

Installing Aircraft for P3Dv3/P3Dv4 - Alternative Method

This method is particularly useful for installing older add-ons that may try to install old versions of gauges, sound or effects files in your default P3D locations. It is also the method recommended by LM, but only a few developers give you the option to do it this way (eg: A2A, Ant's).

Basically, it's a three-step process - harder to explain than actually use:

- 1) Re-create the usual add-on folder structure in a folder **outside of the root P3D folder**.
- 2) Create an XML file that tells P3D what's included (and where).
- 3) Create an entry in "add-ons.cfg".

The beauty of this method is that:

- Core P3D files/folders remain untouched.
- Aircraft can easily be enabled/disabled via the P3D (top menu) Options/Add-ons.
- Aircraft can be cleanly uninstalled - without leaving redundant files and without removing files that may be shared with other aircraft.

The instructions below use a test install of the default **Aircration Ultralight** (from FSX) as an example.

Once you've done one or two, you'll find the procedure is actually quite quick (and straightforward).

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11 July 2017

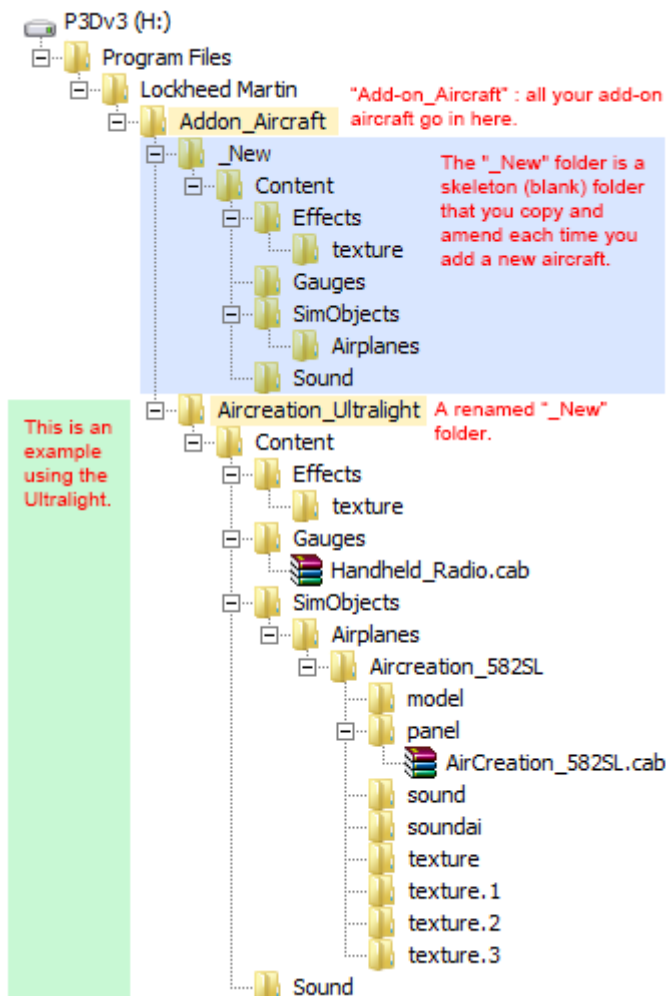
1) Create the folder structure

1.1) Create a base-level folder for all your aircraft add-ons. This can live anywhere - even on a separate drive. In my case, I have P3D on an SSD drive, so have kept the add-ons folder on the same drive. For convenience, I've created it at the same level as my P3D root - in the "Lockheed Martin" folder:

My P3Dv3 root is: H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Prepar3D v4

My add-ons folder is: H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft

1.2) Inside this base-level folder ("Addon_Aircraft"), place a fresh COPY of the blank/dummy folder "**_New**" that's included in this archive. This will contain all the setup files and skeleton folder structure:



eg. "H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft_New"

This **_New** folder should contain the following folders:

- Content
- Content\Effects
- Content\Effects\texture
- Content\Gauges
- Content\SimObjects
- Content\SimObjects\Airplanes
- Content\Sound

At root level in **_New**, you should also have the three files:

```
add-on.xml
addon_addnew.bat
addon_delete.bat
```

1.3) Rename the freshly copied **_New** folder to the name of your add-on aircraft, eg:

```
"H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft\Aircreation_Ultralight"
```

1.4) Extract the incoming add-on aircraft either to a temporary folder somewhere then manually copy over, or extract directly into the "Content" folder (overwrite any existing folders) eg:

```
"H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft\Aircreation_Ultralight\Content"
```

The "Content" folder becomes, in effect, the root P3D folder.

NOTE: Not every add-on aircraft will have files in all of these folders, but it does no harm to have the complete structure there. They only get processed are if they appear in the XML file.

In the case of the Trike example - apart from what's in **Simobjects** - there's only the one additional file (in **Gauges** - "Handheld_Radio.cab").

1.5) Check all the files are correctly placed.

1.6) In the **aircraft.cfg** file, check that all the textures have corresponding entries and that the *.air file is correctly referenced. Also worth checking, are references to in **panel.cfg** for gauges/locations.

2) Create the CFG and XML files

Confusingly, we have to create/edit two files with similar filenames: "**add-on.xml**" (a copy of which lives inside each newly created add-on folder) and "**add-ons.cfg**" (which is a generic P3D config file).

IMPORTANT: XML and .cfg files in P3Dv4 need to be created/saved in UTF-8 format. Make sure your text editor supports this format (Notepad++ does).

2.1) ADD-ON.XML

The Aircreation Ultralight is used again as an example. Inside the folder "Aircreation_Ultralight", edit the XML file "**add-on.xml**", eg:

```
"H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft\Aircreation_Ultralight\add-on.xml"
```

add-on.xml has the following format:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<SimBase.Document Type="AddOnXml" version="4,0" id="add-on">
  <AddOn.Name>Aircraft Name</AddOn.Name>
  <AddOn.Description>A description here.</AddOn.Description>
  <AddOn.Component>
    <Category>SimObjects</Category>
    <Path>Content\SimObjects\Airplanes</Path>
  </AddOn.Component>
  <AddOn.Component>
    <Category>Effects</Category>
    <Path>Content\Effects</Path>
  </AddOn.Component>
  <AddOn.Component>
```

```

        <Category>Sound</Category>
        <Path>Content\Sound</Path>
    </AddOn.Component>
    <AddOn.Component>
        <Category>Gauges</Category>
        <Path>Content\Gauges</Path>
    </AddOn.Component>
</SimBase.Document>

```

NOTE: Not every section (Sound, Gauges etc.) is required in every case - it will depend on whether the respective folders exist in the original aircraft archive. So, for the Ultralight, we will end up with just this:

```

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
  <SimBase.Document Type="AddOnXml" version="4,0" id="add-on">
    <AddOn.Name>Aircreation_582SL</AddOn.Name>
    <AddOn.Description>Aircreation_582SL: from FSX default.</AddOn.Description>
    <AddOn.Component>
      <Category>SimObjects</Category>
      <Path>Content\SimObjects\Airplanes</Path>
    </AddOn.Component>
    <AddOn.Component>
      <Category>Gauges</Category>
      <Path>Content\Gauges</Path>
    </AddOn.Component>
  </SimBase.Document>

```

3) ADD-ONS.CFG (or skip to [3.4])

3.1) If it doesn't already exist, create the file **add-ons.cfg** (in UTF-8 format), in the following location:

C:\ProgramData\Lockheed Martin\Prepar3D v4\add-ons.cfg

The file is in the following format (using the Ultralight as an example):

```

[Package.0]
PATH=H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft\Aircreation_Ultralight
TITLE=Aircreation_582SL
ACTIVE=true
REQUIRED=false

```

Here, "TITLE" is a unique aircraft name that doesn't appear in any P3D selection menu, but is used to reference the addition/deletion of entries in **add-ons.cfg**.

As in aircraft.cfg files, entries are incremental, starting with [Package.0].

3.2) Replace the **PATH** line with your own base-level\Aircraft Name folder location.

3.3) Edit the **TITLE** line.

3.4) Using the BATCH file to ADD a new aircraft

Rather than editing the **add-ons.cfg** file manually, you can execute **addon_addnew.bat** -

*** YOU MUST RUN THIS FILE FROM INSIDE YOUR NEWLY CREATED ADD-ON AIRCRAFT FOLDER ***

eg: "H:\Program Files\Lockheed Martin\Addon_Aircraft\Aircreation_Ultralight\addon_addnew.bat"

3.5) **Make sure P3D is NOT RUNNING.**

3.6) Run **addon_addnew.bat** ("Run as Administrator" if you're not running with full admin rights).

The batch file:

- Picks up the current folder location (for "PATH").
- Prompts you for an aircraft name (for "TITLE").
- Reads your P3Dv4 path from the registry and executes Prepar3D.exe with some parameters to write the information to your **add-ons.cfg** (automatically renumbering the packages).

4) UNINSTALLING an existing add-on (if installed by the method above)

Rather than editing the add-on.cfg file manually, you can execute **addon_delete.bat**. This file can be run from anywhere.

4.1) **Make sure P3D is NOT RUNNING.**

4.2) Run "**addon_delete.bat**" (with "Run as Administrator").

The batch file:

- Prompts for an aircraft name (for "**TITLE**").
- Reads your P3Dv4 path from the registry and executes Prepar3D.exe with some parameters to delete the entry from your **add-ons.cfg** (automatically renumbering the packages).
- The add-on will no longer be used by P3D and you can delete the aircraft addon folder from inside the **Addon_Aircraft** folder if you wish.

NOTES

Add-ons will become available on the next P3D startup (remember to close P3D before adding or deleting aircraft).

TROUBLESHOOTING

Aircraft doesn't show in P3D selection:

- 1) Check that it's showing in P3D Options/**Add-ons** (and is enabled), then check the folder structure and filenames.
- 2) Check your **add-on.xml** file for errors. After the initial XML declaration, all XML tags should be properly nested and paired off.

The end!

