

Re-Installing FS2004 - Some Tips and Tricks

compiled by
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I think it is safe to say that, sooner or later, almost all of us will be faced with the need or desire to remove our current FS2004 setup and do a clean re-install.

The reasons are many and varied, ranging from a "bloated FS" (very slow to load), to a real problem (perhaps not loading at all) to a simple desire to run a "lean and trim" version, using only the aircraft you regularly fly and scenery enhancements you simply cannot do without.

The decision to remove and reinstall is a difficult one, but the process can be "therapeutic" and in my opinion, well worth the time and effort.

This document is offered as a collection of ideas, drawn from my own experience and the experience of many others. The goal is to make the process a little less frustrating.

Hopefully a few items you may not have considered will be mentioned.

The document is divided into three main sections – Preparation, Uninstalling and Reinstalling.

These recommendations are designed for use under the XP operating system. Locations of various files may vary if using a different OS.

Note: At the end of this document is a short Appendix which lists some valuable resources if you only need to restore a particular file or portion of FS2004.

[Preparation](#)

Nothing is more frustrating than to re-install FS2004 only to discover you cannot install a favorite enhancement because you accidentally deleted (or cannot locate) the installation file(s) or your registration data and other required information.

Now is the time to take a complete inventory of any and all payware products you may have and burn copies of everything to a CD or DVD. Be sure to include e-mails with registration codes and any other pertinent information.

If in doubt, check the website where you made your purchase. Many have FAQ sections which will detail exactly what you will need to have to prove ownership of the product prior to reinstalling it.

If you have registered the FSUIPC program, the registration most likely came by way of e-mail and included your name, your e-mail address and a unique serial code.

If you have changed your e-mail address since then, your new e-mail address will **not** be accepted on the registration screen so find the original information and back it up.

Registered programs or utilities which are no longer available – such as FSNavigator – present another challenge.

For FSNavigator, in addition to backing up the installation program, I recommend you also backup the file named Program.cfg. This is a text file which contains your registration information. It is located in the subfolder named Bin – under the FSNavigator entry in your Modules folder.

If you are using the NOCD patch which allows you to run FS2004 without the need for Disk 4 in your CD tray, be sure you have a copy of the correct patch backed up. There are two patches available – one for Ver.9 of FS2004 and one for FS2004 which has been updated to Ver.9.1.

And it might be well to have a copy of the FS2004 update to Ver.9.1 also.

The update can be downloaded from:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=92CF4B8C-EA69-476B-A276-618C4AB52AAF&displaylang=en>

Other Files and Folders to Backup

There may well be a difference of opinion as to what should be backed up prior to un-installing FS2004.

I prefer to back up as much as possible. If for no other reason, such backups provide a convenient reference as to what you had installed and what you considered important.

It is probably well to caution that such backups should **not** just be copied back to their proper location after the re-installation.

If there were “problems” before, potentially you would just be putting them back in place. Any aircraft, scenery or other enhancements should be installed again from scratch.

One possible exception to that guideline would be the restoration of any major Object Library entries such as the RWY12 Static Object Library and (if you installed them this way) a consolidated EZ Object Library entry. They would take an enormous amount of time to locate, download and install from scratch and are likely candidates to be copied back as is.

Suggested folders and files to backup:

The entire Flight Simulator 9 Folder – if you have the media space – i.e. several CD's or at least one DVD.

Such a backup should also include a copy of your current FS9.cfg file.

If media space is a concern, then backup at least the following:

1. Your Aircraft Folder.
2. Your Addon scenery folder (or whatever folder you have which houses airport sceneries).
3. Your FS9.cfg file – this is hidden by default but may contain special “tweaks” and/or keyboard shortcuts you have added. It may be easier to copy such items back into your new FS9.cfg file after re-installation.

Uninstalling

Again there may be some difference of opinion as to the best method and/or order to follow – the following is what has worked well for me.

1. Go to Start/Settings/Control Panel and then select Add or Remove programs.
2. Scroll down the list of installed programs as uninstall all FS2004 “related” entries. That might include aircraft packages and/or a utility and/or even a scenery package. Do NOT uninstall FS2004 from this dialogue, only anything which is “related”. Return to your desktop when finished.
3. Go to Start/Programs and search for any FS “related” entries there. Many enhancements will create an entry here and many will have an uninstall routine associated with it. Run all uninstall routines which you find.

4. If you have updated FS2004 to Ver.9.1 (most simmers have), navigate to your Flight Simulator 9 folder and locate the file named [FS9UpdateUninstall.exe](#). Click on it to start uninstalling the update.

5. To uninstall FS2004, I prefer to use the option to uninstall which is on the menu you see after Disk One has been loaded.

6. After the uninstall is complete, it is **imperative** that you search for any folders and/or files which the uninstall routine may have left behind. Files or folders which have been left behind are the items which cause the vast majority of reinstall problems.

In particular, the [FS9.cfg](#) file which is hidden by default, is almost always **not** removed and it must be removed to assure a good reinstallation.

At this point you may be asking **why** the FS9.cfg file was left behind. I am not a technically trained programmer so the following is only an educated guess. I believe the FS9.cfg file is actually not created until you run FS2004 the very first time. Uninstall routines normally look at some type of cfg or ini file to determine what was originally installed and therefore what should be removed. Since the FS9.cfg file was never “installed” but was created later, the uninstall routine would not remove it.

It can be found (assuming a default installation originally) at:

C:\Documents and Settings\Your User Name\Application Data\Microsoft\FS9

If the folder named FS9 remains after uninstalling, I Cut it and Paste it elsewhere (completely off my hard drive) just so I am sure the FS9.cfg file which was in it has indeed been removed. The reinstallation will recreate the folder anyway.

You should also navigate to the area where the Flight Simulator 9 folder was. Hopefully it will not be there after running the uninstall routine. If it should still be there, Cut and Paste it elsewhere (completely off your hard drive). I do not delete it at this point, preferring to keep it as a backup elsewhere just in case it contains something which may be needed.

Important Note: Simmers who have updated FS2004 to Ver.9.1 but who have **not** run the update uninstall routine (step 4), will find a folder named BACKUP (with some 36 files) remains in the Flight Simulator 9 folder. If this folder is not removed, and you reinstall FS2004, and then attempt to install the update, you will received an error message saying that the update has already been applied.

Apparently the update program looks for the presence of that BACKUP folder and if it is found, reports that FS2004 has already been updated.

7. After confirming that nothing has been “left behind”, I recommend that you defrag your hard drive before proceeding.

In the opinion of many, regular defragging should be an integral part of your computer maintenance program.

I also recommend that you reboot your computer before proceeding to the reinstallation phase.

Reinstalling

This part is pretty straightforward but there are some considerations.

Always double check your install disks prior to starting to be sure they are really clean. It does not take much in the way of dirt or gunk to create an error message.

If all goes well, you will have a clean installation of FS2004 which will load MUCH faster and will really look pretty good right out of the box.

This is the time to consider very carefully just which aircraft you will reinstall. These can be hard decisions but with FS2004, less is often better.

It is also a good time to consider how you might want to organize your scenery additions. There is no “right” way as each simmer has their own preferences.

Be aware that scenery additions do **not** have to be installed in your Addon scenery folder – they can be anywhere on your hard drive! When you add (activate) them in the Scenery Library you are indicating the path to their location – wherever it may be.

My scenery is organized by Country, then by State or Province and finally by City. Others organize theirs by regions or some other method.

Some simmers keep a regular log of what they download and install along with any comments etc.. This is highly recommended – but it takes a great deal of discipline to keep it up to date!

In lieu of a log, I have begun adding a short text file to each aircraft and scenery entry which contains the name of the zip file, the author’s name, where I downloaded it from and where the zip file is stored on my computer. This makes it fairly easy to determine if I already have a particular aircraft or scenery enhancement when I spot one on a download site.

Above all, make haste SLOWLY ! Add enhancements and aircraft at a leisurely pace (not by the handful) and **always** test what you have done before proceeding. It is **so** much easier to correct a problematic addition if you know what you last installed!

Other Suggestions

The following are a few installation procedures for scenery and aircraft which I use that may be of interest.

As I simply do not “trust” any Addon which comes with an automatic installer, I always direct the installation to a “temporary” folder rather than the Flight Simulator 9 (sometimes referred to as the Root) folder.

This allows me to check everything first and then when I am satisfied, I move the folders and files manually to their proper locations.

Too often I have found that automatic installers will install older versions of essential files – without warning – and the above method allows one to verify file size and date before overwriting anything.

If I am installing an aircraft, I again unzip or direct the automatic installer to a temporary folder.

If the aircraft package includes gauges which are supposed to be placed in my FS2004 Gauges folder, I do **not** place them there.

Instead, I place them in the Panel folder of the aircraft prior to adding the aircraft to my Aircraft folder.

According to **Rob Barendregt** (the guru of gauges in my book), FS2004 always looks in the Panel folder first for any required gauges and if they are not found, will then look in the main gauge folder.

If there are older versions of gauges or problematic gauges in the package, using the above method makes it far easier to spot any problems.

I also place any Afcad and Traffic files which come with a scenery enhancement in the scenery subfolder of the scenery entry – not in the usual locations (the Addon scenery / scenery subfolder and the Scenery / World / scenery subfolder).

FS2004 will find and use the Afcad and Traffic files in that location. If I ever decide to remove the scenery enhancement, one delete gets it all – no stray afcads or traffic files to try to locate.

Of course there are exceptions to the above. Very complex scenery enhancements may require specific files to be placed in specific locations.

Always follow the author's instructions in this case.

Many scenery authors will instruct you to simply dump their bgls and textures into the scenery and texture subfolder of your Addon scenery entry. Of course this will work as the Addon scenery folder is "active" (or should be) by default – but you will soon have a cluttered scenery folder with no idea what all those bgls belong to.

I much prefer to create a new scenery entry with a scenery and texture (if required) subfolder and add (activate) it via the Scenery Library. A bit more work, but an easy way to help keep "clutter" to a minimum.

Note: Some scenery enhancements will **not** have a texture subfolder. That is because the scenery is using default textures which you already have.

Always check the contents of texture subfolders, if there is one. If the texture subfolder is empty (no textures at all), delete the texture subfolder.

Many of us have discovered (the hard way) that FS2004 will continue to look in empty texture subfolders, creating what is commonly called a "memory leak" – slowing down loading times and unnecessarily tying up CPU resources in a futile effort to locate some required textures.

I hope these ideas are helpful the next time you need to uninstall and reinstall FS2004.

The compiler accepts no responsibility for any real or perceived damage to your computer as a result of following the recommendations.

Questions and/or Constructive Comments may be directed to:

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For a complete list of all my uploads at Avsim.com – sorted by date, just follow this link:

<http://library.avsim.net/eseach.php?CatID=fs2004&Name=&FileName=&Author=David+Marshall&DLID=&Sort=Added&ScanMode=1&Go=Change+View>

[Appendix](#)

Check out this marvelous website:

<http://www.cat-tamer.com/flightsim/faq001.html>

It shows where everything is on your install disks and how extract just what you need.

I also highly recommend [fs9cddir.zip](#) Compiled by Brian Collins (available in the Avsim.com and Flightsim.com libraries)

This is an Excel format listing of all the files on your install disks. A great resource to keep handy.