

Flic Player Screen Saver Help Index

This index lists all the topics available in this help file.

To learn how to use Help choose 'How to Use Help' from the Help menu.

SSFLIC 1.0 is an MS Windows 3.1 screen saver that plays Autodesk Animator Flic (.FLI and .FLC) and script (.AAS) files.

- SSFLIC Features:
- Full compatibility with MS Windows 3.1 since SSFLIC uses the standard MS Windows screen saver capabilities. SSFLIC appears in the list of Windows 3.1 standard screen savers and supports password protection.
- Full compatibility with the AAPLAY flic and script (.FLI, .FLC and .AAS) files because SSFLIC uses the standard AAPLAY library (newest version 1.10). Files that play under AAPLAY will play under SSFLIC.
- Refined setup including animation speed, position and background. Script files can be created and edited from within the screen saver setup dialog.
- Optional random positioning of the animation to prevent screen tube burn-in.

Setup Dialog

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Setup Dialog

The Setup dialog allows you to setup the Flic Player Screen Saver. You can select an animation which will be displayed when the screen saver is activated. Other options include Password options and Screen options.

You can activate the Setup Dialog from Control Panel's Desktop dialog. At 'Screen Saver Name' select 'Flic Player' and select the 'Setup...' button.

Please, refer to your Windows documentation for more information on Control Panel and Windows Screen Savers.



See also:

[Selecting a Animation File](#)

[Password Options](#)

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Selecting an Animation File

This option allows you to select the animation that will be displayed when the screen saver is activated. You can play either an animation or a script. An animation is a Flic (*.FLC or *.FLI) file or a windows bitmap (*.BMP or *.DIB or *.RLE) file. A script is a text file containing a list of the files to be displayed including timing and transition parameters. A script file can display both animation's and bitmaps. You can also add sound effects to a script file.

Using the radio buttons 'Script' and 'Flic file' you can indicate which of the two file types you want to use. Subsequently, you can select an appropriate file by clicking the 'Browse...' button. An open file dialog will appear that allows you to select an appropriate file.

If you have selected a valid Flic file you can also select the 'Options'... button. This button is only enabled if you have chosen the Flic file option and have selected a valid Flic file. When you click this button a 'Flic Options' dialog will appear. This dialog contains information about the currently selected Flic file. Furthermore you can adjust the speed at which the Flic file will be played and whether or not the file should be loaded in memory prior to playing it. You should only check the latter option if the Flic file is small enough to fit in free memory in its entirety during a normal Windows session. You can see the amount of free memory at any time by selecting Program Manager's About box. Remember, however, that if you are running enhanced mode Windows the amount of free memory reported in this box includes free virtual memory in your on-disk swap file.

When you have selected a script file, the Browse dialog allows you to select a valid script file. Subsequently, you can edit the script file by clicking the 'Edit...' button. When you want to create a new script file, select the 'New...' button. This allows you to create and edit a new a script.

See also:

[Editing a Script File](#)

Editing a Script File

When you are editing a script file, a window will appear that combines a file open dialog with a list box for displaying and editing the script itself. The file open controls and list boxes are on the right side of the dialog. These are used to select animation's or sounds to be entered in the script. To add an animation or sound to the script, the file is selected and then you can press the Insert button or double click on the file name in the file list box. This will insert the animation before the currently selected animation in the script, or add the sound to the currently selected animation. You can also double click on an animation in the script list box which will insert the new animation before the selected animation.

The list box on the left contains the lines of the script. Each line is identified by the name of the animation, followed by several characters indicating which animation parameters are changed from the default. These characters are:

L	-The number of loops is not 1.
S	-The speed is not the design speed.
N	-Sound has been added.
R	-The sound is to be repeated, if it finishes before the animation does.
D	-The sound does not start with the animation.
C	-Palette animation is inhibited.
A	-The entire palette is reserved for animation.
M	-The animation is loaded into memory before playing.
F	-The animation is to play in full screen mode. <i>Not to be used for the Screen Saver.</i>
E	-The last frame of the animation does not loop to the first frame.
P	-The animation is paused at its end.
I	-A transition has been added to the animation.

Using the buttons at the bottom left you can Cut, Copy, and Paste lines in the script. Paste will paste text lines from other sources, if they are in the format of a script file. The Clear button deletes lines from the script without copying them to the Clipboard. The Undo button undoes the last change made to the script.

The buttons at the lower right are used to exit the dialog, test the animation, save the script, change an animation's parameters, and change the sound for an animation. Pressing the Done button will exit the dialog and leave the script as it was last changed. Pressing the Test button will test the animation script, beginning with the selected entry. If no entry is selected, the test will start at the beginning of the script. Pressing the Save button will save the script as it is currently. When a single animation is selected in the script list box, the Parameters and Sound buttons are enabled. Pressing the parameters buttons will bring up the Animation Parameters Dialog, described below, and allow parameters for the animation to be changed in the script. Pressing the Sound button will change the mode of the dialog from adding animation's to changing the sound for the selected animation.

When the sound button is pressed, the script list box is disabled, the edit buttons at the bottom left of the screen are disabled, and the parameters button is enabled. If the animation already has a sound, the name of sound is displayed in the edit control, and the directory is displayed in the list boxes. At this point the user can either press the Flicks button which will return the dialog to the animation mode, or selects a sound and press the Insert button, which will add the sound to the animation, or press the Off button at the bottom of the dialog, which will remove any sound from the animation, or press the Continue button at the dialog which will continue the sound from the previous animation to this animation. When any of these actions take place, the dialog is returned to the animation mode.

Note:

Do not use the 'Full Screen' option in the script files. This may cause the Flic file not to be displayed correctly.

Screen Options

The 'Screen Options' section allows you to specify whether the screen saver animation should be centred on screen or displayed at random positions. Centering the animation can be useful if you are playing an animation that has a significantly smaller resolution than your display. If an animation is too big to fit on your screen it can also be centred, effectively eliminating a border around the animation. If you have selected the 'Random' option, the animation will be displayed at random positions on the screen.

If you are playing a script file with animation's that are not equal in size only the first animation will be displayed in the center. All subsequent animations will have there upper left corner coinciding with that of the first animation.

The 'Background' option lets you specify which color you want the background of the animation to have. This background color will visible only if the resolution of the animation is smaller than the resolution of your display. The dialog in which you can specify this color is a Windows Common Dialog so it should look familiar.

Password Options

Many Windows screen savers can be password protected. This means that the screen saver can only be deactivated by entering a password. All Windows screen savers share the same password. Whether or not this password is used depends on the settings of the active screen saver.

By checking the 'Password protected' check box, you activate the password option. If you have already set your password previously you need not set it for this screen saver again. However, when the password option is checked you can specify your password by clicking the 'Set Password' button. A dialog will appear in which you will have to enter your old password, after which you will have to enter your new password twice. Clicking 'OK' saves the changes and brings you back to the screen saver setup window. Remember that changes in your password are system-wide and therefore also affect the other screen savers.

File Formats Supported

The Flic Player can display the following image files:

BMP/DIB/RLE: The BMP, DIB, and RLE files are known as "Device Independent Bitmap" files, or "DIB's". These files commonly use different extensions for their file names: BMP, DIB, and RLE, according to where they are used. Although their file name extensions are different, the files themselves are the same.

FLI/FLC: Flic files are a sequence of still frames which can be flipped through rapidly to achieve the illusion of movement the software equivalent of movies.

BMP Files

BMP files can be created with Windows' Paintbrush and used as "wallpaper" for the background when running Windows. See your Windows manual about using BMP files as wallpaper.

DIB Files

DIB files can be used as image files in the Windows environment. They can also be applied to computer multimedia systems that are emerging in the marketplace.

RLE Files

RLE files are Windows "DIB" files that use one of the RLE compression routines. Thus, saving an image as a "DIB" using one of the RLE compression's would produce an identical file as saving the image as an RLE file. The only difference would be the file name extension.

FLI Files

FLI files are of the older type of Flic files. They are limited to a 320x200 resolution. Both FLI and FLC files provide only 256 colors and do not contain sound.

FLC Files

FLC files are of the newer type of Flic files. They use a faster compression scheme and can have any resolution. Both FLI and FLC files provide only 256 colors and do not contain sound.

System Requirements

Playing animation's usually means that a lot of data has to be moved to the video memory. In order to achieve a reasonable speed a fast video adapter is needed. Furthermore, it may be wise not to use animation's that can not be loaded in memory. Checking the 'Load in memory' option in the Options dialog has effect only if the amount of free memory is sufficient. If not, the player will constantly access the disk for frame updates.

Playback Speed

Playing animation's under Windows requires translation from Autodesk Animator format to Windows format, which decreases playback speed. In designing animation's, try to minimise changes from one frame to another. For example, full-frame dissolves do not play well.

Colors Under Windows

Colors must be considered for animation's that are to be run in a window under the Windows Environment. Two color problems can arise. Windows on the standard VGA uses the 640 by 480 16 color mode. Animation's that use many colors will not be displayed correctly, in this case. If you are making animation's to be played on a standard VGA screen, you should limit your color selection. The 640 by 480 16 color mode also does not support changing colors in an animation.

For displays with more colors, a mechanism for managing color palettes was implemented in Windows 3.0. This mechanism is used by the player to display animation's in a window. There are some unpleasant side effects that can occur when animation palettes do not conform to the Windows palette management.

First, Windows reserves twenty colors for its own use, so only 236 colors are available for the animation. However, if the colors in an animation do not change, Windows will match colors in the animation and animation's using 256 colors will display correctly.

Normally, when Windows changes the palette, a message is sent to every window begin displayed, informing the window that the palette has been changed. While these messages are being sent, other activity in the system is suspended, including playing other frames of the animation. So palette changes, either within an animation or between to successive animation's in a script, can cause pauses while the animation is playing. When the palette is changed, Windows also may change the colors being used on the display. This means that the animation really needs to be re generated in order to correctly display. If the color change is between animation in a script, the first frame of the new animation will correct the colors. But, if the color change is within an animation, Windows can fix up the colors pretty well, but not completely accurately. So some colors in the animation may change.

If color palette effects are desired, the player can reserve palette entries to be used for the effects. Three options are provided, no color entries are ever reserved, the color entries are reserved when the player finds that the colors are changing, or all of the color entries are reserved. When color palette entries are reserved, they are not available for color matching, and so if more then 236 colors are used, some colors will be lost. Windows reserves the color in the order they appear in the palette, so the twenty entries at the end of the palette are generally the ones that are lost. To overcome these effects you should use color judiciously. If at all possible, don't use more than 236 colors in any frame and make these the first 236 colors in the palette. This limitation allows all of the palette entries to be reserved. Use a common palette for as many frames as possible. If animation's are to be sequenced in a script, the palette of the last frame and the palette of the first frame of the following animation should be the same.

Copyright Information

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CONTACTING THE AUTHOR

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The licensed version of SSFLIC can be purchased from the Public Software Library (credit card orders only) or directly from NT Systems (money transfers only).

If you purchase the licensed version you will receive the latest version of SSFLIC. This disk includes a Windows based installation program and sample flic and script files.

Public Software Library (credit card orders)

NT Systems (money transfer)

NT Systems

Money Transfer

You can order SSFLIC from NT Systems by transferring US \$ 24.95 + US \$ 6.00 for shipping and handling to the following bank account:

Company:	NT Systems
Address:	Fongersplaats 108, 9725 LE Groningen, The Netherlands
Account number:	48.59.53.951
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See also:

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Disk Size preferred 3.5" / 5.25" _____

Flic Player Screen Saver x US \$ 24.95 US \$ _____

Shipping/Handling x US \$ 6.00 US \$ _____

+

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See also:

NT Systems (money transfer)

