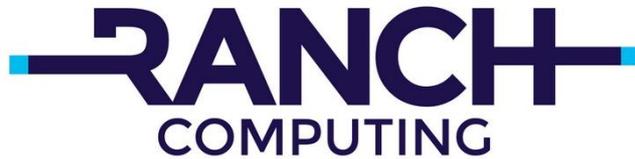# RANCHpacker
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Windows help file

RANCHpacker is a free and very user-friendly application which can convert a Lightwave project to the file format used by the RANCH. Although it makes a few checks on the validity of the project (presence of a scene in the project directory, removal of extra spaces/dots in the scene name, etc.), it assumes that the project has been correctly prepared following the instructions of the RANCH User Guides in PDF format for Lightwave.

RANCHpacker can:

- create a RANCH project archive (.vul) ready to upload to the RANCH
- connect to the RANCH upload page to send your project from your web browser
- check the RANCH web site for price info and time/cost estimations for animations
- detect the CPU on your PC (frequency / cores)
- auto-update itself

To run RANCHpacker, you simply need a computer running Windows (32-bit and 64-bit systems supported).

1) RANCHpacker Installation

Run the **RANCHpacker_Install.exe** program. RANCHpacker will be installed in the **C:\RANCHpacker** directory. The installation is very simple, does not write any data to the Windows registry and does not interfere with the system in any way. When it's done, a shortcut will be created on your desktop, and the RANCHpacker directory will contain:

- the main RANCHpacker program (**RANCHpacker.exe**)
- this user manual (**RANCHpacker_PC.pdf**)
- the free 7-Zip command-line archiver (**7za.exe** - required)
- the subdirectory **archive**.
- some checklist text files summarizing a few points to check before sending a project.

2) When you launch RANCHpacker...

... for the very first time, you will be asked:

- to enter the login and password of your RANCH web site user account. This will let RANCHpacker connect directly to the upload page when you want to send a project.
- if you want RANCHpacker to automatically check for updates (highly recommended).

This information is then saved in the *RANCHpacker.ini* configuration file.

And each time you launch the program, you will be asked to choose the 3D application used to create your project (Lightwave).

3) The 'Prepare project' button...

... asks you to select your project's main directory.

- If you use Lightwave, it will contain at least the *scenes*, *objects* and *images* directories.

When the project directory is selected, the program packs all its files and subdirectories in a project archive file. This archive, saved in the **C:\RANCHpacker\archive** subdirectory, is ready to upload. It has the correct RANCH extension (.vul for Lightwave).

4) The 'Estimate' button...

... opens the Cost/Time estimation page on the RANCH web site.

5) The 'Upload' button...

... opens the *Submit project* web page on the RANCH site dedicated to your 3D software and lets you upload the project archive to the RANCH.

6) The 'CPU detect' button...

... displays the name of the CPU in your system with its standard frequency, real frequency (useful for overclocked systems) and available render threads.

7) The 'Price info' button...

... connects you to the RANCH Price info pages, to see all the RANCH payment formulas and choose the most appropriate formula for your needs.

8) The 'Config' button...

... lets you decide if RANCHpacker must automatically check for updates on the web at launch. It also lets you change the RANCH login and password stored (crypted) in the *RANCHpacker.ini* file. This does not change the real login/password in your RANCH account at all, it only changes the login/password used by RANCHpacker to connect to the RANCH web site automatically (without you having to login manually on the site).

9) The 'Read help' button...

... displays this PDF help file (provided you have a PDF reader installed on your computer).

10) The 'About' button...

... displays the RANCHpacker version and copyright information.

11) The 'Updates' button...

... connects to the RANCH update server to see if an update for RANCHpacker is available. If yes, you will be given the choice to download the most recent version of RANCHpacker (always recommended) or not. If you choose to do so, the new update will be downloaded and automatically installed.

Thank you for using RANCHpacker!

The RANCH Team
http://www.ranchcomputing.com/

History

V1.6
- Some links corrected for the new RANCH Computing web site.
- Removed support for Terragen, no longer supported on the RANCH

v1.5
- Support for Lightwave 2015/2018.
- Removed support for Maya. Use instead the new RANCHecker for Maya.

v1.4
- Removed support for Cinema 4D. Use instead the new RANCHecker for C4D.
- Various minor updates.

v1.3
- Choice between maximum compression level and maximum compression speed
- Significant increase in maximum compression speed

v1.2
- Terragen support.

v1.1
- Autodesk Maya support.

v1.0
- First public RANCHpacker version.