Using the PCGen Ability LST File Generator

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About the PCGen Ability LST File Generator

This program is designed for PCGen users who are not comfortable with coding but who would like to be able to create simple custom abilities (feats, traits, and GM-awarded abilities) for their characters. It provides a GUI to define, edit, and save abilities, as well as modifications ("MODs") to existing abilities. It provides very minimal support to coding mechanical bonuses due to the virtually infinite complexity of potential mechanical effects that can be coded. However, it allows a user to create a custom ability description that is displayed alongside other abilities on their character sheet, as well as specifying prerequisites for the ability.

The program itself contains tooltips that briefly explain various fields and functions, but this document provides walk-throughs of basic functionality.

If you have any questions, feedback, bug reports, etc., please refer them to Tamdrik#0553 on the PCGen Discord server.

Defining a Simple Custom Ability

In the program, specify the attributes of the ability you want to create in their associated text fields. The minimum required fields are Ability Name, Type of Ability, and Description. Unique Key should be specified if the Ability Name is (potentially) not unique to avoid conflicts, but otherwise it defaults to being the same as the Ability Name.
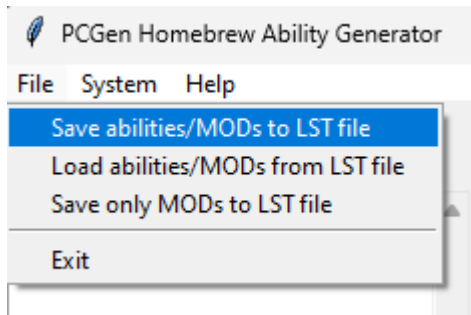

Once you're satisfied with the ability specification, click the "Add Ability" button at the bottom. It should appear in the list to the left.
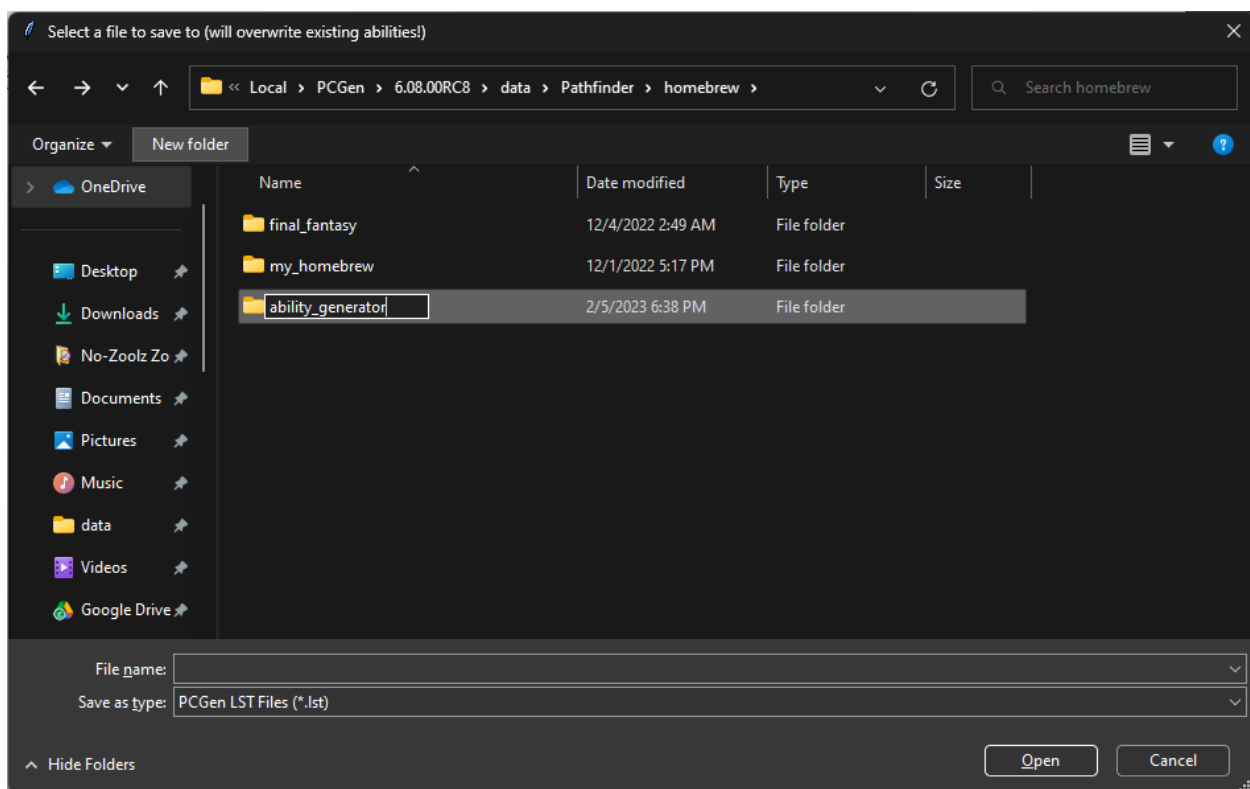
Saving Abilities to a Homebrew LST file

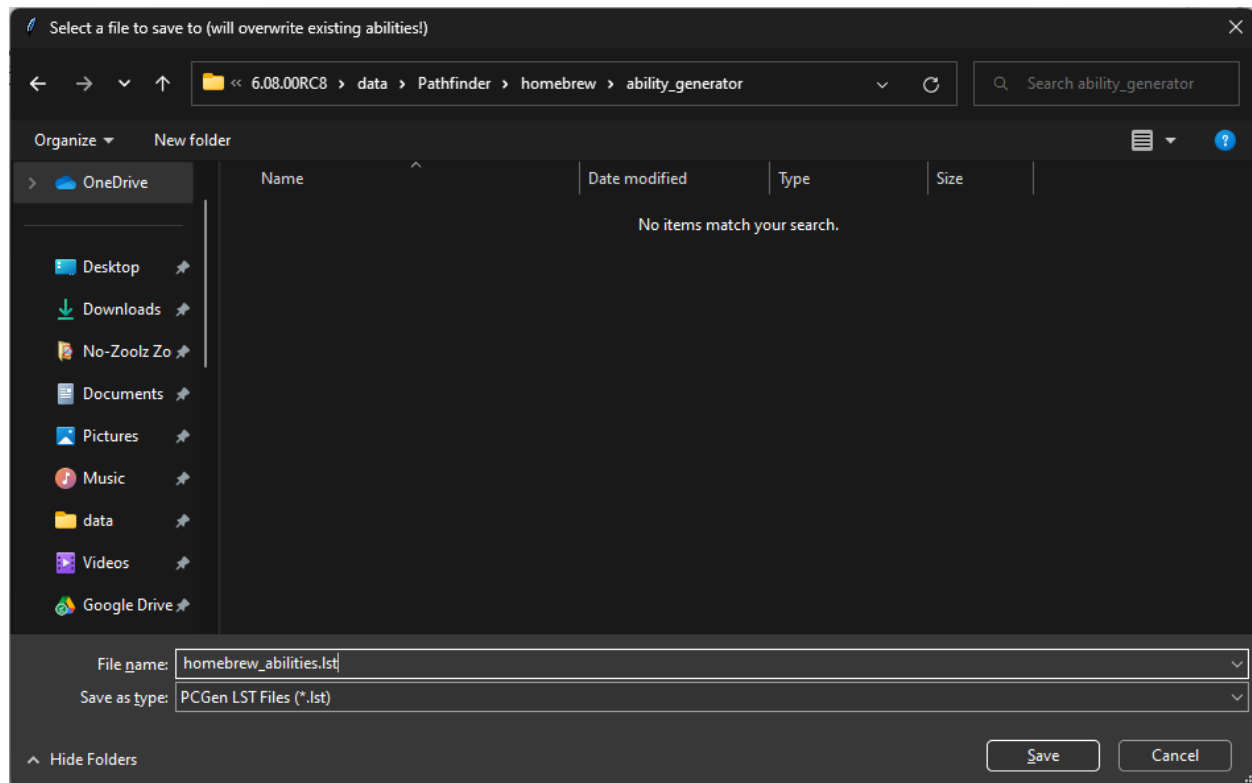Once you've defined all your abilities, you can save them to a .lst file by selecting:

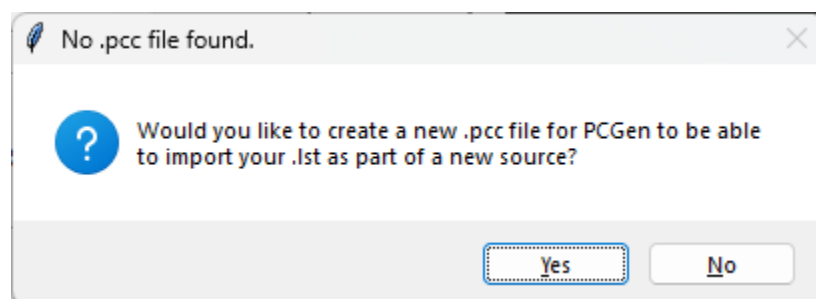`File` → `Save abilities/MODs to LST file.`

To keep your sources organized, I recommend you create a new folder in an appropriate location under your PCGen data folder.
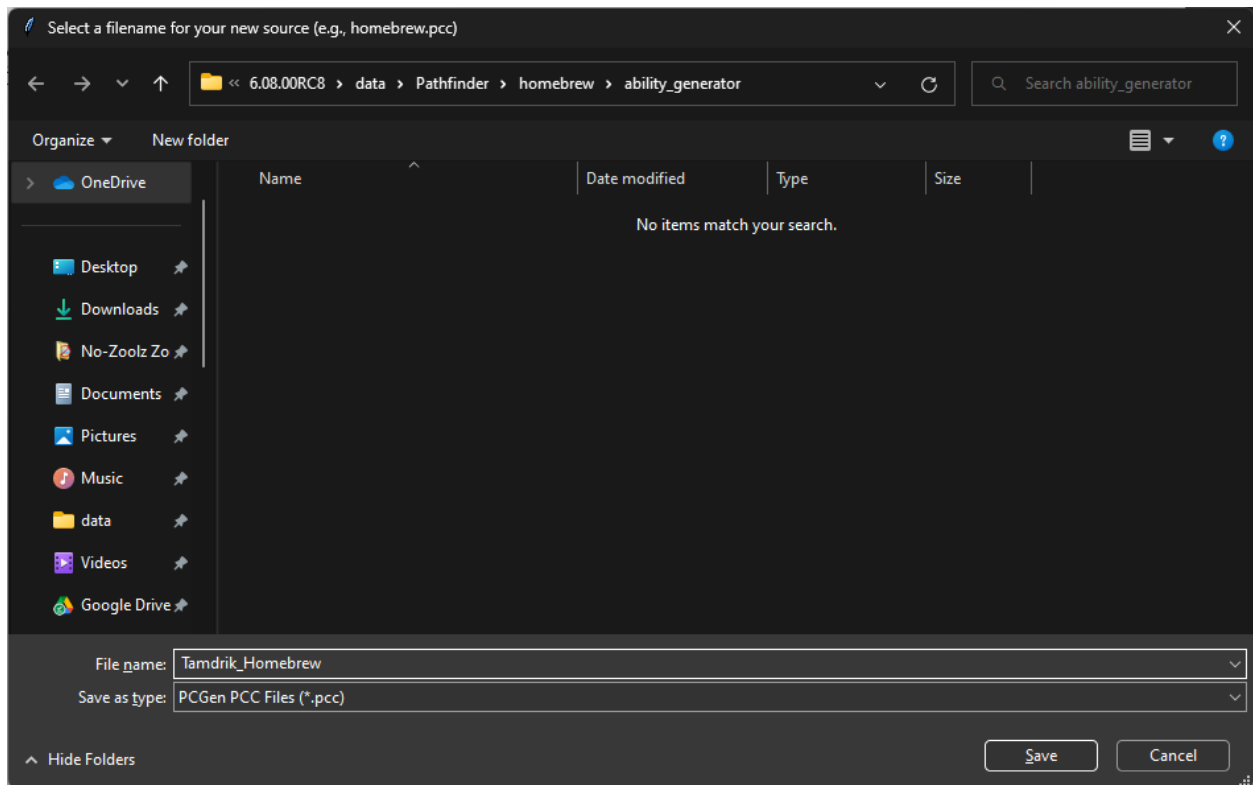
Open that folder in the chooser dialog and enter a name for your new abilities .lst file. By convention, it's recommended that it have "abilities" in the filename somewhere, since this new source could potentially contain other .lst files like for spells or equipment in the future.
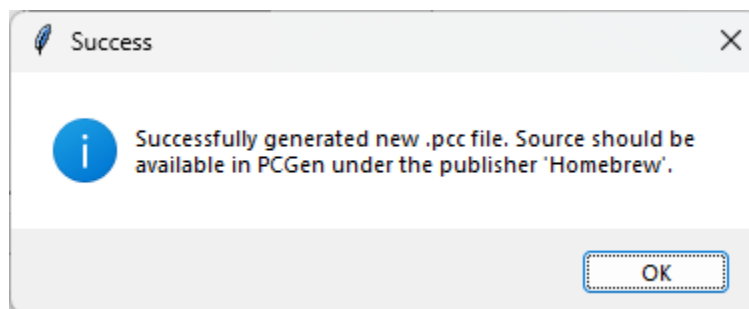

You should get a success dialog.   Once you acknowledge it, since this is a new source, it will ask if you'd like to create a new .pcc file that will load your .lst file. This file specifies all the .lst files associated with your new source, which for now only contains one abilities .lst file, but could contain spells, equipment, or even other abilities .lst files. Select "Yes".

Enter a name for your new .pcc file. It should be in the same folder as your .lst file. For the sake of simplicity, the program will assign the name of your new source to be the same as the filename you choose.
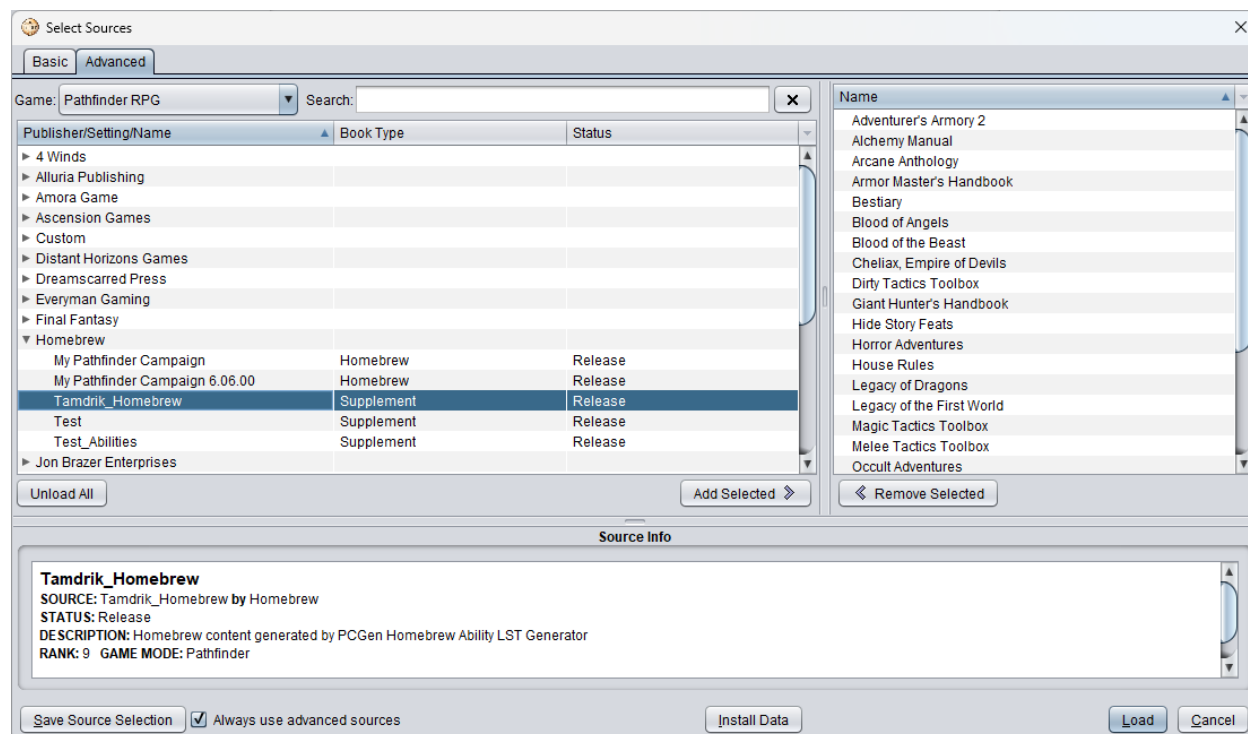

You should get a success dialog that informs you to look under the "Homebrew" publisher when loading your new custom source.

Loading Your Homebrew Abilities into PCGen

Once you've created your homebrew .lst and .pcc files, you can load them into PCGen in the Select Sources menu, under the Advanced tab. Go to the "Homebrew" publisher and select the source with the same name you selected for your .pcc file.

FAQ

Q: I get an error saying, "Couldn't find PCGen directory in standard install location. You will need to save .lst files in a homebrew folder somewhere under the 'data' folder where PCGen is installed on your system." How do I find my PCGen install location?

A: This program looks for PCGen in the default location of `C:\Users\[your account]\AppData\PCGen\[version]` or, failing that, the Windows registry. If it can find it, it will automatically set your default directory to that location's data subdirectory to make it easier/convenient to save your ability .lst files. If it doesn't find PCGen's install location, you'll have to manually save your .lst files to an appropriate subfolder of the PCGen `data` folder. Once you do, the program will save that location as a default directory for future runs when you exit the program. You can find where PCGen is installed on your system by doing the following:

1. (If you have a desktop shortcut to PCGen, skip to step 2.) Right-click on the PCGen start menu shortcut and select "Open File Location".
2. Right-click on the PCGen shortcut here and select "Properties".
3. The install path for PCGen should be located in the "Target" field.