

Startup Makeover

FS2004

This document will show you how to easily create your own menu of favorite flights and have FS2004 start at the chosen flight – bypassing all of the usual menu screens.

Requirements: XP operating system and FS2004.

Optional program: “No slider” by Lucio Pescarolo – the file name is “noslid.zip” – available at Flightsim.com.

First you must create or have created and saved some favorite flights. This is most easily done using the ; shortcut. Give the flight a name you can easily recognize later.

Remember that when you “save” a flight, it saves it using the aircraft, location and time etc. where you are right now. It does not save an entire flight. Saved flights may be a start at a gate, on the runway or even in mid-air somewhere.

Assuming a default installation, these saved flight files will be found in:

“C:\Documents and Settings\YOUR NAME\My Documents\Flight Simulator Files” and will have an FLT extension. Note: There will also be a file by the same name for each saved flight with a WX extension. This contains the weather data for that particular flight.

Now Right click on any of your FLT files and select “open with”.

Then select “choose program”.

Scroll down until you find Microsoft Flight Simulator, select it and put a tick in the box labeled “Always use the selected program to open this kind of file”, then click on OK.

What you have done is to “associate” Flight Simulator with any file that has a FLT extension.

You will know this is working because FS2004 has now started and will open at the flight you just selected.

So after it has finished loading, close FS2004 and let's make a menu.

On your desktop create a New Folder by right clicking anywhere and selecting NEW and then FOLDER. Name it "Favorite Flights" or a name of your choice.

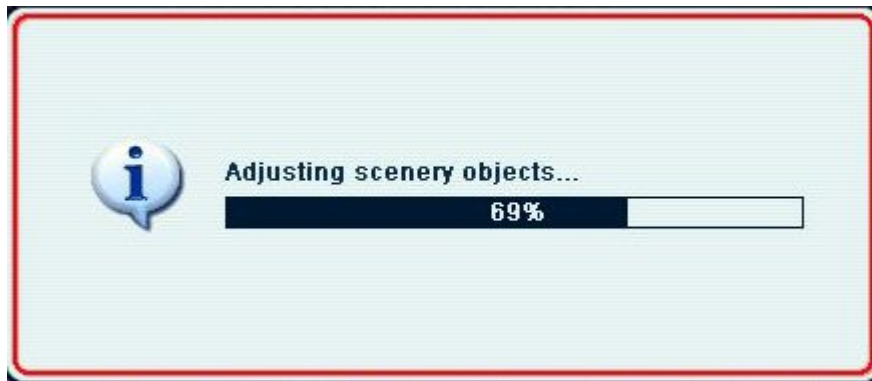
Open this new folder and again right click and select NEW and then SHORTCUT. Browse to the location of one of your favorite flights (see location information above) and then give the shortcut a name indicating what this favorite flight may be.

Repeat this procedure for as many favorites as you wish (I have ten favorites in my favorite flights folder). It also looks a bit nicer if you use the "icons" option in the folders options menu.

Now whenever you wish to fly and know where you want to start, just select one of your shortcuts and FS2004 will start you there. The normal select aircraft, location and time and season menu etc. will be bypassed.

If you don't wish to see the "slider" screen which tells you that FS is loading terrain, scenery etc., just install the replacement bmp file named "dlgalert.bmp" found in the no slider program. It is very easy to do. Be **sure** you backup the default "dlgalert.bmp" first!

Here is a screenshot of the "slider" screen:



NOTE: If you do elect to use the "no slider" option, you should also disable the "prompt on exit" selection. Settings/General is where you will find this dialogue. If you don't do this, you will not see the exit prompt as it is a part of the "slider" function and it will appear the system has hung up when you exit as it is waiting for a reply from you.

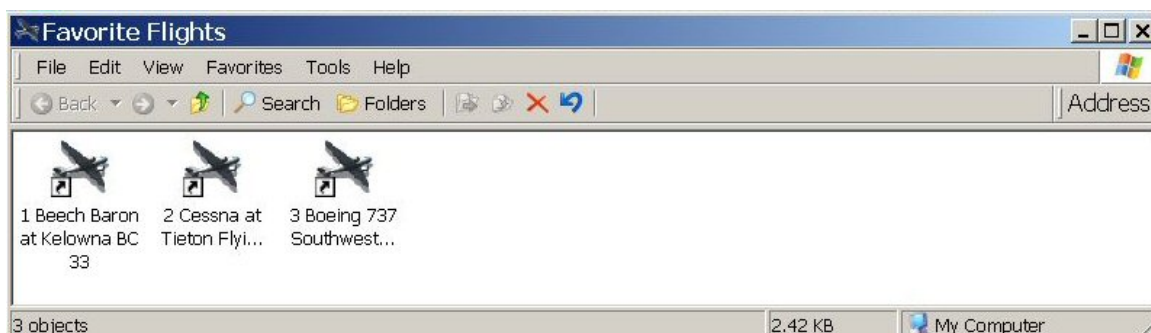
In fact almost ALL prompts which require a response from you will NOT be seen but will still be waiting for a response. For example, if you delete a scenery addition you will not see the "are you sure" prompt and will need to hit Y or N to have the program continue. This takes a little bit of "getting used to" but in my opinion, is worth the time and effort.

Here is a screenshot of a prompt that expects a reply from you:



If you wish, you can also put the shortcut which starts FS2004 in the normal manner in the same folder so you will have all FS2004 related shortcuts together.

This screenshot shows my menu as I was beginning to build it:



Optional: To "dress up" your new folder with a picture of an airplane, right click on the folder and select properties. Then select Customize and then Change Icon. Browse to your FS9.exe file.

It will show you a preview of the FS airplane icon.
Hit OK and OK again. You should now see the FS
airplane instead of the default picture of a folder.

Technical note: The airplane icon is embedded in the
FS9.exe file.



I hope you find this little project useful.

Questions and constructive comments may be directed to

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