

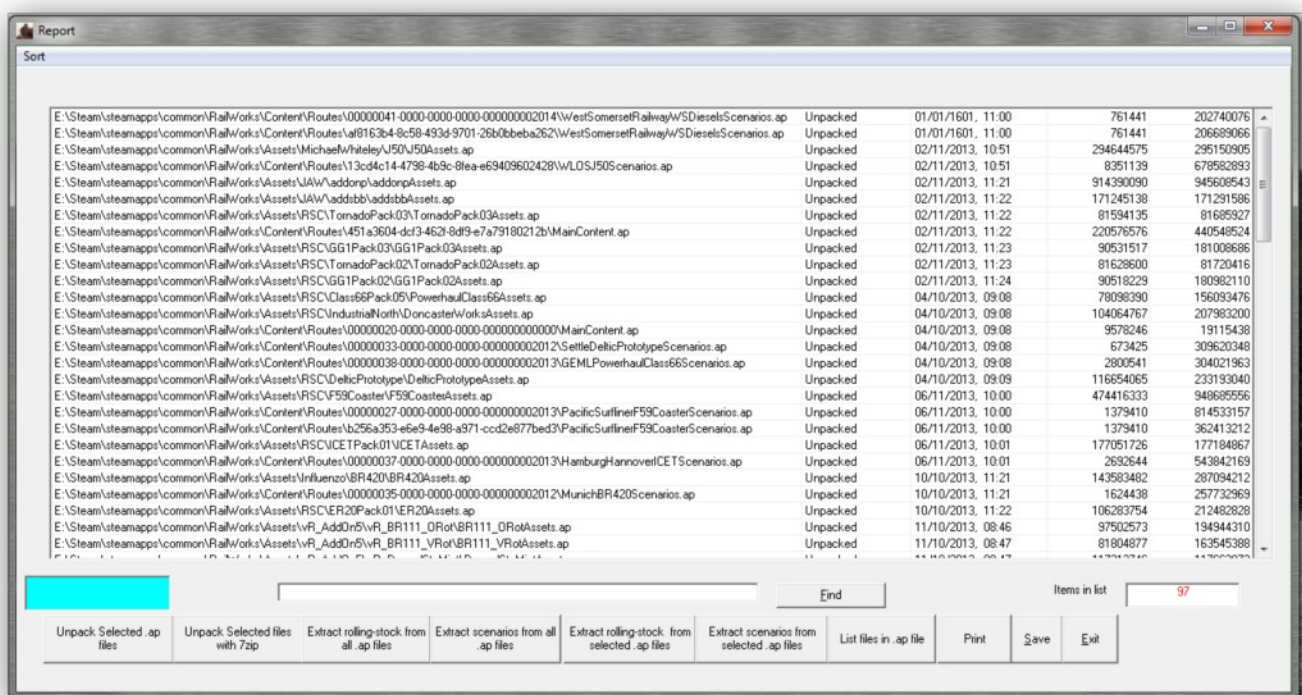
RW_Tools and .ap Files

I have had many emails advising that with the advent of TS2014 a number of options in RW_Tools no longer work as they used to. This is because, RSC have started packing many Routes and Asset packs in a type of .zip file with .ap suffix. They have not documented these changes. Each of these packed folders contains all the files a route or locomotive etc needs to run in TS2014. Unfortunately, this has rendered many of the existing options in RW_Tools unusable. To make matters worse, RSC lied to me saying I would get a beta 'next week' then dropped me from the core program beta test plan without even the courtesy of telling me that I was not getting an early version of the program to enable me to keep RW_tools up to date, nor to comment on it before it was released. I can only assume it is now their policy to try to make it difficult for users to modify the program at all.

Fortunately, these .ap files can be unpacked using the command line version of 7zip (7za.exe) packaged with RW_Tools. Once the .ap files are unpacked, the contents can be used as before. Please note that doing this will DOUBLE the size of folders containing the .ap file as the .ap file must be retained so that Steam can carry out its upgrades, and if there are Steam upgrades, then the new .ap file will have to be unpacked to get hold of any new contents but take care if you have modified your files as any new files will be overwritten during the unpack process, but see below.

Find all .ap files

As the name suggests, this option searches your Assets folder for any/all .ap files therein. This may take a little time as there are a lot of files to check through. Once the files are found, a list like the following appears, your list will be somewhat different as this list includes some home-made files to test the system.



As can be seen above, the list contains packages of both Assets(rolling stock etc) and Content(routes etc). New files will display as 'Not unpacked' then once unpacked they will change to Unpacked.

Note that if an .ap file is subsequently updated by RSC, Steam will send you a new version and this will need to be unpacked again if you wish to change some of the files. Under these circumstances it has been noticed that Steam appears to delete ALL of the files you unpacked originally, and maybe even those you have modified, thus rendering any alterations you have made void. So if you do change any files, e.g. By reskinning or editing .bin files - make sure you back them up or you might lose the changes altogether.

If you wish to see what is in a particular pack, click on the .ap file to select it and click the 'Unpack Selected .ap files' button. This will display ALL of the files contained within any particular .ap file. If you just want to access 1 particular file within the package, you can go to the Extract Files/Extract Selected menu and this will extract the chosen items.

Alternatively you may wish to extract all the files, this can be done using the option 'Extract All' which will place the extracted files into a folder of your choice, or 'Extract all to same folder as .ap' which will establish the complete folder tree as you would have seen under TS2013 and place all of the files so that they are now visible from RW_Tools as in the past. There is also a 'List files in .ap file' button which just provides a list of the contents without having to unpack the file at all.

Unpack with 7zip

As a faster alternative to the above, you may select as many .ap files as you wish in the list of .ap files and click on 'Unpack with 7zip' this then gives you a list of alternative unpack methods you can use as can be seen below.

1. Unpack .ap files to a new folder - this places the folder tree in a folder away from your Assets folder and may be useful if you don't wish to overwrite Modified files, you could unpack to a spare folder and check for changed files.
2. Unpack .ap files to same folder as the .ap (first time unpack) - Use this if your folder only contains the .ap file as it fails if there are existing files in the Folder tree.
3. Unpack .ap overwriting all destination files if they exist (Default setting) - Use this if you have no modified files in the external folder tree - it will unpack all files including updated ones and update your whole folder tree.
4. Unpack .ap skipping any files which already exist - This will only unpack new files in the .ap - but will NOT unpack new versions of files you already have.
5. Unpack .ap appending number to any NEW file which already exists - Probably not much use as it adds a numeric suffix, e.g. Scotsman_1.bin to the new version if Scotsman.bin already exists - OK if it was a small archive, but if you have thousands of files in the tree, a lot of work...

6. Unpack .ap renaming existing files by adding a number - This unpacks all of the new files and keeps the old ones but renames them by adding a numeric suffix as in 5 above.

Note that the above options now make all of the files extracted Read/Write so that they may be used in RW_Tools.

As the above method of extracting every file from the .ap archives tends to double the size of the Assets or Content folders, I have added some extra buttons which only extract Rolling-stock or Scenarios from the .ap archives. This is because many people only wish to extract Locomotives etc to re-skin them or Scenarios to modify them. Extracting these items only allow re-skinning and swapping of stock in Scenarios using RW_Tools to take place without the necessity of unpacking the whole archive. The possible options are:-

Extract rolling stock from ALL .ap files

Extract scenarios from ALL .ap files

Extract rolling stock from selected .ap files

Extract scenarios from selected .ap files

These are self explanatory.

The above is an extract from the next RW_Tools Help file - I am posting it early because there has been a lot of interest in these files.

Please email me direct with any queries/comments/amendments etc

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