Main Menu

Introduction

Creation Station provides children with an enjoyable and creative computing environment. At the same time, every precaution has been taken to provide the security parents need to feel confident that their important information will not be accessible by the child.

Because Creation Station is designed for beginning computer users, it is deliberately divided into functional groups that let parents provide access rights as they see fit.   For example, Creation Station can be setup to password protect printing and exit functions, while allowing easy access to all the activity books and clean-up options.   Setting up access rights is fast and easy (see Preferences for details).

Once access rights have been set (the default is access to everything), a child has freedom to click on anything they can get to, everything is safe.   Within the activity books and on the bookshelf there are no off-limit menus, buttons or other things to get in the way of your childs creativity.   Even the keyboard becomes an interactive exprience!

The Control Center

The main window of Creation Station is the control center.   It is here you perform all other actions.   You can go to the bookshelf and choose an activity book, print pages from one of the books, clean-up work previously created in an activity book, set your preferences, seek help and information, or exit the application.

The Bookshelf

The bookshelf is a common interface used for performing an action on an activity book.   The three actions that can be performed are printing, coloring and cleaning.   The title bar across the top indicates the current mode of the bookshelf.   The picture buttons along the bottom of the screen allow for easy toggling between the bookshelf modes.

To select an activity book from the bookshelf simply point to an activity book button and click the mouse.

Scroll arrows automatically show-up at the bottom of the screen if you install more activity books than can be viewed at one time.   Also, only the picture buttons that represent modes that are not password protected will be shown.

Activity Books

Each book that is found on the bookshelf is an activity book.   It is filled with lots of fun activities for the child.   Activity books have two modes, coloring and stamps.   These two modes are found at the top left and right corners of the screen.   Activity books are filled with multiple pages that can be turned by pressing either the left or right arrow at the bottom corners of the screen.   The other 16 rectangles that surround the page are the palette.   The palette will hold either colors or stamps depending on the mode.

To color a page
Select the desired color from the palette, then press a mouse button down (left and right both perform the same action) and move the mouse.   Release the mouse button to stop coloring.

To use stamps
<u>Press and hold a mouse button over the desired stamp</u>.   While still holding the mouse button down, move the mouse and notice that the desired stamp is dragged with the mouse as it moves.   When the stamp is in the desired location, release the mouse button to place the stamp on the page.

Stamps can be moved after they are placed on the page.   Simply move the mouse over the stamp that is to be moved.   Press a mouse button and move the stamp to its new location (or off the page to delete it).   Then release the mouse button.

Note that the cursor will change to an open   hand with all of   the fingers stretched out when the mouse is over the stamp.   This indicates that a stamp will be grabbed when the mouse button is pressed.

A few tips:

Exiting the activity book

Changing the size of the crayon

Deleting stamps from the page

Use the Esc key to exit the activity book.   Although this may seem a bit inconvenient and non-intuitive for experienced computer users, it provides young children with a safe environment where everything is OK to click on and no unexpected exits will result.

Holding the [Shift] key down while coloring will provide a crayon that is 2 times the size of the default crayon.   Holding the

[Ctrl] key down while coloring will provide a crayon that is 4 times the size of the default crayon.   This should help expedite the coloring of those large wide open spaces.

To delete unwanted stamps, simply drag them off the edge of the page and release them.

Printing

Creation Station allows you to print either colored pages or originals (black and white) to color by hand.

Use the two arrow buttons to turn the pages until the desired page is found, then press the button with the printer on it to print the selected page.   To exit the dialog without printing any pages, click the mouse on the stop sign or press the ⎋ key.

Clean-up

The clean-up dialog provides parents with a way to clean activity books that have been colored.   This dialog is probably too complicated for most children, so it is recommended that this mode be turned off with password protection (see Preferences).

When cleaning activity books, the current contents can be either deleted or saved as a BMP filepopup.   A BMP file is the native file format for the Paintbrush application that ships with Windows.   BMP files are also the same file format that is used as the windows wall paper displayed on the windows background.   If you choose to save the file as a BMP file, you will need to provide an identifier that will be used to give each page a unique file name as it is saved to disk.   Since each BMP file can only hold one picture, this means that every page that is saved out must have a filename that is different than the other pages.   The identifier that you enter will be combined with the page number of the saved page to create the BMP file names.   For example: if you enter an identifier of MYPAGE and save the first 3 pages of a coloring book, 3 BMP files will be created on your hard disk with the names MYPAGE01.BMP, MYPAGE02.BMP, MYPAGE03.BMP respectively.   These files will be located in a sub-directory of the Creation Station directory called SAVEFILE.

When cleaning activity books, you also have the option to clean the entire book or just a specific range of pages.   Choose the options that you desire and then select OK button in dialog box to proceed with cleaning the book.

> **IMPORTANT:**   There is no way to save the contents of a coloring book page to BMP file format without cleaning the page in the book.   Cleaning the page in the book will change the actual state of the page removing all of the previously applied stamps and colors.

NOTE: To make one of the BMP files you save the current Windows wallpaper, you will have to either move or copy the desired BMP file to your Windows directory on your hard disk (see Windows or DOS documentation for more details on moving files).   Once the file is located in the Windows directory, run the control panel (see Windows documentation for help on running the control panel) and double click the "Desktop" icon.   In the "Wallpaper" section of the "Desktop" dialog, choose the BMP filename that you specified for you Creation Station page.

Preferences

The preferences dialog provides a method for customizing Creation Station to work the way you want it to.   All of the options available in Creation Station have been consolidated here for convenience.   Once a change has been made to the preferences, those changes will take effect immediately after the dialog is closed.   Also, all changes, except printer setup options, will be saved from session to session.

Creation Station provides password protection on a mode level allowing you to choose what options you want made available to your child.   When a mode in Creation Station is password protected, a dialog will pop-up every time that mode accessed.

Preferences Options:

Password Protection

Password

Areas to protect

Exiting the bookshelf

Entering clean-up

Entering information & help

Entering preferences

Entering printing

Exiting the application

Display password in dialog

Mouse Click Actions

Printer setup...

General

Go directly to bookshelf on startup

Turn sound effects off

Turn random drawing with keyboard off

Halt application on system errors

Password Protection

Password protection prevents unwanted access to areas that the child has been restricted from.   If the correct password is entered, access is granted and the application proceeds as normal.   If the password is incorrect, the dialog will disappear and the application will resume operation in the same mode that the dialog was called up from.

NOTE: The password dialog will automatically close down after 10 seconds if no action is taken to enter the password.

Password

This is the actual password that must be typed into the dialog when it is presented

Exiting the bookshelf

Presents the password dialog every time the bookshelf is closed down.

Entering clean-up

Presents the password dialog before opening the bookshelf for clean-up mode.

Entering information & help

Presents the password dialog before opening the information center.

Entering preferences

Presents the password dialog before displaying the preferences dialog.

Entering printing

Presents the password dialog before opening the bookshelf in printing mode.

Exiting the application

Presents the password dialog before closing the application or changing focus to another application.   For example: if this option is selected, the Alt + Tab keys combination cannot be used to change from Creation Station to another application without knowing the correct password.

Display password in dialog

If this option is selected, the password will be displayed in the same dialog in which it is requested.   This helps to prevent forgetting the password and will probably not present a problem in cases where the child using the application cannot read.

Mouse Click Actions

This option allows you to set up Creation Station to work in "Toggle" mode.   Toggle mode is designed to make complex operations, like holding a mouse button down while dragging, easier for less experienced computer users.   The first click of the mouse button (press and release) is treated like a mouse press (press and hold).   All of the following mouse actions will be performed as if the mouse button is being   held down.   The next click of the mouse will be treated like the release of the mouse button.   When coloring, a press and release of the mouse button will turn the crayon on.   Another press and release will turn the crayon off.   Stamps work the same way.   Press and release over the stamp that you want and it will be grabbed.   Press and release where you want it to go and the stamp will be dropped.

Printer setup...

This button brings up the standard printer setup dialog, used for setting printer options such as portrait and landscape mode.

Go directly to bookshelf on startup

This will place Creation Station on the bookshelf in color mode immediately after the application is started from the program manger.

Turn sound effects off

Turns all sounds off

Turn random drawing with keyboard off

By default, Creation Station is setup to draw random circles on the current page when any key (except) is pressed.   This option is entertaining for younger children, however, it can be frustrating for older children that accidentally touch a key and mess up their page.

Halt application on system errors

Creation Station is designed to halt all application processing if any fatal errors occur while running.   Since errors of this level require an adult, Creation Station will display a dialog with a message indicating an error has occurred and plays a message informing the child to find an adult to help.   After typing a keyboard sequence described in the error message, the adult is presented with the actual cause of the error.   If you prefer to have this layer of functionality removed and error messages be surfaced directly when they occur, unselect this option.

Information & Help

Information and help can be found in the information center.   This section of the application is designed to provide you with information you may need regarding all aspects of Creation Station.   Here you will find information on other products and activity books offered by Berkemeyer Concepts.   You will also find on-line help. There is a credits dialog that displays the authors credits list (press any key or click the mouse on this window to dismiss it). Finally, there is the application's About box that will give you details about your copy of Creation Station.

Technical Support

If you have any problems installing or running Creation Station on you machine please contact Berkemeyer Concepts at (214) 428-3386.