

Creating a scenario for distribution

This guide provide guidance on how to effectively package your scenarios for distribution to others. It's important though to think about distributing your scenario when you first start creating it.

What to do... and when

Using the powerful editor in AT users can create scenarios using standard units, map graphics and the default unit images. These scenarios can be entertaining, fairly easy to make, and can be distributed often with a simple .pt2 file.

This guide, however will focus on scenarios that incorporate custom unit images, as well as custom event pics and need more than just a .pt2.

I'll use Vic's Netherlands 1940 scenario to illustrate the steps.

If you expect to add your own unit and event pics you should create a folder in your AT graphics folder that will contain your custom pics. A good practice is to name that folder after your scenario.

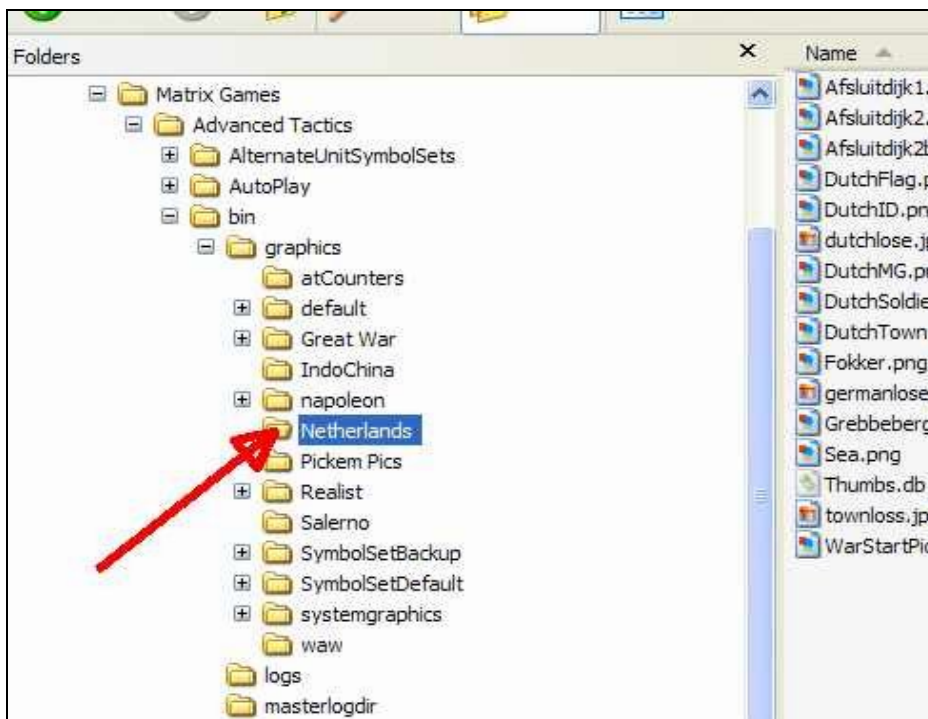


Figure 1

Create the Netherlands folder in the bin/graphics folder. Put ALL of the custom graphics you create in this folder! Notice that Vic has placed all of his images in this new scenario folder. This is important if you want to make sure your scenario is able to “stand on it's own”. You might be tempted to put your custom

flag in the with the other flags in the graphics/default/national folder, but if you do this, you run the risk of having your custom flag being overwritten.

Along the same lines, you should also only use images from either the standard default images folders, or put the images in your own scenario folder. If Vic has already created the image you want to use and has included it in the standard game install, then by all means, use it. But if you want to use an image from another user made scenario, you should copy the image to your graphics/scenario folder. If you don't you run the risk of someone trying to play your scenario, without having the other user made scenario installed. So make your scenarios are able to stand alone. Their might be some duplicate files, but the image files are actually fairly small.

Scenario creation

Now that you have your folder set up and put some of your images you're going to need, you can easily use them from the scenario editor.

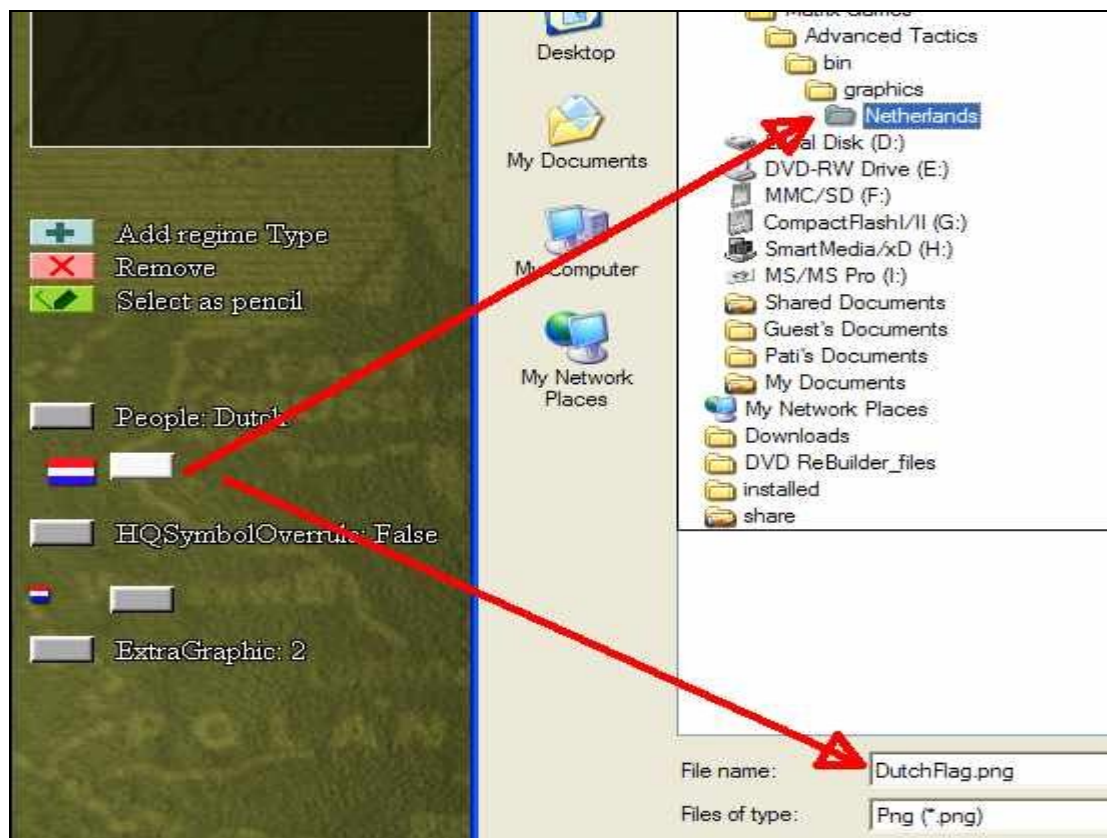


Figure 2

You can load your images from your folder now. But you do need to have your scenario image folder located in the graphics folder.

If you need more details how to create your scenario, see the tutorials on creating scenarios on the community web site: <http://www.advancedtactics.org/> in the documents section.

The scenario folder in the graphics folder is really the only one you need to create at this time. You should be able to complete your scenario. When you've got your scenario ready and want to distribute it there are a few more steps to take.

Putting together the zip file

I'll go through the process I use for packing a scenario, using the zip program built into Windows XP. If you use other compression utilities the step may differ (and might even be simpler – Windows XP doesn't make it easy to create sub-folders).

First you want to have a work area. It doesn't really matter where you create your work area. But keep in mind that when you've finished, you want a zip file that can be put into the AT bin folder, and, when unzipped will place the game files where they belong.

I've created a working area for this next step (I use this same area to test zip files I download to see what files get created. In figure 3 you see the structure of my working area



Figure 3

This work folder is empty, with only two sub-folders, graphics and scenarios. Right now both subfolders are empty as well. I've put a Scenario folder here because when we're finished, I'd like the .pt2 file to go into the Scenario folder. The .pt2 file can actually go anywhere, and is often just placed in the bin folder, but since AT defaults to the Scenario folder when you choose to load a scenario, I like to put new scenarios in that folder.

Now simply drag your scenario folder from the graphics folder down to the graphics folder in your work area. Do the same with your .pt2 folder. If you've also created a new.ptmaster to go along with your scenario, drag it to the Scenario folder along with your .pt2 file. See figure 4.

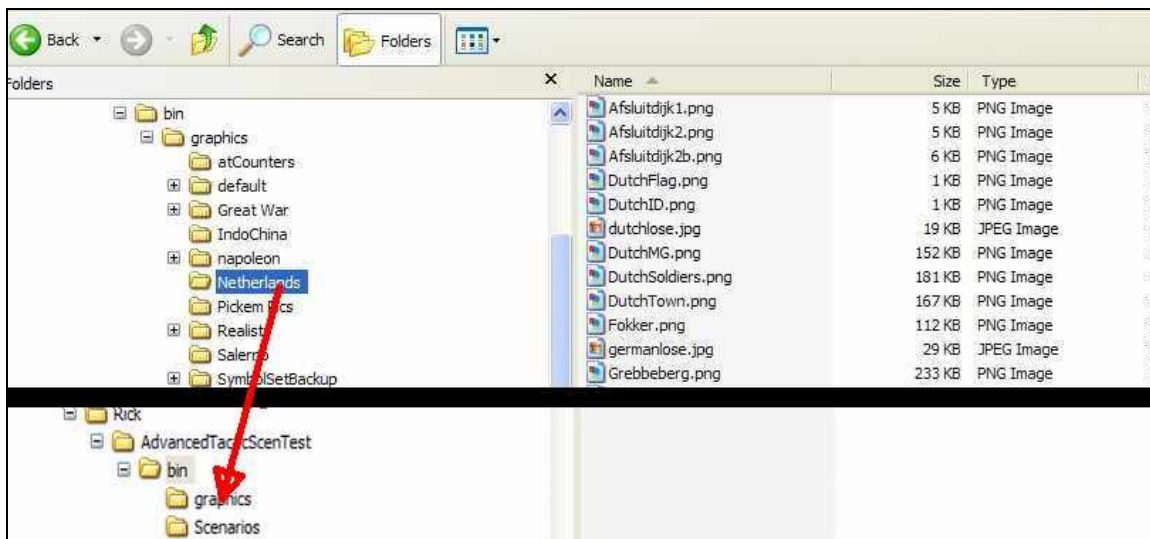


Figure 4

After you've put your scenario files into your work folders your work area should look like figures 5, 6, and 7. The bin folder contains only the sub-folders graphics, and Scenarios and the graphics folder contains a folder called Netherlands (Figure 5)

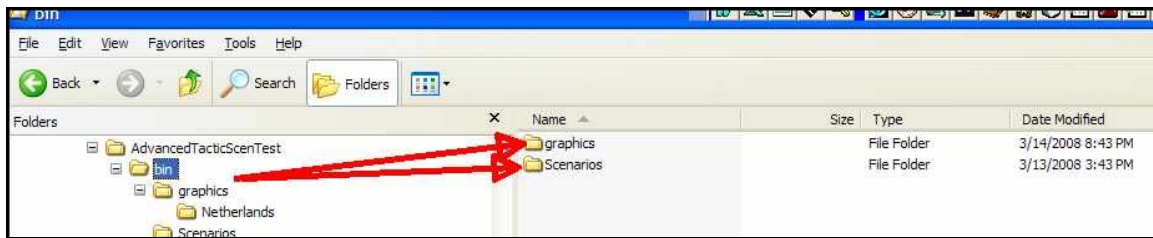


Figure 5

In the Netherlands folder are all of the custom image files for the Netherlands scenario. (Figure 6)

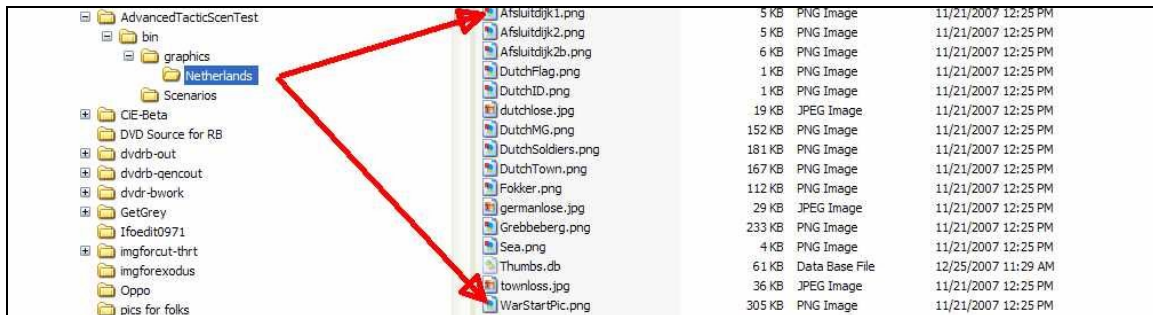


Figure 6

And finally in the Scenario sub-folder, is the Netherlands 1940.pt2 file (this is also where you would put your custom .ptmaster file as well if your scenario uses a custom .ptmaster. Figure 7.

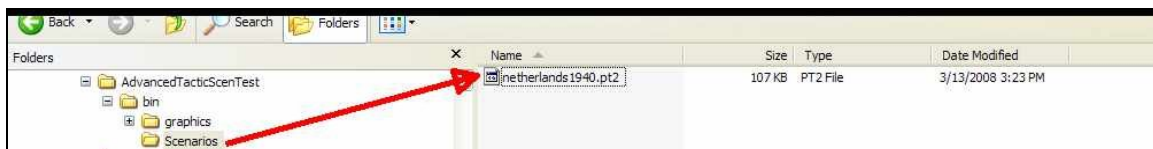


Figure 7

Now that we have all of the scenario files and folders in our working area, we can create the zip file.

Figure 8 shows the four steps for creating the zip file. But this just creates the zip file, it doesn't put any of the files in it. We'll do that next.

So click on the bin folder in the left-hand column (A). Then right click in a blank area in the right side of the window (B). In the pop-up window choose New (C), then at the very bottom choose Compressed (zipped) folder (D). Now name the zip folder Netherlands.zip (the zip extension should already be there.)

This gives us an empty zip file, ready to hold are graphics and scenario folders.

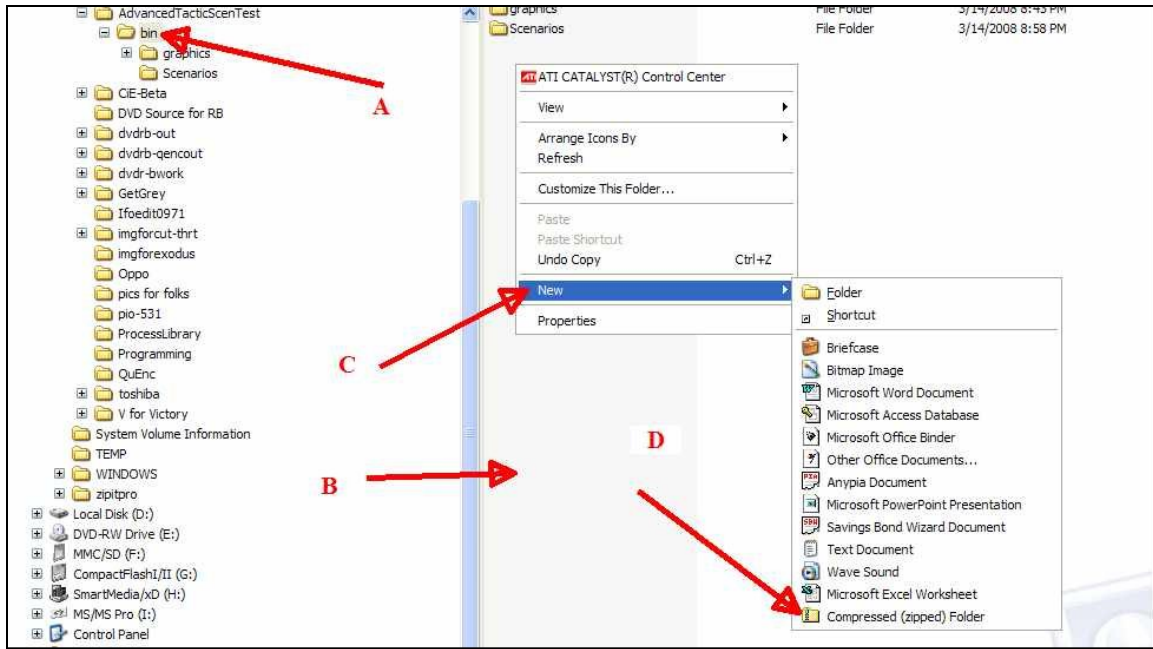


Figure 8

We're almost finished now. We created a compressed folder(a zip file) in the previous step. Note that the size of the new zip file is only 1 KB (Figure 9). That's because it's still empty. Now we need to add the folders containing our custom files to it. To do this simply select the graphics folder in the right hand pane, press the left mouse button and drag the graphics folder to the zip folder (Figure 9 – A). Do the same with the Scenario folder Figure 9 – B). After you've done this you should see that the zip folder is now 1,399 KB. (if you are doing this with your own scenario of course this number will be different!).

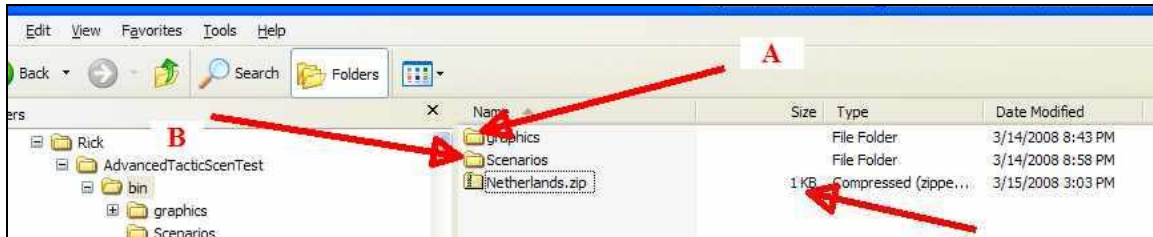


Figure 9

The Netherlands zip file you just created can be placed in AT bin directory and unzipped. NOTE: the default for Windows XP when it unzips a zip file is to create a folder with the same name as the zip file. You can leave it as is, then simply copy the files from the new Netherlands\graphics folder to the bin\graphics folder and from the Netherlands\Scenario folder to the bin\Scenario folder, or, in the unzip dialog, simply delete the Netherlands part of the name from the location prompt. (Figure 10). I usually check a zip folder first, by unzipping it in a my work area, just to make sure files go where they are supposed to.

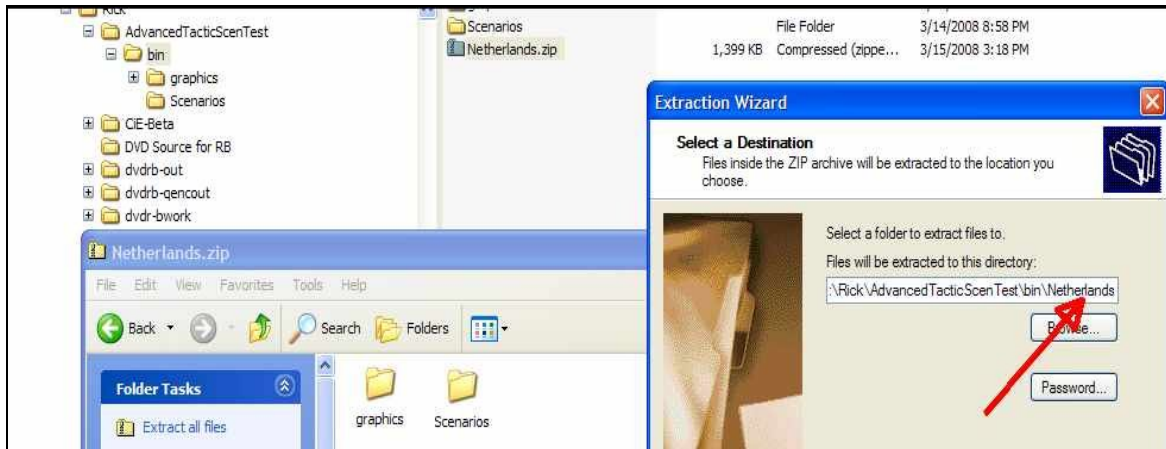


Figure 10