SoftF/X Version 2.5 Installation Guide

System Requirements
Byte by Byte recommends at least 8 Mbytes of RAM to run *SoftF/X*. More memory will enable you to use larger models and more complex scenes, and to render at higher resolutions with greater detail and realism in shadows and reflections.

Intel and compatible 386 and 486SX systems must have a math coprocessor installed in order to run *SoftF/X*. 486DX and higher systems have coprocessors already built in and will run *SoftF/X* as is.

Approximately 14 Mbytes of hard drive space is required for the *SoftF/X* files. Byte by Byte recommends that at least 40 Mbytes of hard drive space be available after installation, to allow for the creation of images and animations and their temporary construction files.

Installation
For Windows 3.1, WfW 3.11, Windows NT, and Windows 95 for Intel installation, run the SETUP.EXE file found on the first *SoftF/X* disk.

For Windows NT for DEC Alpha installation, run the SETUP.EXE file found on the first *SoftF/X* disk.

For Windows NT for MIPS installation, run the SETUP.EXE file found on the first *SoftF/X* disk.

IMPORTANT: This program was developed for Windows NT, and is a true 32-bit application. It is therefore necessary that Microsoft's Win32s subsystem be installed before trying to run the program under Windows 3.1. To do this, execute the SETUP.EXE file found on the WIN32s disks. This Setup program will test your system to see if you need Win32s. You will also have the option of installing Freecell, a 32-bit card game.

Running SoftF/X under Windows 3.x and NT
Start the *SoftF/X* Animator by double-clicking on the "SoftFX Animator" icon in the SoftF/X program group.

Running SoftF/X under Windows 95
Start the *SoftF/X* Animator by choosing the "SoftFX Animator" menu item on the Start Taskbar.

The stand-alone Script Renderer can be copied onto additional host computers for simultaneous rendering of multiple scripts. Note that only one instance of the Script Renderer may be active on any one host at any one time.

The Modeler, Viewer and Player are separate programs in addition to being accessible from within the Animator. This can be helpful for systems with less than 8 Mbytes of RAM, as the smaller modules can be used without loading the Animator. The Viewer can be used to view GIF, TGA, BMP or CEL images. The Player can be used to play FLI and FLC files..

Comprehensive online Help is available. The startup dialog Help button provides a basic introduction to 3D modeling and animation, in addition to general information about *SoftF/X*.

Help for all the functions, tools and actions in each module of the program is available by pressing F1 or clicking on the Help dialog buttons.

Notes
SoftF/X was developed for Windows NT. Versions are available for other platforms that support Windows NT. MIPS and DEC Alpha processors running Windows NT require a separate installation kit. Contact Byte by Byte for details.

Performance under Windows 3.1 is slightly degraded compared to Windows NT, and the Win32s emulator has a few known problems that limit the size of models and complexity of rendered scenes. However, all the example animations and models provided are suitable for Windows 3.1.

Customizing Your Installation
If you have installed *SoftF/X* to a different drive or directory than the default of C:\SoftFX, you will need to modify the preferences in the SOFT_FX.INI file installed to your WINDOWS directory. You can do this by opening the SOFT_FX.INI file in Notepad.

Example SOFT_FX.INI file:

[LOGON]
USERID=I. M. User
IMAGEID=A

[RPREFERENCES]
MAP-PATH1=C:\SoftFX\objects
MAP-PATH2=C:\SoftFX\gif

[VIEWER]
FILE=temp.tga
PATH=C:\SoftFX\render\

[KEYFRAMER]
POSITION=0 41 600 500

The section you need to edit is labeled [RPREFERENCES].
The parameter MAP-PATH1= sets an alternate path to search for missing model and map files. For example, you could place all your objects in a directory named TOYBOX, and set MODEL-PATH1=C:\TOYBOX. A staging file looking for a model in C:\SoftFX\OBJECTS and not finding it would then automatically search C:\TOYBOX. You can add as many paths as you like by numbering them in the order you want them searched:

MAP-PATH1=C:\SoftFX\objects
MAP-PATH2=D:\SoftFX\objects
MAP-PATH3=C:\toybox
MAP-PATH4=C:\3ds3\meshes

The same procedure can be used for directories of images used for maps:

MAP-PATH5=C:\SoftFX\gif
MAP-PATH6=C:\SoftFX\gif\textures
MAP-PATH7=D:\SoftFX\gif
MAP-PATH8=C:\3ds3\maps

It is a good idea to maintain a single directory as an archive for your objects and maps after you are finished with a project. This enables you to call up old staging files at any time and successfully load all the Actors, without actually reconstructing the directories from the time you created the staging.

DOS players
Two DOS utilities for playing FLI and FLC animation files are provided, they are called PLAYFLI.EXE and PLAYFLC.EXE and have been copied to the \TOOLS directory. They are executed from the DOS command prompt (Intel processors only, using MSDOS or 100% compatible shells). They should not be run from the Windows DOS box.

The DOS utilities play FLC and FLI animations considerably faster than the Windows player. If you are considering putting any of your work on continuous display and want it to fill the whole screen you should consider using the DOS players.

Upgrades and Feedback

We're always happy to hear from our customers! If you have suggestions, questions, problems or requests, please contact us. Keeping us informed of any address changes will also let us keep you informed about upgrades and special offers.

If you experience any problems in using *SoftF/X*, please let us know. Please email your technical support questions and fault reports to our Technical Support department at softfxsupport@bytebybyte.com. Please report any problems, and we'll do our best to fix them in the next release!

Technical Support hours are 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Central Standard Time, Monday through Friday. Byte by Byte must have your warranty registration card on file in order to provide technical support.