OTTD Graphics website, Proposal

Objectives/summery:

Goal of the website:

Is to provide a location to upload, download and manage different graphics elements for the New OTTD graphics engine.

Player benefits:

The standard OTTD player will have a single known location that they can download all OTTD graphics from. The location is organised into an understandable structure with logical navigation.

Artist benefits:

The OTTD artist has a place to upload and identify their graphics without needing to worry about administration, organisation, and bandwidth of their own.

Developer benefits:

Developers can feel confident distributing (or assuming) certain graphics are being used by players.

Requirements of the site:

The site must be upload-able via a form based input that will work on all major browsers and OS's

the uploaded graphics must be able to be moderated by an admin/moderator before being publicly available. This process should be done in a similar way to the original form (so that things can be edited in a GUI)

The graphics should be assigned an automated filename, and organised back-end in an appropriate way. (this automatic filename will help when massive numbers of graphics are available)

The graphics should be displayed in a logical order (front end wise) preferably each graphic can be located in multiple locations (from the user perspective)

Possible Future requirements of the site:

Added/Changed input fields in the upload form. (as new sections/objects become available, this is a very real and likely event)

Ottd interfacing with the back end of the site, to monitor, compare, and download new graphics as needed (will save bandwidth, mean graphics need not be distributed with the game . (long way in the future, once the new GFX engine is complete in mid 2005 at least)

The site being able to auto-complete the form by reading the information stored within the graphics format. Or alternatively being able to compile a graphics file from what is written in the form, and the files uploaded to it. (long way in the future i would think if this happens)

UPLOAD FEATURE:

The interface will need to contain input fields, drop down menus, or check boxes for the following things.

- **the next three would be the same drop down menu i assume**
- Replacement of current GFX (input the filename of the one wanting to be replaced) (needs to be moderator approved before actually overwriting anything)
  this is important, as if a file has been submitted in the past, and a file is being uploaded to "replace" it (for whatever reason) this option will need to available to override the existing. Rather than getting duplicates everywhere.
- Add on to current GFX file. (input the filename of the original) (this will group the new graphic in the same table/location as the original with an updated sprite)
  this option is important for graphics you don't want to replace, but ones which are very similar to each other (like very similar)
- original graphic.

- **Status:** Work in progress, or, Publish
  the work in progress section would be a separate system within the site (parallel effectively) where people can upload semi-complete sets for others to finish, or add to. All the functions of this section are the same as the main finished sprites section.

- **Title:** i.e. "pine tree" "large bus"

- **Sample image:** file UPLOAD feature (to be shown on website, will be a .png approx 128pixels wide in most cases)

- **Graphics file:** unsure what the format extension will be currently (probably .zip or .tar) but this file will be usable by the game

- **Object type:** (then subtype through context sensitive menus)
  - vehicle,
    - road
      - truck
      - bus
    - rail
      - rail
      - monorail
      - maglev
      - subway
      - **engine, or carridge** (all subgroups have this under)
    - air
      - helicopter
      - plane
    - water
  - building,
    - industry
    - town/city
      - houses
      - office
      - commercial
      - recreation

headquarters
                        depots
                                road
                                rail
                                monorail
                                maglev
                                helicopter
                                hanger
                                ship
                        stations
                                bus
                                lorry
                                rail
                                ship
                                airport
                        Tunnels
                        Bridges
                landscape,
                        ground
                        trees
                        water
                        misc
                track/road,
                        road
                        rail
                        monorail
                        maglev
                        canal
                        airport
                accessories (kinda the misc area)
                        contains stuff like signs, smoke explosions, GUI stuff...

- **country of origin:** (standard country list, include a "N/A" option too)

- **era:** (date that the item is based on, i.e. 1900's)

- **Set:**
  N/A
  Mars
  Temperate
  Arctic
  Desert
  toy land
  misc-1
  misc-2
  we might get new sets like tropical, Saturn, moon, ocean-floor... so this area needs to be expendable. This section is only really used for extended categorising of graphics

- **creator/creators:** (multiple line input, all creators listed in the source file must be placed here)

- **Comment**: they can write a comment here, (definitely useful for work in progress stuff)

BACK END STUFF:

file renaming:
i am thinking that a filename made up of the things filled in the form would be the most effective way: (although perhaps the coders have something else to say) as long as its consistent i am happy.

For example a WIP file might be like this (I'll leave you up to this one, as long as no form can return the same filename i am happy)

00001WVAHNZ1931AR001.zip

00001=the order in which the file was uploaded to the site (so all files are different no matter what)
W=work in progress
V=vehicle
A=air
H=helicopter
NZ=country code (New Zealand in this case)
1931=year
A=first set on the list (others B,C,D....)
R001= revision number (any file that replaces a previous one will have the same filename but the R will change, this would let Ottd in the future know the file has been updated and to replace it)

but again I'll leave this up to you, you could possibly find a way easier way to do this. That produces a far shorter name.

File organizing:
there would be two separate (but identical) directory structures. (naming is up to you)

-depth 1-
WIP
final

-depth 2- (these directories could be ignored, since files will have different extensions, so the same name could be used for all 3 needed files)
Graphics files
source files
thumbnails

-depth 3-
vehicles
buildings
track types
landscape
misc

for example \wip\sf\v (work in progress -- source files – vehicles)

Mysql/database:
can be organized however you like. But should be done with consideration of future Ottd integration.

FRONT END:

totally up to you, but it should be automatically generating from whats in the back end, and should have a structure easy to navigate, and easy for the user to find anything based on the info from the form. Like if i want to find anything from England i could, or any vehicle in the steam age... or even organised by the artist

visually, if the PHP is linked to CSS then the style of the site can be come up with later, a white site with black is fine for the time being. Logical layout and functionality are more important than colours to me (but if you want to do the look of the site (if its more interesting to you) then go for it :D)

RANDOM THOUGHTS:

since you are the guy making it, and i know that most solutions to problems happen while doing something. I make it clear that everything here is just an "idea" or outline to what my view of things is.

If you find an easier, better, more expandable to do anything another way, or come up with any new ideas which you can incorporate then go for it.

I assume you have the smarts, and ability to make decisions on your own, so go for it.

Thanks heaps for helping out with this. I certainly don't have the skills nor the time to get something like this up and running.

Its gonna be really appreciated by everyone and will save heaps of time and hassle for artists and developers.

Douglas Ollivier