Plaintext

The **plaintext** file format is a recent ASCII file format that is similar to Life 1.05 in that it stores patterns simply by representing dead and alive cells by different characters and "drawing" the pattern with those characters. The particulars of the plaintext file format described here are based on the format used by Edwin Martin's Game of Life program (https://playgameoflife.com/) , which uses the .cells file extension.

Description of format

The first line is a header line, which has the form

```
!Name: Something
```

where "Something" is the name of the pattern described by the file. This is followed by optional "!" lines that describe the pattern. For example:

```
!This is a really cool pattern.
!It was first discovered by Some Guy.
```

It seems as though the convention is to add one final "!" line with nothing else on it before the pattern itself, but this is optional.

To store the pattern itself, a "." is used to represent a dead cell, while an "O" (capital o) is used to represent an alive cell. This choice of characters was derived from the visual format used on The Life Lexicon (http://www.conwaylife.com/ref/lexicon/lex.htm) by Stephen Silver.

Because this file format was created much more recently than other similar file formats (such as Life 1.05), there is no restriction on the number of characters per line.

Examples

The following is a glider in plaintext format:

```
!Name: Glider
!
.O.
..O
OOO
```

The following is the Gosper glider gun in plaintext format:

```
!Name: Gosper glider gun
!
........................O...........
......................O.O...........
```

```
............OO......OO............OO
...........O...O....OO...........OO
OO........O.....O...OO.............
OO........O...O.OO....O.O..........
.........O.....O.......O...........
.........O...O....................
............OO.....................
```

Issues

Some variations of the plaintext format exists,[1] which were results of older manual encoding and should be corrected. For example, trailing dead cells are sometimes omitted on a line, and lines containing only dead cells are sometimes left completely blank. Another example file (https://www.conwaylife.com/patterns/3enginecordershipeater.cells) used "*" (as in Life 1.05) instead of "O" erroneously.

References

1. HubTou (May 1, 2020). Re: LifeWiki Trusted Account Request Thread - Post requests here (http://www.conwaylife.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=&p=95845#p95845) (discussion thread) at the ConwayLife.com forums

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