

A.W.O.L Computing Inc.  
How to make a gateway for dummies  
Version 4.0



<http://awol.uplinkcorp.com>

The official home of A.W.O.L.

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**NOTE: This guide should not be distributed for any amount of money.**

## Section 1: Updates And News And History

Well it's been over a year since the first version of this guide was written and released. During that time Uplink has changed and evolved and so has the community. Version 1.0 of this guide was very primitive and poorly written. It got better as time went on and received a major overhaul when the 1.2 patch released last summer. I made a few changes here and there but the guide mostly remained the same. Well figured it's time to start out fresh and rewrite this thing from scratch both for Uplink veterans and the new people who just found out about Uplink.

Before the new mod method was introduced in the 1.2 patch, you would need to hack Uplink if you wanted to make a custom gateway. Thanks to Modlink and the once strong modding community, Chris saw what people were doing and added mod support to make it easier for a custom gateway or skin to be added. It also made old modders lives hell while we had to convert our old mods to work with 1.2.

But Chris had one minor oversight. When coding the new mod system, he forgot to keep the standard wireless gateway programmed as “untraceable”. It doesn’t work in 1.2 or anything past it. It works just like a normal gateway. Also note that 1.1 mods do not work with 1.2 and up.

Also Uplink is about to be release for the MAC. I’ve been told by Chris that

Anyway this new guide contains all the information and tools you will need to make a gateway.

## Section 2: New Introduction

Before I go any farther I want to explain what the name A.W.O.L. is. Over a year ago I started making gateway mods. I was in an online clan called A.W.O.L. at the time and I created A.W.O.L. Computing In as a tribute to them. In the Army AWOL means “Away With Out Leave”. In the clans case it stood for “Armed Warriors On Line”. In my case it doesn’t really stand for anything, it just sounds cool.

Anyway the first A.W.O.L. mod was a rather crappy gateway called the A.W.O.L. 3900 SE. That is what started it all. Making a gateway mod back then was very hard for the beginner because you had through many complicated steps and there were no guides around to help a clueless newb.

Icepick had one of his own but it wasn’t very helpful to people. So I took it upon myself to write one that would help a person make a gateway and not need to ask any questions. It included Redshirt and covered all the bases. It was an instant hit with the community and it grew from there. I’m willing to go out on a limb and say that if it weren’t for the early versions of my guide, the (modding) community wouldn’t hav grown so big. I know that sounds egotistical but I think it’s the truth. This guide (not this version obviously) was at one time the most downloaded file on Downlink until it went down.

Well thanks to making so many gateways and becoming an outstanding member of the community, I landed a spot as Introversion beta tester, and eventually forum moderator.

## Section 3: FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q: How do I make a gateway?

A: Well that is what this guide is for.

Q: How easy is it to make a gateway?

A: Since you should be using Uplink 1.31, it’s not too bad.

Q: Who makes the best custom gateways?

A: I can’t answer that question. It’s a matter of personal taste.

Q: Where can I get your gateways?

A: On the official A.W.O.L. site or on Modlink, the same place you got this guide from hopefully.

Q: Can I use the A.W.O.L. name?

A: Not if you are making a mod. If you want to use the A.W.O.L. name in some other fashion then please e-mail me first.

Q: How many gateways can I install?

A: If you are running 1.31 then you can install as many as you wish.

Q: Why do you have jokes and comments in this guide?

A: Because this is my guide and I try to make at least one person laugh every day. If I can do that then I'm happy. I also happen to think I'm funny to an extent.

Q: Can I e-mail you for help?

A: Sure you can, but please don't expect me to take you through this step-by-step. I wrote this guide so people would have as few questions as possible.

Q: Can you please take a look at this gateway I made and tell me what you think?

A: Please don't send me your work wanting an evaluation. I don't think I'm in a place to pass judgment on someone else's work. If you like it then that is all that matters. Send it to Modlink instead.

Q: I made my own gateway and had all the right chords but the hardware is out of place.

A: There is no official reason for this, but I have a theory. Which is that Uplink can only show a set amount of hardware in for a certain picture size. If you tell Uplink to go over that limit it makes the game go crazy and put the hardware out of place. There isn't much you can do about it.

Q: What's this bit of hardware that looks like a fan?

A: Back in the early days of Uplink before its public release, Chris gave people the option to overclock a gateway for extra speed. The fans would cool it down so it could be overclocked for longer periods of time. If you don't understand what I mean then think of how a car uses Nitrous Oxide (NOS) for a major speed boost. Anyway Chris took it out because it didn't impact the game much.

Q: Are you a hacker/cracker?

A: No.

Q: Do you make mods for any other games?

A: Yes. I'm currently working on an Uplink based mod for The Sims titled Project SimLink or PSL. All information can be found on the official AWOL site.

Q: What programs should I use to make a gateway?

A: You can use anything you want. I make 99% of every gateway using nothing but MS paint. I use MS Picture It to make the thumbnail. Others have used the pricey stuff like Photoshop and Paint Shop Pro, but I like to keep things simple.

Q: How did you become a beta tester?

A: It's amazing what a \$100 bribe can get you.

Q: Can you get me in the next beta test?

A: No.

Q: How did you and Icepick become moderators?

A: Well Icepick became one first. Back in the summer of 2002 the IV forums had degenerated greatly. They were full of spam and warez crap. They were also not moderated. Chris was never around to clean things up. Then a massive spam attack forced Chris to appoint someone to keep order over things. That person was Icepick. Many months later Einstein was also appointed as a mod but decided to give up the job in March. That's when I approached Chris about a new mod being appointed.

Q: How long does it take you to make a gateway?

A: It varies from gateway to gateway. But most of the time it takes about 3 days from conception in my head to a finished product ready for download.

Q: What about your unreleased work?

A: I've got a lot of finished gateways on sitting on my system that will never be released. Why? Because I'm not happy with the way they turned out. I will probably never release them to the public.

Q: Can I work with you on a mod?

A: Sorry but no. A.W.O.L. has and always will be a solo effort. The entire A.W.O.L. Empire was built from scratch by me and I'm not real crazy about opening it up.

Q: When is chapter 2 of your fan fiction coming out?

A: When it's done.

## Section 4: Getting Started

Well first you need to have bought the full version of the game. And before you asking Uplink and Uplink: Hacker Elite are the same game. Install the game to the default directory. Don't bother starting a new user just yet. You need to patch the game before you start work on a custom gateway.

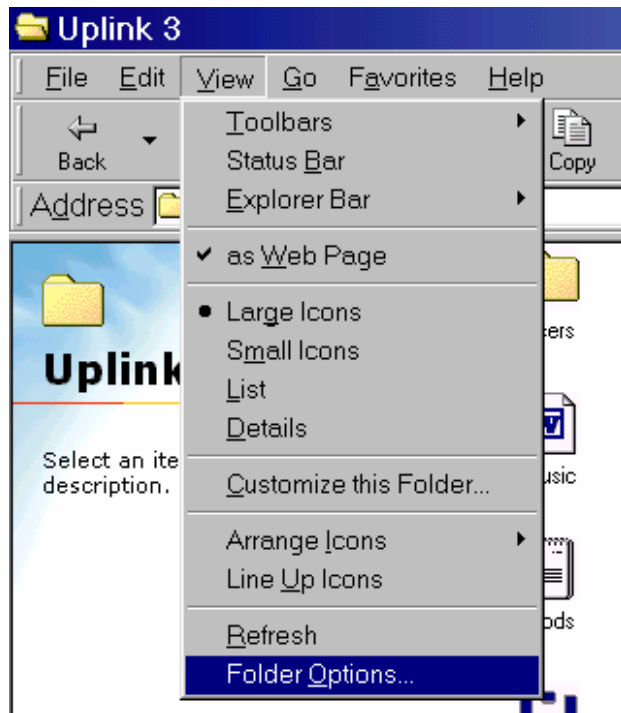
Uplink and Uplink: Hacker Elite are the same games so don't worry about compatibility. The patches on the Introversion website will work no matter what "version" you have. So on the IV website download and install the 1.31 patch. Then run the game and start a new user.

At this point I suggest you make a new folder in the Uplink directory called "MODS" or something else of your choosing. Use this folder to store your work. Also keep backups of your mod incase something gets messed up during the creation.

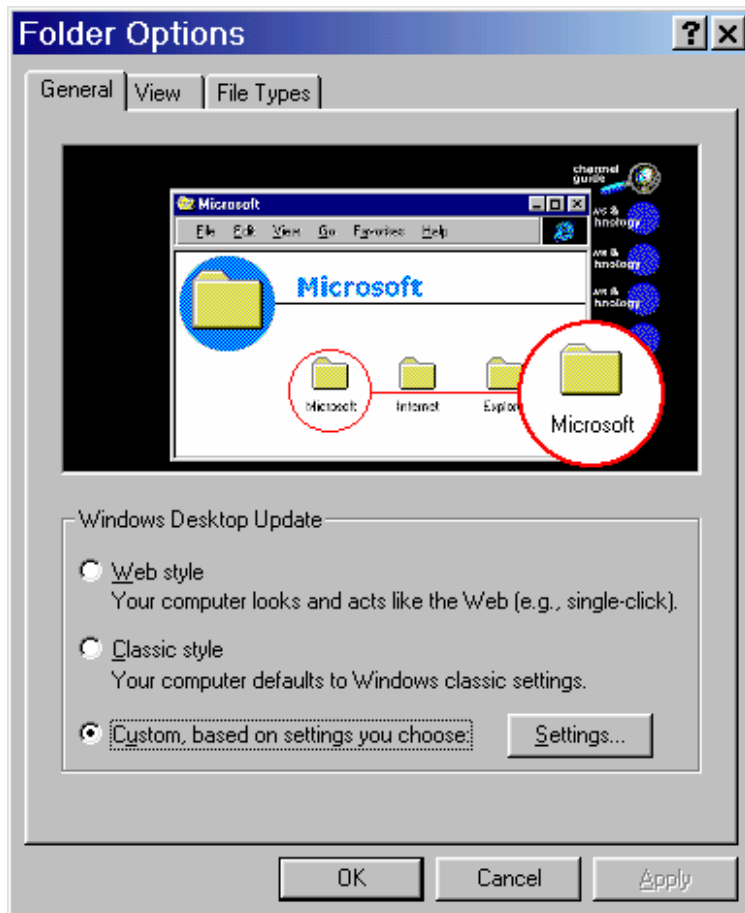
Now go back to the Uplink directory. You're going to need to create several more new folders. Create a new folder called "**data**". Inside the new data folder create a new folder called "**gateways**". It's case sensitive so remember not to use caps.

This next little part is optional. Now back in the Uplink dir (dir will stand for directory from now on) create another new folder. Name this one ‘**graphics**’. Inside the new graphics folder create another new folder. Name this one ‘**gateway**’. Notice that it’s gateway and not gateways like in the data folder.

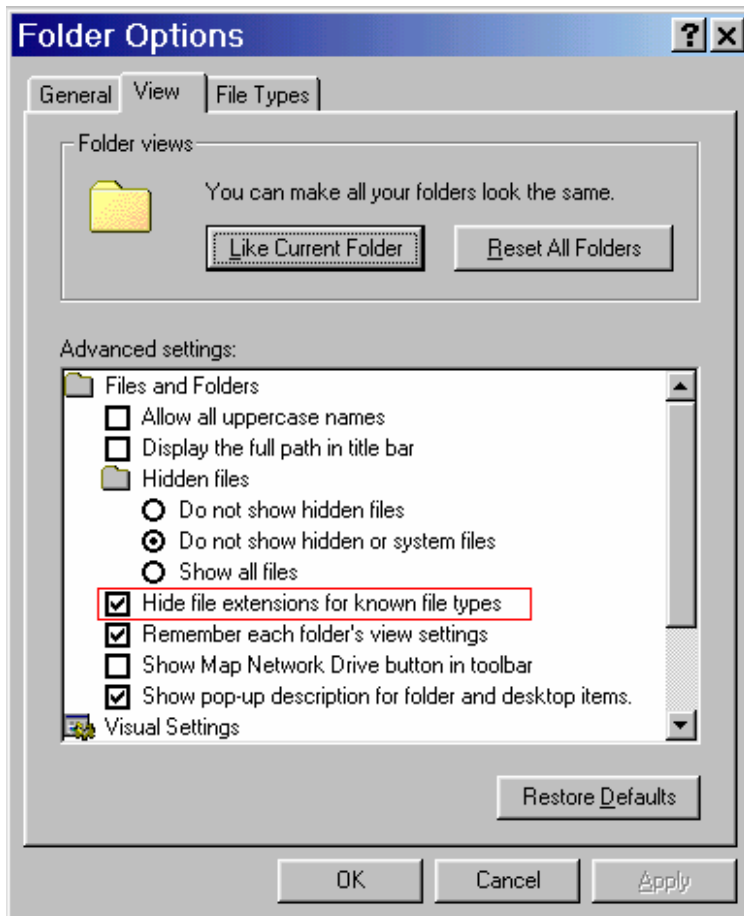
Now you’re going to pry open the standard Uplink graphics so you will have something to work with. It is not as hard as you may think so don’t worry. Go back to the Uplink dir and look in the “view” option. Select the option at the bottom called “Folder Options”.



Once you click it, a little window will pop up that looks something like this.



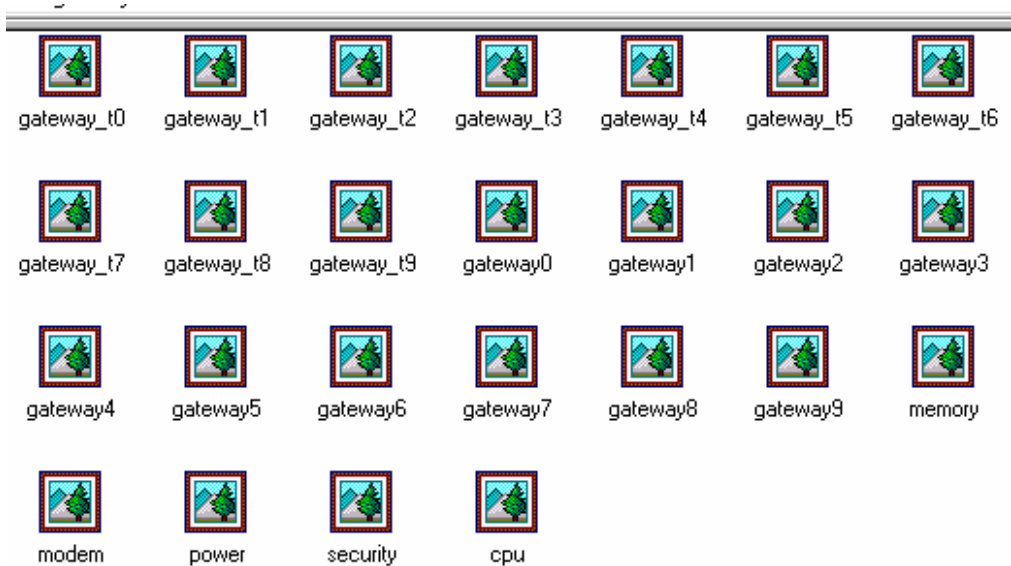
Select the “view” tab and the window will switch over to this menu.



See the option with the red box around it? You need to uncheck this option to unzip the graphics folder. Once you do that click ok and go back to the Uplink dir. You will notice that some files have “.dat” after their name. You need to find “**graphics.dat**” and rename it to “**graphics.zip**”. Now go back to the folder options and recheck the “hide file extensions” option.

Back in the Uplink dir look at the new graphics zip file. Select it and unzip it to the Uplink dir. Look inside the “graphics” folder you created earlier and you will see that it’s full of TIF files. You will also see there are a lot more folders in there now as well.

Just ignore these new folders and go into the “gateway” folder. Where did all these files come from? These are the stock gateways that come with the game. Use these files as a starting point and for parts. The ones with “\_t” in the name are thumbnails.

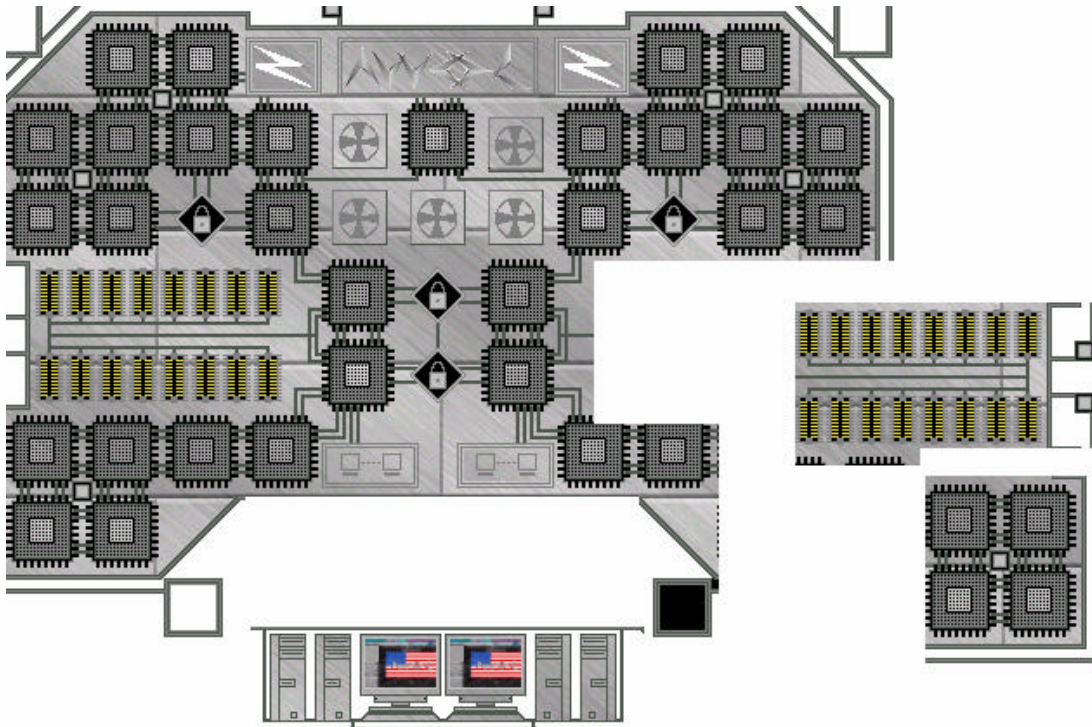


## Section 5: Creating And Building

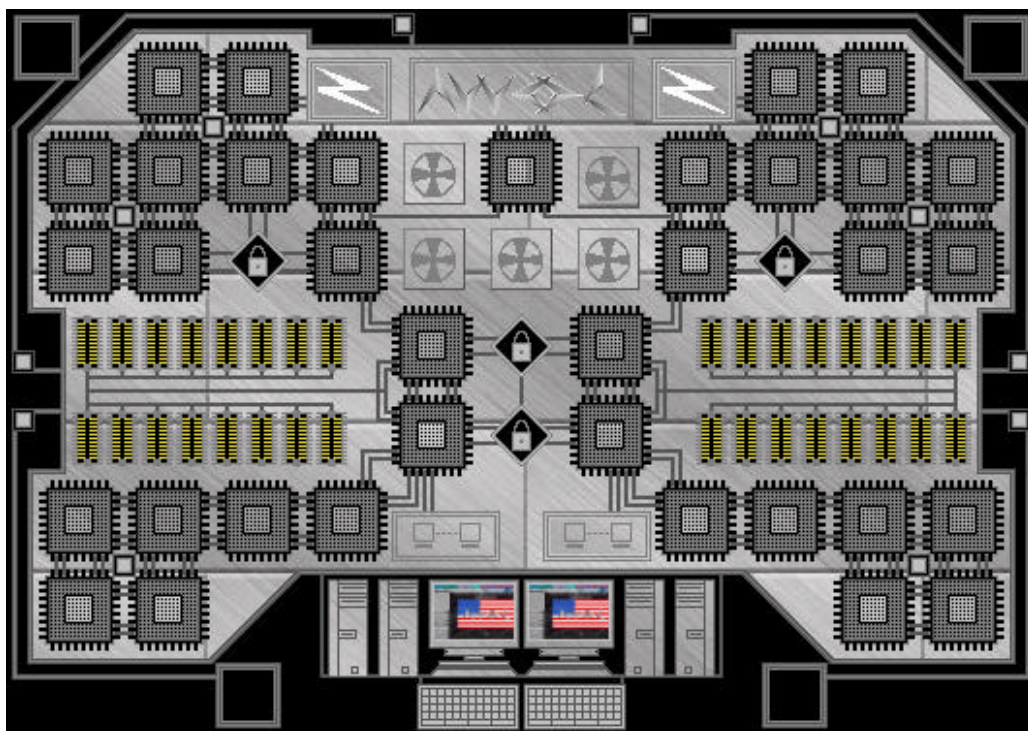
Open up Paint or whatever programs you've chosen to make the gateway with. Then open up a few of the gateways. Use these as a starting point or for inspiration if you will. Once you start seeing what you want your gateway to look like in your head, cut out parts of a stock gateway. Cut out the cpu slot, the memory the power supply ect.

Now start with a big blank space and paste all the parts you have. Then start making a rough draft of your gateway. Look below to see what I mean.





Get the idea now? When you have anything where you want it, you should have something that looks like this. And by that I mean you should have a nice, clean, finished looking gateway. Not one with parts just laying around. They style and color of the gateway is completely up to you.



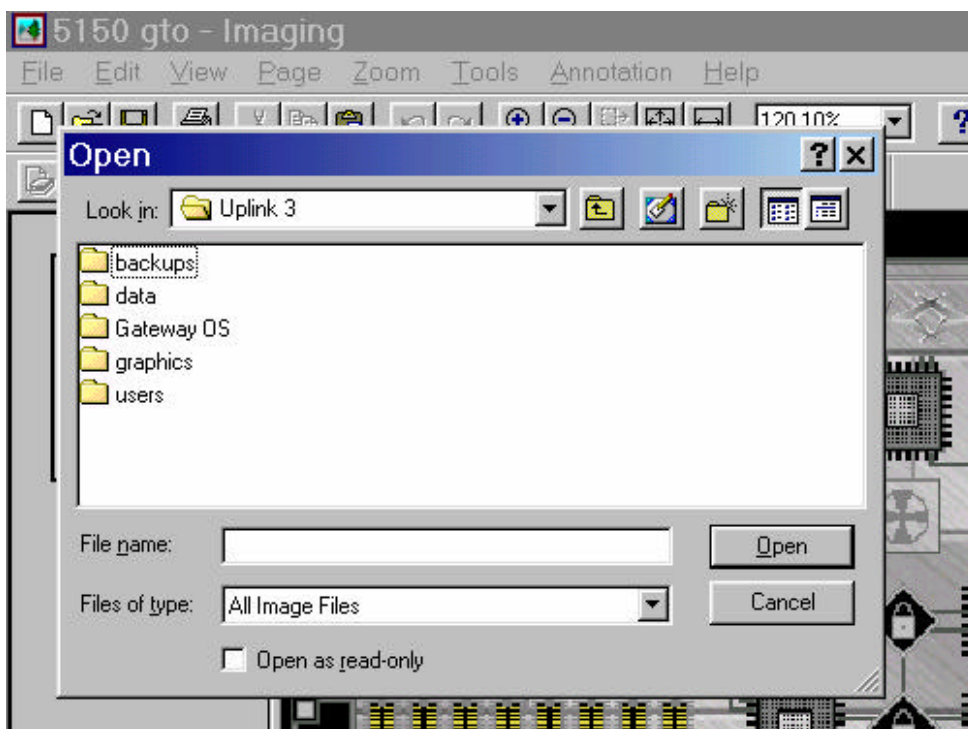
**Note that this is my A.W.O.L. 5150 GTO gateway. Use it for ideas if you like, but please don't make a carbon copy of it. Go to Modlink and see the gateways made by other people if you need more ideas, but don't steal a design.**

Now save your gateway as a bitmap file. **Do not I repeat do not save it as a jpeg or gif. Saving it to either of those formats will cause a serious loss in color information and image quality.**

But before you can do that you need to come up with a name for your gateway. Let's say you're going to call it "Uber Leet" for the sake of argument. Then save the gateway as a bitmap with the name "Uber Leet". And before you say "but Uplink only sees TIF's" I know. We will get to that in just a second.

Windows comes built in with a program created by Kodak. The easiest way to find this program and get it open is to open a pre-made TIF file in Uplink. So just double click on and the program should open right now.

Once it's open, go up to file and select open. Make sure you have "all image files" selected.



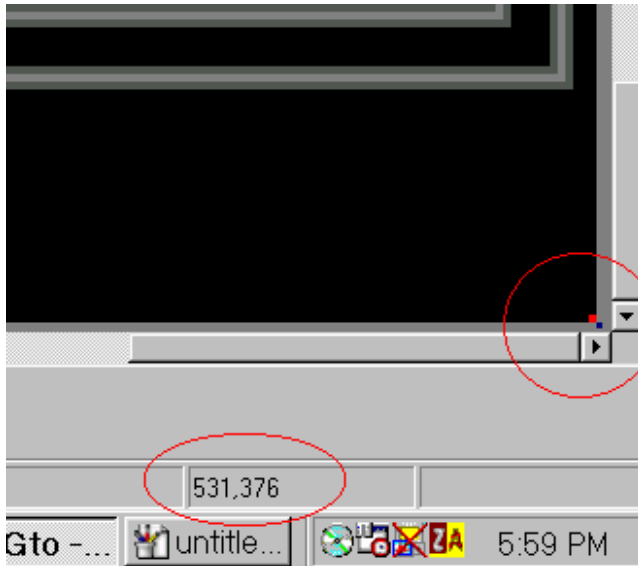
Now go into the folder where you saved "Uber Leet" and open it. Then select save as and select the "TIFF" option. Save it to the "gateway" folder inside the graphics folder. This next part I can't really help you with. Use some program where you can resize the full sized gateway. You will need to squeeze the large picture in a space no bigger than 120 x 400 pixels. Once you do that, use the same TIF method above

only this time save the gateway with the name “Uber Leet\_t”. Make sure you have the “\_” and a lowercase t. Save the file to the same place as the large picture.

Now you should take a little break. Take a walk, watch a movie, chug a soda or whatever floats your boat. Trust me because this next part is going to piss you off. It’s best to be relaxed before you take on this next section.

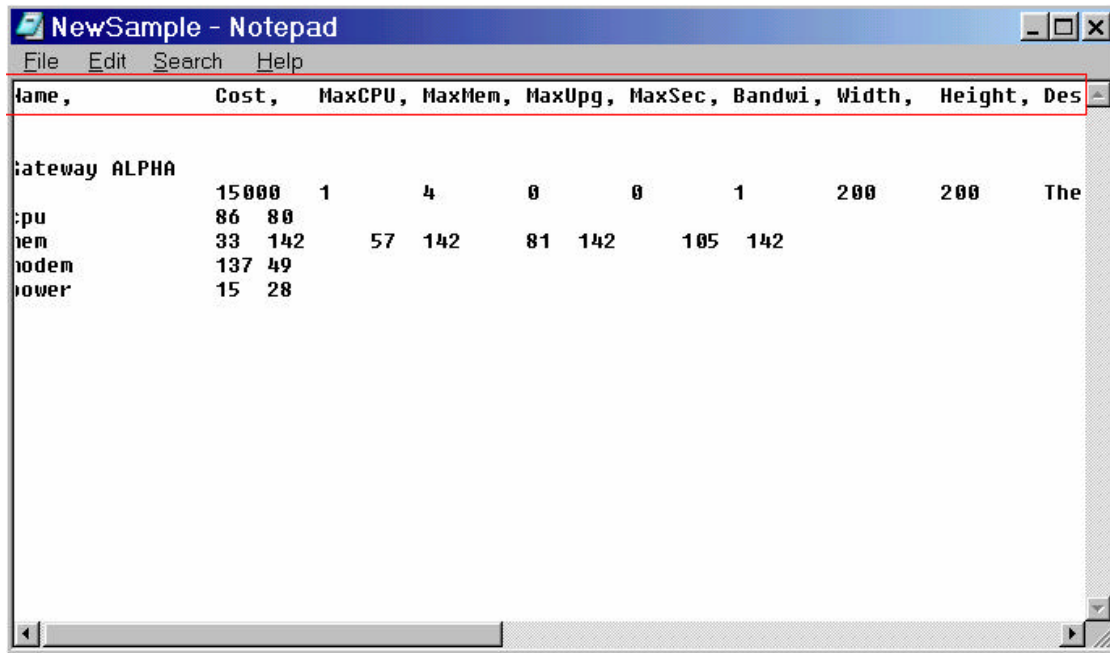
## Section 6: A Real Pain In The Ass

I find Paint is the easiest program to use for this next part. So fire up Paint and open the large gateway TI you made a little while ago. What you are going to do is zoom in and find the chords for each bit of hardware. This step takes a lot of time and is the most painful part of gateway creation. First zoom in on the lower right hand corner. Move your cursor to the corner of your picture and look at the two sets of numbers near the bottom of the screen. The red areas are where you need to look.



The 531 x 376 is the total size of this picture. Obviously you won’t have the same numbers because you are making your own gateway, so jot down your own set of numbers. You will need to remember these numbers to tell Uplink where to put things.

With this guide you should have gotten a small text file called “NewSample”. Open it then transfer everything in it to a blank text file. Later on you will need to remove the “name, cost, MAXcpu ect” line from the file, but just leave it alone for now. That line will serve as your reference point.



Each area is pretty self-explanatory. But because it's been asked so many times, I will explain each one.

**Name-** The name of this gateway.

**Cost-** How many credits the gateway will cost.

**MaxCPU-** The maximum amount of CPU's this gateway can hold.

**MaxMem-** The maximum amount of memory sticks this gateway can hold.

**MaxUpg-** Not used so don't worry about it.

**MaxSec-** The maximum number of security slots this gateway has.

**Bandwi-** The maximum speed modem this gateway can hold.

**Width-** How many pixels wide the gateway is.

**Height-** How many pixels high the gateway is.

**Description-** This is a little information on the gateway.

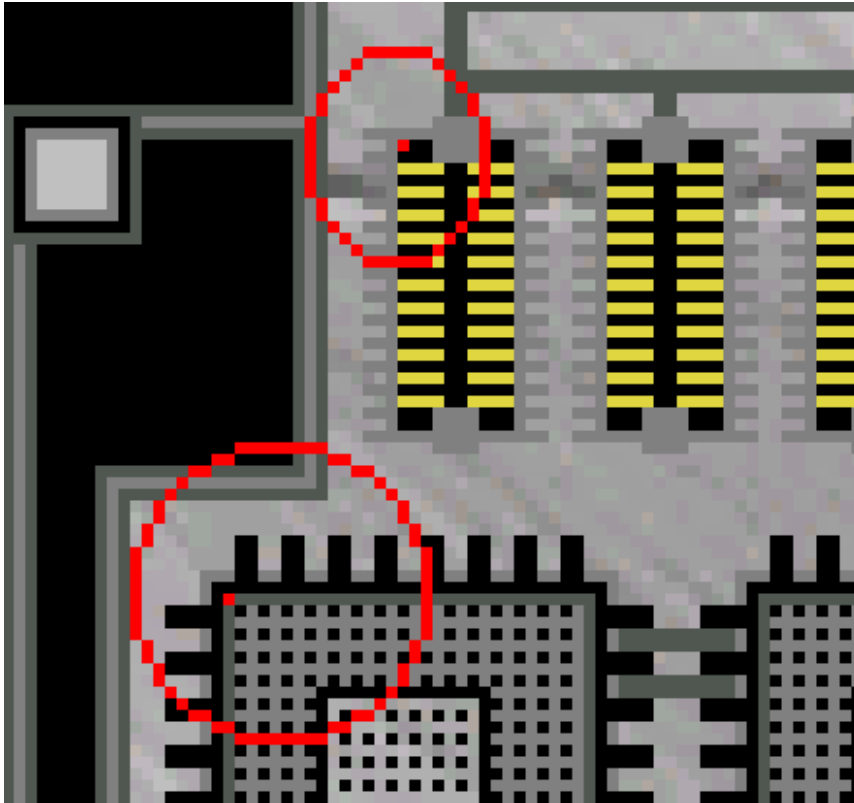
Now we are going to enter the first set of chords for the gateway. Remember those two numbers you wrote down before? Good. The first set of numbers is the width; the second set is the height. So in the "NewSample" file replace the width and height numbers with the ones from your new gateway.

**NOTE: Do not use the chord method above for this next little part.**

Simple enough eh? Now you need to look at your gateway and count how many of each part it has. That means you count how many CPU's you have and memory slots and so on. Then replace the numbers in the "NewSample" file with the proper ones for you. Also change the name to "Uber Leet" or whatever you're going to call it and change the description to whatever you like. But do not write too much there, if you do then it will be cut off when you're buying the gateway in the game.

**NOTE: We are now going back to using the chord method.**

Now we are going to find and enter the chords for each bit of hardware for the gateway. This is long and tedious so bare with me. Look at the top left part of each component. The area inside the red circles tells you where to look and the little red mark is the exact place you need to have your pointer to get the right set of numbers. When your mouse is in place look near the bottom right side of your screen and look for another set of numbers. They will be located in the same place as before when you did the width and height chords.



Once you have the number for the part, go into the “NewSample” file and look to the left. You will see 4 categories.

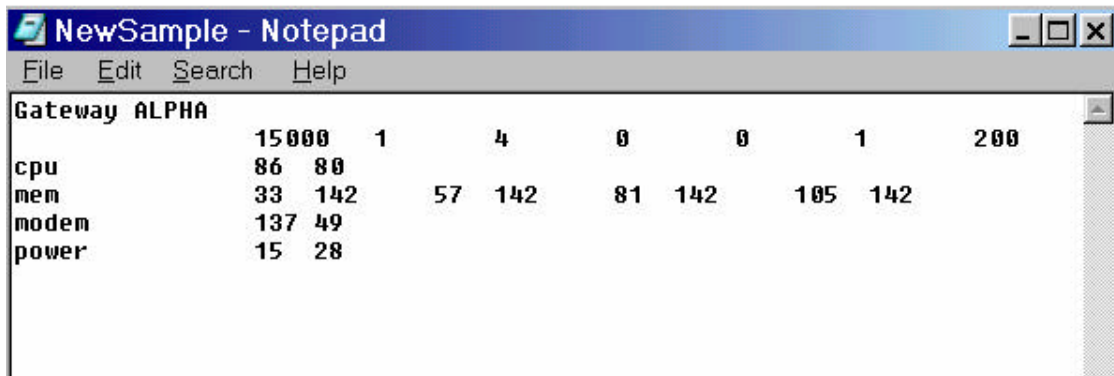
cpu  
mem  
modem  
power

Across from each category there are sets of numbers. These are the chords for each part of the gateway. They tell Uplink where to place each component on screen. Replace the numbers to the right with the proper ones for your gateway. Do this for the CPU's, memory slots, power supply, modem, and security slots. Make sure everything is lined up when you are done.

This will take a few minutes to a long time depending on how big your gateway is and how good of a memory you have.



Once you are done with all that mess, delete everything before the name of your gateway. It should look like this after to finish.



Now go to file and select Save As. Name the file “Uber Leet” or whatever you’re calling your gateway. Remember the name has to be the same one that you used for the TIF files earlier. Save the file to your mods folder and also save it to the “gateways” folder inside the “data” folder.

And that’s it. You’ve just finished your very first gateway.

## Section 7: The End

Well I hope this guide has helped you out. If you need help then feel free to e-mail me at [PunisherBass@aol.com](mailto:PunisherBass@aol.com) Make the subject something Uplink related like “gateways” or something of that nature.

Also remember that I put a lot of my free time into making my gateways, writing the many different versions of this guide, and playing moderator on the IV forums. And I also never have and never will charge people for my mods or my guide. If would like to thank me for my work then please visit my Amazon wish list.

[http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/registry/2OMTIZ3NXYJF8/ref=cm\\_aya\\_wl\\_wl/103-7084430-8379028](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/registry/2OMTIZ3NXYJF8/ref=cm_aya_wl_wl/103-7084430-8379028)

Well that’s about it really.

Take Care  
PunisherBass aka Derek Schott  
<http://awol.uplinkcorp.com>

