

WB-AnimAL

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Chapter 1

WB-AnimAL

1.1 Press the buttons Max.

WB-AnimAL (© 1998 Gadge Software)

(WorkBench Animated Amiga Logo)

(Version 1.10 - Jan 98)

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1.2 What's it all about Alfie?

The purpose of this program is to display an animated logo on your workbench screen in a system friendly manner.

Uses standard anim brushes saved from paint programs.

Up to 50 frames per second on PAL machines.

Can remap anim brushes to workbench palette and depth internally or make use of pre-remapped anims from the ReMapper program (included in archive).

Can use anim brushes from 2 to 256 colours (256 on AGA).

Displays anim in borderless 'solid' window or 'invisible' window.

User defined screen position and frame speed.

Low CPU usage (and the task priority can be set so it only uses spare CPU time).

Easily configured from its tool types.

Example anim brushes included in 1x1 and 2x1 resolutions and a variety of depths from 16 to 256 colours (see Extras drawer).

1.3 I knew there was something i needed.

Workbench 2.0 or better. (3.0 or 3.1 preferred)
(+AGA is even better!)

An Amiga (of course).

A paint program of some description that can save out standard anim-brushes (if you want to create your own logo's that is).

1.4 Hmm...it all seems too easy.

Copy the main program 'WB-AnimAL' into your WBStartup drawer. (if you use a startup utility e.g. 'WBStartup+', then copy it into your 'WBStartup-(enabled)' drawer instead).

Copy the 'WBanim' drawer to the same place.

That's it! (easy peasy).

This guide and the 'Extras' drawer can be copied anywhere else you choose (it contains some example anim brushes for you to try out).

WB-AnimAL doesn't have to be placed in the 'WBStartup' drawer and can be started manually or by other 'launcher' utilities such as ToolsDaemon etc. (just ensure that the 'WBanim' drawer is in the same location as WB-AnimAL).

1.5 TOOLS?.....Hey that's SLOOT backwards.

The program settings can be changed by editing its tool types. (Left click once on its icon and select 'information' from the 'Icons' menu on your workbench screen).

And here's what they do:

XPOS	How far across the screen the animation will be positioned. Any value accepted, if the value is outside the screen area it will be rounded up or down to fit inside the screen. If XPOS is disabled (inside brackets like this) the
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default setting (centered on screen) will be used.

- YPOS Same as XPOS but how far down instead.
- DELAY The delay between animation frames in fiftieths of a second. A delay of 50 would be one second between frames. Lowest value for delay is 1 (that's 50 frames per second). If DELAY is disabled the default setting is 2.
- REMAPTOWB If this is enabled, the anim will be re-mapped to your workbench depth and palette as the program starts. This can take a while if you use a large anim with lots of frames and colours, but help is at hand, see the 'ReMapper' and 'Hints & Tips' sections for info.
- MODE This can have one of two values, MODE=0 or MODE=1. MODE=0 makes the program open in a BACKDROP window. This type of window stays at the back of the display and other windows can't be pushed behind it. MODE=1 opens a 'normal' type of window. This type will allow other windows to be pushed behind it. If MODE is disabled the default setting is 1. (see Hints & Tips for the pros and cons of each setting)
- COLOUR This allows you to choose which of your workbench colours will be use to replace colour 0 (zero) in your anim brush. The first colour in your workbench palette is colour 0. The maximum value is the amount of colours available in the current screenmode, so, on a 32 colour workbench the max value you can set is 31 (0 to 31 = 32 colours). But, even better, if you set COLOUR=-1 (minus one), any part of the anim brush which is clear (colour 0) will be replaced by whatever picture or pattern is on the screen where the program window opens (invisible window, he he). If COLOUR is disabled the default setting is 1 (black). (see Hints & Tips for more info)
- TASKPRIORITY This sets the task priority given to the program (hmmm). Valid settings are from -127 (very low priority) to 127 (highest priority) Tasks with higher priorities are executed before tasks with lower priorities by the system. Most system tasks have priorities of zero or above, so if you want the program to only use spare CPU time you would set TASKPRIORITY below all other tasks. If TASKPRIORITY is disabled the default setting is -1. (see Hints & Tips)
- STARTPRI This sets the order in which programs are launched in the WBStartup drawer. Programs with lower STARTPRI
-

values are launched after programs with Higher ones.
If STARTPRI is disabled the default setting is 0.

DONOTWAIT Should always be enabled.

1.6 I'll have a No26 and a No 43.

To access the menus or their keyboard shortcuts you should LEFT CLICK on the animation and then use the RIGHT mouse button or key combinations as usual to select menu items.

FREEZE Halts the program until you select FREEZE again.
(for anyone who requires all the available CPU time for such tasks as rendering images etc. The program waits in the background until re-activated again).
Can also be invoked with 'Right-Amiga F' key combination.

RESET Special item which may be needed if the program is running with MODE=0 (see Hints & Tips for info).
Can also be invoked with 'Right-Amiga R' key combination.

QUIT Ends the program.
Can also be invoked with 'Right-Amiga Q' key combination.

1.7 To remap or not to remap? That is the question.

The 'WBanim' drawer contains an extra program 'ReMapper' which can be used to remap your chosen anim brush to your workbench depth and palette ready for use by the main program. This speeds up the loading and displaying of your anim because the main program doesn't have to spend time remapping the anim brush internally.

The ReMapper does not alter the anim brush in any way, it saves two new files into the 'WBanim' drawer which contain the remapped data and palette information, these are 'def.remapped' and 'def.palette'.

When WB-AnimAL starts up it looks first for these remapped files in the 'WBanim' drawer, if they don't exist it looks next for your 'def.animbrush' file and uses that instead.

If you remap an anim brush for WB-AnimAL to use you should also disable the REMAPTOWB tool type (put it inside brackets like this) or the remapped file will be remapped again (which is a waste of time really).

The ReMapper program should always be left in the 'WBanim' drawer.

1.8 Hints & Tips? Big Tips? OOH! Suits you sir!

Set the XPOS and YPOS tool types so that the anim window opens up somewhere where there are no other windows open or icons displayed. Especially if the COLOUR setting is -1.

If COLOUR=-1 the part of the workbench screen where the anim window opens is copied into the anim to achieve the 'invisible window' look.

If COLOUR=0 or higher, the window will have a 'solid window' look, filled with the workbench palette colour specified in COLOUR.

If REMAPTOWB is enabled the def.animbrush or def.remapped files in WBanim will always be remapped internally by WB-AnimAL. If disabled, the def.animbrush or def.remapped files won't be remapped by WB-AnimAL except if they contain more colours than the screenmode is set to (e.g. 64 colour anim brush on a 32 colour screen), in this case the tool type setting is ignored and the anim is remapped.

If MODE=0 (backdrop window) the anim window will always be behind other windows on screen, this also includes the workbench window. If your workbench window is set to 'Backdrop' (un-ticked) in the 'Workbench' menu (i.e. it has borders, gadgets etc) you should set MODE=1. If your workbench window is set to 'Backdrop' (ticked) in the 'Workbench' menu (i.e. no borders, no gadgets etc) the anim window will be displayed in front of it but behind all other windows, this is a more pleasing effect but it can have one problem. If you do a 'ResetWB' from the 'Tools' menu of workbench the anim window will be displayed behind the workbench window and will have seemed to vanish. This is where the 'RESET' menu option of WB-AnimAL comes in.

What you have to do is:

- 1> Select 'Backdrop' from the 'Workbench' menu on workbench so that the workbench window has borders and gadgets etc.(unticked).
- 2> Resize the workbench window away from where the anim should be displayed (and there it is - found it).
- 3> Left click on the anim to get access to its menu items.
- 4> Select menu item 'Reset' and the anim closes down for five seconds.
- 5> Select 'Backdrop' from the 'Workbench' menu on workbench so that the workbench window has no borders or gadgets etc. again (ticked).
- 6> Wait for the anim to re-appear again.

If MODE=1 (normal window) the anim window will not be displayed behind a borderless (ticked) workbench window, even after a ResetWB, but other windows are able to be pushed behind it.

The TASKPRIORITY setting effects the way the system runs all tasks on workbench. Tasks with higher priority get preference to tasks with lower priority, for example: If WB-AnimAL is started with priority -1 and this guide is being viewed through 'amigaguide' or 'multiview' with a higher priority, the animation may pause when you scroll the text up and down with the slider gadget. If WB-AnimAL is started with a high priority (127 perhaps) then the text scrolling is made to give way to the animation and it doesn't pause as much. WB-AnimAL uses very little CPU time anyway so experiment with it to see what suits you. I personally use WB-AnimAL with a TASKPRIORITY of -1 and if i need to do any CPU intensive tasks (like rendering etc.) i use the FREEZE menu option of WB-AnimAL.

Changing the anim brush.

- 1> Open up the 'WBanim' drawer and remove the file 'def.animbrush' (put it somewhere safe in case you want to use it again).
- 2> Copy a new anim brush into 'WBanim' and rename it 'def.animbrush'.
- 3> Run the ReMapper program in the 'WBanim' drawer (unless it already is mapped to your workbench palette colours).
- 4> That's it. Now run WB-AnimAL to view it.

Note: WB-AnimAL can not be used to display full size anims (crash time). You should only use anims saved as anim brushes from paint programs such as PPaint or DPaint etc.

Also: The anim brush can not have more than 200 frames, but this should not be a problem (the longest one i've used had 36). The anim brush can have as many colours as your Amiga can cope with (up to 256 on AGA machines).

Notes about the ReMapper. This program does not claim to be the best remapping tool ever in the history of the world (it doesn't use dithering for instance) but it is mostly adequate for the job at hand. Better results can be achieved by using a dedicated art package such as PPaint or similar which can be loaded with your workbench palette and used to remap an anim brush using dithering to get closer to the original colours of the anim brush. The more colours your workbench has the better the results will be also.

If you design your own anim brushes you may want to use your own workbench palette in the paint program so the images don't have to be remapped and will always look as good as nature (or you) intended.

When designing your own anim brushes it's important to note that any part of the brush that is in colour 0 will be treated as transparent by WB-AnimAL and the ReMapper, so it's best to keep colour 0 as the background colour in your paint program.

Size is important. The bigger your anim is, the more chip mem will be used.

Colours are important too. You may find from time to time that when you start a program that uses a MUI gui, Multiview to display a picture or any other program that can change the workbench palette, the colours in your animation may also be changed causing it to look odd (or better in some cases). One solution to this is to never use such programs, but a better one is to get hold of FULLPALETTE (Format-CD, CU-CD, Aminet, P.D. etc) by Massimo Tantignone (V40.18). This utility lets you define and lock all the colours on your workbench so they can't be changed.

In general - Things to remember.

- 1> Smaller anim brushes (width & height) use less CPU time.
 - 2> Larger DELAY settings use less CPU time.
 - 3> Shorter anim brushes (# of frames) use less chip mem.
 - 4> Less workbench colours use less chip mem and CPU time.
 - 5> ReMapped anims load quicker than ones that have to be remapped internally.
 - 6> Check that the REMAPTOWB tool type is set correctly for the anim you are using. If it's not remapped to your workbench palette then either use the ReMapper program or enable the REMAPTOWB tool type.
-

1.9 Extra! Extra!....Read all about it!

The 'Extras' drawer contains some example anim brushes for you to try out. These brushes have been saved out in various depths, either 16 or 32 colours and some in 256 colours. They are in two drawers, '(1x1)AnimBrushes' and '(2x1)AnimBrushes' so you can choose a brush that matches your screen resolution (e.g. on a 640x512 screen you can use the 1x1 brushes, on a 640x256 screen you can use the 2x1 brushes).

The anim brushes are standard anim brushes that can be loaded into (or saved from) most paint programs (e.g. DPaint, PPaint).

The 'def.remapped' files created by the ReMapper are NOT standard anim brush files.

Each anim brush is named as per it's contents (image and colours) e.g 'def.animbrush(BALL256)' or 'def.animbrush(BALL16)' etc.

When you copy one of these anims into the 'WBanim' drawer, DON'T FORGET TO RENAME IT AS 'def.animbrush' (or it won't be found)!

I have also included the original 24bit iff frames of these anim brushes (just in case anybody wants them really). These are in the 'Extras' drawer in the archive '24bit.lha'.

1.10 Bugs?....darn pesky little critters.....

None known at this time.

If you do come across one of these varmints i would be grateful if you would send me an E-mail with details of the problem. You should also state:

Amiga model being used.
Kickstart and Workbench revisions.
Program version (main screen of this guide).
Chip ram, Fast ram, Accelerator etc.

Even if it works perfectly on your system i would still like to hear about your setup so i can include the info in a future version as a help to other users.

Please send E-mail to: simonh@borghome.demon.co.uk

P.S. I would also like to hear from anyone who creates a good set of cool looking anim brushes and who would like to see them included and credited in future releases of WB-AnimAL.

Send your anim brushes on disk by post to:

Simon Hitchen

33 Bodmin Road
Middleton
Leeds
LS10 4PL
(England)

You could also include a read.me file about yourself and your contribution to be included in future releases of WB-AnimAL.
(You never know, other people may be on the lookout for someone who can do graphics work, and it does no harm to get your work distributed).

1.11 'The future is what you make it' - Doc Brown

Include more anim brushes (especially any nice ones sent in).

Maybe create an editor for the tool types (if requested).

Fix any bugs (if any are reported).

Probably add a tool type to allow the user to specify where the program should locate the anims (so the WBanim drawer doesn't have to be in the same location as the main program).

Implement any suggestions sent in by users that i havn't thought of (so long as they don't make the program grow too large that is).

1.12 Stuff Stuff Stuff and more Stuff

Just a little mention of some other stuff wot i did.....

WB-Tidy: A small workbench utility that allows you to arrange your workbench windows in a variety of neat ways with a nice GUI.

TCAA.aga: (stands for T.V.Chubbies Armchair Assassin AGA) Choose your weapon (shotgun, minigun or photon torpedoes) and kill as many T.V.Chubbies (teletubbies) as your mouse hand can cope with. I don't condone mindless violence as a rule but in this case and in my opinion THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION!

(Available on AFCD #23 - requires AGA Amiga)

UFO Enemy Unclothed: Strategy game based entirely on that other UFO Enemy un-thingy type game where you had to kill those enemy alien chaps....BUT WITH PANTS! (and some not so subtle humour thrown in). (free demo version in circulation but the full game costs a fiver guv.)

(Demo on CUCD #18 and AFCD #21 and P.D. houses)

Mortal Kumquat: Fruit based beat em up (no more to say really except it was

once on the cover disk of Amiga Action before the mag folded). (available from P.D. houses).

Super Skiddy Things 3: Two player 'race-some-skiddy-things-on-ice' type game. (available from P.D. houses).

1.13 This is the last page.....HOORAH!

WB-AnimAL V1.10 is E-Mailware.

This means that the program is free to the user but if you have access to e-mail facilities you are asked to send me an e-mail with your thoughts on the program and if it runs o.k. (or not) on your system configuration and what your configuration is. You could also include any ideas you have on any new features you would like to see in future versions.

Send E-Mail to: simonh@borghome.demon.co.uk

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