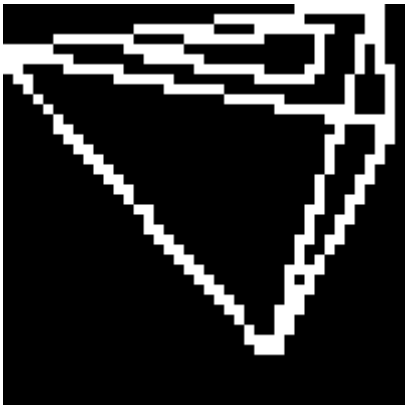
Wire Frames in Star Trek: Armada

In *Star Trek: Armada*, each unit and station has a depiction icon that is shown in the unit detail panel whenever you select it. Technically these are sprites. Each subsystem being damaged or offline is highlighted in the wire frame. This requires five different elements of the wire frame to be present, which together make up the entire wire frame. In *Star Trek: Armada* (in contrast to *Star Trek: Armada II*) the depiction is indeed closely related to the mesh wire. It may for example look like this:



Creating the Texture File

As source for the wire frame it is common practice to load the SOD in the Storm3D Tool, show only the mesh wire (press W), after having placed the black background *MbgBlack.SOD*. An alternative may be the rendering means of your 3D modeling tool.

Once you made an image of the mesh wire, make sure you scale to 40×40 pixels. Leaving at least 1-2 pixels padding is advisable, otherwise the wire frame may look crammed. Work in it, so that it looks well saturated. Especially when using the *Strom3D Tool*, it might look a bit too dark, or to thin-lined. Once you are finished, this will be the basis for the wire frame panels for each subsystem.

The eventual texture file should contain all five elements to be highlighted, when damaged or offline. The texture can be 128×128 pixels in size, that is separated into 40×40 pixels sections, each containing one subsystem element. The order can be any way you like (mapping is done by the sprite referencing it, later), but one way of doing it would be in this order:

Sensors	Shield Generator	Life Support
Engines	Weapons Control	<*empty*>

One of these panels if occupied by one section of the entire wire frame. That can look like this:

In practice, the black color shown here should not be black at all but transparent.

The 40×40 wire frame from above needs some editing now, basically duplicating it five times, but each time cutting out different parts of it, so that each of the five panels is using a different section of it for depicting damage. Once done, save the new image in TGA format, 24 bits, uncompressed.

Creating the Wire Frame Sprite

The texture just created contains all five sub system wire frame elements. But the game still does not know, what the mapping for these panels is. This is done in the sprite files, specifically *gui_global.spr*. There you will find a section, starting with this:

```
# Ship Wireframes
@reference=128
@tmaterial=interface
```

Below it, put a block with the information fitting your just created wire frame texture, e.g. like this:

```
unitw1 txtr80 40  0 40 40
unitw2 txtr80  0 40 40 40
unitw3 txtr80 40 40 40 40
unitw4 txtr80 80  0 40 40
unitw5 txtr80  0  0 40 40
```

The positions in each line are to be interpreted as follows:

<SOD name>w<number> <texture name> <Starting X> <Starting Y> <Width> <Height>

(just like for other Sprites). The *<SOD name>* and *<texture name>* are without the *.sod* or *.tga* file name extension. Also is it important to notice, that the SOD name is meant, **not** the ODF name. Meaning, a wire frame is used for a specific model, not a specific unit. (Multiple units may use the same SOD.) The *<number>* value is a digit between 1 and 5. This translates to:

1. Sensors,
2. Shield Generator,
3. Life Support,
4. Engines and
5. Weapons Control.

This is why it is a good idea to use the above shown table for the order of elements.

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