

Lightwave FBX Plug-in Guide

*LightWave FBX plug-in
August 2005*

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Installation

The LightWave FBX plug-in is used by LightWave® to import, export, and convert files using the *.fbx* file format. This document describes how to install the LightWave FBX plug-in for Windows® 2000/XP and Mac OS X.

Windows installation

Note

If you had created any menu items to import, export, or merge fbx scenes in earlier versions of LightWave, they must be removed and re-created.

- 1** Download the *.zip* file from the Alias web site (<http://www.alias.com/glb/eng/community/downloads.jsp>).
- 2** Double-click the *.zip* file and extract the file.
- 3** Locate the *fbxlw.p* file. By default, the LightWave FBX plug-in files are copied to the C:\Alias\FBXPlugins<fbxver>\lw80 folder.
- 4** Remove all old versions of the LightWave FBX plug-in before copying the new plug-in.
- 5** Copy the *fbxlw.p* plug-in file into the \lightwave-3d-80\Plugins\Input-Output folder.
- 6** Launch LightWave 3D Layout.
- 7** Click Utilities>Add Plug-ins. The file browser appears, prompting you for a *.p* plug-in.
- 8** Select the copied *fbxlw.p* plug-in file in the \Plugins\Input-Output folder, and click Ok.

1 | Installation

Macintosh installation

If the LightWave FBX plug-in is installed correctly, the options “Export to FBX”, “Import from FBX”, and “Merge with FBX” appear in the Edit>Edit Menu Layout menu, in the Plug-ins Command list.

- 9 Add the FBX command to your File menu. Select "Edit>Edit Menu Layout...", then drag the commands "Import from FBX" and "Merge with FBX" from Plug-ins to your "File>Import" menu. Drag the command "Export to FBX" to your "File->Export" menu.

Macintosh installation

Note	<i>If you had created any menu items to import, export, or merge fbx scenes in earlier versions of LightWave, they must be removed and re-created.</i>
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- 1 Double-click the package icon to start the installation.
The LightWave FBX plug-in is installed to the selected disk drive in the following folder: <Macintosh™ Drive>/Applications/LightWave 3D 80/Plugins/Input-Output.
- 2 Enter your login password to continue the installation when prompted.

Note	<i>You must obtain administrator privileges to continue installation.</i>
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The Welcome window appears.

- 3 Click Continue to start the installation process.
- 4 Select a destination disk for your application to be installed and click Continue.
- 5 Click Install (or Upgrade). A progress bar indicates the time remaining of the installation; when the progress reaches 100%, the Finish button is activated.

- 6** Click Finish to exit the installation program.
- 7** Launch LightWave 3D Layout.
- 8** Click Layout>Plug-ins>Add Plugins. The file browser appears, prompting you for a .p plug-in.
- 9** Select the copied fbxlw.p plug-in file in the \Plugins\Input-Output folder, and click Ok.

If the LightWave FBX plug-in is installed correctly, the options "Export to FBX", "Import from FBX", and "Merge with FBX" appear in the Edit>Edit Menu Layout menu, in the Plug-ins Command list.

- 10** Add the FBX command to your File menu.
- 11** Select "Edit>Edit Menu Layout...", then drag the commands "Import from FBX" and "Merge with FBX" from Plug-ins to your "File>Import" menu.
- 12** Drag the command "Export to FBX" to your "File->Export" menu.

1 | Installation

Macintosh installation

2

Importing and exporting

This section describes how to export models from LightWave using the .fbx file format, and how to import .fbx files into LightWave.

It also includes a list of the LightWave features supported by this version of the LightWave FBX plug-in software.

Exporting from LightWave to an .fbx file

- 1 Select File>Export>Export to FBX.

By default, the pop-up menu offers to export the FBX file with the same name and directory as your LightWave scene file.



figure 2-1: FBX Exporter menu.

- 2 Modify this by clicking the browser button next to the Address field.
- 3 Select which parameters to export and click OK. Wait for a confirmation dialog box. For more information of the Export parameters, see "FBX Exporter window options" on page 6.

2 | Importing and exporting

FBX Exporter window options

FBX Exporter window options

Once you select an FBX file to export from LightWave, the FBX Exporter window appears (figure 2-2). The FBX Exporter window contains the following export options.



figure 2-2: FBX Exporter menu.

Importing .fbx files into LightWave

- 1 Launch LightWave.
- 2 Select File>Import>Import from FBX.
- 3 Use the file browser to select the FBX file to be imported, and the folder where your .lwo files are created (figure 2-3).

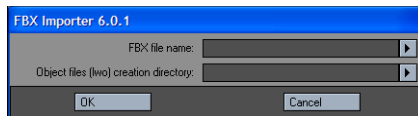


figure 2-3: FBX Importer window.

- 4 Select the take you want to import.
- 5 Click OK.

Merging animation back to LightWave

- 1 Launch LightWave 8.
- 2 Load the original LightWave scene.
- 3 Save the scene as “working copy” (or any other temporary name).

2 | Importing and exporting

What's supported in LightWave FBX plug-in

4 Select File>Import>Merge with FBX

In the pop-up menu, click the browser button next to the address field, select the appropriate FBX file, and click OK.

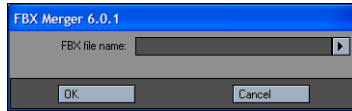


figure 2-4: FBX Merger window

What's supported in LightWave FBX plug-in

LightWave FBX plug-in supports the following LightWave functionalities:

Note

LightWave envelopes are treated as MotionBuilder FCurves.

LightWave	LightWave FBX plug-in
SubPatch Objects	<p>SubPatch objects are not visible as a SubPatch surface inside MotionBuilder software.</p> <p>When exporting SubPatch objects, you can activate the Freeze option, which makes the object a Polygon mesh.</p> <p>If you do not activate the Freeze option, the Subpatch cage is saved as a mesh.</p>
Materials	Multiple materials are supported.

2 | Importing and exporting

What's supported in LightWave FBX plug-in

LightWave	LightWave FBX plug-in
Textures	Embedded textures are supported. Only UV texture maps are supported. Other mapping methods are not yet supported.
TRS animation of objects	Supported.
Bones	Only Limbs are supported. Limb Nodes are converted to nulls.
EndoMorphs	EndoMorphs are supported. Bone and Morph animations are both supported at the same time on the same object. The LightWave MorphMixer must be applied to the object before EndoMorphs can be imported into your MotionBuilder software.
Line Polygons	Line polygons (polygons with two vertices) are supported on export.
Multiple Lights	Supported.
Translation and Rotation animation for lights	Supported.
Cone Angle, Color, and Intensity animation	Supported.

2 | Importing and exporting

What's supported in LightWave FBX plug-in

LightWave	LightWave FBX plug-in
Point, Linear, and Area lights	Point light (All Lights retain their original light type when you merge back to LightWave.)
Spot light	Spot light (All Lights retain their original light type when you merge back to LightWave.)
Distant light	Infinite light (All Lights retain their original light type when you merge back to LightWave.)
Multiple cameras	Supported.
Camera Field of View animation	Supported. Camera vertical and horizontal field of view animation is converted to Zoom Factor in LightWave.
Camera translation and rotation	Supported.
Camera Roll animation	Camera Roll is supported when the camera has a Camera Interest (target).

2 | Importing and exporting

What's supported in LightWave FBX plug-in

LightWave	LightWave FBX plug-in
Camera interest	There is limited support for Camera Interest (target). The camera must not be parented
.Camera Pixel ratio	Supported
Camera Target	If you parent the camera, the animation is plotted to the camera.
Camera Up node	Camera up node supported by plotting its effect on the camera roll animation.