ShowVIC

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SHOWVIC V3.06

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ReqTools and PowerPacker by Nico François

Comments, suggestions, bug reports etc. to

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1.3   disclaimer

This program comes with no warranty, either expressed or implied. The author is in no way responsible for any damage or loss that may occur due to direct or indirect usage of this software. Use this software entirely at your own risk. Having said that, I'm a good programmer and I've tested ShowVIC thoroughly, so I shouldn't think there will be any problems.

1.4   copyright

This software is freely distributable, BUT the ShowVIC program, the ConvertFox program and all documentation are copyright 1993 Matt Francis. The ReqTools and PowerPacker libraries are copyright to Nico François. The sample pictures included are copyright to other parties, and are provided simply to demonstrate the program. Permission is NOT given to re-release the ShowVIC program and/or documentation if it has been altered in any way.

1.5   distribution

Permission is given to include the ShowVIC package in a public archive (such as a BBS, FTP site or PD library) providing that all parts of the original distribution are kept intact. These are as follows:

ShowVIC/ShowVIC

ShowVIC/ShowVIC.info

ShowVIC/ShowVIC.guide

ShowVIC/ShowVIC.guide.info

ShowVIC/ConvertFox

ShowVIC/ConvertFox.doc

ShowVIC/ConvertFox.doc.info

ShowVIC/ConvertAmica

ShowVIC/ConvertAmica.doc

ShowVIC/ConvertAmica.doc.info

ShowVIC/UpdatePrefs

ShowVIC/UpdatePrefs.info

ShowVIC/UpdatePrefs.exe

ShowVIC/Formats.doc

ShowVIC/Formats.doc.info

ShowVIC/Libs/reqtools.library

ShowVIC/Libs/powerpacker.library

ShowVIC/Pictures/#?

No charge may be made for the ShowVIC package, other than a

reasonable copying fee, and/or the price of the media.

1.6   requirments

Required - Kickstart V37 (release 2.04) or above

- ReqTools library V38 or above (supplied)

Recommended - PowerPacker library V35 or above (supplied)

- PowerPacker (commercial) or PowerPacker mini-clone (PD)

1.7   introduction

ShowVIC is a utility that converts and displays Commodore 64 picture files. A number of different formats are supported, which ShowVIC will automatically identify and convert. These are as follows:

- Koala

- Artist 64

- Art Studio

- Advanced Art Studio

- Image System (multicolour and hires)

- Blazing Paddles

- Vidcom 64

- Doodle

- FLI

- Hi-Eddi

- Amica-Paint

- PageFox

If you have PowerPacker you can crunch all your pictures. If not, don't worry as you will still be able to view crunched pictures (providing you install the PowerPacker library). ShowVIC was written in assembly language, so it is small and fast (especially the picture conversion).

ShowVIC has been tested on several configurations, ranging from a basic A500+ running Kickstart V2.04 to a super-duper A1200 with the fabulous Kickstart V3.0. It is totally OS compliant, as all Amiga programs should be (discounting demos and action games :-). It works without problems for me, and I hope it works as well for you.

1.8   Indirect Support

The PageFox and Amica-Paint formats are currently only supported indirectly, via the supplied programs (ConvertFox and ConvertAmica - read the seperate documentation for each). Direct support for these formats may appear in a future release of ShowVIC.

1.9   Vidcom 64

Unfortunately, Vidcom doesn't seem to store the screen colour in its bitmap files. To get round this, ShowVIC takes the screen colour from byte 2026 ($7EA), which is usually a zero (this offset takes into account the two load-address bytes). This can be changed by loading the picture into a binary file editor like NewZap or DekSid, and changing byte 2026 to a value from 0 to 15. Vidcom, by default, uses a dark blue screen (colour 6) but as byte 2026 is usually zero, Vidcom pictures will by default have a black screen colour. Of course the best way round this is to avoid using the Vidcom format - I recommend you use a format such as Advanced Art Studio or Koala.

One more thing about Vidcom is that it seems to use the same format for both hires and multicolour pictures, making it impossible to distinguish between them. For this reason, ShowVIC currently converts all Vidcom pictures as multicolour bitmaps. If many people badger me (unlikely), I might add a switch in a later release, so you can choose which mode to convert to.

1.10 Using ShowVIC

ShowVIC can be started from a Shell or from the Workbench.

ShowVIC's screen has two menus :

Project:

Open...

Save As...

About...

Quit

Settings:

Edit Palette...

Restore Palette

Title Bar?

Workbench?

Save Settings

Sending ShowVIC a CTRL-D will pop its screen to the front, ready for use. If ShowVIC receives a CTRL-C , it will quit as if you had selected the Quit option in the "Project" menu.

1.11 Menu Help

ShowVIC uses Intuition's new menu-help feature, so pressing the help key while a particular menu item is highlighted will cause an information requester to appear describing the item's function.

1.12 Project Menu » Open...

This menu item will load, convert and display a C64 picture. The format of the picture file will be automatically determined (or else an error requester will appear).

1.13 Project Menu » Save As...

This menu item will save the current image as a compressed IFF ILBM file. The picture will be 320x200 with 16 colours. The current palette is saved with the picture.

1.14 Project Menu » About...

This menu item opens a requester displaying, among other things, the format of the current picture.

1.15 Project Menu » Quit

This menu item causes ShowVIC to exit immediately.

1.16   Settings Menu » Edit Palette...

This menu item opens a ReqTools palette editor so you can change the screen colours to your liking.

1.17   Settings Menu » Restore Palette

If you make a complete mess of the palette, you can restore the factory default values with this menu item.

1.18   Settings Menu » Title Bar?

This menu item toggles the visibility of the title bar. The title bar is on by default. When the title bar is enabled, the top few lines of the picture will be obscured.

1.19   Settings Menu » Workbench?

This menu item opens or closes the Workbench. Workbench is left open by default.

1.20   Settings Menu » Save Settings

This menu item saves the current settings to ShowVIC's prefs file. These settings will be restored when you next use ShowVIC.

(The settings are saved as an IFF PREF file in ENV: and ENVARC: called "ShowVIC.prefs".)

1.21   signals

If you started ShowVIC synchronously from a Shell (i.e. you didn't use the Run command) you can send it a CTRL-C or CTRL-D signal just by pressing those keys. If you started ShowVIC using the Run command, or you are in another Shell window, use the Status command to find ShowVIC's process number and then use the Break command to send it a signal.

If you started ShowVIC from the Workbench, you will have to find its process number some other way or use a task monitor program (e.g. TaskX) to send it a signal.

1.22   Converting Pictures

Porting pictures from the C64 to the Amiga can be done by using a C64 emulator (I like A64 best) or a transfer program (for example TransNib).

Picture files must retain their load address bytes (the first two bytes of the file) and should be exactly the right length otherwise ShowVIC will reject them (the correct lengths, and other information, are given in "Formats.doc"). This won't usually be a problem, especially if you rip pictures with Action Replay or something similar. (BTW: Certain cartridges - e.g. Action Replay VI - save the screen colour in Image System files at a different offset than the one the program itself uses - I'm not sure whether this is just my copy of the Image System, or whether the cartridges are wrong).

Once you've ported a load of pictures, the best thing to do is to crunch them all with PowerPacker, which ShowVIC directly supports.

To make pictures look more like they would on a C64, make your monitor's screen a bit narrower (if it'll let you), and stand back a bit. For authentic results, view ShowVIC pictures on a crap television or through a sheet of slightly frosted glass for that fuzzy "composite video" look. For maximum nostalgia-factor, use ShowVIC in conjunction with PlaySID for the ultimate C64 experience!

1.23 TransNib

The TransNib system is a generic parallel batch file transfer protocol, designed to make linking two machines and transferring files between them as easy as possible. The system was designed so that even the simplest of parallel interfaces could be linked. Basically, any two machines supporting the TransNib protocol can be linked together. So far, front-ends exist for the Amiga (TransNibAm) and the Commodore 64 (TransNib64). I used a TransNib link between an Amiga and a C64 to transfer most of the pictures that appear in this archive.

The TransNib package has not been released to the public yet, but it is very near completion and I plan to release it soon. For more information on this, feel free to email me (see the credits page).

1.24 Closing Words

Things to anticipate in future versions:

- An AppIcon to drop picture files onto,

- An ARexx port (to make slideshows, do batch conversion,

synchronise with PlaySID etc.)

- Support for more formats (Paint Magic, Page Fox (extended size),

Mouse and Cheese etc. Some of these formats support large pages

sizes, which ShowVIC will support by using a virtual screen.)

- An option to convert Vidcom pictures as hires instead of

multicolour,

- Sprite slideshow (just kidding).

1.25 acknowledgments

My thanks go out to the following people (in no particular order):

PT and GD for supplying me with C64 games to rip pictures

from.

Pasi 'Albert' Ojala for information on the FLI format (and for his

interesting articles in C= Hacking).

Georg Schwarz for sending me loads of nice Koala pictures.

Dave for his ideas and for sending me loads of pictures and stuff

so I could implement Hi-Eddi and AmicaPaint support.

All the great comp.sys.cbm people who expressed interest in ShowVIC (hope you like it now that it's finally released!).

Ron and Håken for PlaySID V2.1 (should be a Commodity

though :-)

All the other people who are keeping the C64 alive after all this time.

Nico François for the PowerPacker and ReqTools libraries, which

make life much more pleasant.

Jan van den Baard for GadToolsBox, which was used to design the

Intuition bits for ShowVIC.

Matt Dillon for producing an astonishing array of unique and

professional software (if you program the C64 and have an Amiga, check out DAsm, his brilliant 6502 cross-assembler).

CygnusSoft for CygnusEd, the fastest, most stable and BEST text

editor for the Amiga (and, from what I've seen, for any computer!). And it still works without problems on my A1200!

Commodore for brilliant computers which the competition just can't

match.

1.26   history

V3.06

Implemented the Hi-Eddi format and added the ConvertAmica program to provide indirect Amica-Paint support.

V3.05

Prefs are now saved in IFF PREF format. Included utility to convert old prefs files (mainly for people who had customised their palettes). Discontinuted main doc file, guide file only from now on.

V3.02

Added Workbench option to settings menu. Consequently, prefs file is a bit larger (but older prefs files are still compatible). Twiddled the code a bit. Started writing the docs in AmigaGuide format.

V3.01

Added on-line menu help. Made title bar shown by default. Other minor changes. ByteRun1 compression added to IFF save routine.

V3.00

Almost totally re-written. Added menus, palette requester, IFF save and support for Doodle and FLI formats. Picture decoding is slightly faster too.

V2.23

Tweaked a couple of things.

V2.22

Dependance on PowerPacker library removed. Added Kickstart version check.

V2.21

Minor addition made to Workbench side of things.

V2.20

File requester mode added for both Shell and Workbench invokation. Minor cosmetic surgery performed on code.

V2.15

Another minor re-write to incorporate ReqTools. Error reporting from Workbench improved greatly. Rearranged a few things.

V2.10

Minor re-write to incorporate Workbench support. Multicolour conversion routines optimised slightly.

V2.01

Added multiple files option.

V2.00

Re-written for Kickstart 2.

V1.1

Added support for hires bitmaps, pointer glitch corrected.

V1.0

First release.