
Subject: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat

Posted by [kerryg](#) on Sat, 13 Feb 2010 19:38:37 GMT

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Hi all. This one's another skinning advance.

We've had some great breakthroughs in skinning lately. We've had a resolution of an old problem in altering some of PARIS's most ancient BMPs - a problem that induced crashes in the Paris app (workaround: if you're going to mess with MIXER.bmp, use Resource Tuner rather than the long-recommended XN Resource Editor - XN seems to mangle 8-bit BMPs). Jim Drago's also created a new method of skinning that's cut the time he needs to generate a new skin to 1/10th of the previous, and as you've seen he's produced some gorgeous new skins that you can now download from the Wiki.

One issue remained: the app has always had large chunks of the user interface that *aren't* bitmaps, and as such couldn't be edited using the traditional methods. This includes most of the editor window - meaning the lanes and audio objects and waveforms and text labels for them. They'd always remain at the default, no matter what you did to the bitmaps.

We stumbled on the solution for this by accident while trying to solve other graphics issues. For all I know the term might actually be "re-stumbled" - the solution is actually ridiculously simple so someone's probably noticed this before.

In your PARIS root folder there's a file called Paris.dat. You may remember this file from the days of the "Paris PC Downgrade" - it contains the text strings that PARIS displays as dialogues, which were edited in the "PARIS PC Downgrade" to give humorous alternatives. That's the first section of Paris.dat.

The second section of Paris.dat appears to control the locations and sizes of various "rectangles" which represent elements of PARIS' user interface - for example, where (and what size) to display the bitmaps for the SUSHI bar at the top of the Editor Window (we'll start investigating this part later).

[Be aware that although I've not noticed any stability issues at all (it seems PARIS doesn't really care what colors it draws), this next part is, as always, "use at your own risk". Back up your Paris.dat before editing it just in case you accidentally erase or overwrite something!]

The third and final section of Paris.dat is the jackpot for skinning - it's a description of the colours used in pretty much everything in PARIS which isn't a bitmap. This would include the colours of:

- all fonts, menus, scrollbars and rulers
- lanes, audio segments, waveforms and text in the Editor Window
- the top half of the Project Window
- plus many other interface elements.

Paris.dat can be opened in WordPad, edited as a text file and re-saved (make sure the file extension is changed back to .dat). The colours are stored as RGB values (ie 255,255,255). I'll be creating an index over time to show which entry does what (some are already commented in the

original .dat and I've discovered what a lot more of them do as well).

I've already started a RADAR-style graphic look for the Editor window with grey lanes, blue segments and black waveforms. It's pretty easy on the eyes, and it'll be familiar to those who have used RADAR before. I'll post a screenshot when it's more mature, and a modified Paris.dat you can drop in your PARIS folder (after backing up your own, of course!) as well as the raw text of the modifications that you can paste in your own Paris.dat (if you've already altered your own and don't want to lose your modifications).

The net result of all these advances means we finally have the overwhelming majority of the PARIS app available to us for skinning and re-colorizing, which is eventually going to result in some pretty cool new looks for the old girl. They're easily exchanged, too, either via copies of the Paris.dat or pasted text.

Have fun
