

Basic Black: Screen Saver Au Natural

There is something to be said for simplicity. Lack of complexity often leads to fewer problems. Basic Black is such a simple, straightforward program. Many screen savers do amazing things - I had one which used to show lots of animated sequences and, every third or fourth time it was activated, would make my system crash. Wow, neat huh? Basic Black is the screen saver for those of us who do not want to worry about incompatibility problems. When your computer senses no keystrokes or mouse movements for a period of time you can set, Basic Black, as the name implies, turns your screen black. If you wish, it will also display a clock that tells the time as it moves around the screen. It is tiny, a 28K application that sits in your Control Panel folder. I have been using it now for a couple of weeks and have encountered no problems. I don't really expect any problems from it either; screen savers are notorious for screwing up system files, from what I understand, because of their intensive use of graphics. Since Basic Black makes so little use of these, it should encounter few if any problems.

For it's small size, lack of problems, and effectiveness, I recommend Basic Black. It will not make you say Ohhhh-Ahhh, but it will help save your screen from burnout and not mess your system up in the process.

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A Look at War. . .

and the Future

Bosnia, Face of War is an unorthodox freeware application that is noteworthy of mention for three reasons: it addresses the terrible crisis in Bosnia, is an example of HyperCard 2.2's standalone capabilities, and it herald's a new form of freeware that will probably be making a larger and larger impact on the Net in the near future.

Bosnia, Face of War presents a piece of the tragedy of modern Bosnia on a stand alone HyperCard stack. As you flip through the stack, Bosnia presents examples and personal testimonies of some of the horrific events happening in Bosnia (please note, some of the text is very graphic). It is interesting, informative, disturbing, and easily read. It would be something to go on about the content of Bosnia, but I think that it would be best for individual readers who are interested to read it themselves. Suffice it to say that reading it is an experience.

As a HyperCard stack, Bosnia is an interesting example of the new stand alone capabilities of Hyper-card 2.2. The graphic interface works well and includes an opening piece of music which plays nicely.

At no point during its operation does Bosnia invoke a HyperCard player or home stack and, as a result, runs quite smoothly. It takes up 1.2 megabytes which might be a little on the high side. I would imagine that the graphic interface is mostly responsible for pushing up the size of the application, but the interface worked well, so I'm not going to complain.

One of the more interesting aspects of Bosnia, however, has nothing to do with Bosnia or HyperCard. Bosnia, the Face of War, is a telling example of political expression on the Net. Reading it brought to mind the many possibilities the Net presents for political expression. Imagine, for example, QuickTime movies being emailed via the Net to provide actual footage of a political crisis, or PICT's, GIF's, and JPEG's being stored to chronicle an atrocity.

Since the Net recognizes no political boundaries, it becomes an almost ideal tool for supplying the world with images, movies, and text from the heart of a place like Bosnia, providing instant, direct information without censorship and without having to smuggle the information out of a country. This is an area of the Net which is surprisingly underdeveloped and, without a doubt, will gradually grow with time. Bosnia is an example of this: a digital, selfless, political expression, circulating around the Net with no owner nor creator (Bosnia is neither copyrighted nor does it list an author, it simply provides an email address for further information). It is a very interesting example of Net use.

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