PPrefs 2.0 Guide

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PPrefs 2.0 Guide

1.1   PPrefs 2.0 Guide

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*                PPrefs 2.0 Screen Promotion Utility                 *
*                      Freely distributable                          *
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   Copyright         Distribution conditions
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   Requirements      What is needed to run PPrefs

   Installation      How to install it
   Prefs editor      How to edit the preferences
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   Hints, suggestions, bug reports..

   History              PPrefs' history
   Acknowledgements     Some persons I'd like to thank
   The author           How to contact me


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1.2   Copyright notice

PPrefs is Copyright 1993,94 The Naughty Bits, All rights reserved.

PPrefs is copyrighted freeware. The programs and files in this distribution
may be freely distributed as long as no charge is made other than to cover

time and copying costs. The files in this distribution must be kept
together in original, unchanged form.

The MagicWB-style icons are distributed with the friendly permission of
Martin 'MagicWB' Huttenloher.

If you want to include PPrefs as part of a commercial package you have to
contact the author first.

1.3 Introduction

PPrefs is a screenmode promotion utiltity which allows you to promote every
available screenmode of your system (including HAM and EHB modes) to
another mode. You simply select a source and a destination mode and every
program that wants to open a screen with the source mode, instead will open
a screen with the destination mode. If you want that some very special
programs get their very special screenmode or don't get promoted at all,
besides that "mode to mode" promotion, PPrefs supports task/screen specific
promotion, as well.

Mode promotion could be useful in many circumstances:

o You own an A4000 and a monitor which cannot display PAL and NTSC
resolutions. Unfortunately some of your favourite programs don't allow you
to select a screen mode and the system prmotion refuses to promote them to
DblPAL or DblNTSC.

o You like to use the Euro36 and Euro72 modes instead of PAL/NTSC because
you like the higher refresh rates.

o You own a graphics card and want your favourite program to open its
screen on the card. Unfortunately the program doesn't allow the selection
of a screen mode. Perhaps your card comes without a mode promoter, or you
don't like the one supplied (like me).

Maybe, the time comes where every program provides a screenmode requester –
most new programs do so – but there are still lots of older programs which
have not to be thrown away. Most could be promoted to other modes and some
of them even make use of a bigger display.

1.4 Requirements

PPrefs requires Kickstart 2.0, but should be more useful with Kick 3.x :)

You should have asl.library, iffparse.library, mathieeedoubbas.library and
mathieeedoubtrans.library in your LIBS: directory. If you use the catalogs
you will of course also need locale.library.

1.5 Installation

PPrefs consists of two programs. The program PPrefs itself is the promoter and patches the intuition.library/OpenScreen(), OpenScreenTagList() and QueryOverscan() functions. It is now (form version 2.0 on) WB-startable. To install PPrefs permanently you should put it in your WBStartup directory – but you can also put it anywhere else on your Workbench disk, or just put it on top of another thing – you know there are too many things not lying on top of other things.. (sorry, watched Pythons too much)

To remove PPrefs, simply start it again and confirm the requester or send it a CTRL-C.

The other program is the preferences editor of PPrefs which should be placed in the Prefs drawer of your WB disk. The GUI is localized, so if you have 2.1 or above, you can copy the appropriate catalog to your Workbench disk. Currently there are german, french and swedish catalogs available.

1.6 Edit your preferences

   The Preferences Editor

The 2 listview gadgets on the top left side allow the selection of the source and destination mode of a mode promotion, the button above them allows to remove these promotions. The pair of listboxes below shows shows various informations on the selected modes. The listview on the right side is for the define of exceptions. Below it there are some gadgets to set a few options.

The modes are arranged in sublists for each monitor (ever tried clicking on the slider of the mode selector of DPaint 4.5?) To enter a sublist just click on the monitor name, to leave it click on the top item of the sublist.

Note: If you have the OS3.0 standard mode promotion enabled (yes, the little gadget in IControl), then the promoted (i.e. scandoubled modes) appear in the Default: monitor's list. You should better disable it or you could get confused or get problems when you try to promote these modes.

The 3 bottom gadgets just work like those of the standard prefs programs and let you save, use or abandon the settings. The menus and tooltypes are basically the standard preferences stuff, too.

1.7 How to promote

If you want to promote a mode, just single click on it on the source side so that its properties appear in the listview below. Then select the desired destination mode on the destination side (again a single click is enough) – that's all.

If you click on a source mode that is already promoted, its destination mode will automatically appear on the right side; if it has not been promoted yet, the right side will show no selection.

Note: The Kickstart 3.0 (i.e. GadTools V39) listviews highlight the
selected entry rather than showing its name on the bottom of the gadget as
they do under 2.0 - under 2.0 it could look a little confusing.

If you have Kickstart 3.x, you will find a "Best xxxx mode" entry in the
monitor list and in every mode list of the destination side. With it you
can utilize the Best mode promotion of PPrefs using the new BestModeID()
function.

1.8 How to unpromote

To remove a promotion you have to click on the 'Unpromote' gadget above the
mode listviews. Alternatively you can select the 'Unpromote' menuitem in
the 'Edit' menu. There is also an item to remove all promotions and one to
remove all promotions of a monitor.

1.9 Exceptions

If you want to exclude a particular program from the promotion or if you
want its screen(s) to be promoted differently than the normal promotion -
that's where the exceptions come into action.

You can specify these screens by the screen title or by the name of the
program that opens the screen. You can choose the appropriate list by
clicking on the cycle gadget below the listview. To add an entry click on
the 'Add' gadget and then enter the desired name. (The new entry will be
inserted above the currently selected entry or on the bottom if no entry is
selected.) The program will now get exactly the mode it wanted whether
there is a promotion for that mode or not. The names can contain wildcards
and are case insensitive.

If you want to give a program a particular screen mode just select its
entry in one of the exception lists and then select the desired mode in the
destination listview.

1.10 Options

Under pre-AA chipsets the number of colors a mode is able to display,
varies. So if you want to promote a mode to another one that only can
display less colors than the original mode, it can happen that a program
cannot get the number of colors it wants to get. For this case you can
specify (separately for each promotion and exception) what should be done
here by choosing between keeping the resolution or keeping the colors. The
default is to keep the resolution, so the program gets the mode you wanted
it to get, but only as many colors as possible. This may have the effect
that you can't see everything you should - perhaps you should then better
use the other option: to keep the colors and to reduce the resolution of
that screen. In this case PPrefs will activate autoscroll (if needed) so
you can shift the visible area to see the whole screen.

See the Best mode promotion section for the rest of the options.

1.11   Promote to the best suitable mode

Under Kick 3.0 (or above:) you will find a "Best xxxx mode" entry in the
monitor list and in every mode list (on the destination side). This lets
PPrefs use the new BestModeID() function to determine a suitable display
mode. If you select the global entry then the mode is searched in the whole
display database. It could take a noticable amount of time before the
screen is opened, depending on the speed and the number of screenmodes of
your system. If you selected the entry in one of the mode lists the
returned display mode will use the monitor of the selected entry.

It seems that the BestModeID() function is hungry for stack, especially if
you have some more monitor drivers installed (often on AGA-machines). To
ensure sufficient stack space for BestModeID, PPrefs checks for a minimum
of available stack memory and swaps the stack if needed. You can adjust the
minimum with the Tooltype/CLI option MINSTACK.

There are 4 checkboxes to give you the possibility to influence the
selection of the best mode:

Source mode - this lets PPrefs pass the source mode ID to BestModeID() so
that it can take care about a proper aspect ratio and some special
properties like HAM etc.

Dimensions - this passes the width and height of the requested screen to
BestModeID() to ensure that the screen could be displayed entirely using
the desired mode.

Aspect ratio - this overrides the aspect ratio of the source mode and uses
the width and height of the screen to determine the desired aspect ratio.

No lace - this restricts the search to modes without interlace.

However, the BestModeID() function has some peculiarities, so you should
restrict the use of the best mode promotion to the exceptions. For regular
mode to mode promotion it should be better to select a real destination
mode.

1.12   Configuration

If you quit the editor via the 'Use' gadget the configuration will be saved
to ENV:promotion.prefs. You can edit your prefs even if PPrefs is not
currently running. If you 'Save' the prefs, they will also be written to
ENVARC: so they'll survive the next reset. If PPrefs is currently running
it will immediately use the new configuration.

1.13   Non-standard PPrefs menus

Unpromote   – does the same as the corresponding button

Unpromote monitor – deletes all promotion entries of the currently
      selected source monitor

Unpromote all   – deletes all promotions (both regular entries and
      exceptions)

Loadmode   – select the loadmode

1.14   The new file format and loadmodes

PPrefs 2.0 introduces a new prefs file format. Now it does not only save
the mode IDs but also their names. This is useful for graphicboards where
the IDs are changing from revision to revision or could be changed by
defining new modes with the included software (both being the case for the
PicassoII).

However, only the prefs editor can make use of this feature – the promoter
always uses the IDs, not the names. There are 2 loadmodes available for the
editor – one uses the modeIDs, the other uses the modenames to build up the
promotion database. To switch between them use the Loadmode menu item or
set the MODE tooltype to NAME or ID.

If you know that some modes got different IDs, start the editor – be sure
to set the loadmode to names or you will lose all promotions with these
modes without warning! If the loadmode is set to IDs, toggle it and use the
"Edit/Restore" menuitem to reload the prefs file. Have a look if now
everything is like it should be, then quit with the "Save" gadget.

PPrefs 2.0 can still read the old file format but only saves the new one.
In a next version this might change, so better save your prefs now.

Note: As the saved names are not the normal modenames but those built up by
the editor (displayed in the modelists), this feature works also for modes
that normally don't have a name.

1.15   The editor's options

Supported tooltypes:

CREATEICONS

PUBSCREEN

MODE   – Set the loadmode to NAME or ID.

LANGUAGE – Select the language of the user interface.

For preset files the tooltypes SAVE and USE are supported.

For commandline usage:
"FROM,EDIT/S,SAVE/S,USE/S,PUBSCREEN/K,MODE/K"

1.16 PPrefs

The PPrefs program patches the OpenScreen and OpenScreenTagList functions
of intuition.library, in such a way that OpenScreen is completely replaced by
OpenScreenTagList.

Since version 2.0 it also patches the QueryOverscan() funtion to ensure
that programs that check the size of overscan regions before they open a
screen get the those regions of the promoted modes. However, this works
only for mode to mode promotion and for exceptions specified by tasknames.
As QueryOverscan obviously doesn't supply a screenname PPrefs couldn't
check for it and so could promote it differently as when opening a screen
with the same source mode.

PPrefs looks for a promotion entry in the screenlist, the tasklist and the
normal promotion array (in that order). If it finds one, it searches for an
appropriate overscan region, checks if it fits entirely on the screen, and
if not, enables AutoScroll. It then will center the screen or at least look
if the left/top coordinates don't exceed the overscan region.

PPrefs has some options which could be given on the commandline or as
Workbench tooltypes:

NEWLOOK Enable newlook for promoted screens.

NOCENTER Don't try to center the screen.

STDOSCAN Adjust overscan only up to standard (graphics) overscan which is
         editable via Preferences. The default is maximum overscan which is
         not editable but fixed.

MINSTACK Set the minimum size of available stack for use with best mode
         promotion.

1.17 Problems

I cannot have all the programs you may have and so cannot test PPrefs with
every program available for the Amiga. Of course I tested it with the
programs I use and some problems that I could not imagine appeared with
some of them and I changed PPrefs to work with those programs. So if your
favourite program does not work well with PPrefs – I cannot do anything to
fix this if I don't know about it – you have to tell me!

I have included a special version of PPrefs called PPrefsDBug that prints a
few informations when a screen is opened. To use it, you should abort the
normal PPrefs program and start PPrefsDBug. When you have a program that
makes problems with PPrefs you should send me the output that PPrefsDBug
makes. You could also use it to determine the modeIDs and screen/task names

of the screens.

I had some replies from people using PPrefs with their AGA-machines but I
also like to hear if anyone succesfully uses PPrefs with the Spectrum or
some other graphicboards.

1.18 Thanks

I'd like to thank:

```
  Matt Dillon for his DICE system
  Sylvain Rougier and Pierre Carette for their fantastic BrowserII
  Dirk "Max" Moritz for his CD-ROM drive :)

  especially Torsten "Tigy" Gebert
  for his original 'all to VGA'-patch, for the stack swapping code
  and for testing PPrefs

  and all persons who sent reports and suggestions
```

A special thank goes to the translators:

```
  Sylvain Rougier    (french)
  Martin Henkel      (swedish)
```

1.19 History

I wrote PPrefs because all the other promotion utilties I tried and used
didn't offer the features I wanted. After trying several of them I used
ForceMonitor but I was not fully satisfied with it. After I bought my
PicassoII gfx card, I needed a good promotion utility even more because I
don't like that ChangeScreen utility included with the Picasso so much.

Tigy had an A2000 and a VGA monitor without a flickerfixer some time.
Therefore he wrote a little patch which worked quite well but it offered no
oppurtunities to edit - it just promoted everything to VGA. So I wanted to
build an editor for it and he should change his patch so that they work
together. But as we didn't see for quite a time I did the patch myself.
(actually I was just wondering if it is possible to do that beast in C:)

1.0 (06.09.93)

    o Initial release.

1.0a (13.09.93) (not released)

    o Added screen centering.
    o Does not use any global data for the taglist extension anymore.

1.1 (26.10.93)

     o Redesigned GUI and the font-sensitive code.
     o Added "Best mode" promotion.
     o Gets name of CLI started programs from process.
     o Added semaphore protection.
     o Reworked screen centering, left/top adjust and overscan handling.

2.0 (04.10.94)

     o Editor now understands commandline options.
     o Modelists display full modenames.
     o New prefs file format includes modenames.
     o Some minor changes in the GUI layout.
     o Gives some more error messages.
     o PPrefs is now WB-startable and could be removed from editor.
     o Now also patches QueryOverscan().
     o Refuses to remove if another program patched one of the functions or
       if one of them is currently active.
     o Added stackswapping for BestModeID() function.
       (swap.o was done by Tigy - who is a naughty bit, indeed)

1.20 Contact me

If you have problems, suggestions,etc., I can be reached

via EMail (preferred) :

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or via snail mail:

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The stack swapping code was done by Torsten "Tigy" Gebert, who could be
reached at:

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