menu option and choosing the dialogue Node Setup tab as shown below.



Display On Node:

☑ Actor Image
☑ Buttons
☑ Actor Name
☑ Conversant Name
☑ Menu Text
☑ Dialog Text

Presets: Select A Preset...

John Doe
Mr. NPC
Tell me more...

Please continue to tell me more about your fascinating journey through the jungles of Africa. I appreciate all of the information that you have told me so far.

□ Auto Size Node To Dialog Contents

Preferred Width: 250 Minimum Height: 0
Preferred Height: 150 Maximum Height: 0

Sections of the dialogue information that is shown on the node may be hidden by toggling the various check boxes, or a preset may be loaded by selecting from the drop-down list. The remaining options affect the size of the dialogue node:

Auto Size Node To Dialogue Contents
Each dialogue node will be set to the preferred width, but the height will be based on the length of the dialogue text.

Preferred Width
The width that you would like all dialogue nodes to be set.

Preferred Height
The height that you would like all dialogue nodes to be set unless they are auto sized to the dialogue contents.

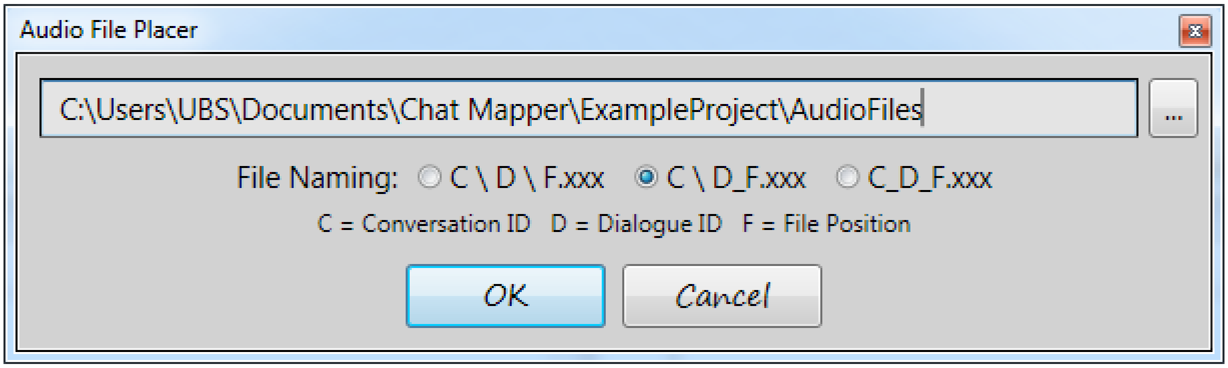
Minimum Height
When auto-sizing the dialogue node, it will not be allowed to be smaller than this height.

Maximum Height
When auto-sizing the dialogue node, it will not be allowed to be taller than this height.

Audio Files

Audio files in Chat Mapper are meant to represent dialogue voice-over and are played during simulation. Any number of files may be associated with a single dialogue node and each file is played as a segment on the dialogue as described in the section on Dialogue Markup. Chat Mapper utilizes any audio codecs installed for Windows, so if your file plays in Windows Media Player, it should play fine in Chat Mapper. To preview the audio for a dialogue node, select **Play Audio** from the right-click context menu of the node.

In order to make the job of assigning audio files to dialogue nodes easier, a tool is provided that can be accessed from the **Tools | Audio File Placer** menu item. This tool will allow you to automatically load in audio files based on the filename and directory structure of your audio folder.



C:\Users\UBS\Documents\Chat Mapper\ExampleProject\AudioFiles

File Naming: ○ C \ D \ F.xxx ● C \ D_F.xxx ○ C_D_F.xxx

C = Conversation ID D = Dialogue ID F = File Position

Audio File Placer Tool

Available auto-detection options are:

Folder Organization
Assumes subdirectories exist for each Conversation ID, followed by subdirectories for each Dialogue Node ID, followed by files numbered for the position in the file list.

Example: `C:\003\002\005.mp3` would be loaded into conversation 3, dialogue 2, file position 5.

Folder/File Hybrid Organization
Assumes subdirectories exist for each Conversation ID, followed by files numbered with either DialogueID_FilePosition.xxx or DialogueID.xxx

Example1: `C:\003\002.ogg` would be loaded into conversation 3, dialogue 2, file position 1.
Example2: `C:\003\002_005.wav` would be loaded into conversation 3, dialogue 2, file position 5.

File Organization
Assumes all files are number as ConversationID_DialogueID.xxx or ConversationID_DialogueID_FilePosition.xxx

Example1: `C:\003_002.ogg` would be loaded into conversation 3, dialogue 2, file position 1.
Example2: `C:\003_002_005.wav` would be loaded into conversation 3, dialogue 2, file position 5.

Dialogue Markup

When writing dialogue text or menu text, there are optional tags that may be added to enhance and control the playback of the dialogue during simulation.

Menu Text Tags

`[f]` - **Force Menu Display**
Typically, if only one menu option is available to the player, it will automatically be chosen and played. This tag placed anywhere within the menu text will force the menu option to be displayed to the player and not auto-played.

`[a]` - **Action Choice**
This tag placed anywhere within the menu text simply causes the menu item to be displayed in italics.

Dialogue Text Tags

These tags can also be found by clicking the small pencil button above the dialogue text entry box in the properties editor.

`|(pipe)` - **Break**
During long dialogue text, it is useful to split the text into segments to be displayed in sequential order during playback. Simply placing the pipe character throughout the dialogue text will accomplish this. Each segment of the text will attempt to play the associated audio file position during playback as well.

> *Example:* This is a very long dialogue text entry | that I would like to break up | into three different segments.

`[pic=#]` - **Change Dialogue Picture**
By default, the image of the actor of the dialogue node is displayed when the dialogue text is displayed during simulation. If any dialogue image files are defined, you may choose to display one of those pictures instead by inserting this tag with the # equal to the file position you wish to display, with the first file being position 1.

`[pica=#]` - **Change Actor Picture**
If more than one picture file is defined for the dialogue actor, you may display the file in the given position by using this tag.

`[picc=#]` - **Change Conversant Picture**
In rare cases, you may want to display a conversant's picture for the dialogue instead of the actor's. Using this tag, you may display the specified conversant picture file position.

`[em#]`some text`[/em#]` - **Emphasize Text**
You may specially emphasize any bit of dialogue text by surrounding the text with an [em] tag. The # should be replaced by a number 1 through 4 and the text will be colored given by the colors chosen in the project preferences.

`[var=MyVar]` - **Display Variable Value**
The value of the variable named MyVar will be shown in place of this tag. This can be used to display the value of a variable, such as "score" in the dialogue text during simulation.

About Lua

Lua is a scripting language widely used for games due to its simplicity and readability. Lua can be used to modify and store variables as well as call functions defined in the main application. Below is a brief primer on the Lua language but you can learn more by reading the Lua 5.1 reference manual.

Variables

Variables in Lua are used to store a piece of information, such as a text value, numeric value, or a boolean value (true/false). A variable can be set using the equals sign:

```
variable_name1 = "text"
variable_name2 = value
variable_name3 = false
```

Note: The boolean variable is case-sensitive and must be lowercase.

One additional type of variable in Lua is called the Table. If you are familiar with programming, a table is much like a class where the table may store many additional variables, or properties, within it. A variable stored within a table can be accessed using either square brackets, or dot notation:

```
table_name["variable_name"] = value
table_name.variable_name = value
```

Arithmetic Operators

Lua supports all of the most common arithmetic operations on variables and values including addition (+), subtraction (-), multiplication (*), division (/), modulo (%), exponentiation (^), and negation (~). Note that Lua does not support the ++ or -- operators found in some programming languages, so to increment a variable value, you must use:

```
variable = variable + 3
```

Function Calls

If functions are available to the scripting language, they may be called by using the following notation:

```
function_name(parameter1, parameter2, ...)
```

Although some functions do not require any parameters at all. For more information on the functions available in Chat Mapper, see the next section.

Relational Operators

Relational operators always produce either a true or false response by comparing variables to some value or another variable. The most common operators are:

`==` : Equal - Compares two values or variables and returns true if they are equal.
`~=` : Not Equal - Returns the opposite value of the equal operator.

For a full list of operators, see the Lua reference manual.

Logical Operators

Logical operators combine multiple relational operators to allow for complex expressions. The available logical operators are `and`, `or`, and `not`.

`20 == 20 or 20 == 10` returns **true** because the first half is true.

`20 == 20 and 20 ==10` returns **false** because only one of the two statements is true.

Using Lua in Chat Mapper

Chat Mapper supports the use of Lua 5.1 when writing scripts or conditionals. For both scripts and conditionals, all assets are defined as Lua tables with each asset field defined as a variable within the table. Each variable is named using the field title with spaces replaced with underscores.

Templates are provided for common scripts and conditions and can be accessed by clicking the pencil button above the script and conditions editors.

Note: All assets and dialogue nodes can by drag-and-dropped into the script or conditions window and will replace the selected text with the Lua asset table equivalent.

Special Asset Fields

In addition to the required and user-defined asset fields, two additional fields are available for use:

Status
Each asset gets a special status field that can by used as a general purpose tag to store some text value. This field does not have to be used, but is available for all assets.

> *Example*: `Actor["Player"].Status = "dead"`

SimStatus
Each dialogue node asset has a special SimStatus field, used during simulations, which determines whether the dialogue has been offered as a choice to the player or has been displayed. Available values are "Untouched", "WasOffered", and "WasDisplayed".

> *Note: In some cases it is useful to wait to change the dialogue SimStatus to "WasDisplayed" until after the next menu options have already been built. In order to do this, use the "Delay SimStatus" option in the conditions editor.*

Available Functions

Chat Mapper provides various functions that are accessable through Lua in order to perform special tasks beyond just setting and accessing variables.

Mutual Status
Chat Mapper can track a status that is defined between any two assets, which is referred to as a mutual status. To set or access a mutual status, use the following two functions:

```
SetStatus(Asset1, Asset2, "status value")
GetStatus(Asset1, Asset2)
```

Relationships
Chat Mapper will also track numerical relationship values between any two actors. Relationships can be useful for controlling NPC reponses based on a relationship value. The following four functions can be used to control relationship values:

```
SetRelationship(Actor1, Actor2, "relationship type", value)
GetRelationship(Actor1, Actor2, "relationship type")
IncRelationship(Actor1, Actor2, "relationship type", incrementAmount)
DecRelationship(Actor1, Actor2, "relationship type", decrementAmount)
```

Variable Tracking

By Default, most variables are tracked automatically in the tracker panes of the simulation window. If, however you would like to add a variable to the tracker window manually, you may use the following functions:

```
TrackVariable(Table, "variable name")
TrackStatus(Asset1, Asset2)
TrackRelationship(Actor1, Actor2, "relationship type")
```

Conditions and Scripts

Conditions

The conversation just wouldn't work if all of the dialogue options were presented at all times. There must be a way to control which options get displayed depending on the player's inventory, the way the NPC feels about the player, etc. These are all controlled by defining Conditions.

Conditions are defined by clicking on a dialogue node or group node and typing a logical Lua expression into the conditions editor. All conditions are defined to allow the dialogue node to be offered or played if the condition evaluates to true. As such, you should ensure that the condition is written in such a way that it always evaluates to either **true** or **false** by using logical and relational operators.

Example:

```
Dialog[4].SimStatus ~= "WasDisplayed" and Variable["points"] > 15
```

Will allow the dialogue to be displayed if Dialog 4 has not been displayed before and the variable "points" is greater than 15.

Note: You may include carriage returns to make the conditions look a little nicer and all lines will be reduced to a single line before evaluating the expression.

False Condition Actions
By default if a dialogue node condition evaluates to false, the the node along with all following nodes will not be considered for inclusion in the following menu options. In some cases it is useful to allow a node to simple pass through to the following nodes if the condition is false. In order to do this, select the "PassThrough" option for false condition action.

Condition Priorities
If several nodes all evaluate their conditions to true, then the highest priority nodes will be displayed first. This is useful if you want a node to be displayed when some condition is satisfied and you want that node to be the only option available to the player. In that case, you would make sure the priority is higher than the other nodes.

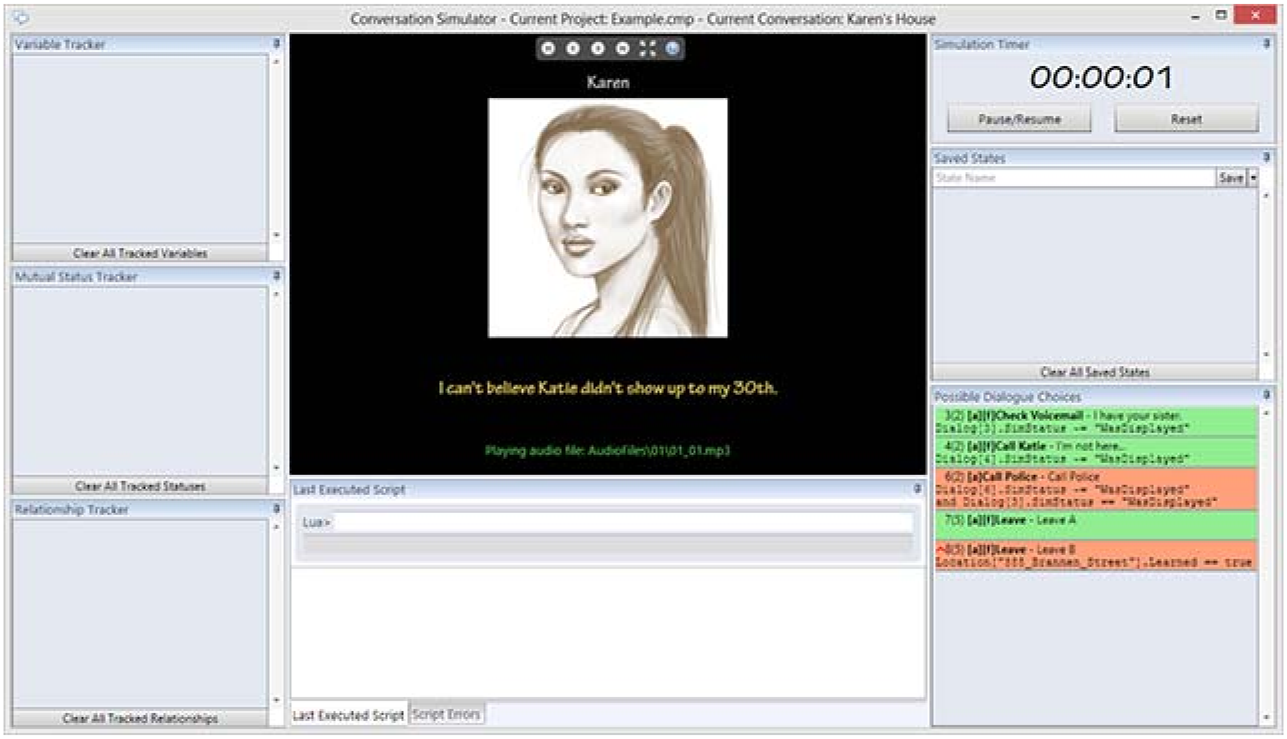
Note: Priorities are compared only between nodes belonging to the same group.

Scripts

Conditions would not be of much use if the variables and asset fields never change. In order to make changes to any asset field or variable, a Lua script is attached to a dialogue node and executed when the node is played. To see the Lua script attached to a node, simply select the node and look at the script editor. Each individual Lua command should be separated by a carriage return.

Simulation Interface

After you think you have the conversation exactly how you want, it is time to test it out in a mock-up of the game! From the menu, choose **Project | Simulate Conversation...** or press **F5** to start the simulator.



I can't believe Katie didn't show up to my 30th.

Playing audio file: AudioFiles\01\01_01.mp3

```
3(2) [a][f]Check Voicemail - I have your sister.
Dialog[3].SimStatus ~= "WasDisplayed"
4(2) [a][f]Call Katie - I'm not here...
Dialog[4].SimStatus ~= "WasDisplayed"
6(2) [a]Call Police - Call Police
Dialog[4].SimStatus ~= "WasDisplayed"
and Dialog[3].SimStatus == "WasDisplayed"
7(3) [a][f]Leave - Leave A
^8(3) [a][f]Leave - Leave B
Location["888_Brannen_Street"].Learned == true
```

Conversation Simulator Window

Control Toolbar
At the top of the window are a set of controls for navigation and full-screen mode.

Tracker Windows
On the left side of the simulator, any time a variable, asset field, mutual status, or relationship changes, it will be added to the appropriate tracker. Tracked variables can be removed by clicking the button with the red X, and variables may by manually added by using the appropriate Lua function.

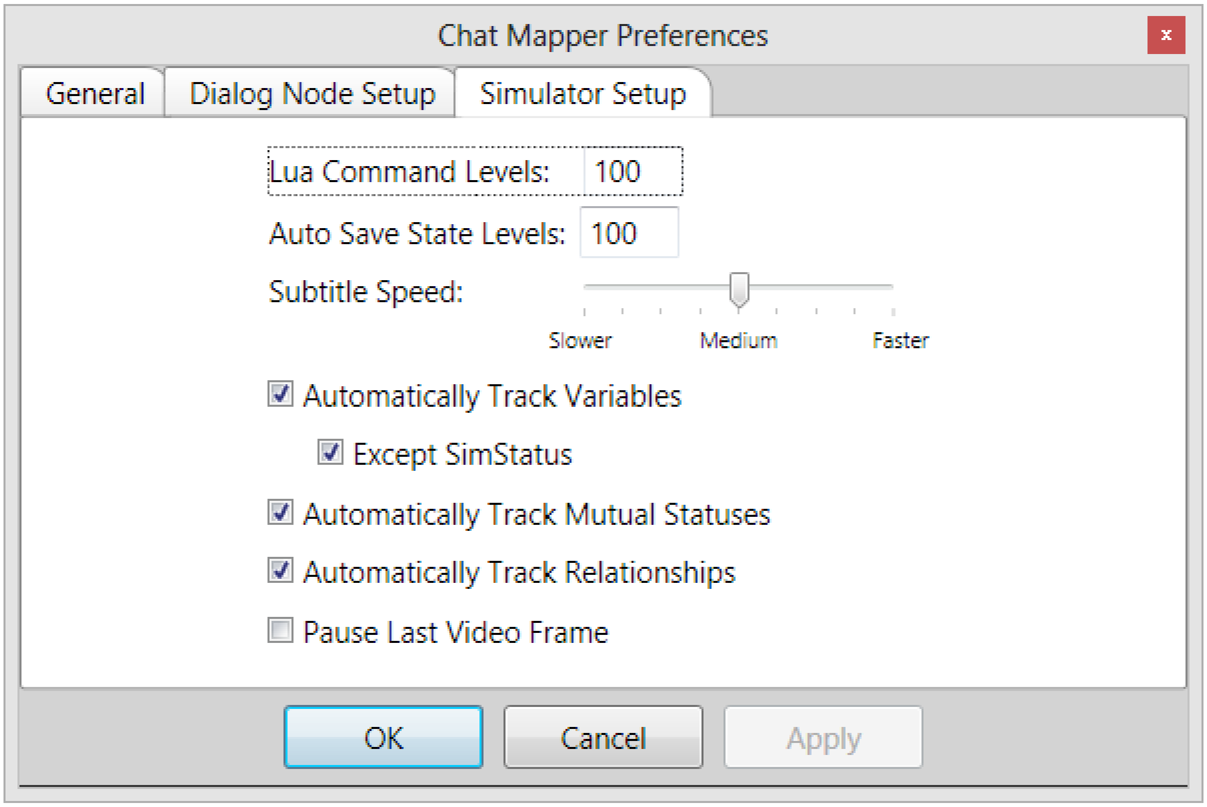
Lua Script Panel
At the bottom of the simulator window in a Lua command line, a text area showing the script that was run for the displayed dialogue, and a list of any Lua script errors. *Note: When using the command line to display a variable value, you must use the word "return" before your variable.*

Saved States
At the top right of the window is a list of all saved states. A state will store the values of all variables and asset fields as well as your current position within the conversation tree. To load only the variables from a state, click the button with the V and to load the entire state, click the blue play button.

Possible Dialogue Choices
At the bottom right of the window is a list of all possible dialogue choices that could be displayed to the player. Green items are dialogue nodes for which the conditions evaluated to true and red items evaluated to false. Also displayed are the condition priorities, the dialogue ID, and the group number that the dialogue nodes belong to. Remember that priorities are only compared against dialogues of the same group.

Simulator Preferences

Several options for the conversation simulation can be set by going to the **Tools | Preferences... | Simulator Setup Tab** menu item.



Lua Command Levels: 100

Auto Save State Levels: 100

Subtitle Speed:

☑ Automatically Track Variables

☑ Except SimStatus

☑ Automatically Track Mutual Statuses

☑ Automatically Track Relationships

□ Pause Last Video Frame

Simulator Setup Dialog

Lua Command Levels
Sets the maximum number of lua commands that are stored in memory from the command line. Pressing the up and down arrows keys allows you to scroll through the previously run command line entries.

Auto Save State Levels
Each time a menu is displayed that requires player input during simulation creates an automatic saved state in order to enable navigation. This value is the maximum number of those saves states that is put into memory.

Subtitle Speed
If no audio file is present for a dialog text, the on-screen time for the dialogue text is automatically calculated based on character count and punctuation. This setting allows for slower or faster subtitle speed.

Automatically Track Variables / Mutual Statuses / Relationships
If this is checked, any variables, statuses, or relationships that are changed will automatically be added to the associated tracker.

Except SimStatus
If this is checked, changes to the dialogue node SimStatus will not be tracked.

Importers and Exporters

Basic Exporters

After you are satisfied that your conversation simulates properly, there are numerous export options to get your conversations into the hands of programmers, producers, or designers. The available exporters will be displayed when selecting the **File | Export** menu option.

Chat Mapper Package (CMPKG): This export option is only available for commercial license holders and allows the author to export the Chat Mapper project and all associated media files to a compressed archive suitable for sharing. Another author may import the package file and view all of the media originally used.

As Chat Mapper 1.3/1.5 Project: Exports to a Chat Mapper project file (CMP) that is compatible with Chat Mapper version 1.3 or version 1.5 respectively.

Project As XML: This is probably the most versatile export option because the resulting file contains all aspects of the project including assets, dialogue, and conditions in a human-readable and computer-readable plain-text XML format.
This option is only available to license holders.

Project As JSON: JavaScript Object Notation data is ubiquitous in HTML and online applications. Exporting to this format will format the Chat Mapper project data suitable for loading directly into JavaScript.
This option is only available to license holders.

Screenplay as RTF File: Exports the script (as shown in the script view tab) to an RTF file, which includes formatting and font selections that can be opened and edited by word processors, such as Microsoft Word.
This option is only available to license holders.

Project Data to Excel: Exports all of the data in the entire project, including all custom asset fields, to an XLSX file, which can be opened by Microsoft Excel. This data may be edited and then imported later to update the project.

Dialogue Graph as PDF / JPEG / PNG Image: Exports the entire dialogue tree as a PDF, JPEG, or PNG image shown exactly as displayed in the software.

Custom Exporters

If purchasing a Commercial license, you may write your own exporters using the Chat Mapper Exporter Development Kit that is provided as a download at the time of license purchase. Any custom exporters will also be displayed at the bottom of the exporters list.

Basic Importers

Currently there are two available importers, each of which require a license to use. The available importers will be displayed when selecting the **File | Import** menu option.

Chat Mapper Package (CMPKG): Using this import option and selecting a Chat Mapper package file will decompress all project assets to the "Imported Projects" folder in "My Documents" and open the project.

Project Data from Excel: Project data from an Excel file will be imported into the currently open Chat Mapper project. Only existing assets will be updated. It is not possible at this time to create new assets from importing an Excel file.

New Project from XML: Project data from an XML file will be imported into a new Chat Mapper project. This can be used to start a new Chat Mapper project from a 3rd party tool that exports to the Chat Mapper XML format, or from a previously exported Chat Mapper project.
NOTE: This import option only works well if the XML was created with the "export empty fields" option enabled and with all custom asset fields exported.

Command Line Tools

Command Line Tools (Commercial License Only)

If you own a commercial license, you may take advantage of the command line functions to automate export of CMP files into other data formats. The command line syntax is as follows:

```
"[installationPath]\Chat Mapper.exe" [command] [outputPath] [inputFiles]
```

`[installationPath]` is the path to your Chat Mapper installation (usually in Program Files). If the `[installationPath]` is added to your system path, then you are only required to type `"Chat Mapper.exe"`.

`[command]` can be one of the following standard export formats:

```
-xml
-excel
-rtf
-csv
```

You may form a custom `[command]` by using the title of a custom exporter in lowercase and replacing the spaces with dashes. For example, if you create a custom exporter titled "My Custom Exporter", then a valid `[command]` would be `-my-custom-exporter`.

`[outputPath]` is the path to the output folder where all processed files will be saved. `[inputFiles]` is a comma separated list of CMP project files to be processed. Each file will be exported to the desired format in sequence.

Note: make sure to enclose each file name in quotes if there are spaces in the file path.

Techincal Support

There are many ways to get help with Chat Mapper.

Documentation

You are on the right track already by reading through this documentation. Updates to the documentation will be posted to the Chat Mapper website as well.

Help Desk

If for some reason you cannot find an answer to your question, there is an official help desk where you can ask questions and view solutions to common problems. Just send an email to support@urbanbrainstudios.com or call 888-754-5015.

Video Tutorials

If you need some more help getting started using all of the features, check out the online video tutorials.

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