The Palace Authoring Tool Guide

Version 1.0

Contents

The Palace Authoring Tool

This document describes how to use The Palace Authoring Tool to change your Palace site look and feel. It has the following sections:

About The Palace Authoring Tool

The Palace Authoring Tool is a standalone web-based tool that lets you edit your Palace configuration files (`.pat` files) in an easy-to-use Graphical User Interface (GUI). You can edit rooms, doors, spots, and scripts; add and remove images from your Palace rooms; and, view the changes *before* publishing The Palace.

You can do the following with The Palace Authoring Tool:

- Add and remove rooms.

- Edit rooms, doors, hotspots, nav areas, and scripts

- Add one-way and two-way doors to your rooms. Doors are links to other rooms in the same Palace.

- Add spots to your rooms. Spots are areas that run a script when you click on them. Scripts are mini programs that can run, for example, a chess game.

- Set backdrop images for the rooms.

- Make as many design changes as you want before publishing your Palace site.

Getting Started

This section describes how to get start using The Palace Authoring Tool:

Prerequisites

You need The Palace Server 4.4 or better and a web browser (Netscape or Internet Explorer) version 4.x or greater.

Launching The Palace Authoring Tool

As an applet, The Palace Authoring Tool resides on a web page. From this page, you launch The Palace Authoring Tool applet. This web page also has help links.

- To go to The Palace Authoring Tool documentation pages, click **Help**.

- To get help on authoring rooms and scripts, go to the Authoring web page by clicking **Extras**.

▼ To start The Palace Authoring Tool

1. Do one of the following:

   If you have a Palace server running, click the Palace Authoring Tool button on The Palace server control panel.

   ## Or

   Select **Palace Server:Palace Authoring Tool** from the Windows **Start:Programs** menu.

2. Your Web browser launches The Palace Authoring Tool web page. If The Palace Authoring Tool finds a valid preferences file for your server that references a valid `.pat` file, The Palace Authoring Tool loads this `.pat` file. Otherwise the tool is loaded in a blank state and you can now select a `.pat` file to open.

3. The Palace Authoring Tool then launches to the main window, which is the room layout view. See the following section, *Working with rooms* on page 6, for more information.

4. If you have your Palace already up and running, The Palace Authoring Tool automatically "loads" the `.pat` file your Palace is currently using; you can select a different `.pat` file to edit if you want, or create a new one. If you launch The Palace Authoring Tool without your Palace running, you need to select a `.pat` file to edit. See *Working with .pat files* on page 5 for information.

Exiting The Palace Authoring Tool

You exit The Palace Authoring Tool just as you would any other web page; for example, you can move to another web page or exit your browser.

Working with .pat files

This section describes how to use The Palace Authoring Tool to work with your configuration files (`.pat`):

- *What is a .pat file?* on page 5

- *Opening a .pat file to edit* on page 5

- *Creating a new Palace .pat file* on page 6

- *Saving or undoing changes* on page 6

What is a .pat file?

The Palace Authoring tool works by configuring your Palace's `.pat` files. These files contain information about rooms in your Palace, such as their ID, layout, which room is the entrypoint into your Palace, and any doors or hotspots you have. You can have as many of these files on your machine as you like; this means you can pick and choose a different look and feel for your Palace when you want. You do this by selecting a new `.pat` file through your server control panel **Preferences** option.

With The Palace Authoring Tools, you can edit existing `.pat` files and create new ones. You obtain at least one `.pat` file for your Palace when you choose the complete Palace option from the Palace Site Server Download web page; you can get other templates from this page also.

Opening a .pat file to edit

If you have your Palace already up and running, The Palace Authoring Tool automatically "loads" the `.pat` file your Palace is currently using; you can select a different `.pat` file to edit if you want. If you launch The Palace Authoring Tool without your Palace running, you need to select a `.pat` file to edit.

▼ To open a .pat file

1. From the room layout window, click **Open**.

2. From the resulting window, navigate to where your `.pat` files reside (generally in your `palaceserver\palace\psdata` directory) and select the file to open.

Creating a new Palace .pat file

You can create a new `.pat` file through The Palace Authoring tool. This file will be empty until you create rooms for it. If you have a current `.pat` file open, you will lose any unsaved changes.

▼ To create a new .pat file

1. From the room layout window, click **New**.

2. Add rooms, doors, and scripts as desired.

3. When you are finished, click **Save As** and then enter a file name in the displayed dialog box.

Saving or undoing changes

When you are satisfied with all the changes to your template, you can save your new edits.

▼ To save your changes

After you are done with the changes to the Palace, click **Save** (if editing an existing file) or **Save As** (if saving a new file).

▼ To revert to the old file

To revert to the saved `.pat` file and lose all the changes made since the last time you saved, do not save your changes. Instead, click **Open** and then reopen the file.

Working with rooms

This section describes how to configure your Palace rooms:

*   *The room layout window* on page 7

*   *Adding and removing rooms* on page 8

*   *Setting properties for a room* on page 11

*   *Adding a backdrop image to a room* on page 14

*   *Importing navigational elements from a file* on page 17

The room layout window

The Palace Authoring Tool has the following main window:
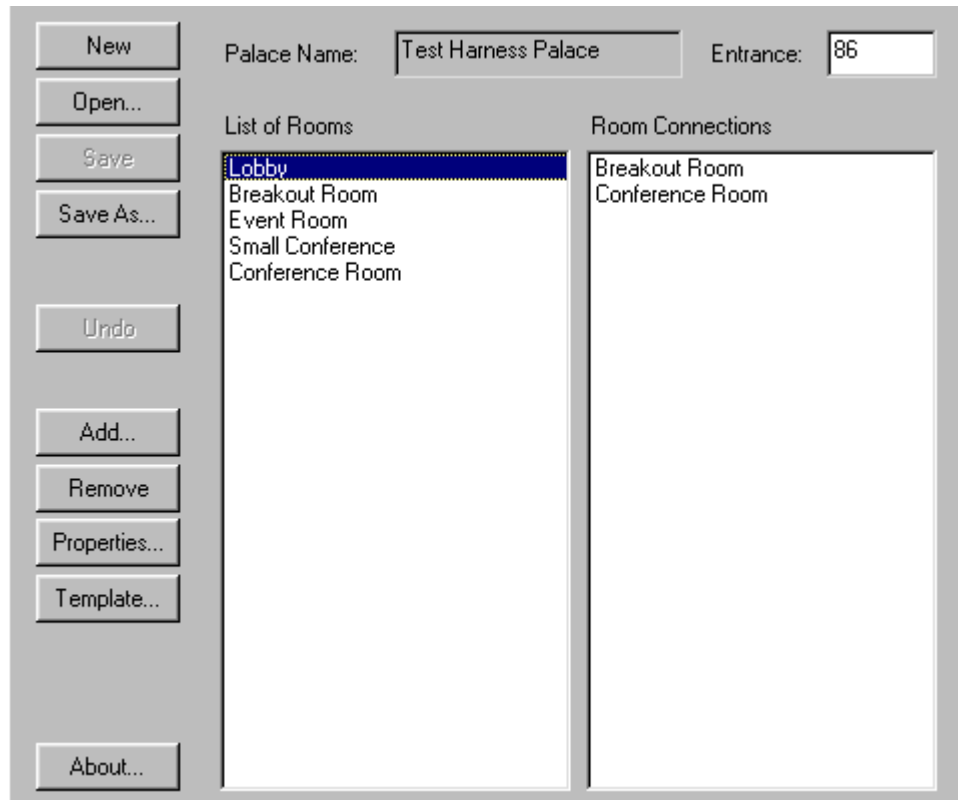
The Room Layout View consists of two parts:

- List of rooms in your Palace (as they appear in your `.pat` configuration file) in the **List of Rooms** list box.

- List of connections for the selected room in the **Room Connections** list box.

This window also has the following fields and buttons:

- **Palace Name**

  The name of your Palace.

- **Entrance**

  The ID of the room that is the entry point into your Palace. You can change this by entering a new room's ID (to find the ID, select the room and click **Properties**).

- **New**

  Creates a new `.pat` file. See *Creating a new Palace .pat file* on page 6.

- **Open**

  Opens an existing `.pat` file. See *Opening a .pat file to edit* on page 5.

- **Save**

- **Save As**

  Saves the changes to your `.pat` file.

- **Undo/Redo**

  Undo's your last change. Toggles to **Redo**.

- **Add**

  Adds a new room. See *Adding and removing rooms* on page 8.

- **Remove**

  Removes a room. See *Adding and removing rooms* on page 8.

- **Properties**

  Displays the properties sheet for the selected room. See *Setting properties for a room* on page 11.

- **Template**

  Lets you import a rooms template. See *Importing a room from a template* on page 9.

- **About**

  Displays information about The Palace Authoring Tool.

Adding and removing rooms

You can add and remove rooms from your Palace, set backdrop images, and assign navigational areas (with optional scripts) to the rooms.

You can create and set properties for a new room. You can also import a room with all its information from an external template file.

▼ To add a new room

1. Click **Add** in the Room Layout View. The Palace Authoring Tool displays the **Add Room** dialog box.
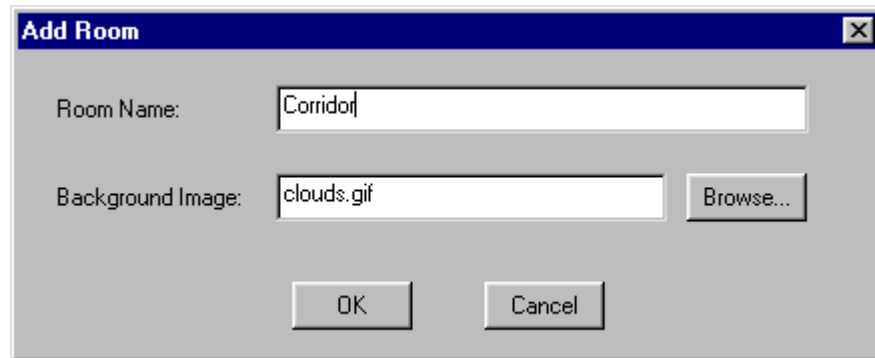
2. Enter a name for the room in the **Room Name** text field. You cannot add duplicate room names. The default name is `New Room uniqueIDnumber.`

3. Select a background image for the room, using the **Browse** button if necessary to navigate to your image file. The default is the Palace clouds image.

4. The new room appears in the **List of Rooms** list and is automatically selected. Now, you can set properties for the room, including doors, hotspots, scripts, and a backdrop image.

▼ To remove a room

Select a room, and then click **Remove** to remove the room from your Palace. You can also click **Undo** to remove a room that you just added.

Importing a room from a template

You can import rooms from any file, but it must be a text file and conform to the specifications shown in the *Sample Room Template File* on page 10. You can edit this rooms file using a standard text editor. You can also download Palace room templates from the Palace website.

▼ To import a room template

1. Click **Template...** to display the **Room Template Library** dialog box.
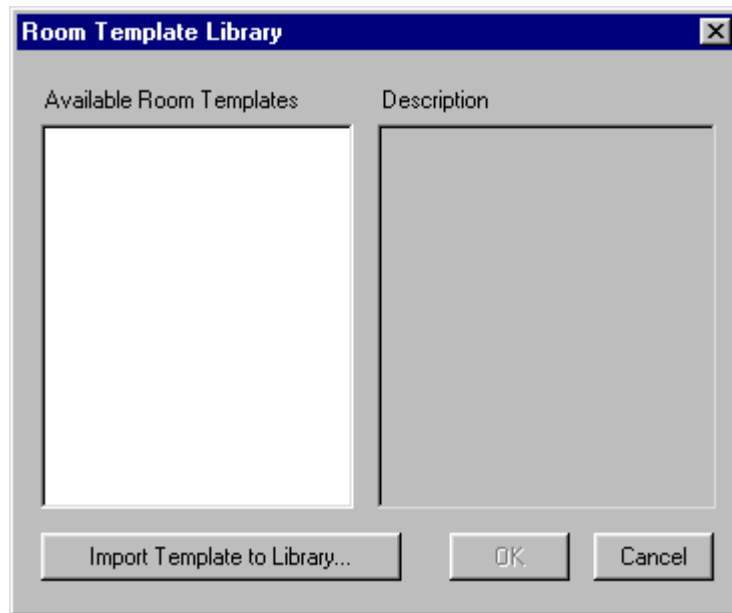
The **Available Room Templates** list box does not list any templates when it first opens.

2. To view room templates:

   a. Click **Import Template to Library...** to display a file browser dialog.

   b. Choose a template file (for example,
      `.../`*PalaceServerDirectory*`/RoomsT/rooms.txt` and then click **Open**. This file must conform to the specifications shown in the example *Sample Room Template File* on page 10.

3. The **Available Room Templates** list box now lists all the rooms in the template. Click a room to view a brief description (if available) in the **Description** text box.

4. Double-click the room to import, and click **OK**.

The Palace Authoring Tool adds spot locations and shapes, scripts, and the backdrop image from the template to the room. To avoid conflicts, The Palace Authoring Tool renumbers the IDs for all added components to make sure the IDs are unique.

Sample Room Template File

This is a sample room template file, called `rooms.txt`. You can edit and create room template files using any text editor application. Make sure you save them as `.txt` files.

```
ROOM
    ID 100
    DROPZONE
    NOPAINTING
    WIZARDSONLY
    MAXMEMBERS 99
```

```
        NAME "Main Lobby"
        DESCRIPTION The main lobby for your site.
        ENDROOM
ROOM
        ID 110
        DROPZONE
        NOPAINTING
        PRIVATE
        NOCYBORGS
        HIDDEN
        NOGUESTS
        NAME "Breakout Room"
        DESCRIPTION Take a break from all the yakking in this fun break room.
        PICTURE ID 1 NAME "breakroom.gif" TRANSCOLOR 14 ENDPICTURE
        SPOT
            ID 1
            OUTLINE 0,0  1,0  1,1  0,1
            PICTS 1,256,192 ENDPICTS
            ENDSPOT
        DOOR
            ID 111
            DEST 100
            OUTLINE 0,0  80,0  80,384  0,384
            ENDDOOR
        DOOR
            ID 112
            DEST 120
            OUTLINE 431,0  511,0  511,384  431,384
            ENDDOOR
        SPOT
            ID 14
            OUTLINE 1,1  2,2  2,1  1,2
            SCRIPT
                    ON LEAVE {
                        { CLEARLOOSEPROPS PAINTCLEAR } NBRROOMUSERS 2 < IF
                    }
            ENDSCRIPT
            ENDSPOT
        ENDROOM
```

Setting properties for a room

You can set various properties for a room through the room's **Properties** window. To bring up this window, select the room in the room layout window, and click **Properties**.
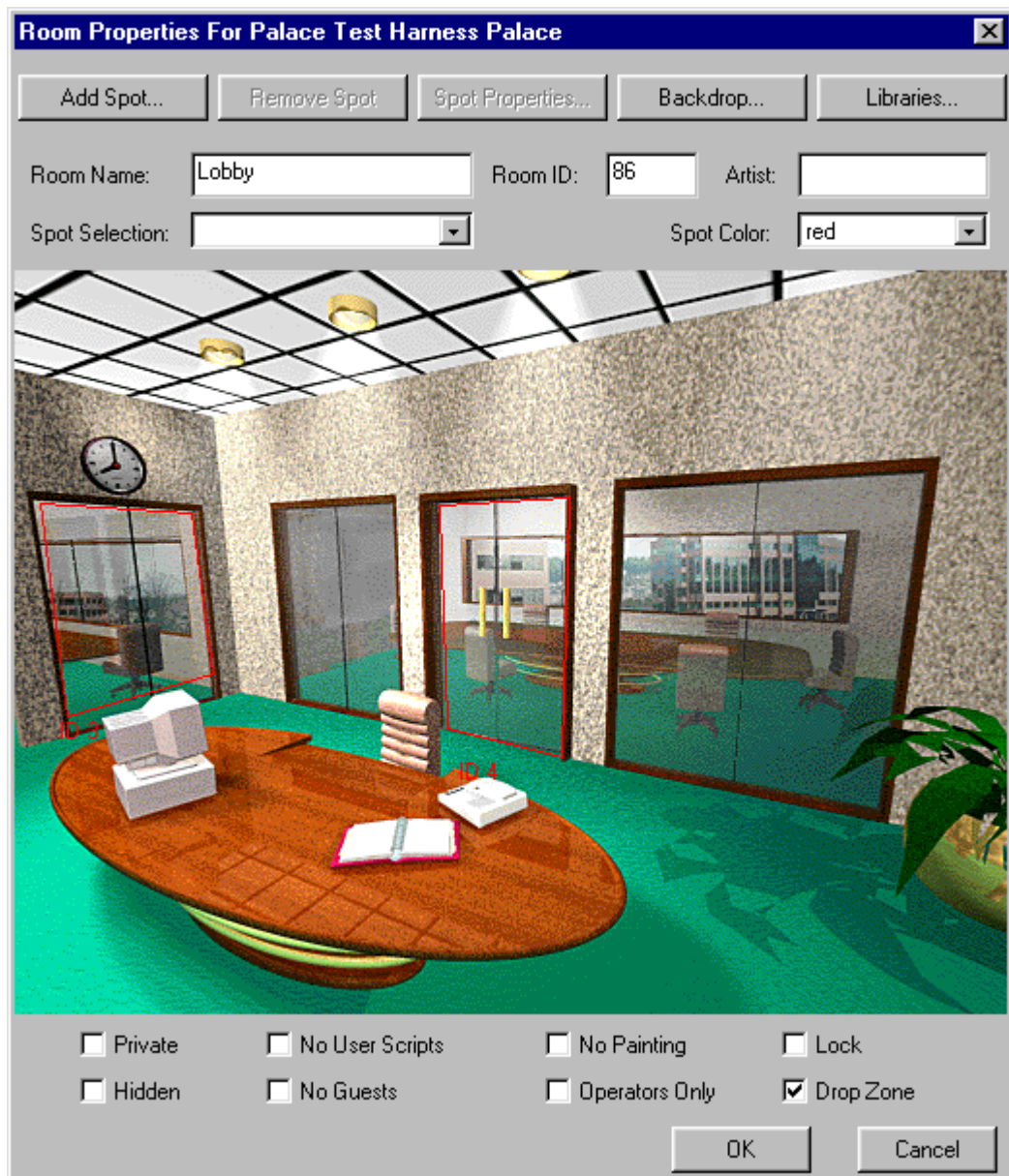
The properties window displays with an image of this room. All navigational areas (also known as spots) are outlined, and displayed with either an ID number or a name (if there is one). This window has the following buttons and fields:

- **Add Spot**

  Lets you create a new navigational element, such as a spot or a door. See *Creating new navigational elements* on page 19 for more information. You can also import existing navigational elements with the button *Libraries* on page 13.

- **Remove Spot**

  Removes a selected navigational element (spot, door, or nav area).

- **Spot Properties**

  Sets properties for a selected navigational element (door, spot, or nav area). See *To edit a navigational element* on page 21 for more information.

- **Backdrop**

  Changes the backdrop image for the room. See *Adding a backdrop image to a room* on page 14 for more information.

- **Libraries**

  Brings up the **Spot Library** window. This window lets you import existing navigational elements (known generically as spots) from a file. See *Importing navigational elements from a file* on page 17 for more information. To create a new navigational element individually, use the button *Add Spot* on page 12.

- **Room Name**

  Displays the name of the room, which you can change.

- **ID**

  The identification number assigned to the current room appears here. You can change the ID by typing into this box.

- **Artist**

  Name of the artist.

- **Spot Selection**

  You can use this dropdown list to select a navigational area instead of using the mouse.

- **Spot Color**

  Changes the outline color of selected spots, doors, and nav areas.

- **Private**

  Check this field to hide the number of people in the room. Generally, the user's client **Rooms** window lists the name of each room in that Palace, along with the number of people currently in that room. Private rooms, on the other hand, display with a dash instead of a number. The only way to tell the number of users in a private room is to enter that room.

- **Hidden**

  Check this field to prevent the room from showing up in the user's client **Rooms** window. For all intents and purposes, the room doesn't exist for non-operators (operators and owners still see all rooms in your Palace).

- **No User Scripts**

  Check this field to prohibit user scripts (also known as *Cyborg Scripts*) in the room. It's a good idea to turn user scripts off in rooms that already possess a lot of scripted activity (continual `SETALARM-ON ALARM` loops, for example). You might also want to turn scripts off in rooms where large numbers of people are expected to gather, as these scripts can seriously affect the speed of events in the room.

- **No Guests**

  Check this field to prohibit guests from entering the room (making the room into a Members-Only room).

- **No Painting**

  Check this field to prohibit painting/drawing in the room. It is a good idea to set painting off in rooms with a large amount of scripted activity (looping alarms, for example); this is because painting can seriously affect the speed of events in the room.

- **Operators only**

  Check this field to allow only your operators (that is, designated power-users to whom you give your operator password) to access this room.

- **Lock**

  Check this field to require a password to the room.

- **Drop Zone**

  A drop zone is an entry room into your Palace. The first drop zone used is your entrance room (the room ID you in the field *Entrance* on page 7). However, if that room is full, your Palace will look for the next room specified as a drop zone, and put overflow visitors in that room. You should specify your main entrance room as a drop zone.

Adding a backdrop image to a room

You can choose or change the backdrop image for a room by importing from an image library file. Each line in the file is a file name and path to an image. For a sample `images.txt file`, see *Sample image text file* on page 15. You can select, add, or remove images from this image library.

▼ To add a backdrop image to a room

1. Select the room in the Room Layout View, and then click **Properties...** to display the **Room Properties** window.

2. Click **Backdrop...** to display the **Backdrop Library** dialog box. This dialog is initially empty if you have not already selected a file to import.
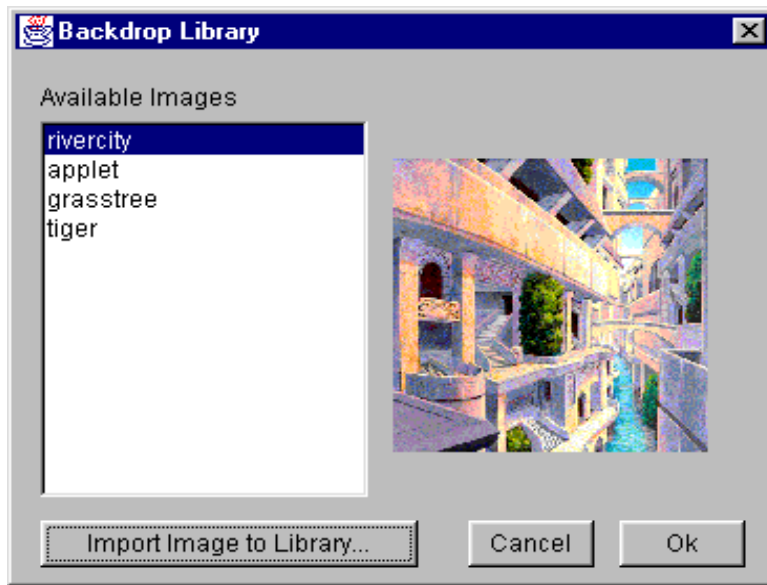
3. To view images in the library:

    a. Click **Import Image to Library...** to display a file browser dialog.

    b. Choose an image file (for example
        `/PalaceServerdirectory/ImagesT/images.txt`) and then click **Open**. The
        Available Images list box now lists the image files in the `image.txt` file.

4. Click an image (the right side of the dialog box displays a scaled preview image),
    and then click **OK**.

Sample image text file

This is a sample `images.txt` file. The files are located in your `ImagesT` directory. Each
line is the file name and path to an image. You can add images to the image library text
file using any text editor application. Make sure you follow the same format as
displayed.

You can enter individual images (with their full path), and/or a complete images
directory. This is an example:

```
NAME   lobby   LOCATION   C:\PalaceServer\palace\media\lobby.gif
NAME   clouds  LOCATION   C:\PalaceServer\palace\media\clouds.gif
NAME   breakout   LOCATION   C:\PalaceServer\palace\media\breakout.gif
NAME   conference LOCATION C:\PalaceServer\Media\PICTURES\conference_room.gif
NAME   small conf LOCATION   C:\PalaceServer\Media\PICTURES\sm_conference.gif
C:\PalaceServer\Media\PICTURES
```

Working with navigational elements (doors, spots, and nav areas)

This section describes how to work with doors, spots, and nav areas. You can edit these elements for a room through the room's property window (select the room and click **Properties**).

- *Navigational element descriptions* on page 16

- *Importing navigational elements from a file* on page 17

- *Creating new navigational elements* on page 19

- *Moving a navigational element* on page 21

- *Resizing a navigational element* on page 21

- *Editing a navigational element* on page 21

- *Assigning spot selection colors to rooms* on page 20

Navigational element descriptions

Navigational elements include:

- ***Doors*** are special types of spots that allow entry into other rooms. They specialize in allowing movement between rooms, and possess built-in "door-like" features (that is, they can be opened and closed, locked and unlocked, and passed through).

    You can have one-way or two-way doors. A two-way door is an entry to another room within the same Palace which will also contain a door returning to this room. Note that you cannot add a two-way door to another Palace; you can only add one-way doors to other Palaces. A one-way door is a passage to another room in the same Palace, or to another Palace in which there is no associated door coming back.

    For current Palace User Software users, doors are the same as ***passages***. They can be ***shutable***, ***lockable***, and ***deadbolt***. You set these in the door's property window (see *Editing a navigational element* on page 21).

- A ***spot*** (of a non-door variety) can run scripts when selected, but possesses no built-in responses for opening/closing, locking, and other door-like behavior. While much of this behavior can be mimicked with Iptscrae, there is currently no way to make a Spot change the mouse cursor in response to a "rollover" event. For current Palace User Software users, a spot is the same thing as a ***normal*** navigational element.

    A regular spot is not outlined by the Palace when the user moves the mouse over it. Sometimes you do not want an outline to appear; for example, you might create a button for users to click that does not require an outline.

- A ***hotspot*** is a spot which is outlined when the user moves the mouse over it.

- A *nav area* is the area in which a user can move his or her avatar. Once a user enters, they cannot move out unless they move into another door or spot. In other words, they cannot move onto any "non-spot" areas of the screen.

In the **Properties** window for that room, these elements can be outlined in a color that you can choose, and includes a label and resizing handles. You can do the following with these navigational elements:

- edit properties

- resize

- move them within the room's boundaries

- add scripts

Importing navigational elements from a file

You can add navigational elements (also known generically as spots) to a room in two ways: importing existing ones from a file, or creating them individually. This section describes how to import navigational elements you already have existing on your machine. To create a new one from scratch, see the section *Creating new navigational elements* on page 19.

Once you add a navigational element to your room, you can edit using the instructions in *Editing a navigational element* on page 21. For example, you can change its shape and add scripts to it.

▼ To import a navigational element (spot) to a room

1. Select the room in the Room Layout View, and then click **Properties...** to display the **Room Properties** window.

2. Click **Libraries...** to display the **Spot Library** dialog box.
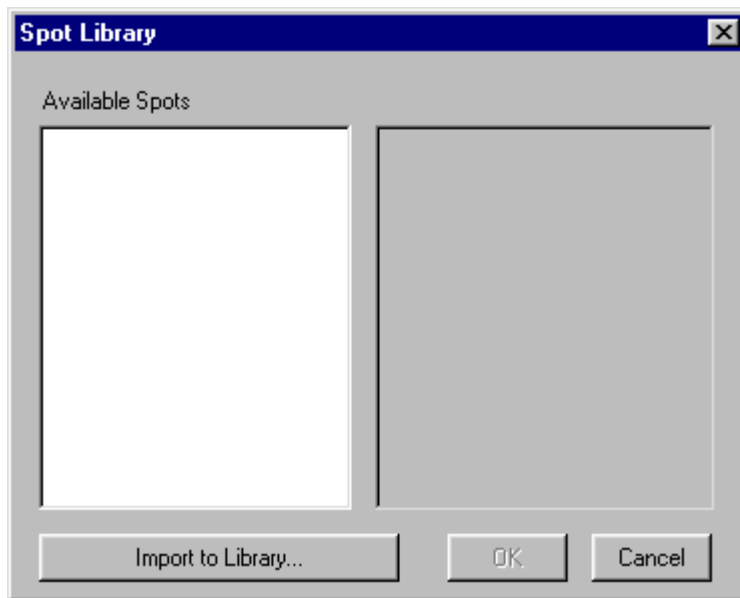
The first time you open this dialog during a session, it is empty.

3. To view spots in a spot file:

    a. Click **Import to Library...** to display a file browser dialog.

    b. Choose an spot file (for example,
        /PalaceServerdirectory/ScriptL/spots.txt) and then click **Open**. The
        Available Spots area now lists the spots included in this file. Click a spot to
        view its description in the right side of the dialog box. For a sample spot file,
        see *Sample spot file on page 18*.

        Spots are displayed either by name (if they have one) or by their ID values.

4. Double-click a spot to select or deselect it. Selected spot files display an X.

5. Click **OK** to add the selected spots to the room.

NOTE – You can edit any new spot; for example, you can move, resize and add a script
to it. See *Editing a navigational element* on page 21.

Sample spot file

This is a sample spots.txt file. You can edit script files using any text editor.

NOTE – The first two lines below the SPOT or DOOR in a script file are reserved for
the name of the script and a description for the script respectively.

```
SPOT

    ID 301
    OUTLINE 0,0  1,0  1,1  0,1
    PICTS 1,256,192 ENDPICTS
    ENDSPOT
DOOR
    ; Run a way
    ; Execute this script to play a cute game.
    ID 201
    DEST 100
    OUTLINE 0,0  80,0  80,384  0,384
    ENDDOOR
DOOR
    ; Spin the bottle game
    ; With this script you can play the spin the bottle game.
    ; Be careful!!
    ID 303
    DEST 120
    OUTLINE 431,0  511,0  511,384  431,384
    ENDDOOR
SPOT
    ; Chess
    ; How about some chess to tickle the gray cells?
    ID 101
    OUTLINE 1,1  2,2  2,1  1,2
    SCRIPT
        ON LEAVE {
            { CLEARLOOSEPROPS PAINTCLEAR } NBRROOMUSERS 2 < IF
        }
    ENDSCRIPT
    ENDSPOT
```

Creating new navigational elements

You can create and add any number of navigational elements to your Palace room.

▼ To create doors, spots, hotspots, and nav areas

1. Select the room to which you want to add hotspots in the **Room Layout** View, and then click **Properties** to display the **Room Properties** window.

2. Click **Add Spot...** in the **Room Properties** window to display the **Add Spot** dialog box.
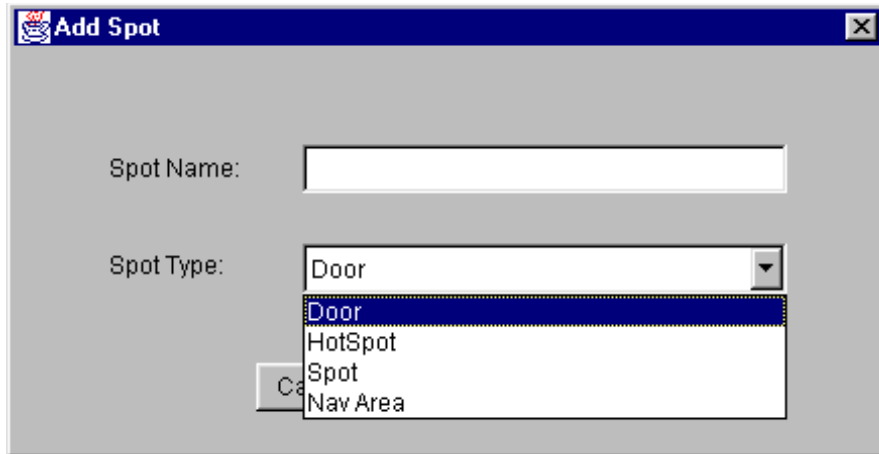
3. Enter a name for the spot in the **Spot Name** text box. Note that if you do not enter a name, The Palace Authoring Tool assigns a unique ID value.

4. Select the spot type in the **Spot Type** list box. You have these options (see *Navigational element descriptions* on page 16 for a description):

    • **Door**

    • **Hotspot**

    • **Spot**

    • **Nav area**

5. Click **OK**. The Palace Authoring Tool adds a default spot in the room with the name you entered in step 3.

6. You can now edit settings for this spot using the procedures in *Editing a navigational element* on page 21. You can also resize and move it.

All navigational elements are outlined in color. You can change the color of this outline by selecting it in the **Selection** dropdown list.

Assigning spot selection colors to rooms

For each room, you can set the color in which a selected spot or door is outlined. Options include red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, white, or black. Red is the default.

▼ To assign the spot selection color to a room

1. Select the room in the Room Layout View, and then click **Properties...** to display the **Room Properties** window.

2. Click the **Selection** drop-down button to display a list of colors.

3. Click a color.

The Palace Authoring Tool updates all spots and doors with the new color.

Moving a navigational element

To move the door or spot, click it to select it, hold the mouse button, and then drag to the new location.

Resizing a navigational element

To resize a door, area, or spot, select it to show its handles. Then, click and drag its handles to the size you want.

Editing a navigational element

You can edit the existing door, spot, or nav area in your Palace through its properties window. Depending on what navigational type you assign to the element, the **Properties** window displays different fields.

▼ To edit a navigational element

1. Either double-click the element, or select it and then click **Spot Properties...** to display the **Properties** dialog. This example shows the **Properties** for a 2-way door.
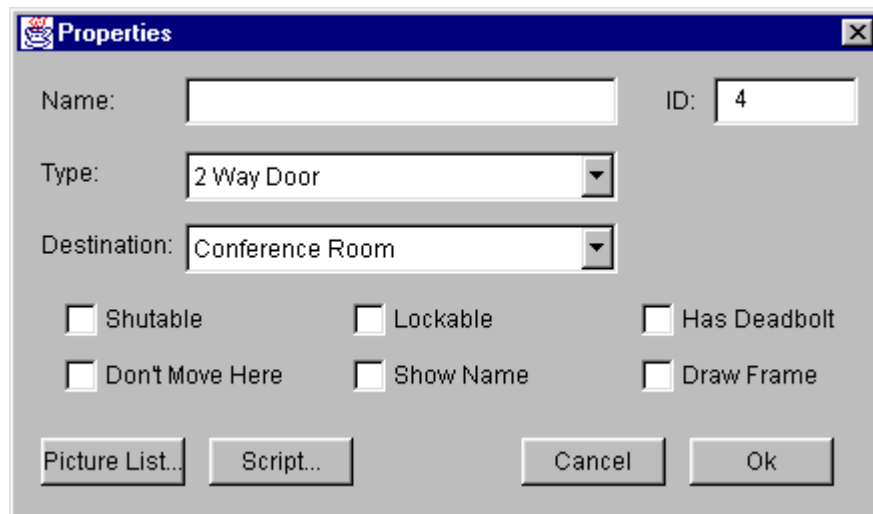
2. This window has the following fields. When you have made your changes, click **OK**. The Palace Authoring Tool places the new element (with the selected image if you chose an image, or a default size and location if you did not choose an image) in the room and highlights it.

- **ID**

  The identification number assigned to the current room appears here. You can change the ID by typing into this box (you cannot use ASCII characters). If the ID clashes, it is automatically set to a new value.

- **Name**

  This displays the name.

- **Type**

  You can change this if desired (see *Navigational element descriptions* on page 16). The fields change according to which type you are assigning.

- **Destination** (doors only**)**

  Select the destination room from this pull down list. This list displays all the existing rooms in your Palace.

- **Shutable** (doors only)

  Sets the door state to open or close. The door can be opened or closed by clicking on it.

- **Lockable** (doors only)

  Sets the door state to locked or unlocked; allows passage to the destination when open.

- **Has Deadbolt** (doors only**)**

  Creates a deadbolt spot. When a visitor clicks the deadbolt, the door shuts and locks and other visitors cannot enter the room.

NOTE – Selecting **Lockable** automatically selects **Shutable** and selecting **Deadbolt** automatically selects **Shutable** and **Lockable**.


- **Don't Move Here**

  Keeps users from moving onto the door/spot.

- **Show Name**

  Causes the name of the door/spot to appear superimposed on the image in the client View Screen. This is especially useful for creating links to other Palaces or web pages.

- **Draw Frame**

  Causes the outline of the door/spot to be visible to all users. It appears as a thin black line.

- **Picture List**

  Click this button to select a picture (`.gif` file) to represent the element. The Palace Authoring Tool displays the **Picture List** dialog box:
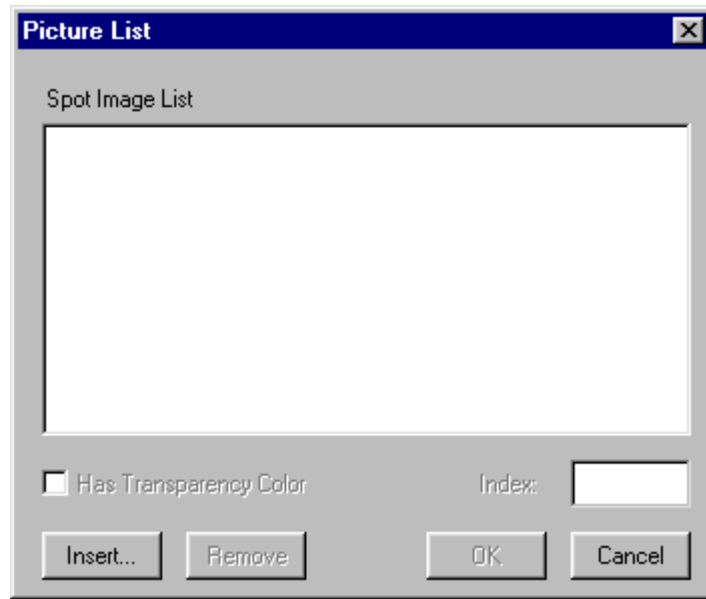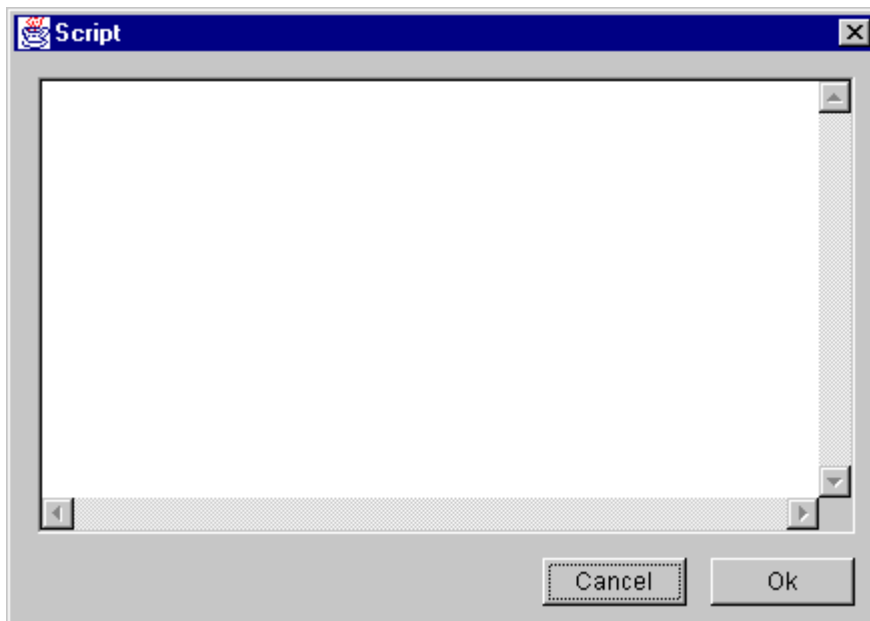
To use an image not listed in this dialog box, click **Insert...** to display a file browser dialog. Choose an image (`.gif`) file, and then click **Open** to add it to the **Image** list. To use an image listed in the Image list, click the image in the **Image** list.

• **Script**

Click this button to add a script to this element. This displays the **Script** dialog box.

Type your script in the text box, and then click **OK**. Scripts are is generally written in the Palace scripting language Iptscrae (see the Iptscrae manual on the Palace website for details). Examples of scripts include a hotspot, games, and greetings. Here is a sample script:

```
ON ENTER {
    "FazeIn" SOUND
    CLEARPROPS
    "Halo" DONPROP
    8 SETCOLOR
```

Quick Reference

This section lists common Palace Authoring Tool Tasks and how to do them.

What to do	How to do it
Start The Palace Authoring Tool	*Launching The Palace Authoring Tool* on page 4
Stop The Palace Authoring Tool	*Exiting The Palace Authoring Tool* on page 5
Open a `.pat` file	*Opening a .pat file to edit* on page 5
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Add/remove rooms	*Adding and removing rooms* on page 8
Set properties for room	*Setting properties for a room* on page 11
Add background image to room	*Adding a backdrop image to a room* on page 14
Create a script for a spot	*Editing a navigational element* on page 21
Add doors, spots, and nav areas	*Creating new navigational elements* on page 19 and *Importing navigational elements from a file* on page 17
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