Altering the 3D extrude, and text color

Pressing the 'E' button (or CTRL+E on the keyboard) displays the Extrude dialog box that allows you to alter the text color, the extrude 3D depth, and whether the text is shown glossy or matt.

Text object color

Normally the text is white, and colored by the three lights shining upon it. However you can change the color of the object by clicking on the 'Color' patch in this Extrude dialog box. This displays the Color Picker. If you select anything but a very light or pale color you'll find the light colors have relatively little effect.

Selecting Matt or Shiny alters the reflectivity of the surface. However the difference won't always be obvious unless the lights are at the necessary angle to reflect off the surface. This is usually obtained by arranging the lights to be behind the text (keep dragging the light right or left so it goes behind) so it can reflect off the surface of the text.

You have the choice of omitting the front or back face of the text. This can create some interesting effects.

See also
Altering the lights
Altering the background
Altering the Bevel
Altering the text

Altering the Bevel

You can adjust the bevel - that is the type of corner that is applied to the edge of the text - by typing CTRL+B or pressing the 'B' button to display the bevel dialog box.

Normally the text is displayed with no bevels, but you can select various bevel types from the list, and the size of the bevel by typing in the bevel depth. Note that the bevel size is relative to the extrude depth, so that the greater the 3D depth of the text, the more obvious the bevel is. Also note that the bevels go along the side of the text, not the face of the text. So, for example, selecting the 'Curved' bevel produces a budge effect to the extruded part.

Notes

Beveled text is slower to display than text with no bevel.

The Miter and Round options affect the corners of the lettering. Usually it's displayed with a sharp mitered corners, but you can round this off by selecting the Round options. This is usually only obvious for fonts that have sharp corners or serifs.

See also
Altering the text
Altering the 3D extrude
Altering the lights

Altering the background

Altering the background color or texture

By right-clicking on the background you can select either the background color, in which case it will display the Color Picker or you can choose to import a bitmap texture background.

Bitmap texture backgrounds are useful where you want a 3D text heading to appear on a web page that has a texture background. By importing the same bitmap as the web page background you can ensure that any 3D heading 'fits in' with the whole page background. You can import any JPEG or GIF file as a background and Xara3D will repeat this (tile) in exactly the same way as a Web browser.

See also
[Altering the text](#)
[Altering the 3D extrude](#)
[Altering the lights](#)

[Altering the Bevel](#)

Altering the lights

Xara3D has three lights shining on the text object, which can be any position and color you desire.

To view the lights:

1. Press the 'light bulb' button. (You can also press TAB.)

This shows the three lights, represented by colored arrows that are initially red, green and blue. You can alter the color of any light by double clicking the appropriate light arrow. To learn how to select colors see The Color Picker

To reposition a light:

1. Simply drag on it. This rotates the light around the text object.

To make the light go behind the text, just keep dragging right or left and it rotates behind the object.

Notes:

An alternative way to control the light colors is right-click on the background. This brings up a pop-up menu that allows you to control all three lights as well as the background color or bitmap texture.

See also
Altering the text
Altering the 3D extrude
Altering the Bevel

Altering the background

Altering the text

Press the T button (or CTRL+T on the keyboard) to display the Text options dialog box.

Use the dialog box to alter the text and the font.

This dialog box also shows you a preview of the font and wording you've selected. Any installed TrueType font is available in the font list. With Xara3D you may find that some of the more unusual block and 'curvy' fonts work particularly well.

See also
[Altering the 3D extrude, and text color](#)
[Altering the Bevel](#)

[Altering the lights](#)

Changing the shortcut

After Xara3D is installed, a shortcut to the program is placed in the top level of the Programs menu.

To move the shortcut to a submenu:

1. Right click on the Start menu on the Taskbar and select Open.
2. Double-click on Programs. This displays the contents of the top level menu with Xara3D shown at the bottom.
3. To move Xara3D to another folder simply drag and drop it over the desired folder.

To create a shortcut on the Windows backdrop:

Drag the icon to the Windows background. This gives you easy access to the program right from the desktop.

Creating a movie or Animated GIF

It's incredibly easy to create rotating text animations and movies in Xara3D. You can preview a rotating animation by pressing the rotate button. The text always rotates horizontally around its center. You can control how many steps it takes using the animation dialog box available from the A button.

Rather than always doing a complete 360 degree revolution, where you would see the back side of the text which is difficult to read, Xara3D includes an option to show only the front face of the text. This restricts the rotation to 180 degrees so that, although it appears to perform a continuous rotation, it actually skips 180 degrees and the text is always readable.   This has another significant advantage of reducing the file size of the animation, particularly important for Animated GIFs.

Steps to producing a movie or animation:

1. Resize the Xara3D window to the required image size. Remember that Animated GIFs really have to be very small to have an acceptable download time.

2. Select the Animation dialog box (the A button) and choose the number of frames per revolution etc. Again for Animated GIFs the fewer the better.

3. Select Export on the File menu, and select AVI or Animated GIF file type, and give the file a name and press Save. This displays the Export quality dialog box where you can select the quality number and number of colors etc., see Export options for AVI movies and Export options for Animated GIFs

When previewing an animation, the program displays a much lower quality to be as fast as possible - however when exporting an Animated GIF or AVI movie Xara3D always renders all frames at the maximum quality. To preview an Animated GIF simply drop the file onto your web browser window.

Xara3D can produce, in minutes, top quality Animated GIFs and movies that would take hours using traditional 3D design programs.

See also
Previewing AVI movies

Tips for reducing the size of Animated GIFs

Direct3D

Xara3D doesn't use Direct3D as the Xara3D engine is more advanced in many ways than the Microsoft Direct3D software solution (for example, the anti-aliasing). Obviously having a hardware accelerator would be faster; however these are also usually inferior quality (again no anti-aliasing). Future versions of Xara3D may offer a Direct3D option as and when hardware accelerators are able to render the same quality as Xara3D.

Export options for AVI movies

Experimentation has shown that exporting AVIs as 24-bit produces the smallest file size. Perhaps surprisingly, exporting as 256 color (8-bit) produces larger files but usually higher quality. This is because it uses a different compression system.

Note. It's very important to make sure the compression option is switched on. Even at 100% quality, compression makes the file up to 10 times smaller.

See also
Creating a movie or Animated GIF

Previewing AVI movies

Export options for Animated GIFs

To learn more about Exporting animated GIFs see <u>Creating a movie or Animated GIF</u>

Because Animated GIFs can be quite large, you may find that a 4-bit, optimized palette per frame, produces the best results for the smallest file size. However experimentation is recommended.

Dithering always makes GIFs look better, but at the same time makes them larger. When outputting at 256 colors you may find that there is no need to turn dithering on.

Note:

There is an issue with 'optimized palette per frame' with Macintosh web browsers. Unfortunately they all seem to have a serious bug that prevents per frame optimization working. If you know your audience consists of Mac viewers then we advise you **not** to use per frame palette optimization.

See also

[Tips for reducing the size of Animated GIF files](#)

Export options for GIF or BMP

GIF export is the most common and probably the best format for use on the Web. GIF images can have no more than 256 colors, which you might think is a limitation. However, using Xara3D's advanced dithering and palette optimization features, you can get near perfect quality images using only 256 colors. Indeed you'll be surprised at how good GIFs with just 16 colors can be.

For GIF (and BMP) export format you have control over not only the number of colors but also whether the image is dithered and has an optimized palette. These are techniques to improve the image quality while using a reduced number of colors. For example using only 16 color GIF nearly always produces the smallest file size, but with no dithering the shading can be poor. By using an optimized palette and diffusion dithering you can substantially increase the quality of the result.

There are no hard and fast rules as to which combination of export options is best - it depends on the image and your requirements. Therefore we recommend exporting in a number of different formats to see which is the best and has the smallest file size. Typical options to try include 16 color with diffusion dithering, or 256 color with no dithering.

For examples of the different quality settings see the web page <u>GIF quality settings</u>

When exporting as a GIF you have the option of making it an interlaced GIF (progressive rendering as it's downloaded) and whether the image is transparent.   For more details on the transparent options see the web page <u>GIF transparency</u>

The crop option ensures that only the area of the text is exported in the bitmap, so reducing the file to be as small as possible.

Additional quality control:

The shareware program, Xara Webster, provides even more advanced color reduction facilities and can be used to further reduce the size of files by selecting intermediate numbers of colors. To do this, export the image as a True color 24-bit BMP image and use Xara Webster to color reduce the file to a specific number of colors.

<u>More details on Xara Webster</u>

Export options for JPG

JPEG bitmaps are always 24-bit, true color, but the JPEG compression system means that the quality is often not as good as a GIF. The Quality setting determines how small the resultant file is - the higher the quality, the larger the file. Quality settings less than 80% usually produce inferior images to those available from using palette optimized GIFs.

The crop option ensures that only the area of the text is exported in the bitmap, so reducing the file to be as small as possible.

Help for Xara3D

Welcome to Xara3D, a 'slimware' program that produces great, super high quality, three-dimensional text headings, and animated GIFs in seconds.

The online Help provided here is deliberately simple and lacking illustrations in order to keep the download size small. A more descriptive, illustrated version of the documentation is available online at http://www.xara.com/xara3D/help/

Version 1.1 Oct. 1997

All trademarks acknowledged

Hidden or advanced options

Wire-frame mode:

You can turn on a wire-frame mode that can speed up the moving and positioning. To do this press CTRL+W Press it again to turn wire-frame off.

Perspective:

You can adjust the Z distance of the object by pressing the + and - keys on the numeric keypad. Note that at maximum zoom you get a rather unrealistic perspective, as if the image were very close to the eye, causing a fish-eye lens effect. This exaggerates the perspective. The default perspective is about right for the typical distance these images will be viewed on screen.

Installing the fonts

After you have run the installer, three free fonts are included in a Font folder. You can preview the fonts simply by double clicking on them in this folder. To use these fonts in Xara3D or other Windows programs, you need to install them using the Fonts Control Panel.

To install the fonts:

1. Open the Control Panel by double-clicking on Control Panel in My Computer.

2. Open the Fonts Control Panel by double clicking on its name.   This shows all the TrueType fonts installed on your system.

3. Drag the fonts over the Fonts Control Panel window.

Notes:
▶ In step (1) you can also click Start on the Taskbar then choose Settings, Control Panel.
▶ In step (3) you can also select the menu   Install New Font on the File menu of the Font Control Panel, and then locate the fonts on your hard disc where Xara3D was installed.

The three free fonts are called:
▶ Balthazar - an unusual old fashioned 'pen' font
▶ Dayton - a modern blocky font
▶ GeoType - a wonderful collection of symbols and shapes. Kindly provided by Gary David Bouton.

The first two fonts are from the large Xara collection of fonts available for individual download at http://www.xara.com/resources/fonts/

Introduction

Xara3D is a 'slimware' program as opposed to the increasingly complex 'bloatware' that is released from the major software developers nowadays. This does not mean that Xara3D is low quality or produces inferior results compared to more complex 3D programs; on the contrary, it produces better output, and faster than just about anything else.

'Bloatware', while often very capable, includes so many features that most people never get to use more than 10% of the functionality. It's often huge, impractical to download over the Internet, requires huge amounts of disc space, and is nearly always so complex that to use its advanced features takes a considerable learning effort.

Xara3D is designed to be a program that does one thing, and does it supremely well, that is dead simple to use, and costs very little. It's designed to be small enough to be easily downloaded from the Internet.

Xara3D produces high quality three-dimensional text images and nothing else. These images would typically be used on Web pages although they can be used anywhere. Xara3D can create animated rotating 3D images with absolute ease (AVI movie or GIF). You have control over the text, the font, the depth of the 3D extrude, the type of the bevel on the text and the lighting. You can position and rotate the text just by dragging, and it updates the image in real-time, interactively. You resize the image just by resizing the window. It couldn't be easier.

See also
Installing the free fonts

Position, rotation and sizing

To position or rotate the the 3D text object :

1. Drag on the window. The operation of this has been designed to be as intuitive as possible.

Alternatively you can use the vertical and horizontal scroll bars to rotate the object vertically or horizontally.

To control the size of the image:

1. Resize the Xara3D window by dragging the bottom right corner, as you would normal windows. Everything in Xara3D is WYSIWYG - so the size you see in the window will be the size of the resultant image on your Web page.

Xara3D uses one of the most advanced 3D rendering engines around. For instance, it automatically anti-aliases the image to produce the highest quality jaggy-free image. However as the anti-aliasing process can take a second or two, when you are 'interacting' with Xara3D (that is when you are dragging the text or altering other aspects in real time, such as the lighting) the program produces a lower-quality non anti-aliased display. When you stop moving or altering things, the program automatically redisplays the top quality version.

Previewing AVI movies

To preview a movie:

1. Double-click on the movie file icon.

However this uses the standard Windows95 AVI player which plays the movie once and then closes the window. If you want to keep the movie on screen, right-click on the AVI file icon and select Open. When the movie player has opened, you can select the 'Auto-repeat' option that allows the AVI movie to cycle continuously.

Microsoft have recently made available a newer and more advanced movie playing solution, called ActiveMovie. This is available for free download on the Web. See http://www.microsoft.com/ie/download/

You will need to select the OS type (Windows 95 and NT4) and then proceed to select ActiveMovie 1.0 for Windows 95 and NT4.

Previewing GIF and JPEG files

The easiest way to see how your saved GIF or JPEG files will appear on the web is to preview using your web browser.

To preview GIF and JPEG files:

1. Drag the file from the folder in which you saved the file and drop it over your web browser window. This works for both Netscape and Microsoft Internet Explorer. The same applies to animated GIFs.

Note that Netscape versions prior to Navigator 4 do not get the timing right for animated GIFs - they always ran about half the speed they should. Navigator version 4 and Internet Explorer display animation with the correct inter-frame timing.

See also

Previewing AVI movies

Unlocking Xara3D

Purchasing over the Web uses two keys:
- a nine letter **Key code**
- a seven letter **Unlock code**

The Key code changes if you change or reformat your hard drive or change to a new computer. You will need a new Unlock code.

If you have already purchased Xara3D, you will not be charged for getting a new Unlock code. However, you will need your XaraClub user name and password. Forgotten your password? The XaraClub FAQ pages (http://www.club.xara.com/clubxarafaq.asp) tells you how to get the password hint you typed in when you joined XaraClub.

To unlock Xara3D:

1. If necessary, reinstall Xara3D.

2. Run Xara3D and click Purchase.

3. The Title Bar of the dialog box shows you the nine letter **Key code**. Make a note of this code.

4. Click Purchase Online or type in the URL https://secure.commerce.xara.com/x3d/unlockmain.asp

5. Follow the instructions for generating a new unlock code.

6. Type that seven letter **Unlock code** into the Purchase dialog box in Xara3D. Note: use upper case letters - type 'ABCDEFG' not 'abcdefg'.

Remember: this Unlock code applies only to your current set-up. Changing the hard disc or computer means you need a new Unlock code.

Related Topic:

Purchasing Xara3D

Purchasing Xara3D

This page applies if you are running the time-limited trial version of Xara3D.

This version of the software displays a background message, which you cannot change. (With the full version you can use any color or bitmap as a background.)

When you start up Xara3D a dialog box reminds you that you are running the trial version - click Purchase on that dialog box. This lets you purchase Xara3D using a fully secure transaction process.

If you have already purchased Xara3D but get an 'Invalid Key Code' message or need a new Unlock Code:

Look at the Unlock Codes page for more details.

Saving an image

When you've positioned and sized the image as required you will need to export the image in one of the appropriate bitmap formats. Xara3D can export the image as one of three different bitmap types: BMP, GIF or JPEG image, and two animating types - AVI movie and Animated GIF.

To save an image:

1. Select Export on the File menu.

2. Select the appropriate type from the drop down 'Save as type' list on the export dialog box

3. Enter the required name.

4. Press OK. This displays the export options dialog box which provides all the control over the quality of image.

Depending on which bitmap export type you've chosen you'll get a number of different export options as follows
Export options for GIF or BMP
Export options for Animated GIF
Export options for JPG
Export options for AVI movies

Hint

While there are no hard and fast rules as to which file type, JPEG or GIF, is best for the web. It's our advice to try the GIF format first as this can produce higher quality images than JPEG.

See also

Previewing GIF and JPEG files

Technical support

If you have any problems with Xara3D you can contact our tech support by emailing technical@xara.com or alternatively you can send feedback directly from our web site http://www.xara.com/feedback/index.html

The Color Picker

The Color Picker lets you select any hue and any shade of color.

To adjust the shade:

1. Click or drag on the central area of the Color Picker. You'll see the exact color in the top right corner of the dialog box.

To alter the hue:

1. Click or drag on the rainbow strip along the lower part of the dialog box.

The basics

To create a 3D heading you just enter the text and the font for the heading (use the T button), then adjust the bevel and extrude if you wish (using the B and E buttons). Finally drag the text and resize the image window so that you've got it to be the right size and angle. Then just select the Export menu option to save the image as a GIF or JPEG.

Each of these steps is described in more detail on the following pages, along with instructions for more advanced features such as setting the background image or color, producing animated GIFs and AVI movies etc.

Tips for reducing the size of Animated GIF files

- Images of any type that are larger than, say, 50K are not really welcomed by Web users.
- Make the image as small as possible by reducing the window size.
- Select 'Front face only' and have no more than about 20 frames per revolution.
- When exporting try selecting 16 colors (4-bit) with no dithering and optimized palette. When images are animating, the banding is far less obvious than with a static image.

Uninstalling Xara3D

To keep the download size small Xara3D doesn't include an uninstall option. However uninstalling is simple:

1. delete the folder containing Xara3D
2. right-click on the Start menu on the Taskbar, and select Open.
3. double-click on Programs. This displays the contents of the top level menu with Xara3D shown at the bottom.
4. delete the Xara3D shortcut.