Bridge Commander Universal Tool Manual

Installation

Auto: Run the installer and follow the onscreen instructions.

Manual: Copy & paste the contents from the unpacked variant of BCUT to where you want. Make sure to start BCUT.exe as this is the main executable.

BCSMC Section

This section contains 5 different tabs: Basic BCSMC, Fast BCSMC, Advanced BCSMC, Plugin Editor and TGL Description Merge.

Options are very well documented all you need to do is right click anywhere on the form and then left click on an option for detailed help.
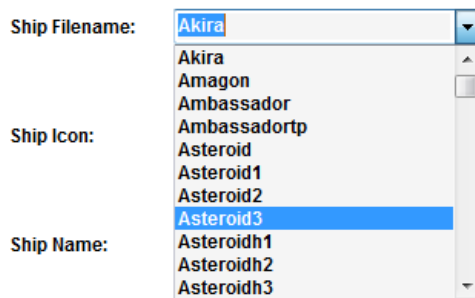
Don't forget to configure first BCUT's saving location output in the Options section.

-Basic BCSMC:

This is most useful option for the average person. It allows fast few clicks plugin creation. Let us demonstrate how to create a sample plugin.

Before doing so, we configured the BCUT in the options section to save plugins in our BC directory.
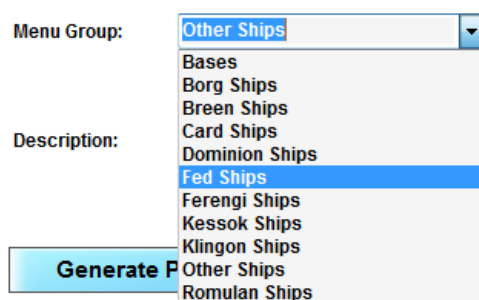
From the dropdown menu select your desired ship file:
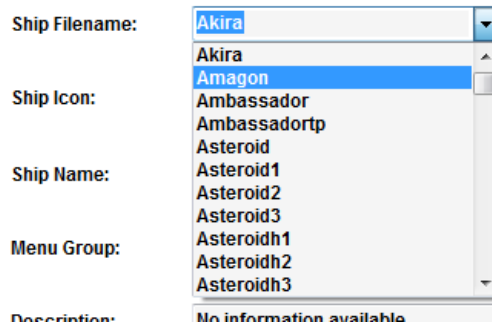

Choose a Menu group:

Click on Generate Plugin button and we are done.

-Fast BCSMC:

This option like the Basic BCSMC allows easy plugin creation, only instead of creating a plugin immediately it stores the data in its internal database. When you click on the Generate Plugins button it then creates them at once.

Let's create few sample plugins.
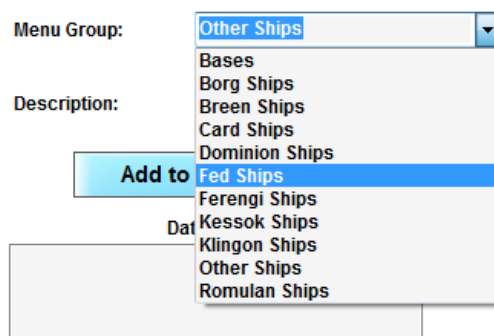
Select a ship from the dropdown menu:

Configure its menu group:

Click on the Add to database button.

Now repeat the steps from above for each ship you are planning to inject into the game.

Once done, click on the Generate plugins button and wait a second until BCUT completes the plugin creation process.

-Advanced BCSMC:

This is the ultimate ship plugin creation tool which supports a wide variety of customization options.

It supports FTech, SDT, Submenu and many more options.

This mode also supports Ship Description Writer format which allows flexible and more advanced ship descriptions.

Let us create a sample plugin:

As in Basic BCSMC and Fast BCSMC modes the most basic data is auto filled once you define a ship filename.

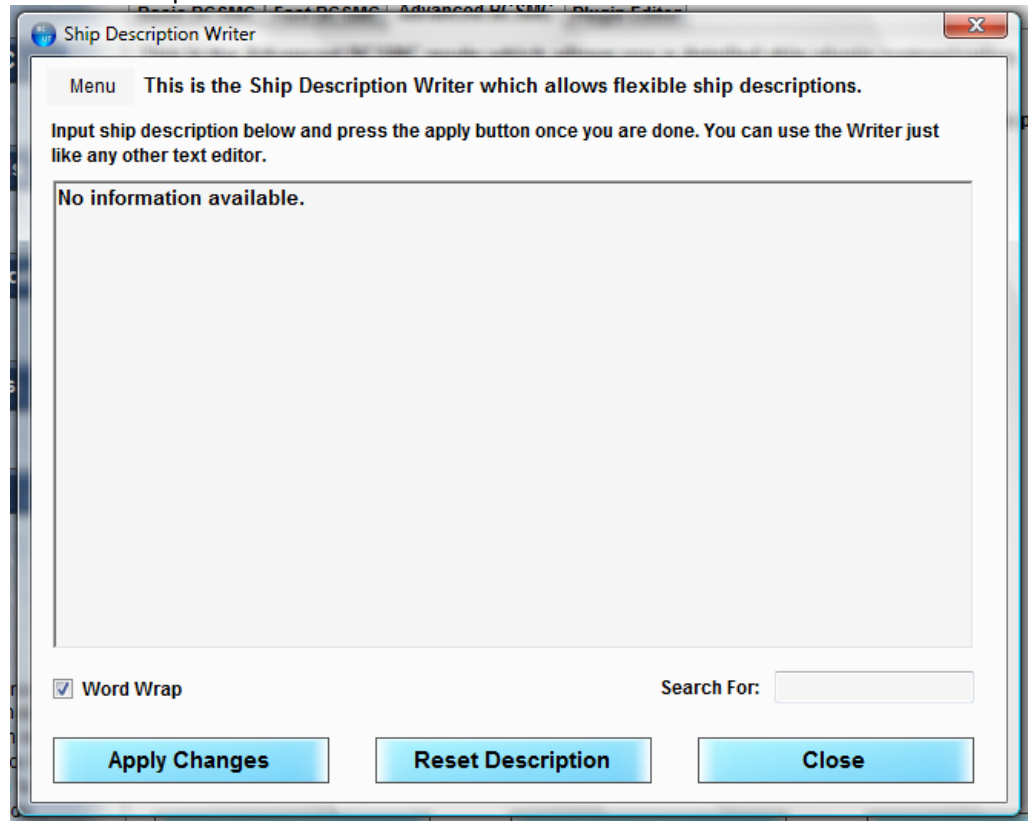Now specify a ship icon from the dropdown list:

Type in the ship name:

Define a ship menu group and if you want customize ship species also (this is useful if you add a ship to a non predefined menu like "Future Ships" i.e. and want your ship to have Federation Sounds)

Write a description:

And click on the Generate Plugin button. This will create you a most basic plugin.

Other options like Warp Speeds (CWS 2.0 required), Life support (DS9FX Xtended required), SubMenu (submenu required – comes with BC Foundation 2008), SDT (SDT Required), FTech (FTech required – comes with BC Foundation 2008), CloakSFX (CloakSF required) are completely optional in a plugin, if you insert the data in the plugin and the end user doesn't have those mods installed. They just simply won't have effect on their install, so you don't have to go rushing out and pointing to users that they must have those mods installed (in this case they are completely optional).

-Plugin Editor:

This tool will load an existing data from the plugin and allow you to edit it. Note that the editor doesn't support all the features out there and if it comes into a data it cannot load it will prompt you.

This mode supports all the features Advanced BCSMC supports so please refer that section for more info.

This mode supports drag & drop of ship plugin files, so just simply drag and drop a plugin onto the tab to quickly load a data from the plugin.

NOTE: Drag & Drop doesn't work on Vista due to UAC.

-TGL Description Merge:

This tool allows you to import old format TGL descriptions to your game. By old format we mean plugin descriptions created via BCMP which you were supposed to merge with ships.tgl. You can do this via 2 methods:

1. Plugin Importer
   This method is highly recommended. For best effects make sure to install QB Description Fix which comes with BCUT.
2. TGL Merge
   This method is the same as the old BCMP's. It merges or replaces the descriptions in the ships.tgl. We however encourage you to use Plugin Importer feature as it is more reliable and easier to use when you wish to edit current data in the plugin.

- Plugin Scanner
  Allows you to scan your BC and detect which ships are missing plugins. Any ship plugin created using this tool will be located in "Unsorted Ships" menu in the game.

BC Tools Section
Don't forget to configure first BCUT's saving location output in the Options section.

-N00b 101:
In general this is a guide on how to create a most basic modded installation. Be sure to follow the instructions precisely.

-BC TestMode Starter:
This will allow you to create a desktop shortcut with correct parameters to start your Bridge Commander correctly in TestMode. Please refer program guides on the tab for more info.

-BCMP Fixer:
If you tend to use BCMP and notice ships missing from your menu selection in the game, that is BCMP's doing. Use this feature to fix installations messed up by it. Please refer the program guides on the tab for more info.

-Backup BC:
This option allows you to backup your scripts folder which you can use to later on restore back. It is very useful if you get a BSOD when you install a mod, using this tool you can quickly restore your BC to a previous (working) state.

-Mod Installer:
This feature extracts mod archives such as zip, rar, 7zip etc and analyzes the archive contents and it then follows appropriate protocol to install the mods.

Mod Installer recognizes 3 mod types:
1. Manual also known as Copy and paste
2. BCMod packages
3. Setup Installers
Each of these 3 types is supported; in each scenario BCUT guides you through the appropriate steps.

If BCUT detects that a mod package has 2 installation types i.e. Setup Installer and Manual type. It will select based on criteria:

1. Manual installation has advantage over any type
2. BCMod types have advantage over Setup Installers
3. Setup Installers are chosen if no other installation type is detected

To install a mod:
1. Press Extract Archive button
2. Navigate to the desired mod archive
3. Press open
4. Select which documentation to view (please note that you must have appropriate software to view some documents i.e. Microsoft Office to view doc types or docx document types)
5. Select appropriate installation option
6. Press Install Mod button

If you are worried about space, BCUT on each program start deletes its Temporary directory so any leftover is always auto cleaned.

This mode supports drag & drop, so if you wish simply drag and drop your archive onto the tab.

NOTE: Drag & Drop doesn't work on Vista due to UAC.

-Ship Uninstaller:
This option allows you to uninstall Bridge Commander ships. This tool will delete ships icon, ship scripts, ship hardpoints, ships carrier file and ships model and textures. It is useful for freeing up disk space and getting rid of ship mods quickly.

-BCMod Unpacker:
This mode is intended for backwards compatibility with older mods out there. This tool handles and unpacks BCMods. By default during install BCUT is associated with BCMod files (by this we mean when you double click on a file then BCUT launches and starts the unpacking process). If you missed this option simply click on the Associate BCUT with BCMod to repeat the process.

If you want to extract individual files from a BCMod do the following steps:
1. Press the See BCMod Contents button
2. Select files from the BCMod Files Contents list view
3. Click on the Unpack Selected button

This tab also supports drag & drop of BCMod files. So you can drag & drop a BCMod file and BCUT will unpack\install the specified file.

NOTE: Drag & Drop doesn't work on Vista due to UAC.

-BCMod Creator:
This mode allows you to create BCMod packages. By default during installation BCUT adds a right click context menu for directories "Create BCMod". This allows you to simply right click on a folder and click on the button and BCUT will start up instantly and create a BCMod package for you. If you missed this option you can click on the "Add BCUT to Directory Context" button to repeat the process.

This tab also supports drag & drop of folders, so you can drag & drop a folder and BCUT will create a BCMod package instantly.

NOTE: Drag & Drop doesn't worn on Vista due to UAC.

-Sound Plugin Creator:

If you hear no engine sound, phaser sound or torpedo sound ingame it is most likely because it doesn't have a sound plugin specified. Use the following mode to create a sound plugin for your sounds.

Select appropriate sound type, then use the "..." button(s) to browse to your desired sound(s).

Adjust its volume if you want, then press the Add to database button.

Repeat the steps for all of your desired sounds and in the end click on generate plugin button.

-TGL Editor:

This utility can load and edit Totally Games Localization files. It can also load "broken" tgl files which no other tgl editor will load. Using this tgl editor you can fix those tgls so you won't have to lose your data.

If you wish to write ship descriptions, we recommend the usage of the ship description writer in the Advanced BCSMC mode.

For more help use the program guides on the tab.

This tab also supports drag & drop of tgl files, so just drag & drop a file and BCUT will load its data.

NOTE: Drag & Drop doesn't work on Vista due to UAC.

-Carrier Creator:

This option allows you to create Ship Carrier Files for your ships. For this tool to have any effect you must have Shuttle Launch Framework installed on your game.

-Hardpoint Tweaker:

This feature allows you to load up existing hardpoints and tweak their values such as shield values which will naturally make your ship stronger, add new torpedoes to the ships's loadout or change the torpedo amount.

This feature allows you to edit about 90% of all hardpoint values which are categorized for easier access.

This feature however does *not* allow you to position the systems on a ship or add new systems/subsystems.

This is *not* a full MPE replacement .

This mode supports drag & drop of HP files, so just simply drag and drop a hardpoint onto the tab to quickly load the data from the HP.

NOTE: Drag & Drop doesn't work on Vista due to UAC.

-Torpedo Tech Creator:
This feature allows you to add existing techs to ship projectiles. Please remember that you must have FTech installed and depending on tech: either KM 1.0 (or higher) or Frontier's Tech Pack installed.

-Python Editor:
This feature allows you to edit python scripts which BCUT otherwise can't open or recognize by default.

-Foundation Section
This section contains modules related to Foundation.

You can install the foundation by clicking on the install foundation button and select one of the 3 installation option it offers.

It also offers 2 additional fixes for various related game specific problems.

If you tend to use Ship Description Writer then it is recommended to install the QB Description Fix to fix some Foundation related issues regarding this.

-**Options Section**
This section allows you to globally define where BCUT should save ship plugins\extract BCMod files or save sound plugins. It is advised to use the Automatic option when configuring this feature.

-**Help Section**
Using the help section you can check for program updates, view the documentation, readme, visit the programs homepage or obtain help regarding the program.