General Description

ComView was written as an off-line viewer for the electronic comic book series NanoWars [see Information on NanoWars].   However, ComView is an excellent general purpose utility to create your own multimedia books, slideshows and presentations.   Simply build a data file [see Data Files] that contains the file names of your graphics.   A separate sound file can also be attached to each graphics page, allowing you to add a soundtrack to your visual display. [see Sound Types]   [see Graphics Types].

The Primary Menu Options are, FILE, OPTIONS, CONTROLS, HELP and are documented below.

File:

OPEN FILE - ComView is driven by a data file [see Data Files].   Normally, a data file is passed into ComView upon program startup as a command line parameter [see PARMS].   The Open File option allows you to switch to another data file while ComView is running.

EXIT COMVIEW - exit program.

Options:

All Options are saved in a COMVIEW.INI file stored in your windows directory.

SOUND - if this option is checked, whenever ComView is displaying a .GIF file, it will also look for a .WAV file of the same name.

Example: TESTFILE.GIF   TESTFILE.WAV

If it finds such a file, it will play it.   If it does not find it, it will not try and play anything.   The next graphic file that is read, the process starts again.   This means that you could place a sound track on some graphics files and not on others in the same set (data file).

TOOLBAR - if checked a toolbar appears at the top of the screen.   You may want to turn this off, conserving screen real estate, if viewing larger graphics files (especially if you are running in standard VGA mode).

SLIDE SHOW LOOPING - if checked, and slide show is activated, when ComView gets to the end of a data file, it will start reading again from the top.   And over, and over, and over.

SLIDE SHOW DELAY - Set the number IN SECONDS of delay time between slides.

Controls:

FIRST PAGE - Menu option or tool bar.   Jump to first entry in data file.

PREVIOUS PAGE - Menu option or tool bar.   Back up one entry.   Not active if already on the first entry.

NEXT PAGE - Menu option or tool bar.   Move forward one entry.   Not active if on last page.

SLIDE SHOW - Menu option or tool bar.   Start slide show.   It will read through the entire data file ONCE, unless [Slide Show Looping] is turned on.

STOP SHOW - Menu option or tool bar.   Once you turn Slide Show ON, the option button changes into Stop Show. Select Stop Show to turn slide show OFF.

Help:

Self Explanatory.

Data Files

A ComView data file is just a simple ASCII text file containing a list of file names, namely, graphics that you wish to display.   A data file can be created with any available text editor and can have any file name you choose. Depending on how you have your PATH statement configured, and where the location of the graphics are, you may need to place absolute path names in front of the file names.   As a convention, it is a good idea to give data files a file name extension of .DAT, so a example of a short data file would look like this:

file name: TESTFILE.DAT
contains the following:

C:\NANOWARS\pic1.gif
C:\NANOWARS\pic2.gif
C:\NANOWARS\pic3.gif

If you have the right utility, it is possible to programmatically build a data file.

To promote flexibility we have elected not to check for a specific file name extension or to add a proprietary entry into the ASCII file.   This allows you to create data files programmatically with the correct utility.   The downfall to this approach is that any type of file can be parmed into ComView.   If the file parmed into ComView is not an ASCII text file containing only 1 file name per line, errors WILL occur.

There is currently a 300 entry limit within a Comview data file, any further entries will be ignored.

Parms

Data files are passed into ComView as command line parameters, as in the following example:

C:\COMVIEW\COMVIEW c:\nanowars\nw1.dat

This method can be used when setting up an icon properties (win3.x) or a shortcut (win95).   Note that the uppercase portion is the PROGRAM and the lowercase portion is the DATAFILE (case does not matter, and is provided only for illustration purposes).

As you see, an icon can be set up to represent an individual BOOK.   If you have several books, you could have several icons, each one executing ComView, but parming in a different data file (displaying different graphics).

Graphics Types

Version 1 of ComView is capable of reading non-interlaced, GIF87 format graphics.   Plans are to later add support for JPEG.

Sound Types

Version 1.1 of ComView is capable of reading Microsoft Windows .WAV sound files.   Your system must already have the necessary hardware and Windows sound driver configuration for sound support.   The sound file must fit into available physical memory.   If your sound file does not play, it may be too large.

Information on NanoWars

NanoWars is an ongoing illustrated Science Fiction series by Anthony S. Napier, available on the net.   The title page of Chapter One reads: The year is 2020 and mankinds advancement of technology continues.   In fact, it has reached the ignition point!

The current URL (as of DEC95) for the NanoWars Home Page is at:

http://www.erinet.com/prass/nanowars/nw.html

NanoWars Chapter 1 & 2 (and all future editions) should be available via WWW.   Do a net search in AltaVista (or other internet search engine) on the term NANOWARS to determine where a current WWW location of   the files are.

Check it out!

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```
/* decode.c is Steven Bennetts code with some minor changes */
/* the original copyright from him follows */
/* Wilson MacGyver Liaw */

/* DECODE.C - An LZW decoder for GIF

/* Copyright © 1987, by Steven A. Bennett
/* Permission is given by the author to freely redistribute and include
/* this code in any program as long as this credit is given where due.
/* In accordance with the above, I want to credit Steve Wilhite who wrote
/* the code which this is heavily inspired by...
/*GIF and Graphics Interchange Format are trademarks ™ of
/* Compuserve, Incorporated, an H&R Block Company.
/* Release Notes: This file contains a decoder routine for GIF images
/* which is similar, structurally, to the original routine by Steve Wilhite.
/* It is, however, somewhat noticably faster in most cases.
/*/
```