README.WRI for Action! 2.5.1 for Windows

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We at Macromedia have made every effort to deliver the highest quality product for your use. However, as with all software, you may encounter some problems. This document contains information about problems you may encounter, and workarounds where possible.

After installing Action 2.5, run SETUP in the \VFW directory of the CD to install Video for Windows version 1.1.

What's New in Action! 2.5.1

Play Movie Only

To better support the VideoLogic Terminator and MediaSpace hardware (and digital video hardware in general), movies such as Video for Windows (AVI), Autodesk Animator (FLC or FLI) and Director Player for Windows (MMM) will be given the option to "Play Movie Only" via the object edit dialog (Movie Options sub-dialog). This checkbox is off by default. When this option is selected it will cause all other animation to cease while the movie object is actively playing.

QuickTime

Action! 2.5.1 now includes QuickTime for Windows version 1.1. This version includes the Compact Video compression option that allows better movie playback.

Support for 16- and 24-bit DIB Import

Action! now supports import of 16- and 24-bit DIBs

General Hints

Action! cannot import PAL palettes from Windows Paintbrush. The PAL file format that Action! recognizes is created by the program PALEDIT.EXE provided with the Windows Software Development Kit or with Microsoft Video for Windows.

Pauses created in templates will not take effect until the template is applied to a scene.

You may want to compress Action! player files to be able to fit more onto a floppy disk. Use a popular compression tool like PKZIP.EXE or LHARC.EXE.

Shadows do not apply to grouped objects.

Select All... selects ALL objects in the current scene, whether they are visible on screen at the time or not. Be careful when using Select All when deleting, making groups and applying motion or sound.

In full screen mode the menus are still available. Just click at the top of the screen.

When playing an Action! presentation, the cursor will change from an arrow to a square when playback is paused. Press the spacebar to resume playback.

You can set a background for multiple scenes simultaneously by selecting them in the Scene Sorter and choosing the Set Background command from the Scene menu.

You can jump to the next or previous scene by pressing Page-Dn or Page-Up during playback.

In the Timeline, you can drag the end-of-scene line to change the duration of the current scene.

Animations

Note: Macromedia Director is a Macintosh-based multimedia authoring tool. The animations created with Director can be converted to Windows with the Director 3.1 Player for Windows, available separately. These converted animations have the file extension .MMM. Action! can directly import .MMM files. We refer to these files as "animations" or "movies."

Macromedia Director animation objects (movies) always appear on top of the Action! scene - no object can be placed on top of an animation.

When FLI or FLC files are imported into Action!, the duration of the animation in the Timeline may be too short, since there is no way for Action! to determine the length of the animation. Lengthen the time bar to see the whole animation.

Charts

Text which is set to white in a chart with a transparent background will not appear. Use light gray instead.

There is no "UNDO" action for Cut, Copy, Paste or Clear in the Data Window.

Action! does not directly import Excel 4.0 files. Save them as Excel 3.0 format before importing.

Digital Video

After installing Action 2.5, run SETUP in the \VFW directory of the CD to install Video for Windows version 1.1.

AVI movies that are set to move on the screen during playback will not animate.

Only one AVI movie can play at a time. If you use more than one movie in a scene, set the second movie later in the timeline.

Digital Video and Palettes

AVI movies using optimized palettes will cause problems when imported into Action!.

If you have problems with palettes and authoring using AVI, use only the system colors in the bottom row of the color chip for your presentation objects.

Importing from Other Applications

When importing or pasting a metafile from another application, the file may appear full-screen. This is dependent on the source application since many save metafiles as full-screen. Use the mouse to resize the metafile once it appears in Action! by clicking and dragging the size handles in the corners of the image.

Networks

When installing to a network, you may need to type the full path of the drive where you want to install the program rather than any alias to that drive (for example, **F:\PUBLIC\APPS\ACTION2** rather than **F:**.

Novell networks have an option to display the double dot character which allows the user access to the parent directory. If SHOW DOTS=ON is not present in the SHELL.CFG, you must type the full path to the parent directory to move to that directory.

If the PROGMAN.INI is marked read only, the Install program may fail to create a Macromedia program group and install the icons required to run Action! properly. You may install the icons into any program group manually using the procedure described in your Windows manual.

Preferences

Changes to the Preferences settings do not take effect immediately for the current document. Save the document and load it to see the changes. When setting a custom stage size in the Preferences dialog, the changes will not take effect until you create or load a new document.

The ACTION.INI file contains one undocumented setting, `EnablePaletteFades`, with one of two values assigned to it (1 or 0). When this option is set to 1 (as in `EnablePaletteFades=1`), a black fade will occur between scenes. To disable this effect, change this line to read `EnablePaletteFades=0` and restart Action!.

Sounds

To use MIDI sound, be sure your Windows MIDI Mapper is configured for all 16 channels, rather than the default 10.

You cannot delete a sound that is associated with an object. To suppress the sound, set the duration for the sound to zero seconds by double-clicking the object and choosing the Sound attribute in the Edit Object dialog box.

KNOWN PROBLEMS

General

Action! creates files with a TMP extension as you work. When you quit Action!, these files are deleted. If you encounter an error while running Action!, there may be TMP files that don't get deleted because of the abnormal exit. You should delete these TMP files manually after closing all other Windows applications. You may want to add a line to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file which deletes the *.TMP files from your temp directory when you boot your PC.

Hold effects and ink settings do not apply to grouped objects.

The ink effect White Transparent only applies to bitmap objects. It has no effect on other object types.

Animations (Movies)

When copying or moving presentations that contain movies, be sure to put the movies in the same directory as the Action! presentation.

Objects using the default color palette will have their color palette modified when they are played at the same time as a FLI or FLC movie. To minimize these color shifts, use the basic system colors on the bottom row of the color chip for your objects.

Inks have no effect on Director animations. The animations always play as imported.

If a template with a movie is applied to a scene, the movie in the template must be removed before the sound of the scene movie will be audible.

Charts

A template chart's default background color can be changed in scene view without promoting the chart. This may mistakenly lead you to think that the chart itself has been changed. You must promote the chart in the template to the current scene prior to making option changes.

The enter and exit transitions "Boxy Squares" and "Boxy Rectangle" may not refresh completely after the transition is finished, when these transitions are applied to chart categories or series.

If a chart has a transparent background (fill style set to None), you cannot change the chart text to white. It will not be shown. Select either light gray or one of the color chips close to white and the text will appear.

When data motion has been applied to pie charts with data labels showing, the data labels appear behind the pie slices. Without data motion the data labels appear in front of the pie slices.

If the chart data range contains invalid data, the invalid data range error message will appear each time you change the chart options or apply data motion. Change the data to valid data to avoid multiple occurrences of this error message.

Importing from Other Applications

3D pie charts created in Aldus Persuasion 2.1 and exported to WMF are not correctly imported in Action!. Use 2D pie charts instead.

WMF files imported from Harvard Graphics for Windows or Aldus Persuasion are placed one pixel too low on the screen. Use the arrow key to reposition the graphic.

Separating all objects in imported presentations which contain gradient backgrounds will cause the gradient to disappear. Set a new gradient background in Action!.

Player (PLAYACT.EXE)

Presentations containing charts must be saved as a Player file (.ACP) rather than as a standard presentation (.ACT). Charts will cause the ACP file to be larger than the ACT file.

If a chart is given a border style of None and a transparent fill against a gradient background with the Use Palette option selected, the border may continue to display in the Player. Moving the chart may cause the border to disappear.

Opening a presentation in the Player and in Action! simultaneously is possible, but is not recommended.

To play an Action! presentation automatically upon loading, run the Player from the File Run command followed by the name of the Action! file. For example, PLAYACT.EXE MYPRES.ACP would automatically load and run the presentation called MYPRES.ACP.

Sounds

Action! maintains access to the CD-ROM drive when loaded.   If you want another program to use the CD-ROM drive instead of Action!, load that program before loading Action!

Setting a loop (using the Set Loop command in the Control menu) around a short sound may cause the sound to play back at a slightly different time in each loop.   This is a caused by the

time required to load the sound, and varies depending on the speed of your PC.

When using CD audio, load the CD before launching Action! to assure correct operation.

CD audio will always start and stop 0.1 seconds before the chosen times.