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### Notes on using transparency in textures for the GameGuru EBE

Transparency is useful in EBE for such items as screens or windows but can be fiddly to achieve. A limitation is that the technique is unsuitable for doors etc. because such windows remain solid and cannot be passed through physically although they can be seen through. The effect is worth trying because excellent results can be achieved, examples including medieval windows or Arab screens such as shown below. A force field could be simulated by using a completely transparent wall.

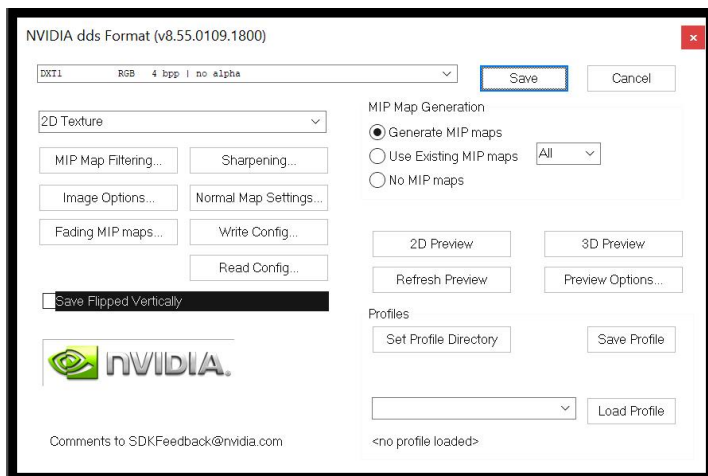


The trick is managed by placing a texture with transparency specified in the image (as described below) onto an EBE object such as a wall. These notes are based upon using PaintShop Pro with the NVidia plug-in for .DDS files. If this (free) plug-in is not available, it is possible to use .png files and let EBE translate these automatically in making a new palette for your building: See the second set of instructions below.

#### To make a .dds file with transparency

The first task is to create an image of the desired subject, whether window, screen or something else. All .dds files need to be square, 1024 or 512 pixels being useful sizes for textures for a wall or floor. To avoid rough edges in transparency on the wall it is advisable to have a solid colour border of 40 pixels each side in an image of 512 square. Some of this border will be used (or lost) for the edges of the wall/floor object. Use pure black (or 0,0,0 in RGB terms) wherever the transparency is needed. It is usual to start with this black as the image background. The following stages are needed to save the image in a suitable format but require care because the menu items needed are not obvious. After creating your picture, the black areas (RGB 0,0,0) can be made transparent on the *Image/Palette/Set transparency* menu, selecting the bottom of the three radio buttons, background colour of RGB 0,0,0. Check the image with Ctrl+V to see the transparency. If any changes are made to the image, the transparency may require to be reset.

## Saving textures with transparency for the GameGuru EBE



### THE NVIDIA PLUGIN SCREEN

Save this file to .dds with the menu choice of DXT5 from the top plug-in window slot so it reads

“DXT5 ARGB 8 bpp | interpolated alpha”.

(On opening, EXT3 is the default choice and not easy to read.)

Other options may be left if not needed.

The EBE keeps image files in the subfolder named Texturesource in the Ebeank folder. An oddity here is that only .dds files are shown by default. To see .png and other types if they exist, the *All Files* has to be chosen. Another oddity is that if a single .dds file (rather than the full set of three, named \_D, \_S, \_N as is the preferred system) is used to replace another texture, old saturation maps, bump maps or normal maps from the former image may remain undeleted and show through the new surface texture. Note that if files are put in a subordinate folder they still appear in the choices available.

### To save a .png image instead of .dds

Remembering a square image is required with transparency solid black:

Using the *Layers* Menu:

- 1) Select *New Mask Layer* and the options *From Image.../Any non-zero value*. Click OK.  
(If the mask comes out clear white or black without any image or clearly not what is intended to be transparent, use the Undo and try again with a different setting.)
- 2) Next select *Layers/Load/Save Mask* and option *Save Mask to Alpha Channel*. Ensure the mask is correct and click Save to .png file.
- 3) Right click on an item on the EBE texture chart to replace it with your image. The Ebebank system will create a .dds file from the .png file for the textures plate if the image is suitable. Problems often happen here so try again if needed!