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Subject: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [asmcint](#) on Tue, 10 Sep 2013 16:28:40 GMT  
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Are the MDL files for Fable III related in any way aside from the file extension to the Autodesk MDL format?

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [Keshire](#) on Tue, 10 Sep 2013 16:59:34 GMT  
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Superficially. I wrote a blender script to import static models into blender that I still need to upload. But I was having problems with the math to figure out bone rotations to grab animated models.

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [asmcint](#) on Tue, 10 Sep 2013 17:22:33 GMT  
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But, were I to use that script, would I be able to import a normal Autodesk MDL as well as a Fable III MDL?

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [Keshire](#) on Tue, 10 Sep 2013 20:48:07 GMT  
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asmcint wrote on Tue, 10 September 2013 10:22But, were I to use that script, would I be able to import a normal Autodesk MDL as well as a Fable III MDL?

Nope. There's enough differences that that would not be possible.

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [asmcint](#) on Tue, 10 Sep 2013 21:13:13 GMT  
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Damn. That sucks, I was kinda hoping I could use your work with that plugin to make an Autodesk plugin for Blender. Oh well, I can still take a crack at making an export plugin once you've uploaded your work.

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [Artofeel](#) on Wed, 11 Sep 2013 05:54:37 GMT

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maybe this is DotXSI format?

Quote:art\characters\fable 3 characters\children\dotxsi\au\_fchild\_hat\_01\au\_fchild\_hat\_01.mdl  
somebody tried to add a header?

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [asmcint](#) on Wed, 11 Sep 2013 06:02:22 GMT

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If it's a DotXSI format, then this SHOULD help in being able to import and export the models.

Link to code from an XSI import/export plugin, hopefully works.

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [Keshire](#) on Sat, 02 Nov 2013 18:14:42 GMT

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asmcint wrote on Tue, 10 September 2013 23:02If it's a DotXSI format, then this SHOULD help in being able to import and export the models.

Link to code from an XSI import/export plugin, hopefully works.

XSI itself is plain text ascii. They used their own in-house plugin to export from dotxsi to their binary model format. .MDL is pretty much just a generic extension for models. Kind of like how .bsp is the generic format for quake/unreal levels.

Once I figure out what the unknowns do, and which data is used and not used, I can write an exporter for blender to get models back into Fable 3. There's really only a few things left that I need to make that possible.

The bulk of my work right now consists of figuring out what the second Verts[nVerts][8] structure does. And then I still need to check if Unknown2 is used. If it is, I need to figure out what it's doing.

After that, it's material/texture stuff. But that should be vastly easier to deal with.

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [asmcint](#) on Sun, 03 Nov 2013 00:49:46 GMT

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That bit having to do with illumination might be glow strength. v1/2/3 is probably handled by the game's quality settings so that it knows what texture resolution to use for given settings.

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [Keshire](#) on Sun, 03 Nov 2013 01:59:08 GMT  
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asmcint wrote on Sat, 02 November 2013 17:49 That bit having to do with illumination might be glow strength. v1/2/3 is probably handled by the game's quality settings so that it knows what texture resolution to use for given settings.

Nah, there's a texture that controls that.

```
Material28
DiffuseMap
art\inventory\multimeshweapons\pictures\hammer_head_auroran_medium\hammer_head_auroran_medium_diff.tex
SpecularMap
art\inventory\multimeshweapons\pictures\hammer_head_auroran_medium\hammer_head_auroran_medium_spec.tex
NomralMap
art\inventory\multimeshweapons\pictures\hammer_head_auroran_medium\hammer_head_auroran_medium_norm.tex
EnvironmentMap
art\inventory\multimeshweapons\pictures\_sharedtextures\rifle_barrel_base_env.tex
IlluminationMap
art\inventory\multimeshweapons\pictures\hammer_head_auroran_medium\hammer_head_auroran_medium_illum.tex
```

I this has more to do with self lit mesh. So that it doesn't need a lightsource to see the texture. At least from what I saw. I've had a ton of problems testing changes so I'm not too sure.

Interestingly enough, Fable 3 will completely skip over files it doesn't like and use the retail/earlier DLC version instead. It's caused me quite a few headaches today.

The second array is 8 floats. And it's per vertex, so I doubt it's doing anything quality wise (I think the steaming.bnk handles that with .gmd).

My best guess is that normals and possibly smoothing groups are being stored there. Since Blender can't import normals I'll have to write the exporter and just guess which ones they are until I get it right...

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Subject: Re: Question about the MDL format  
Posted by [Keshire](#) on Mon, 04 Nov 2013 04:51:07 GMT  
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Keshire wrote on Sat, 02 November 2013 11:14  
And then I still need to check if Unknown2 is used. If it is, I need to figure out what it's doing.

I still have some checking to do, but it looks like that unknown is total verts used for faces. I found a couple easy ones that made it obvious. 3 verts per face = unknown2.

```
00000396 uint32 nTris  2  02000000  4
00000400 uint32 Unknown2  6  06000000  4
00000404 uint32 nVerts  4  04000000  4
```

```
00000601 uint16 Tris[nTris][3]    12
```

```
00000379 uint32 nTris  80  50000000  4
00000383 uint32 Unknown2  240  F0000000  4
00000387 uint32 nVerts  90  5A000000  4
```

```
00005071 uint16 Tris[nTris][3]    480
```