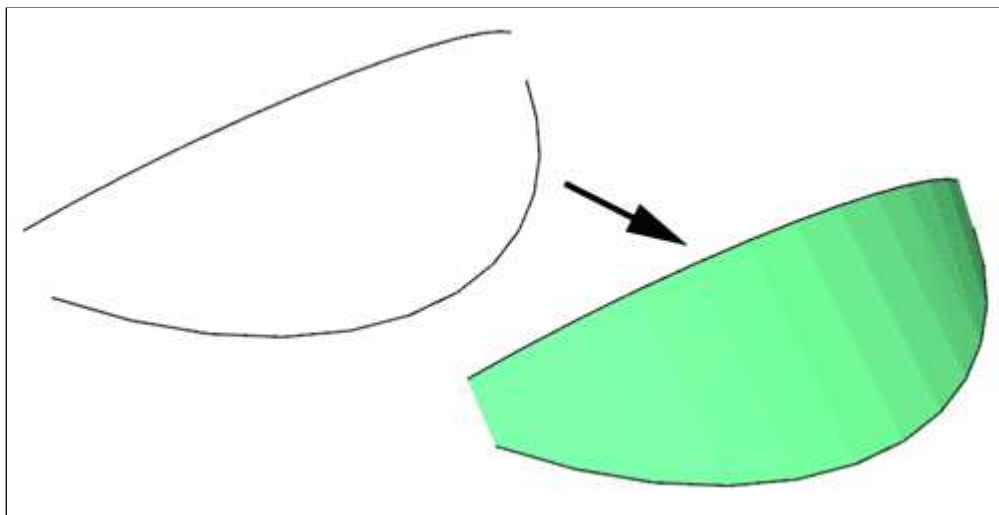


Coverer, LDraw sheet generator



Coverer utility creates a sheet of triangle and quads between two sets of lines. Each set is provided to the utility in separate LDraw files. A third file containing the surface (and its conditional lines) is created.

It is a simple console application, source code is provided below to anyone willing to integrate it in a more palatable interface. You may also use Michael Heidemann [LETGUI](#) front-end (highly recommended!).

Download

[Coverer package](#), including program for Windows and Linux, documentation, source files (Visual C++ sample files).



Note: Linux version courtesy of Mufti.

Note: Macintosh version (universal binary) courtesy of Jim DeVona

History

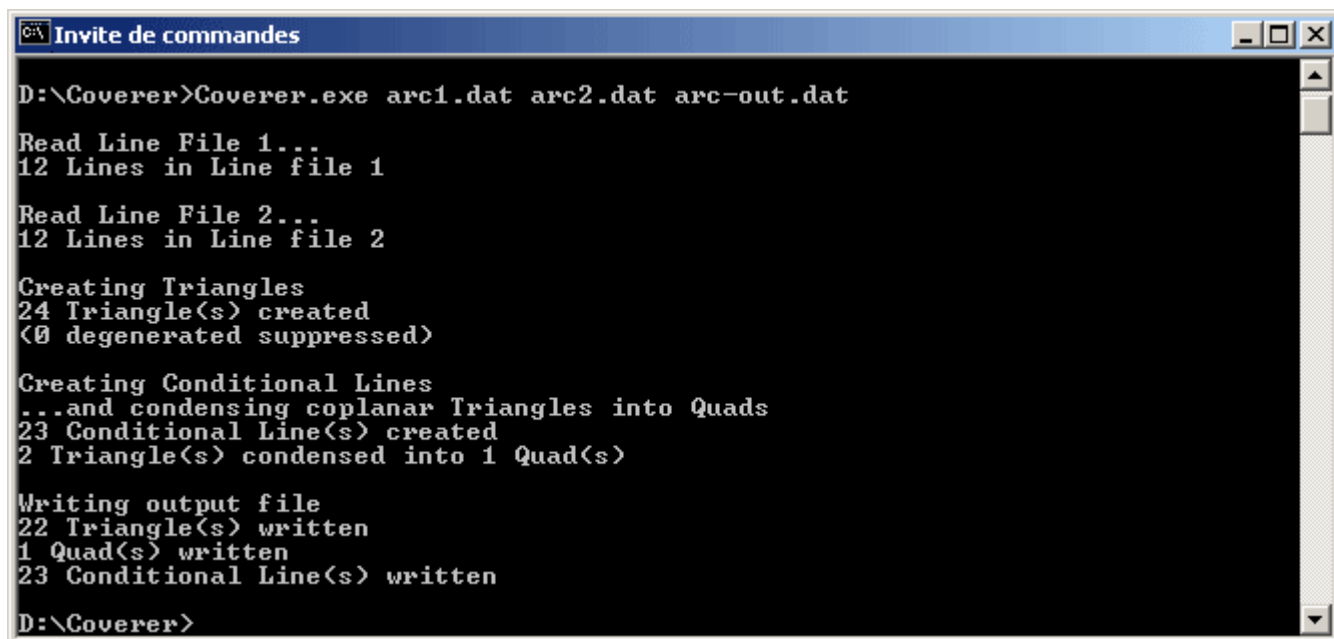
- V1.0: Initial release
- V1.1: July 2008
 - Corrected a bug that sometimes created an extraneous - and wrong - conditional line.
 - Improved output format
 - Added -b bias parameter
- V1.2: July 2008: Corrected a bug that allowed concave quads to be generated
- V1.3: July 2011:
 - Added a new algorithm that generally gives better results. The old algorithm is still available through option.

- Limit angle for conversion to quad is now closer to 1°.

Usage

- Prepare the input LDraw files. **Coverer** uses only lines of input files (line type 2). Other LDraw line types are ignored. If you want to compute surface between edge primitives, they must be inlined down to lines. [LDDesignPad](#) does this very conveniently.
- Launch a command prompt
- Type the command line: `coverer [-r] [-s] [-l <length>] [-b <bias>] LdrawLineFile1 LdrawLineFile2 LdrawSurfaceFileOut`. **Coverer** will create `LdrawSurfaceFileOut`, containing the surface. Note that if `LdrawSurfaceFileOut` exists it will be overwritten without warning. `-s`, `-b`, `-r` and `-l` are optional parameters controlling the behavior of **Coverer**. These options will be detailed below.
- **Coverer** output file with 6 digits after decimal point, this precision is excessive for most usages and values will be rounded. Here again, [LDDesignPad](#) does that very well.

Here is a screen shot of a sample run:



```

D:\Coverer>Coverer.exe arc1.dat arc2.dat arc-out.dat

Read Line File 1...
12 Lines in Line file 1

Read Line File 2...
12 Lines in Line file 2

Creating Triangles
24 Triangle(s) created
(0 degenerated suppressed)

Creating Conditional Lines
...and condensing coplanar Triangles into Quads
23 Conditional Line(s) created
2 Triangle(s) condensed into 1 Quad(s)

Writing output file
22 Triangle(s) written
1 Quad(s) written
23 Conditional Line(s) written

D:\Coverer>

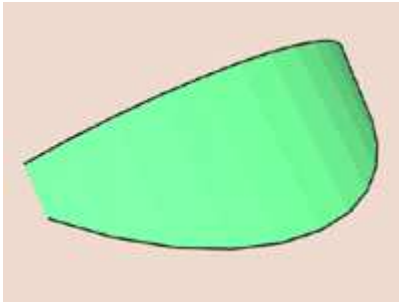
```

How Coverer works

- Both input files are read and parsed. All line apexes are stored in arrays (limited to 2000 lines, should be more than enough!).
- These arrays are sorted, allowing to use LDraw files with lines in non-consecutive order (e.g. files coming from [Isecalc](#)). If more than one line path is found, a warning is issued as this probably denotes a wrong input file which will likely produce a buggy result.
- If **-r** option is present, order of the second file is reversed. Use this option when the resulting surface join is from opposite ends (often looking like a jagged butterfly).
- If **-s** option is used, the old (coverer version < 1.3) sequential method is used. Both paths are travelled through progressively. without `-s` option, the point providing the more compact triangle is chosen.
- if **-l xxx** option is used, lines longer than xxx are split in smaller segments. You may get smoother surfaces with this option. See examples below.
- **-b xxx** (-100 < xxx < 100): bias triangle spreading towards one end or the other. See examples below. This option only works with **-s** one. Most probably default option will provide better result than **-s -b**.
- Triangles are created between both paths, progressing proportionally along them. When degenerated triangles (reduced to a line) happen (for example when paths have common points), they are suppressed.
- A scan is done in the generated triangle. If two consecutive triangles are in the same plane and form a complete quad, they are condensed. If they are not in the same plane, a conditional line is added.

- Output file is created.

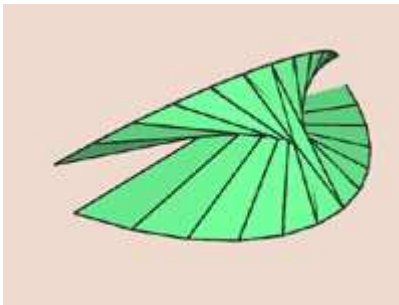
Examples



A nice looking surface between 2 arcs.

Files: arc1.dat, arc2.dat --> arc-out.dat

Command line: Coverer arc1.dat arc2.dat arc-out.dat



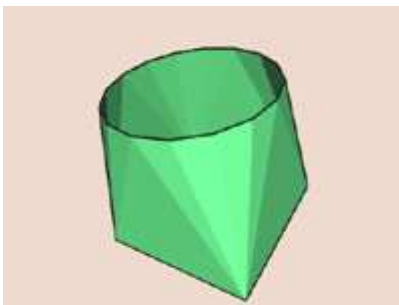
Here the order and direction of the lines of the second file was inverted.

Files: arc1.dat, arc2-r.dat --> arc-r-out.dat, arc-rok-out.dat

Command line: Coverer -s arc1.dat arc2-r.dat arc-r-out.dat

created that weird shape. The -r parameter corrects the order and returns the surface as the first example. Without -s option, shape is a bit different - but still

Corrected command line: Coverer -r arc1.dat arc2-r.dat arc-rok-out.dat



Fitting a square to a circle.

Files: sqc1.dat, sqc2.dat --> sqc-out.dat

Command line: Coverer sqc1.dat sqc2.dat sqc-out.dat

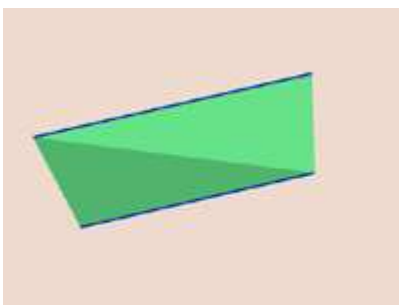


Note that the relative orientation of the paths matters, even if they are symmetric.

Here the circle was turned by 45°, the result is twisted. Note that without -s correction the result is obtained here, but if the circle had been rotated by a greater angle, the surface would have been distorted too. For circular paths, you must ensure that the first line of each LDraw path file are matching.

Files: sqc1.dat, sqc2-45.dat --> sqc-45-out.dat

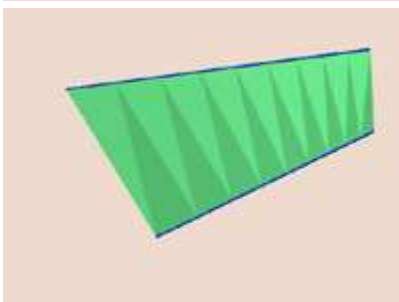
Command line: Coverer -s sqc1.dat sqc2-45.dat sqc-45-out.dat



This example shows how to create twisted surfaces such as the one in [43721 slo](#) [wedge](#). Two single lines form the edges. A simple application of coverer provides a chunky result...

Files: wedge1.dat; wedge2.dat --> wedge-out.dat

Command line: Coverer wedge1.dat wedge2.dat wedge-out.dat



...the -l parameter improves the result:

Files: wedge1.dat; wedge2.dat --> wedge-l-out.dat

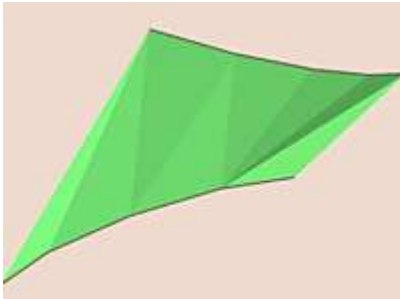
Command line: Coverer -l 10 wedge1.dat wedge2.dat wedge-l-out.dat



Here we see the use of -b parameter. Without -b, the triangle creation moves on segment at a time on top and bottom line. But because of the shape of the bottom horizontal distance travelled on bottom line varies little at the beginning. The green surface looks twisted and creased.

Files: b1.dat; b2.dat --> bias-0-out.dat

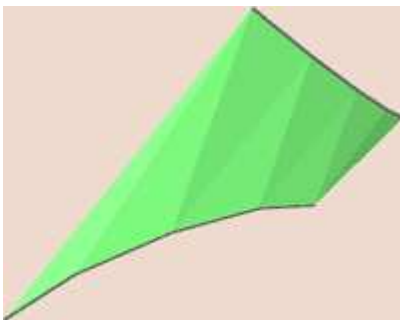
Command line: Coverer -s b1.dat b2.dat bias-0-out.dat



With a bias added (-b 4), we explore bottom line faster at the beginning to compensate. This results in a much smoother surface.

Files: b1.dat; b2.dat --> bias-4-out.dat

Command line: Coverer -s -b 4 b1.dat b2.dat bias-4-out.dat



...but with the new algorithm, -b is useless and provides better results!

Command line: Coverer b1.dat b2.dat noneedbias-out.dat



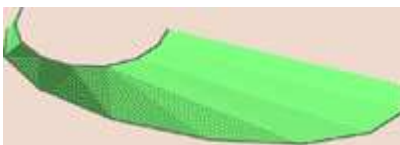
When most points of one path are closer to a few points of the other, and far away from others, the new algorithm may fail.

Command line: Coverer el1.dat el2.dat elnosout.dat



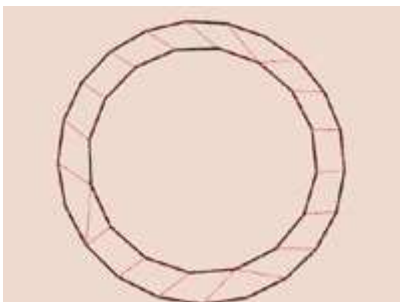
In that case -s provides better results...

Command line: Coverer -s el1.dat el2.dat elsout.dat



...improved again thanks to bias option.

Command line: Coverer -s -b 1 el1.dat el2.dat elsblout.dat



Adapter rings are probably the most useful application of Coverer. They allow to use regular 16- or 48-primitives to section of parts with different period. I used this extensively in gears, wheels and tires, such as 30391 tire that has a 16-primitive core but 40 bumps on its rim.

Files: cir21.dat, cir16.dat --> adapt1621.dat

Command line: Coverer cir16.dat cir21.dat adapt1621.dat



[MINDSTORMS® & Technic](#)

[NXT](#)

[Sensors](#)

[LEGO tech. info.](#)

[LDraw](#)

[LEGO misc.](#)

[LEGO & photo](#)

[Panoramic Photography](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)