

Default

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Chapter 1

Default

1.1 Main

Picticon V0.8
July 24, 1994

This document describes and explains Picticon V0.8, a picture to icon convertor that requires OS3.x. Datatypes, palette sharing, and appicons are a few of the features.

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Copying and Disclaimers Some legal information.

Introduction A brief introduction.

Requirements What you will need in order to run.

Usage How to utilize the various features.

Tooltype Summary A complete listing of tooltypes and args.

Known Bugs A list of known bugs, and a to-do list.

Questions and Answers A small list of Q&A.

Credits and Author Info About me, and some thanks.

1.2 Copying

Copying and Disclaimers

Picticon was thrown together in a few days using bits and pieces of Iconian. If you haven't gotten a copy of Iconian, find one. It is the number one OS3.x icon editor you can get (IMHO).

Since Picticon is a patchwork program that's held together by

spaghetti sauce, many bugs will probably show up. I will honestly claim that I can get consistent, satisfactory results at this time. If you do run across any, please let me know. SEE: Bugs

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There are several exceptions to this. Fred Fish may include this program, of course. He is the one spot any Amigan should be able to look to for quality material.

Aminet also has free distribution rights. This is another high-quality distribution network that should not be hampered in any way.

Any CD collection can include Picticon for free. CD's are a great source for programs. Publishers of CD's rarely (never?) take seem to take advantage of end users. (Unless they were to *only* include Picticon on a CD and then charge 19.95... yea right)

Magazines wishing to include Picticon on a coverdisk may do so on one condition. I'd like a copy of the specific issue mailed to me. My address is at the end of this guide. 10-30\$ isn't alot considering all the issues a magazine sells. Is it? (A big thanks to Amiga User International and France's Amiga Dream for asking for Iconian in the past.)

Ok, enoughs a 'nough. On with the show...

1.3 Intro

Introduction

Picticon is a conversion program that creates "thumbnail" icons from pictures. This is accomplished through datatypes, and therefore many various formats are supported.

Also, palette sharing routines are used to remap these scaled icons to the current Workbench's palette.

Unlike previous similar programs, many options are available to customize what these icons look like. These include background images, size text, centering, and sizes from real small to extraordinary large. SEE: Tooltype Summary

A graphical status window is opened if run from Workbench or a Appicon. This status window will be opened and closed many times, but it's position is remembered until you turn the computer off. If you wish to set a permanent default position, then copy the file "Picticon.prefs" from ENV: to ENVARC:.

All visual information may be turned off by the QUIET tooltype. This includes the status window and/or CLI output. (Note, the CLI QUIET switch isn't operational, so use the >NIL: pipe for now.)

New to version 0.8 is the ability for Picticon to dither images. The type, level and amount of dithering is all user controlled via tooltypes.

There are three ways to run Picticon.

CLI: A semi-functioning interface. Usage is limited (for now), and isn't recommended.

Workbench: Seleting multiple icons, then doubleclicking Picticons icons will invoke conversion of the selected pictures.

Appicon: If run from Workbench without passed files, an Appicon will be opened. Any "dropped" files will be processed. To remove Picticon, just doubleclick the appicon and select "Quit".

1.4 Requirements

Requirements

Any Amiga running at least Kickstart 3.0 and Workbench 3.0.

At least 1 megabyte of RAM is required. 2 megs of CHIP and 4 megs of FAST is recommended.

A 68000, but a faster processor is recommended.

The external librarys "iffparse", "diskfont", and "mathtrans" of at least version 37. All these are standard, so no problems should arise.

A strong knowledge of palettes, colors, and tooltypes is recommended for full feature utilization.

A nice set of pictures. Come on, at least one. :)

1.5 Usage

Usage

Just double click the icon for an instant result. Then drop a picture icon onto the newly created appicon. If you need the picture to show up on Workbench, use the "Window-> Show-> All Files" Workbench menu option.

Read the section "Tooltype Summary" for some better info on creating custom backgrounds, sizes, and overall looks.

1.6 Tooltypes

Tooltype Summary

x a numerical value
B a boolean value (ie YES or NO, TRUE or FALSE, 1 or 0)
\$ a string, usually a file with directory path
() What the option defaults to

```
APPICON=$ ('ENV:SYS/def_appicon') then,  
          (program's icon) then,  
          ('ENV:SYS/def_tool') then,  
          (default tool icon supplied by Workbench)
```

Names a user defined icon for the appicon image. X and Y positions are set to NO_ICON_POSITION unless overridden by APP_X_POS and/or APP_Y_POS.

```
APP_X_POS=x (NO_ICON_POSITION)  
APP_Y_POS=x (NO_ICON_POSITION)
```

Specifies where the appicon will appear, in typical unreliable Workbench fashion.

```
BACKGROUND_ICON=$ (none)
```

Names a background you wish to overlay the picture over. There is no default. If the named icon does not exist, a blank workspace will be used.

```
CENTER=B (NO)
```

Centers the image in the PIC___POS/PIC___SIZE rectangle. Otherwise, it'll be upper-left justified.

```
CHUNKYMODE=B (NO)
```

Turns on chunky image conversion. This may allow certain types of graphic boards to save correct looking icons. The conversion process

is a bit slower, but much safer.

DITHER=B (YES)

Turns dithering on or off. The type and level of dithering is controlled via the D_THRESHOLD, D_IGNORE, D_LIMIT, D_TYPE, and TWOPASS tooltypes.

D_IGNORE=x (16)

If the absolute error amount of the red, green, plus blue components is less than this value, then don't pass the error off to adjacent pixels. If this value is zero, then dithering will be as high as possible. If a fairly high value is used, then dithering will be only done for the most extreme color match errors. The maximum logical amount is 765 (3*255).

D_LIMIT=x (255)

This is the maximum error amount (red, green, or blue) to pass off to adjacent pixels. A high number will allow full dithering. A low number will minimize the dithering. A zero will turn dithering off.

D_THRESHOLD=x (2)

If the red, green or blue error amount is below this amount, then treat the error as zero. I'm not sure quite what the results will be with outrageous values, so experiment if you will.

D_TYPE=x (0) (only values of 0 thru 5 allowed)

This specifies what percentages will be used to pass error values around. The 6 types allowed are:

	Right	Down-Left	Down	Down-Right
0) Default	3/8	0	3/8	1/4
1) Floyd-Steinburg?	7/16	3/16	5/16	1/16
2) Alternate	1/2	0	1/2	0
3) Crosshatch	0	1/2	0	1/2
4) Linear	1	0	0	0
5) Equal	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4

I'm no expert on dithering techniques, only having stumbled on it in the week or so. Any comments will be appreciated.

FREE_ICON_POS=B (NO)

If on, all saved icons will be "unsnapshot". If off, then the template icon's position will be used.

FORCE_EIGHT=B (NO)

Saves the icons with 8 planes, always. This will only help with icons created with 3 planes (8 colors), and a MagicWB style palette setup. Hopefully, everyone has switched to "shovecolors" by now, and won't need this option... :)

HIGHPEN=x (256)

Specifies the highest pen to use. A value of 4 or 8 is useful for cross-computer displaying.

LOWPRI=B (NO)

Turn this on to allow Picticon to run at -1 priority. Usefull for background processing of many images.

MAXIWIDTH=x (128)

MAXIHEIGHT=x (100)

This is the workspace you wish to allocate to the processing engine. It ranges from 50 to 1000 in size. If you specify too small of a number, your icons may come out chopped off. The default values Usually work fine.

PIC_X_POS=x (0)

PIC_Y_POS=x (0)

PIC_X_SIZE=x (size of buffer (128))

PIC_Y_SIZE=x (size of buffer (100))

Creates a rectangle to place the scaled image into. This can be used along with BACKGROUND_ICON to create frames. See my examples. Also, see the CENTER tooltype.

QUIET=B (NO)

Turns off all status output, including messages and the status window. Not tested much, so take care.

SHOWSIZE_NORMAL=B (NO) This overrides:

SHOWSIZE_OUTLINE=B (NO)

The size text can be 1 of three styles. It defaults to a shadow look, but a normal font or outline style can be specified. NORMAL overrides OUTLINE. Use OUTLINE if you expect the text to be displayed over a confusing background.

SHOWSIZE_TALL=B (NO)

Tells the show size renderer to use the 8 pixel high font instead of the 6 pixel high. Useful for interlaced displays.

SHOWSIZE_X=x (no display)
SHOWSIZE_Y=y (no display)

Will display the image size using one of two built in fonts. These coordinates specify the upper-left position, not the baseline. The height is 6 unless SHOWSIZE_TALL is turned on, in which case it's 8. Use a X coordinate of -1 to center the display under the scaled image.

TEMPLATE_ICON=\$ ('ENV:sys/def_picture') then,
('ENV:sys/def_project') then,
(default project icon supplied by Workbench)

Names a icon to get tooltypes and positions from. Only the "meat" is used, not the image. To specify an image, see the tooltype BACKGROUND_ICON.

TWOPASS=B (NO)

If this is equal to YES, then bi-directional processing will take place. This was mentioned on Usenet as improving error distribution, so I tried it out. It doesn't appear to make much difference on small pictures, so it's default is off.

1.7 Bugs

Known Bugs

- (1) ANNOYANCE A small bug that makes usage annoying.
 - (2) VISUAL A bug which makes visual output unattractive.
 - (3) GENERAL A general performance lack of a feature.
 - (4) SERIOUS Will not crash the machine, but will require a reboot.
 - (5) CRITICAL This is a spectacular crash.
-
- (2) If your screen font is too wide, some text may be chopped off. This window width is set at 400 pixels until I find a reasonable solution.
 - (3) The CLI interface may be broken. Most if not all of the available features are not present. See the Q&A section for a CLI workaround.
 - (4) Sometimes the JPEG datatype will freeze and then refuse to respond to all future requests. I'm not sure about the entire nature, but the only solution is a reboot. It will affect *ALL* programs afterwards, so it is probably the JPEG datatype's fault. ?

Sending the Picticon process a signal via XOper usually restarts the JPEG datatype. Any good Amiga user will have XOper sitting on his/her hard drive. Just send a \$FFFFFFFF signal to Picticon's

process. Repeat if necessary.

1.8 todo

To-do

- o Repair most of the CLI interface.
- o Better CLI output, and/or a better status window display.
- o Maybe implement an arithmetic scalar instead of the current integer one.
- ? Maybe a frame around the image, to distinguish it from the background?
- ? A GUI preference program/window to make easy option changes?

1.9 QA

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Q Why doesn't the image fill the entire background?

A Picticon uses a simple, quick integer scaling method. This is mostly for speed, but also to retain some x/y aspect. For best results, use a fairly large, square rectangle.

Q When loading JPegs, it takes an awfully long time...

A JPegs are slow, even on fast computers. Just run them in the background (LOWPRI tooltype) and do something else. (Wow, multitasking.)

Q HAM-8 pictures don't come out right.

A The internal datatype format is 8 bits (256) colors. The picture datatype does not convert the HAM images to 256 colors, and therefore they will not appear right. You'll need to break down and use a different conversion program to at least get them into 256 colors. Better bet is to convert them to JPeg, as JPegs are smaller and will retain most of the 24 bit information.

Q I can't get Picticon to run from CLI.

A The CLI interface isn't quite done at this point. You can copy Picticon to C:, and edit the icon for your options. Then use RUNWB or WBRUN to use the icon's settings. Create several copies, each with a

different name for multiple settings.

1.10 Author

Author Info

The author:

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Thanks to:

Jay Miner. For creating such a unique, wonderfull machine. May he rest in peace.

Wouter van Oortmerssen. For "E" in all it's glory. The money for version 3.0 is in the mail.

Lionel Vintenat. The French locale catalog, for both Iconian and Picticon.

Colin Bell. My datatype routines are partially based on his.

David Larsson. For King-CON, of course!

D.L. McPaul. For the AmigaGuide Writer, used to create this guide.

Iconian betatesters. For finding so many bugs, I still haven't gotten them all. Don't worry, I hope to one day continue major work on Iconian...

Commodore (RIP). For all their mismanagment, non-marketing, unfulfilled promises, and overall empty-headedness. :P PPPPHTTT

Any company. Hey, I'll do free-lance work! Mail me. (yeah, right)

Other works by C.Randall

Previous Aminet released works include:

Iconian The premier 3.x icon editor that almost does it all.
Randomcopy Copies one file from a pattern list to a destination file.
Half-n-Half Fakes 1 meg of "fast" memory from 2 megs of "chip".
Fake20 Hacks execbase into thinking you have a '20 installed.
ColorSlash A boot picture based on the OS3.x system disks.

Other notable ancient projects:

Pit Bomber 4 mini-games in one. PET
Bust Out Break out clone. PET

Land Unique game where 2 players fight for land. VIC=20
Cartoon DBase Keep track of Saturday cartoons. VIC=20

To Hell&Back Ultima clone. C-64
Land Wars Updated Vic game. C-64

Un-named Unfinished Wizardry/Ultima clone. (Too big for me) IBM
B-Paint Monochrome paint program. IBM
C-Paint 256 color paint program with mouse support. IBM
Chess-4 A four player chess program based on Hoyles rules. IBM
Tetra Tetris clone. IBM
Petra Well-tris clone. IBM
Tank Wars Tank trajectory, landscape battle thingy. IBM
Gems 1,2 Two versions of Columns clone. IBM

Chess-4 IBM conversion for AmigaBASIC. Amiga
VCR database Simple movie indexer. Amiga
PopEd Program to create Populous gfx landscapes from IFFs. Amiga
Z-Mix Set of 2080 color display programs for OLD chipset. Amiga
Gems 3-6 4 versions of Columns clone. Amiga

btw, you can ask to see any of the above, but don't expect much.
Most of it's buried and long forgotten.

1.11 Iconian

Iconian

A great (IMHO) icon editor that deserves a look at. Features abound:

Features of Iconian v1.98

Support for sizable windows and custom fonts.
Multiple undos
Appwindows
Custom magnification levels
Upto 256 colors
3.x palette sharing
RGB color editing
Integer scaling of oversized brushes
Optional remapping of IFFs to screen colors
Can save 8 plane icons which stay "normal" regardless of screen depth.
Full range of drawing tools including beveled boxes
Recolors 1.3 icons
Clipboard support
Extensive keyboard support
Ability to cut and paste brushes
Drawing with text, including selectable font and styles
100% system supported, no reqtools/explode/iff/powerpacker required

Look for it on Aminet in the gfx/edit directory. It requires OS 3.x.