MAKE YOUR OWN TOWN IN 3DS MAX!

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TO USE THIS YOU WILL NEED 3DS MAX 5,6, OR 7

Included is the town file in 3ds max format. This is a finished town with sky, tree canopy, trees and the houses missing from the original sample file in the minimod kit; this is basically the finished version of the sample file from the minimod kit. The 3 missing houses I replaced with some of the simple houses from Japanese Town. It also includes Pikko the Fisherman for those wanting this merchant. Basically you could export this town file as town.scn and play it as is perfectly and the result would look mostly (except for replaced houses) like the original.

As such, you could easily change the merchants, add more, rearrange the houses or whatever very simple changes you want and export your custom town. You could also use the buildings as a template for making your own town, to which I say good luck.:wink:

To Export Your Custom Town:

You need to get the minimod kit released by Travis Baldtree the creator of the game. It is in the Mod Archive. In it are the exporters for the screwdriver format that all in-game files are in. Then you will need a copy of 3ds max 5,6,or7, as they are only ones he gave exporters for. Open the town_template.max file, then go to file -- export. A dialogue will pop up and from the dropdown in the lower right corner select Screwdriver Scene (*.scn). Then name your file town.scn and save whereever you want or navigate to your town folder and overwrite town.scn or navigate to a mod folder you're making and save as town.scn. That's it. If however, you make changes to the layout of the town you will need to alter the town collision file also included in the zip. The collision file is all geometric shapes with no texture that represent the parts of the map that you should collide with. If you make a custom building the easiest way to create a simple collision model is to go into create--lines and then create a spline that outlines the shape of the house. Then use the modifier edit-mesh and the line will become a plane. Then select the poly within the mesh and select the extrude option in the task pane and extrude it up into a full mesh representation of the object. Then export as town.col.

To Make Merchants/Questgivers:

You will see throughout the town green crosshair helpers. These are used to make fire's, glows, smoke, sounds, merchants and questgivers, in game. To make a merchant you must either clone an existing merchant and then alter it's properties or make a new crosshair helper and name it merchant# for a merchant, or questgiver# for a questgiver, calling the helper merchant or questgiver will make that point a merchant or questgiver in game. Then you must rightclick on the helper and go to properties. In the properties dialogue go to the User Defined tab. There you will see (if you copied a merchant) for merchants two tags NAME= and TYPE= the name is any of the names listed in the human section at the end of the monsters.dat. Obviously to make a new merchant you will also have to add another person to the monsters.dat. The easiest way to do this is copy a human already there and then alter it. Give it a new name and then under the model info change it to the model of a monster in the game. Then go to the greeting message and change that appropriately as well (if you want this to be modman added then you would create a mod with a monsters folder and then create your own monsters.dat with only the human to be added). The TYPE= will tell the game how to build the inventory of that person. The types are: gambler, weaponsarmor, magic, healer, traveling, goods, breakweapons, breakgems, fish or minstrel. Whatever type you make it will be what the new merchant will sell. Gambler will create another Zim-type character, magic will create another Jin-type character, etc.

Questgivers are much simpler. You name the helper questgiver# and then in the properties-user defined you simply put the name after a NAME= tag. Then of course as with the merchant you must create the new questgiver in the monsters.dat using the above listed steps. Then export your new town as town.scn and your set to go.

It should also be noted that the masterquestgiver helper cannot be changed in any way or it will not function. Also you can add glows, smokes, fires, sound, etc. anywhere in town by creating a helper and calling it either glow#, particle#, or sound# and then changing it's properties in the user defined tab. The sounds must be a sound in the sound folder and the glows and particles are listed in their respective *.dat files.

To Make Splash Screens:

When you first enter the game, the screen on which your character and pet is displayed and you can select your options is called a splash screen. You can create custom splash screens using 4 point helpers. In the center of town next to the fountain and center tree you will see 4 helpers named: player, pet, camera and target. To get the effect of these go ahead and export the town as splash.scn and see how it works. You can reposition the camera and target to view your character from any angle (just keep in mind that a sharp upward angle will show gray space since the sky won't be tall enough. There is a way to make the camera move but I haven't figured it out yet. The easiest way to see your result and frame your scene is to use the viewer included in the mini mod kit. You can position your camera and target then export as splash.scn and view the scene in the viewer. If it gives you the expected view then you can try it out in game in order to better position your pet and character (view doesn't show them).

Once you have your scene set then you should save a copy of the town called say town_splash1.max for example. Then, delete everything in the town that is not part of that scene. In the tree wall, sky, and ground patches you are using you should go to the poly level and delete the poly's that you are not using. You also want to delete all the point helpers you are not using, though if there are smoke and glows in the scene you may want to leave them. Then test in game to see if you deleted too much or could delete more. In the end your exported splash.scn should be around 1Mb.

sign represents a number that is not already in use. Easy way to see this is to use the select by name tool then scroll down to merchants or questgivers and see what numbers are being used and create the next one higher. or more simply just clone an existing one and 3dsmax will select a number not in use for you.

To Make the Collision:

The collision model is just a geometric, textureless representation of the area around your model that you don't want anyone to run into. So whereas the tree is a complex model of thousands of polys in the scene file, in the collision model it is just a cylinder protruding out of the ground. As I said above the easiest way to make collision models of the buildings is to just go into the create tab and go to shapes - splines - lines then you draw the outline of your building using straight lines until you arive back at the starting point and it will ask you if you want to close the spline, you say yes. Then in the modify tab you select the edit mesh or edit poly modifier and it turns the spline into a flat mesh. You then select extrude and pull the polygon up until you have a tall enough 3d shape of your building. The idea is that the collision model doesn't need to be detailed, it is just something to run into, so you want to keep it as simple and the file size as low as possible. If you look in the included collision file you will see that around the river is just a wall and while the bridges are the real model the walls on either side of them are just big buffers to make you not run into the river. You'll also notice if you look closely that those buffers are curved slightly at the edges so that as you're running towards the bridge you get pushed into the center if your off a little.

Basically to make the collision model, I would open up the collision file I included. Then delete the shapes representing the buildings (unless you made them the same in your altered town) then go to file - merge. The merge option allows you to pull in parts of another file and merge them into your scene. You then select the file that is your finished town. It will then give you a list of every single object that is in your town max file. Select everything from the list that is collidable and isn't already taken care of. for example you don't need to change the ground (unless you changed the shape of it) or the bridges or the wall around the town, but you do need all the buildings, carts, trees, fences, lamps, etc. Then you go around and make a collision model around the object then delete the merged mesh for that object. For many things you will be able to make a simple shape: a box or a cylinder for trees. When you are finished making everything collidable, go to file export and select screwdriver collision model *.COL. Now let me tell you, if you start messing with the ground be ready to take some serious time making the collision. The ground is one mesh that merges with the walls, whereas the ground in the scene file is divided like 7 ways. So, when you change the ground you have to merge that piece of the ground into the collision model and then go around adjusting vertex by vertex until the ground matches the exact shape of your altered ground. You could also merge in the ground from the scene file and then select the collision models ground and delete all the polygons that represent that area of the ground and then select your ground again, go to the advanced tools and remove all material and uvws and then attach and weld it to the rest of the ground but you'd have to make sure you set a low threshold for the weld so that you don't go moving vertices and then you'd have to go around making sure that every vertex did in fact weld. If you're doing minor edits to the ground I would say go with moving vertices, if you're doing a major change I would then replace the ground with yours. Just keep in mind that these hardened warriors can't make it up any kind of even minor incline, lol.

On Poly Count:

For the fate crowd you want to keep it down to as low poly as you can. In making the town I found a lot of little tricks for making things look the same without using a lot of polys. alot of the time you can do this with textures. instead of modeling window you can have a poly cut out in the face of a wall that is in the shape of the window and then the window is just a texture. all the doors in town are this way and the windows as well, but unless you really got up close and examined it you wouldn't notice. But you do want to keep your buildings each as one unit.

As for reference on the building poly count here's where mine ended up and I wouldn't try to go any higher than these as they pushed some peoples systems a little and I'm still trying to look for ways to cut.

inn: 1209
torvus' hut: 406
rikko's shrine: 607
bank (behind zim): 1140
blacksmith: 208
petstore: 1250
gazebo: 511
2 story shop keepers house: 645
shinto shrine: 611

But my advice to you is don't design constantly looking at your poly count. this will limit your creativity. just make it as cool as you can and then after you've attached it all together see if it needs to be trimmed down and then find creative ways to do this. The 2 story shopkeeper's house was originally 10,000 polys :shocked: and I had no idea how to get it down. but I found tha if I removed all the rafters under the extended eves and made them a texture i could cut it in half and it looked better. Then the railing became a plane with a 2 sided transparent texture. and that just about got me down to where I needed to be. Then all those doors and windows became one plane with a 3d texture and I was there. There are also little things you can do afterwards like deleting all the sides of your mesh that face inwards like as if the building were a molding. but again I would just create something cool and worry about this second step afterwards.

However, it really would be great if there were a tool that would make something like a molding of the building after it was finished and then you could use the molding and have a very clean and easy model but I found nothing to that extent. I think that after examining Travis' original buildings what he must have done is make one shape and cut and extruded it into the shape he wanted specifically to keep it simple and the poly count down. Whereas I really made it like a house with all the cross beams and pieces fitting together and then went "this is way too high what am I gonna do"

New Items added in FUR/FTS:

Naming a point helper "realmportal" will make a portal to another realm. In the user defined tab you need to put NAME=name of town and the next line REALMID=# the realm id of the realm. You can set a merchant pointhelper to TYPE=Tarot for the card dealer. You must put a teleportstart pointhelper in town with nothing in the user defined properties. You can set a merchant to TYPE=herostatue to create a hero statue, but you have to make the platform, you can also scale the statues in the monsters.dat and make them as big or small as you like and the items will be that size as you put them on the statue.

Crashes and Final Thoughts:

My other suggestion is that you should make version numbers of your saves. When working with something as complex as the town, many times max crashed on me. When it does this, sometimes it makes a backup and sometimes it doesn't. and sometimes the backup is corrupted. So my suggestion is after you make a big change to a building or have just gotten through a crazy monotonous piece of mapping, do save as and then call it egyptiantown_v1.1 and then 1.2, 1.3, etc. Just to give you an idea I used this numbering system and my final version is at 15.9 right now with the garden, do the math. I had some crashes where I was so angry I didn't touch it for a week, losing hours of work, so don't be like me.

As far as time goes, it took me 6+mos but in that time I got a good job that left me too exhausted to mod at night so I didn't touch it much for 3mos and just about disappeared from the forums, leaving many people to think I would never finish. So you can probably finish much sooner. In that time having apricot to ask questions of was invaluable. and since I've been through the process I can probably help you pretty quickly and easily as I spent often days trying to figure out how to do many things. I wouldn't go crazy with missing sleep. Something this large-scale, you know you won't finish it any time soon so you fiddle a little here fiddle a little there and let it unfold as your imagination does.

Anyway this is a great start good luck to you on this. One thing to keep in mind while you're making the model think about how your dividing the texturing and make cuts/lines to outline where you'll be using different textures. Texturing is a whole nother dimension to everything. I'm so glad that someone else is tackling this challenge.

Good luck!