

Introduction to Create-a-Theme 98

Welcome, to Create-a-Theme 98 - a utility that will let you create, load, edit *and* save desktop themes.

A desktop theme changes what your computer screen looks like. Most themes are a collection of icons, sounds, mouse pointers, wallpaper, screen saver, and colors, however some themes do not have all of these features.

A desktop theme is a great way to make your computer look great, and have your friends **green with envy**. But dont worry, desktop themes make it very easy to share what you have created with your friends, family, and colleagues.

If you are sick of looking at the boring background on your desktop, and are tired of hearing the **ta-da** when you exit windows, then you are in desperate need of a theme! If you are a bit scared to go out and make a theme yourself, then you may like to have a look at someone elses theme. You can find thousands of themes on the internet, which can be downloaded and applied to your computer.

Create-a-Theme 98 makes it easy for you to make new desktop themes, as well as enabling you to open themes (whether it was created by you, or someone else). When you open a theme, you can change anything and everything, from a single color, to the entire sound collection - with Create-a-Theme 98, you have the power.

On a final note, it is important that you realise that Create-a-Theme 98 is not a free program. It is a shareware program, which basically means try before you buy. You are entitled to use this program for 30 days, and after that evaluation period, you must either uninstall the program, or register. Registration will only set you back US\$20, and you can use your credit card, or pay by check, money order, or cash. [Click here for more information.](#)

How to Make a Theme

Create-a-Theme 98 will generate a filename with a **.theme** extension. You will simply tell it which mouse pointer you want to change, and then select a new mouse pointer. If you want to change a sound effect, you will click on which sound you want to change, and then select a new sound effect. Sound easy? Well it is. All you have to do is point and click until you think that you have the perfect theme.

However, what you will need to do with some other program besides Create-a-Theme 98 is make the icons, background, sounds, screen saver etc. This might sound a bit hard, but it isn't. There are plenty of sounds for you to use on your computer - you just have to look in a few directories, and you should find what you are looking for. If you are looking for sounds, then try the subdirectory in your Windows directory (usually C:\Windows\) called Media. If there is not a directory called Media, don't panic. This is because you did not install these sound files when you installed Windows 95. Also, look in your Themes directory (usually C:\Program Files\Plus!\Themes\). Here, you will not only find sound effects, but you will also find mouse pointers, icons, and wallpaper. If you are looking for screen savers, then look in your Windows System directory (usually C:\Windows\System).


Also, there is always the internet, or CD-ROM collections, which will have thousands of sounds, icons, mouse pointers, wallpaper etc. for you to choose from. Make sure that if you are using someone else's creation that you ask their permission.

If you are feeling creative, then feel free to make your own theme items. This can be done by using Windows Paintbrush. The icons and background can be saved as bitmap (.bmp) files. Your icons will automatically be resized to the correct size (32 x 32) when the theme is loaded, so even if you have a really big bitmap, you can use it as your My Computer icon, or your background.

How to Open a Theme

To load a theme:

1. Click on the File menu
2. Select Open
3. Find the theme that you would like to open, and click on it
4. Select the Ok button

Or, you can click on the Open button on the toolbar () , and then follow steps 3 and 4.

Then, Create-a-Theme 98 will open all the files needed by the theme, and display them in the appropriate place (e.g. it will display the My Computer icon on the Visuals Tab).

Sometimes you may get the message:

There was a problem while loading this theme. One or more files couldn't be found or were corrupt. The rest of the theme should be functioning correctly.


This is caused because, like it says, one or more files could not be found, or were corrupt. A common problem that will cause this is that some icons are from an .exe or .dll file (as in the Windows Default theme), and as they are not actual .ico files, they can not be loaded. However, this will not cause the theme not to be opened - it will just be missing the files that couldnt be loaded.

If the file couldnt be loaded, it may be because it was in a different directory than what was specified in the .theme file. For example, say that the My Computer icon was in the Windows directory, instead of the theme directory. To fix this, when the theme has finished loading, go to the visuals tab, and click on the button labeled My Computer, and click on it. Then, go to the Windows Directory, and click on the icon that you were looking for, and select the Ok button. Then, when the theme is saved, it will automatically copy the file in to the correct directory, and the next time that you want to open the theme, there should not be another error.

How to Save a Theme

To save a theme:

1. Click on the File menu
2. Select Save
3. Type in what you would like to call your theme
4. Select the Ok button

Or, you can click on the Save button on the toolbar () , and then follow steps 3 and 4.

Create-a-Theme 98 then creates a directory on your computer, and then copies all necessary files needed by the theme in to that directory, and also creates the .theme file.

By default, Create-a-Theme 98 will save the theme in your Plus! Themes directory. If, however, you would like to save it somewhere else, you will need to edit the preferences. This is done by clicking on File, and then selecting Preferences. A new window will appear, and here, you will be able to specify the directory where you want to save themes. Click on the text box underneath the heading **Directory where themes are saved:**, and then enter the directory where you would like themes to be saved.

NOTE:- a subdirectory will always be created when a new theme is saved.

Removing Theme Items

Once you have selected a theme item, you may decide that you would like to change or remove it. To remove a theme item, all you need to do is:

1. Select the ✕ button on the toolbar so that it clicks, and stays, in the on position
2. Click on the button for the theme item that you would like to be removed (repeat this step as many times that is necessary)
3. Un-select the ✕ button on the toolbar.

When the ✕ button is in the on position, anything that you click on will be removed from the theme, so be careful to turn it off once you have finished removing theme items.

The Toolbar

The toolbar has the following buttons:



Click on a button to find out more information about what it does.

Registering Create-a-Theme 98

To register Create-a-Theme 98, simply print and fill out the order form below, and send it along with your payment. Or you can run the Register.exe program included with Create-a-Theme 98, which will enable you to register using your credit card. [Click here to run the program \(it must be in the same directory as this help file\).](#) Payments can be made by cash, check or money order, in either US or Australian funds. The cost of registration is US\$20 or Australian\$30.

Please send this form along with payment to:

Tim Lawson
68 Mundy Street
Goulburn, NSW
2580
Australia.

Create-a-Theme 98 Order Form

Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ State Zip Code

Email: _____

I would like to order _____ copies of Create-a-Theme 98, at \$20 US each or \$30 Australian each

with a total of: \$ _____ in US / Australian funds (please circle one)

I have enclosed: Money Order / Cash / Cheque

Would you like to receive information on new releases of Create-a-Theme 98, and any related programs.

YES / NO

Please make cheques payable to Tim Lawson.

You will be sent the password and code to unlock the program as soon as your check is cleared. A much quicker response will be provided if you include an email address.

[Click here to print out the form](#)

About Create-a-Theme 98

Create-a-Theme 98 was programmed by Tim Lawson.

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History of Create-a-Theme 98:

August 1st, 1997 - The first version of Create-a-Theme 98 (then called Create-a-Theme 95 version 1.0) was a very basic theme creator - it did not have the ability to load themes, or any of the features that are included with the current version.

September 12th, 1997 - About one month after the first released, a new version was to be released (version 2.0), that included being able to load themes. This also included other features such as the color schemes, and the Tip of the Day. Create-a-Theme 98 was one of the first programs that enabled users to load themes created with any program.

April 15th 1998 - Create-a-Theme 98 was released. This was the most noticeable upgrade to Create-a-Theme 98. Gone was the Tip of the Day, and the old way to choose your colors (and very confusing way at that!). Now, the colors are chosen visually, by pointing and clicking. And it is more user friendly, letting the user customize their preferences of where to save the theme, and the background for the program.

Theme Items

A Theme Item is one particular thing in your theme, for example, it could be one sound (like the Windows Start sound), or it could be one particular mouse pointer, etc.

