

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Copyright for this document

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## How to work with this software

Q: There can I get this software?

A: Please go to the project homepage for the place where you can download the original files and where development happens.

- <http://www.decisiontable.org>
- <http://sourceforge.net/projects/jdecisiontable>

To get an overview over all projects from the author(s) please go either to

- <http://www.mgmechanics.de>
- <http://sourceforge.net/users/mgmechanics>

Q: How can I contact the author?

A: You should see my email below copyright notice for this document. Please be patient - I am a single person who codes in his spare time. For quick and comprehensive support it's also possible to hire me.

Q: I'm on the project homepage. Where are the files?

A: Go to "Files" in the menu bar. The root folder contains the current version in a zip file named JDecisiontable-<VERSION>.zip. This file contains also all documentation and all examples available from the author.

All operation systems should come with a software to unpack zip files. Before installing some freeware it is recommended to have a look at your operation system. If there is really no software to unpack zip files installed look for a Open Source software in favour of freeware.

The folder named "Legacy" contains past versions together with the related examples and help files. Versions which are outdated because of bugs will be removed from download. The test automation provides high test coverage for this project so there are good chances that severe bugs will be busted before rolling out a new version. If you find a bug please mail me. Until I fixed it please consider using a legacy version.

Q: How to install it?

A: The zip file you've downloaded should contain a file named "What\_is\_in\_the\_zip.txt". Because there is a version to run with Java and one to run with Microsoft® .NET® (without any Java) the description was moved there.

Q: I try to type some text in the field but nothing happens.

A: Some fields take certain letters only. These are:

- 'y', 'n' or '-' on all decisions in each rule (= all rows on right hand table except the last two ones)
- 'x' to mark a node as condition, DEL or Backspace to remove the mark (= first column on left hand table)
- 'x' to mark a rule as valid, DEL or Backspace to remove the mark (= row before last row on right hand table)

Q: I try to type some text in the field "Description" / "Probability" / "Comparison" / "Successor" but nothing happens.

A: Please press the F2 - key or double click into the field you wish to type. Leave the field with Enter. Usually just start to type text should work. If not please let me know. You should see my email with Help -> About. See also "How can I contact the author?"

The field "Successor" is that field in the last row of each row.

Q: When I launch the application there are no new file open as other applications do.

A: You need to use Decisiontable -> New from menu or press Ctrl + N to get a new decision table as You would do elsewhere in application flow.

Q: Can I work using keyboard only?

A: Yes. This application was designed to do everything important without touching the mouse. Thus almost every menu entry can be executed by pressing the keys as written behind this menu entry, i.e. Ctrl + s to save the file. You may use Ctrl + # to switch between both tables. Then use Tab, Enter or arrow keys to switch from cell to cell. (Especially right after creating a new table you need to press Tab after Ctrl + # to go to the first cell. This is not a bug.)

There is only one important action you can not do without mouse: To switch between different tabs. It would be not too hard to give you this feature but chances are good that I use the same keys as used for switching between running programs or from desktop to desktop. But I added this to the product roadmap.

Q: I miss an undo function. I miss better protection against overwriting / altering the wrong file.

A: For real protection and for tracking of your changes I recommend a version management software. For choosing a version control software which fits to your needs it is important to know that there are two different kinds of version control software:

- **Central version control software** always requires a server which stores the master repository. Everyone gets actual files here and commits changes to this server. If you can't connect to the server you can use the version control software. Often used specimens are CVS

and SVN.

- **Distributed version control software.** All repositories are equal. Usually one repository will be used as master repository. There is no server. Thus you can use the version control software even when you can't reach the server (i.e. on travel). I use this kind of version control for this reason even when I'm the only one which work on a project: I don't need a server but can still track changes and may undo (= revert) stupid changes. If you have access to a shared folder you may use it to backup your changes by cloning your local repository into the shared folder and fast upload only the changes from time to time using your version control software.

As quick-and-dirty alternative you could backup your files.

Q: I want to check if two decision tables are equal and if not, how they differ - how to do this?

A: **Solution 1:** You may export each decision table to CSV file format using the menu

- Decisiontable —> Export to Csv

For test specifications please use the menus

- Testspecification —> Export to Csv +check +split
- Testspecification —> Export to Csv -check -split

**Solution 2:** All \*.5dt or \*.5ts files contains nothing than JSON strings. JSON is a plain text data format so you can open two \*.5dt or \*.5ts files in an editor and see if they're different. Advanced editors like Notepad++ have a facility to compare text files.

**Solution 3:** To see if two files are equal in your software you may use `de.mgmechanics.myflipflops.File.Checksum` which provides methods to generate CRC32 checksums. This class is used for automatically executed tests for the application JDecisiontable.

Q: How are the data saved? Are \*.5dt and \*.5ts files binaries?

A: See JDecisiontable\_Manual → File Formats.

Q: How to open \*.csv files with LibreOffice Calc?

A: See `How_To_Open_Csv_Files` (also in German).

Q: I need higher precision for the probability - what can I do?

A: Please consider to write the exact values in the test specification.



## For Developers

Q: Are you using your other projects in the application?

A: Yes. This software includes two other libraries from same author:

- JDecisiontableLib (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/jdtlib>)
- myflipflops (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/myflipflops>)

Please have look at the pom.xml file in the source code repository for current state.

Q: What do I need to develop on this software?

A: If you don't know better I recommend to use the same tools as I do:

Oracle Netbeans (the edition marked as "Java SE" as "OS Independent Zip") (currently, in autumn 2012, I use version 7.1.2 but I use to update it from time to time)

- The Maven (build system) plug-in which comes with Netbeans (should installed + active by default)
- The Git (version control) plug-in which comes with Netbeans (should installed + active by default)
- "Cobertura Modul Test Coverage" to check the code coverage (not installed by default but recommended)
- Additionally, I install Git among my other software on my computer to update my repositories at sourceforge.

Later versions of the Git plug-in for Oracle® Netbeans® come with a build-in facility to do this. So you may not need it.

I use a Linux machine with English language to develop and execute almost all tests. The English language is important to run some tests because they depend on that a "Yes" button is labeled "Yes", "No" is labeled "No" and "Cancel" is labeled "Cancel". You may change this in the class Test Classes → de.mgmechanics.jdecisiontable.App and may then use any language.

Then you need to checkout the repositories with the software which is included but not available via some public Maven repository. Actually this is only the software which I have created, that is:

- JdecisiontableLib (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/jdtlib>)
- myflipflops (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/myflipflops>)

Both are available on sourceforge from same author as this software (<http://sourceforge.net/users/mgmechanics>). Please check out the source code repositories of these projects additional to the source code repository of this software: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/jdecisiontable>.

Other files needed for the software (see NOTICE.txt and pom.xml) should be downloaded automatically from public Maven repositories without

configuring anything ("out of the box") as soon as you do the first build.

Do you checked out all repositories as written above? Here we go (assuming that you use the same tools as I do:

- launch Netbeans
- open the repositories (this software + my other software mentioned above)
- build the project myflipflops by right-click, then Custom -> install\_in\_local\_maven\_repo [this is possible by using Netbeans and having the nb\*xml files in the root folder of the repository]
- while building, Netbeans may download a lot of jar files, if this fails just repeat the process
- build the project JDecisiontableLib by right-click, then Custom -> install\_in\_local\_maven\_repo

Each time you build this repositories like this and the build was successful, Maven puts a copy of the resulting jar file into the local Maven repository on your machine so that this file is available for all projects requiring it.

- build the project JDecisiontable by right-click, then "Build with dependencies"

Each time you build Maven will run all tests available for this project. This may take a while. At JDecisiontable this test includes a test of the GUI. Do not wonder if you see the GUI appearing, do something and disappearing during the test! This is just my self-written GUI test automatisation solution (de.mgmechanics.myflipflops.swing.test.\*) running all the tests. On my machine this takes (fall 2012) 10:28 minutes for 130 test cases.

If you want to check the code coverage please right-click on a project and choose (if available - this feature depends on an entry in the pom.xml and not all projects may have it) "Code Coverage" -> "Show Report" -> (this opens a new tab) "Run All Tests". This will run all tests again, showing code coverage after. Because this action downloads more jar files it is recommended to do this while having internet connection before working offline.

# Copyright and License

Q: Who owns the copyright?

Q: Under which license comes this software?

Q: Which works were used to prepare this work?

A: See LICENSE.txt and NOTICE.txt in the same folder. There should be answer to all these questions. Otherwise let me know. For questions about the license itself please ask the institution which released this license.

Q: It makes me suspicious when someone gives away some good. This is not natural because there is no free lunch. What are your motives?

A: Personal answer by Michael Groß: Who said that I was not get payed for writing this software? I don't earned any money but:

- tons of knowledge about programming in Java, Scala and Ruby by hands-on first-hand experience
- the software I needed to have, I love to work with and I can recommend
- tons of fun writing it<sup>1</sup>

The Apache License version 2.0 was choose carefully because

- allows using the sources also under terms of a different license
- grants license of software patents
- issued by Apache Software Foundation, an organization well-known in open source

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1 No poor management turns my projects into a Dilbert zone. Of course I made some poor design decisions but I am always free to correct them later without begging for extra budget. I really knew that it is important to keep a project in time & budget. But what is better: A terrible ten dollar haircut or a twenty dollar haircut and you have the job? IT projects today compares with an expedition in a unknown area far away. Aware bad surprises and losses but earnings may outclass your wildest dreams.