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Introduction

Much of the content in Distant Worlds can be modified, allowing you to customize your game experience.

Want to add your own alien races to the game? Maybe you want to predefine your own characters that appear in the game? Do you have some custom ship pictures you want to use in the game? Or maybe you just want to hear different music while playing the game? All of these changes are possible in Distant Worlds.

This document describes which content you can customize, and explains how to do it.

Themes

A theme contains a full set of customized content, including images, alien races, characters, music, etc. You can switch between all of the themes on your computer from the “Change Theme” screen on the Main Menu.

Themes are stored in their own folder, with subfolders for specific types of content.

A finished theme should be placed in its own folder under the **Customization** folder. The theme will then be available for selection from the “Change Theme” screen in the game.

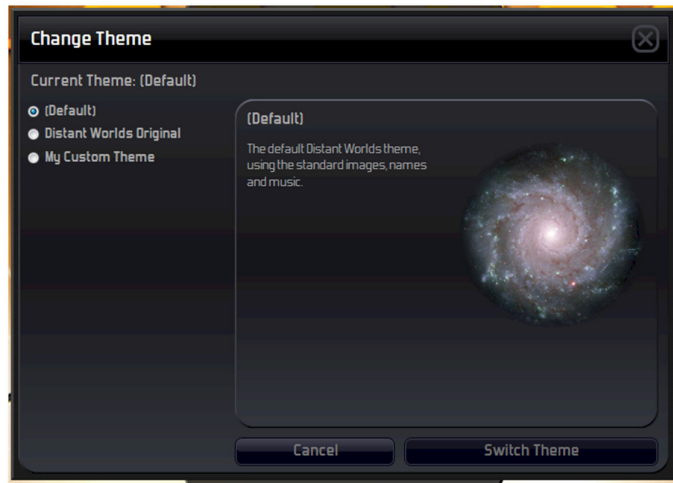


Figure 1. Change Theme screen

Listed below are all of the types of content that can be customized in a theme:

- Alien races (races folder and raceBiases.txt)
- Alien race families (raceFamilies.txt and raceFamilyBiases.txt)
- Empire policy (policy folder)
- Dialog for each alien race (dialog folder)
- Ship Design templates (designTemplates folder)
- Custom predefined Characters (characters folder)
- Natural resources that occur in the galaxy (resources.txt)
- Components used to build ships and bases (components.txt)
- Research tech trees (research.txt)
- Fighters (fighters.txt)
- Planetary facilities and wonders (facilities.txt)
- Governments (governments.txt and governmentBiases.txt)
- Nearly any images in the game including:
 - Ship and Base pictures (images\units\ships folder)
 - Alien race and pirate pictures (images\units\races folder)
 - Character pictures (images\units\characters folder)
 - Troop pictures (images\units\troops folder)
 - Empire flag symbols (images\ui\flagshapes folder)
 - Weapons effects (images\effects\weapons folder)
 - Planet images (images\environment\planets folder)
 - Planetary surface maps (images\environment\planetmaps folder)
 - Use interface button icons (images\ui\chrome folder)
 - And many more...
- Custom Galactopedia articles (help folder)

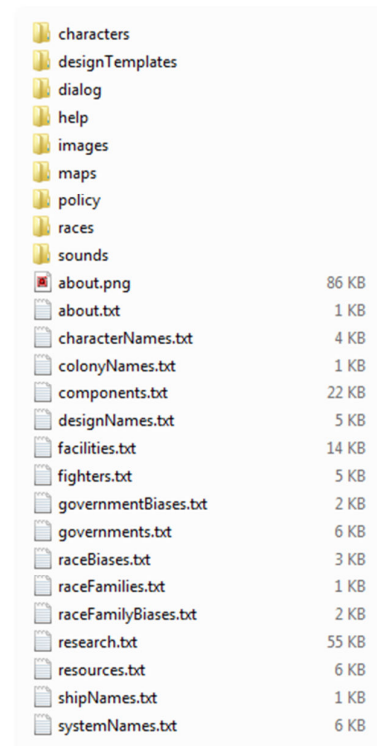


Figure 2. Theme folders and files

- Custom predefined Galaxy maps (maps folder)
- Star system names (systemNames.txt)
- Ship design names (designNames.txt)
- Random Character names (characterNames.txt)
- Player ship names per type (shipNames.txt)
- Names given to newly-established player colonies (colonyNames.txt)
- Music (sounds\music folder)
- Sound effects (sounds\effects folder)

Theme Description

To introduce your custom theme in the Change Theme screen, you may optionally include some descriptive files in the root of your theme folder.

To display some introductory text describing your theme, include the file **about.txt**. The text in this file will appear when your theme is selected in the Change Theme screen.

You may also add an image to accompany your description. To do this, include a PNG image file named **about.png**. This image will be displayed to the right of your introductory text.

Most Items Optional

Note that most customizable items are optional – i.e. you only need to supply the items that you want customized, all other items will be loaded from the default resources. Thus it is possible to customize a single image, while loading the remaining images from the default Distant Worlds images.

This principle holds true for most other items: customized name text files, etc. You do not need to customize everything to have a valid theme. Just customize what you want to change.

However an exception to the above applies when adding alien races to a theme. If you create one or more new custom races then you must explicitly define all of the race-related files for every race in your theme. This also means that you must include any of the default races (from the root game folder) that you want available in your theme. For every alien race you should include the following:

- a race file in the **races** folder
- an empire policy file in the **policy** folder
- optionally, a set of predefined characters in a file in the **characters** folder
- optionally, a set of design template files in their own race-named subfolder in the **designTemplates** folder
- an updated **raceBiases.txt** file that records bias values for all races in your theme

To achieve this, you may find it helpful to copy some of the existing race, policy, character and designTemplate files from default Distant Worlds game installation. You can copy these files to your theme subfolders and then modify them as needed.

