

StartupScreen 3.1 Help Index

Welcome to StartupScreen Help! When reading a topic, use the arrow keys or scroll bars to move through the text if it is too large to fit on a single screen. Hit the F1 key now if you need help using the Windows help system.

Additional information can be found in the STARTUP.TXT document.

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What is StartupScreen?

StartupScreen 3.1 is a freeware Windows application written in Microsoft Visual Basic that allows you to replace the Microsoft opening logo with a screen of your own design or choosing. The file type for the new startup screen must be Microsoft's RLE4 format.

I accidentally discovered the method for replacing the opening logo screen several months back. It took me some time to figure out exactly what was going on (see How it Works), but with time, and the help of others, I managed to perfect the system. Since then, this is my third major version of StartupScreen, and the first update to that version.

To those of you who are new to the idea of changing your startup screen, and especially to those of you who are also new to Windows, this program and help file may seem confusing at times. Mostly, that is because I have tried to document this program as thoroughly as possible, mostly for the benefit of those who are interested in the process and its oddities. However, the program itself has been designed to catch just about any error you might make, so most of this documentation isn't even necessary. You can just go ahead and try it out. Find some suitable RLE files (there are probably some where you found this program), and install them. If you make a mistake, the program is designed to stop you in your tracks and let you know what's gone wrong.

Of course, there's no accounting for poor programming. If there's a problem with StartupScreen, or a feature you'd like to see added, please let me know.

This program has been tested by the author on several machines, using everything from CGA to several flavors of SuperVGA. Other configurations have been tested by beta-testers and other kind souls who were nice enough to do so.

Also, I've tested it using Windows versions 3.0 and 3.00a. It may not be compatible with future versions (reports from Windows 3.1 beta testers indicate that StartupScreen and other programs like it will need to be re-written when that version is released).

No real technical support is available, but that shouldn't be necessary. However, if you do have a problem, etc., I'll do my best to help you. And, of course, as mentioned above, your comments and suggestions are always appreciated. Here's how to contact me:

FidoNet FidoMail, Mike Mezaros: Node 1:107/331
FoReM-Net E-Mail, Mike Mezaros: Node 593
GEne via Z*Net Publishing: Z-NET
CompuServe via Z*Net Publishing: 75300,1642
InterNet via Z*Net Publishing: 75300.1642@compuserve.com

How it Works

StartupScreen merges three files: WIN.CNF, the LGO file corresponding to either your video card or the resolution of your RLE file, and your new RLE file into one file: WIN.COM. WIN.COM is the file that you use to load Windows. In addition to handling a few simple tasks like checking for HIMEM.SYS, WIN.COM also contains and displays your startup screen.

The install process used in this program is equivalent to the following DOS command:

COPY /B WIN.CNF + XXX.LGO + XXX.RLE WIN.COM

This is where the RLE file size limitation comes in. Because COM files cannot be larger than 64k, and your RLE file is incorporated into WIN.COM, your RLE file should not be any larger than approximately 60,000 bytes (about 58k). The exact size varies slightly depending upon which video adapter you use. If you were to use an oversized RLE, Windows would not load properly. Therefore, StartupScreen checks your RLE file to make sure it isn't too large before installing.

RLE File Types

RLE stands for Run Length Encoded. Basically, RLE's are compressed images (compressed, in this context, meaning the size of the FILE, not the size of the actual picture on your screen). There are two different kinds of RLE files that you'll see floating around: CompuServe and Microsoft style RLE files. CompuServe style RLE files will NOT work properly with StartupScreen.

The Microsoft style RLE format is a compressed version of the Windows BMP format. This format actually comes in several varieties. The only kind you need to worry about are RLE4 files. The 4 stands for 4-bit, meaning a maximum of 16 colors per picture. ***The only RLE files usable with this program, or any other program that works on the same principle, are Microsoft style RLE4 files in VGA (640x480x16) or lower resolution.*** You may use RLE's that are the same resolution as your video mode or lower (except for better than VGA systems, where 640x480x16 is still the limit). For information on effectively using certain RLE's with a lower resolution than your video mode, see the [Resolution Menu](#) section. StartupScreen checks to make sure that your RLE is the proper resolution before installing or previewing.

Windows BMP files can be converted to RLE's using either Paint Shop or WinGIF. Both of these are shareware programs, available on many BBS's, as well as CompuServe and GENie. (If you opt for PaintShop, be sure to use a 1991 version. Earlier versions had a number of problems.)

IMPORTANT: The RLE you use for your new startup screen cannot not be any larger than about 58k (the exact size varies slightly depending upon what kind of video adapter you use). StartupScreen also checks to see if your RLE is too large in this way before installing or previewing.

Restore Microsoft Logo Button

The **Restore Microsoft Logo** button will re-install your original Microsoft opening logo. This button might be useful; see the [Legal Issues](#) section.

Install Button

The **Install** button installs your new startup screen. It will be used the next time you load Windows, and from there on until you install another (although Windows will set it back to the original Microsoft opening logo if you use the Windows Setup program to change video drivers).

If this is the first time you are using StartupScreen, it makes a backup of your current WIN.COM file, named WINBAK.COM. Then, if for some reason you can no longer load Windows, simply rename WINBAK.COM to WIN.COM. This backup is provided as a precautionary measure only. The procedure used by StartupScreen (see [How it Works](#)) has been used reliably by thousands of people for quite some time now, and has proven itself to be extremely "solid."

Install also checks to see if the RLE file is physically too large (as in disk size, see [How it Works](#)) or visually too large (as in resolution, see [RLE File Types](#)) to be usable. If so, the RLE will not be installed.

Version History

StartupScreen 1.0 - Written in Gw-Basic (compatible with Gw-Basic and Basica).

StartupScreen 1.01 - Corrected a few extremely small bugs and added an additional RLE file.

StartupScreen 2.0 - Only released to beta-testers. All RLE files dropped. Written in ASIC 2.0 compiled Basic. Due to problems with the compiler, as well as the availability of NewStart, this version was never publicly released.

StartupScreen 3.0 - First version for Windows, written in Microsoft Visual Basic. This version was labeled 3.0, despite the fact that 2.0 was never released, because Version 2.0 had been widely publicized prior to its demise.

StartupScreen 3.1 - This version. Adds a Preview feature, greatly enhanced error-control, a "cleaner" interface, a search feature for the help system, and dozens of other more minor tweaks and fixes.

Microsoft Visual Basic

Microsoft Visual Basic is a programming language for developing Windows applications. It is loosely based on Microsoft QuickBasic. However, program interfaces are designed graphically -- much like using a paint program. Microsoft Visual Basic is very easy to learn, and this author sincerely recommends it to anyone interested in programming for Windows.

Assorted Thanks

Thanks go out to:

Jeff Elkins, for compiling this help file for me, as well as for writing [NewStart](#) and listening to and implementing my suggestions.

Keith Pleas, Keith Funk, Dennis Harrington, Jonathan Bell, and Jonathan Zuck, for some excellent suggestions, programming help, encouragement, and letting me "keep them on their toes."

Charles Kistler, Paul Weissler, Hal Foster, Jerry Schwartz, and Kevin Bachus, whose suggestions and comments concerning the original "Startup" text files were greatly appreciated.

"The only advice I can offer you here is simply to do the best you can."

- **Charles Petzold**
Programming Windows

Jeff Elkins' NewStart

NewStart is an application that accomplishes the same thing as StartupScreen. It was the first Windows application of this type. Because it was written in Turbo Pascal for Windows, NewStart requires slightly less RAM than this program and doesn't need VBRUN100.DLL. Jeff runs the Mote Prime BBS at (803)-782-3772. NewStart, and many other great programs, can be downloaded there.

Legal Issues

This program is freeware.

DISCLAIMER #1: The Microsoft Windows startup screen (the one that comes up when you first load Windows) is actually a copyright notice. If Microsoft should decide that they aren't happy with people removing their copyright notices, you're on your own. Just in case, this program allows you to easily restore the original startup screen with the proper copyright notice intact at any time.

DISCLAIMER #2: Mom always said that I wasn't responsible, and she was right. I am not responsible for *ANYTHING* that might happen to you or your computer or anyone or anything because of this program -- including, but not limited to, damaged diskettes and holes in the ozone layer. StartupScreen has been tested thoroughly, but I do not offer any guarantees or warranties of any kind (neither expressed nor implied). It is available without cost, in good faith on my part. *Use it at your own risk!*

DISCLAIMER #3: At some unknown point in time, the entire universe, including this program, will collapse into itself. A new universe will then develop, but it cannot be guaranteed that this program will exist in that new universe.

Freeware

Freeware is software that you may use and distribute without charge, but may not modify in any way.

Preview Button

After selecting an [RLE file](#) from the file list box, clicking the **Preview** button will allow you to view it. The RLE "takes over" your screen, and the pointer changes to an up arrow. Clicking anywhere on your screen (or hitting any key) will make the RLE disappear.

Immediately after showing the RLE, but before you get a chance to make it disappear, StartupScreen checks to see if the file is physically too large (disk space wise, see the [How it Works](#) section) or not a 'legal' resolution (too large visually, see the [RLE File Types](#) section). If either problem exists, you will be warned that the RLE cannot be installed.

Resolution Menu

StartupScreen automatically determines what type of video adapter you are using. However, it also assumes that the resolution of your new startup screen will be the same resolution or less than your graphics mode, and not matching that of any other graphics mode. This is usually (99.9% of the time?), but not always, the case. Basically, this feature was provided for people like myself who love to try every different RLE they can get their hands on, regardless of resolution.

Specifically, you may want to use an RLE picture with a lower resolution than your graphics mode (you cannot use one with a higher resolution), but matching that of a lesser graphics mode. For example, you might have a VGA monitor and want to use an RLE designed to fill an EGA screen. In order for the RLE to display properly, Windows must be given special instructions. To do this, simply check the EGA item on this menu before installing the new RLE. Otherwise, Windows will try to interpret your new startup screen as if it were a VGA RLE, and it will appear distorted.

What if some of your options on the Resolution Menu are disabled?

StartupScreen checks your Windows\System directory for any LGO files. These LGO files are included with Windows and determine how startup screens should be handled by different types of displays (see How it Works). Only those that are found are enabled on the menu. If any of these are not in your Windows\System directory, they are on your original Windows diskettes (see Windows' documentation for information on retrieving files from those diskettes). The LGO files correspond to the menu items like this:

VGALOGO.LGO	<i>VGA or Better</i>
EGALOGO.LGO	<i>EGA</i>
EGAMONO.LGO	<i>EGA Monochrome</i>
CGALOGO.LGO	<i>CGA</i>
HERCLOGO.LGO	<i>Hercules Monochrome</i>

Remember: You don't need any additional LGO files unless you specifically want to use an RLE designed for lower graphics mode.

Selecting any of the **Resolution** menu items "checks" it by placing a check to the left of the item. Only one item can be checked at a time. Selecting a new item automatically "un-checks" the last checked item. The mode that you are currently using is the default.

