

# Small notes for CutXtra™

## Installation

These are some notes for version 1.0 of CutXtra™ for Illustrator™ 5 & FreeHand™ 5. The installation is simple: drag the filter CutXtra™ in the Illustrator Plug-in folder (or FreeHand Xtra's folder) and put the application CutXtra™ Server in any convenient place where you can find it easily. An example is in the Startup Items folder or in the Apple Menu folder, that allow an automatic and a fast launching respectively. Both softwares are provided in the "FAT" mode, allowing them to run at maximum performance on both 68K Macintoshes and PowerMacintoshes. The only requirements are the System 7 (or newer) and a minimum 68020 processor.

## Configuration

As a second step you have to configure the Server to work with your plotter: launch it and go to Plotter config item in the File menu.

Choose the right plotter brand, the communication speed and the other parameters.

Another setting is in the Parameters item: consult the handbook of the plotter to know how many of the possible working parameters are supported (i.e. speed, acceleration and the range in which the values can change).

ore parameters are explained later.

## Use in a local environment

The use in the local machine is also very simple: launch the Server and keep it in background when you need to drive the plotter, then call from Illustrator (or FreeHand) the filter ExtraPlugs->CutXTra™. You will be prompted for an application to connect: if you acted correctly, the Server will be the only one in the right list. Then, you'll position and size the drawing as you need: you've also the option to cut only what you left selected in the drawing program, and to make multiple copies of the drawing. The plug-in takes care of how many plotter pages the drawing needs and instructs the Server accordingly.

**IMPORTANT NOTE** Choosing CutXtra directly from Filter menu DOESN'T show the window to connect an application and doesn't query the Server again about plotter characteristics: please use this option only if you didn't changed anything on the plotter (i.e. the sheet) and, obviously, if in the meantime you didn't quit the Server.

## Cutting from the Server

When you press the OK button in the Plug-in, the drawing will be sent to the Server. If in the Parameters window the Start immediately button is checked (active only when also Delete when done is checked), the drawing will be sent immediately to the plotter, otherwise the Server will maintain it in a queue (visible in the Files menu) until you will not choose it from the Files menu in the window.

When the program is ready to send a file, you will see the name in the box under the Start button and the word Acknowledged, otherwise the Server can be busy (you'll see the amount of the work done, the amount to do and the estimated time), or Idle. You can stop the job in any moment by pressing the Pause button (that will change to Resume) and then pressing it again to restart. You can also choose to go step-by-step by the Back and Forth buttons: in this case the plotter will proceed with the pen up (good to re-position after a problem in cutting, i.e. a broken tool, etc.). The Notes button shows in a window what was eventually typed in the Note dialog of an object in Illustrator. The Clear button stops and deletes the job active in that moment, while the All button clears the whole queue.

## Advanced parameters

Special possibilities are present in the Parameters window:

Settings: some common settings can be saved with a name to be recovered later. The Standard setting is the one automatically saved from the software and corresponds to the last used. A setting can be deleted choosing its name with the Option key pressed.

Tool: enables (in some plotters) the possibility to choose pen and cutter from the head or the carousel.

Color separation: allows the user to choose the colors (recovered from the drawing application) to send to the plotter, stopping each color to exchange the material in the plotter.

Accuracy: the Auto option takes automatically care of the right accuracy to use in segmenting the curves on the plotter. The High, Medium and Low accuracy forces the software to use a fixed number of segments for each curve.

Maintain Log: the Server maintains a log file in the Preferences folder. This is a normal text file that can be imported in a spreadsheet or database to calculate statistics on the jobs. Furthermore, the CutXtra Log Preview folder keeps the PICT preview of each job, naming it with the date and time of the execution. This option allows advanced users to have a complete control on the job flow in the company.

## Use in a network

To use the Server from other machines in the network, you have to enable in the Control Panel the Program Linking and to allow the users to access your machine. See the System 7 handbook on how to use Program Linking. For every other aspect, the use remains the same than in the local environment: of course, network users can choose to cut on different Servers if more plotters are connected.

## Colour separation

The CutXtra plug-in sends to the server all the information about colours used in the original drawing: if the user wants to cut every colour in a different sheet, the Colour sep. menu in the Parameters window has to be checked in the Simple item. When the user asks for starting, the following window appears:

n the left there is a list with all the colours used in the original drawing: if the user chooses “custom” colours in the drawing program, also the colours names are reported in the list. The colours are normally checked: this means that they are ready to be cut. A double click toggles a colour from the checked status (to cut) to the unchecked (to skip). On the right side there is the possibility to choose the range of physical pages to cut (only when the drawing is big enough to require multiple pages).

In the case of colour separation, the user is prompted every colour with the following:

K sends the colour to the plotter, Cancel stops the plotting.

### **Copy protection**

The software is NOT protected, except that the Server, once launched the first time, installs itself and, when copied to another hard disk, will not work. So, maintain always a “clean” copy to avoid loosing the only copy you have and backup the software before launching it!

### **Demo version**

The main differences from the demo to the final release is the possibility to cut only one shape, less plotter drivers (only the most common 10), the absence in the plug-in of the included utilities and no PowerPC code: i.e. the demo is only plain 68K code. This is not important to test

the basics of the software, but makes it quite hard to manage in the real work and not as fast as possible on newer machines.

### **More info...**

Any further information can be requested at

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