QuickGIF™

Version 1.0

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AmariliSoft

977 E. Stanley Blvd. Suite 226
Livermore, CA 94550, USA

I. What is QuickGIF™?

QuickGIF™ is a shareware application that decode and display CompuServe's GIF format graphics very fast on Macintosh computers with Color Quickdraw. If you find this program useful you are expected to register your copy for the amount of $30 dollars in USA funds (residents of California should include your local sales tax). Registered users will receive by mail a receipt for the amount paid, and a diskette containing a copy of QuickGIF™ Plus (which adds the ability to do Slideshows of graphic and sound files).

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II. QuickGIF™ Hilites

This program can open and view GIF, PICT, and MacPaint type files. It is also able to play sound files produced by Macintosh sound digitizers. Decodes GIF images two to four times faster than existing utilities. Can save in GIF or PICT format, and let you copy graphic images into the clipboard.

The custom open dialog permit the user to select multiple files for opening at once. It also provide a way to play a sound file in loop mode, which let you open graphics accompanied by digitized music or special sound effects.

You can also apply some transformations to the images, such as: spheric, conic, mirroring, oil paint, and dithering to black and white. A photo mode let you display graphics using the whole screen, which is nice to take pictures directly from the screen.
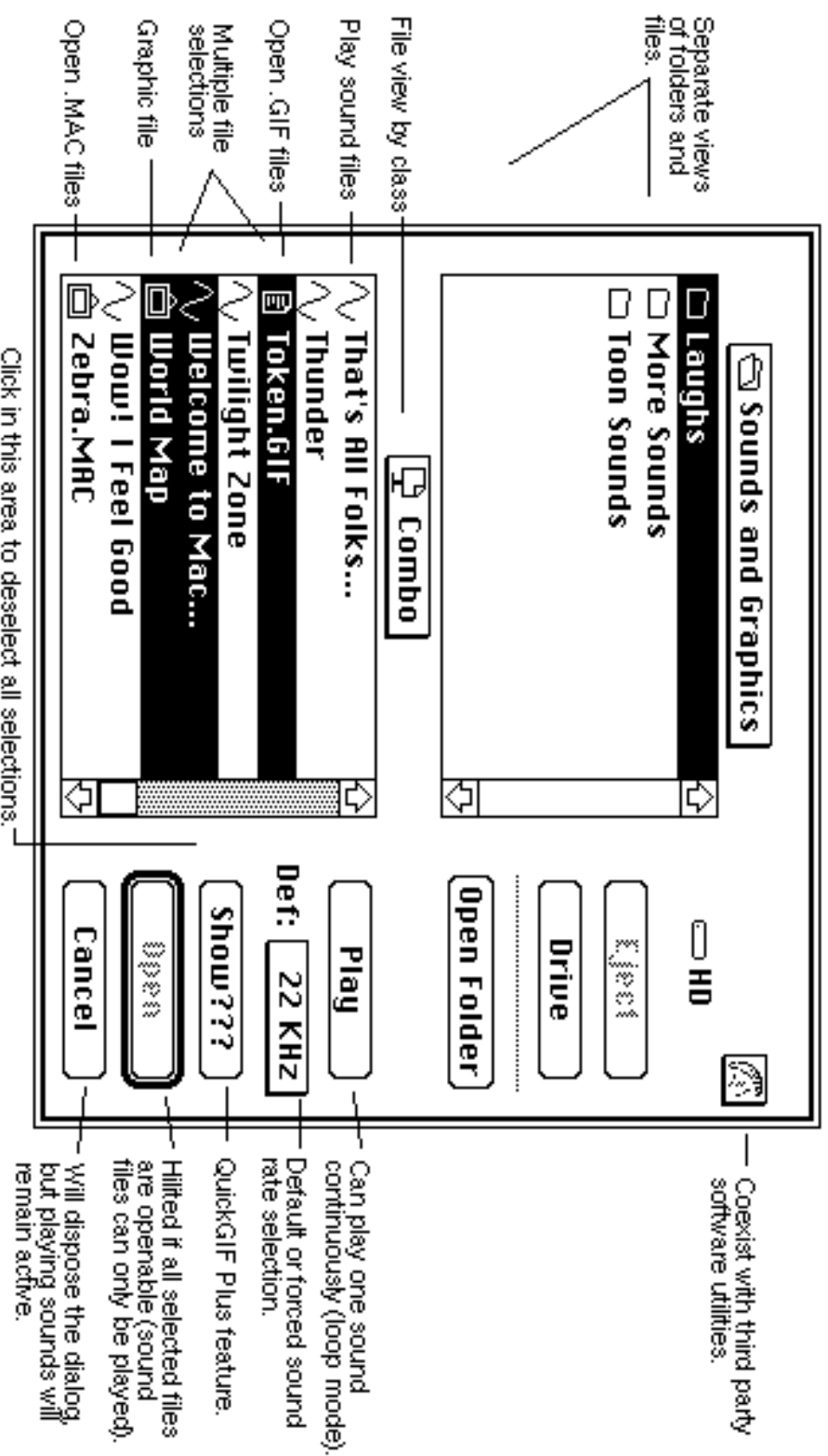
III. The Menus

Open...

This will invoke the custom opening dialog, from which you can open multiple graphics within a folder, or play sound files. When selecting multiple files use the shift key to select continuous group of files or the command key to select and deselect arbitrary files. To deselect all files just click in the open area immediately to the right of the scroll bar. Once you have selected the files and click on the open button, all the selected files will be opened in the order found.

If you have installed open dialog utilities such as Boomerang, by Hiroaki Yamamoto, you may notice that it is not possible to open files directly from the utility. This is so because of the way the custom dialog operate to provide the ability for multiple file selection. Nevertheless, all other functions of these utilities can be performed without problems (such as jumping among folders).

Graphic files with MS-DOS extensions such as ".GIF" or ".MAC" can be opened easily, and the corresponding Macintosh file type will be set accordingly, when successfully opened. The application will correctly distinguish between MacPaint files and READMAC files, correctly displaying the resulting Paint file.

Open dialog hilites:

Separate views of folders and files.

File view by class

Play sound files

Open .GIF files

Multiple file selections

Graphic file

Open .MAC files

Click in this area to deselect all selections.

📁 **Sounds and Graphics**

☐ **Laughs**
☐ More Sounds
☐ Toon Sounds

📂 **Combo**

/\ That's All Folks...
/\ Thunder
▤ **Token.GIF**
/\ Twilight Zone
/\ Welcome to Mac...
▥ **World Map**
/\ Wow! I Feel Good
▥ Zebra.MAC

☐ **HD**

Eject

Drive

Open Folder

Play

Def: [22 KHz]

Show???

≈≈≈≈

Cancel

Coexist with third party software utilities.

Can play one sound continuously (loop mode).

Default or forced sound rate selection.

QuickGIF Plus feature.

Hilited if all selected files are openable (sound files can only be played).

Will dispose the dialog but playing sounds will remain active.

When playing sounds, if you press the Shift key while clicking on the Play button, the selected sound, or the first selected sound will be played continuously in loop mode until another sound is played or interrupted. PLEASE NOTE: if you selected multiple sound files , only the first one will be looped endlessly, and the only wait to interrupt is by pressing command period. That is, whenever you got a watch cursor while playing sounds, you can interrupt the play by pressing command period. If, on the other hand, the arrow cursor is available, command period will not stop the sound, but will dismiss the open dialog. To stop any playing sound you can select the Stop entry in the rate selection popup menu, or select the "Stop Sound" entry in the Misc menu.

Any sound that is playing, but not looping, will stop by itself and will release the sound channel for other purposes. Looping sounds must be stopped manually by either menu entry as mentioned above. When the application Quits it will stop any active sound and release the sound channel.

Under MultiFinder, if you switch to another application there are two possible scenarios. If there were no opened windows in QuickGIF™, any active playing sound will remain playing, and in control of the sound channel, while you work on other applications. Any sounds from other applications will not be played, and beeps will result in flashes of the menu bar. All this is normal behavior and does not represent a problem to the system, while QuickGIF™ maintain control of the sound channel, no other application or the system can produce sounds through the same channel.
The second possibility when switching to another application is when there were opened windows within QuickGIF™. In this latter case, the program will try to see if the next application window looks different from our kind of windows, if a difference can be determined, the currently playing sound will be stopped, and the sound channel released.

The appropriate action when switching to another application in MultiFinder, is to stop any playing sounds and release the sound channel so that other applications can also make noises. QuickGIF™ does this when windows are opened but don't if no program window is active. The purpose of this is to provide a way that the user can exploit to loop a sound file while being in another application. This is useful for doing simple presentations with a looped sound with programs that do not provide sound support.

When opening sound files, any information, regarding how to play the sound, found in resources will be used to setup the environment for the selected sound. Farallon's SoundEdit™ (bundled with MacRecorder®) provide this information when saving digitized sounds. This application lets you edit the digitized sound, and specify starting and ending positions for looping sounds. When this information is available in the sound file, it will be used; otherwise, the loop points will be assumed to be the first and last sampled point.

The sound rate popup have a dual function. When in default mode (as indicated by the title "Def"), it will define the rate for playing sounds that do not contain the information on how to play the sound. For sounds that do contain this information, the rate value will be meaningless. To change from the default rate mode to the force rate mode, just click on the popup menu without selecting another entry. The current entry will be check marked and the title of the popup will change to "Use". In this mode, any information found in the file will be overridden, and the rate selected will be used to play the sound. Changing the rate in the force rate mode will have immediate effect upon playing sounds.

To stop a playing sound you may use the Stop entry in the rate popup menu, or the Stop Sounds menu item within the Misc menu. When a sound finishes or is stopped, the sound channel is released.

There exist an extra feature in QuickGIF™ which is only available to users with the extended keyboard. If you press Control when clicking on the Open button, the Creator of the files being opened will be changed to QuickGIF™ (type 'QGif'). Remember that the program automatically changes the filetype and creator of text files with MS-DOS extensions. The Control-Open feature will change the Creator of all openable files to QuickGIF™. This feature is not officially supported in this program, and is only provided for the convenience of those users that have an extended keyboard and want to be able to double click on some graphic files to automatically startup this application.

Close

This menu entry close the frontmost window in the application. If the frontmost window is a transformed window, no warning will be made to the effect of saving the window. In fact, the program never warn the user about unsaved windows. This was defined in this way because this program was never intended to modify or produce files. But rather, to present existing files.

Close All

All application's windows will be closed.

Keep Only

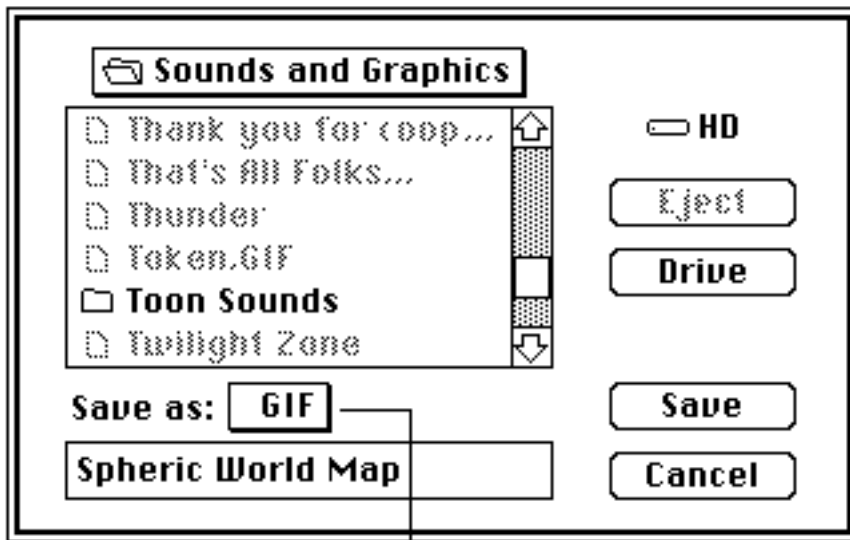This will close all windows except the frontmost window.

SaveAs...

This will open the Save dialog for saving the contents of the frontmost window. Graphic files can be saved as GIF (sequential or interlaced) and PICT types. Interlaced GIF are mainly used when uploading or downloading files because it gives an early hint of the file content while viewing a download. It is recommended that you always save GIF files as sequential, since these are easier and faster to decode and display. The advantage of GIF is the compression scheme used to reduce the file size when saving. Although it takes longer to encode in GIF format, the decoding is relatively fast in comparison.

Quit

This close any open sound channel, dispose of the memory used by the application, and quits to the operating system or calling program. All opened windows are closed at once, and the color environment is restored to the state previously found when the application was launched.

File save dialog:

— Choose file type to save graphics .

Edit Menu

Only the Copy entry is supported in this menu, the others are provided for the convenience of desk accessories that could make use of them. When issuing a copy, the frontmost graphic will be copied into the Clipboard in PICT format.

Transform Menu

The transformations will work with all graphics up to 8-bits per pixel. Each transform will produce a new window document without affecting the content of the graphic being transformed.

Dither

There are three error dispersion dither filters provided: SierraLite, Sierra2 and Sierra3. These are the result of an ongoing research in this area. Error dispersion generally provides a better looking display when transforming color images into black and white. The three filters provide different levels of graininess when dithering. The Contrast entry will toggle between Lo, Medium, or High contrast, which is used when dithering images. The All Above entry will let you dither using all the filters, which is useful for visual comparisons. Dithering is only meaningful for color graphics. There is no visible change when applied to black and white graphics.

Mirror

Mirroring is performed by projecting half of the image into the other half. This hierarchical menu let you project the lefts, right, top or bottom part of the image.

Spheric

This will produce a spherization of the frontmost window. Due to the nature of the process, the pixels near the center of the graphics are greatly magnified and it may not look good. Some antialiasing filtering is necessary to reduce this problem (slated for a future enhancement).

Conic

The conic transform is the opposite of spherization. It is specially interesting when applied to people's faces. This transformation, as well as the Spheric transform requires the present of the Floating Point Processor (FPU) to work.

Oil Paint

With this filtering, digitized images will resemble artistic oil paint renderings. This is the one that takes longer to complete, but the results are quite interesting.

Flip and Rotate

These let you change the orientation of the image.

Misc Menu

Photo Mode

When going into photo mode the whole screen is drawn in black and the image is centered within the screen boundaries. If the image is bigger than the screen, then the top left portion of it will be displayed. In photo mode there is no windows, menus, and no cursor. To end this mode just press any key or click the mouse.

Stop Sound

This entry let you stop any active sound currently playing. Once stopped, the sound channel is released.

Windows Menu

NextWindow and PreviousWindow

Next and Previous window will change the frontmost picture in circular order. When going to a previous window, the current one is sent to the back of all windows. Similarly, when going to the next window, the last one is moved in front of the other ones.

Window Titles

There is no specific order for the titles of windows in this menu (except for the order in which they were opened). The frontmost window will contain a check mark. If you want to change the frontmost window just select it's name from the menu.

IV. About GIF

GIF or Graphics Interchange Format is a hardware independent graphics format designed by CompuServe, Inc. with the goal of interchanging raster based graphics among different computers. This format support various kinds of images from black and white to 8 bits per pixel color images. The format also provide a mechanism to put multiple images within a graphic, which provide some level of presentation and animation.

A very important point is the compression scheme used for this format. Since color files contain much more information, their size is usually much larger than black and white images. And since moving huge files through telecommunication lines could take a lot of time, then the idea of graphic files taking less space and time to transmit is appealing.

The compression ratio is highly dependent on the type of image, but usual saving from 20% to 50% are achieved with GIF. Even though compressing an image takes some time, decompression is relatively fast in comparison.

There are thousands of digitized, and graphic images already in GIF format available from several online services (including local BBS). If you want to get some GIF images you may go into the PICS forum in CompuServe for additional information and pointers to additional Graphics forums where you can find thousand of images to choose from.

It is important to remember that GIF images should be downloaded in binary format. There have been cases where the images were treated as TEXT files and the graphic was destroyed when linefeeds gets stripped from the file. When downloading images, make sure that your telecommunications program treat the graphics as binary data. Specially look for information regarding options about MacBinary header or stripping-linefeeds in your program's manual.

When uploading GIF images to non-Mac environments, please do not use the MacBinary protocol since other computers have problems dealing with the header attached to GIF files when using this protocol. Refer to your program's manual on how to turn off this option.

V. What About QuickGIF™ Plus?

QuickGIF™ Plus is an enhanced version of QuickGIF™ that provides the ability to do a slide show of graphics and files within a folder. The show is presented in photo mode and displaying one graphic at a time in the order found in the folder. Sounds are also played in the order found, and remain playing while graphics are being decoded and displayed. To order the files the user can put numbers in front of the filenames within a folder. The show is played continuously until interrupted.

QuickGIF™ Plus is a Commercial application while QuickGIF™ is the shareware version. All registered users of QuickGIF™ will receive a copy of QuickGIF™ Plus. However, the Plus version is not open for distribution.

In addition, the Plus version will be further refined and enhanced with new features. We welcome any suggestions you may have to this regard.

VI. Support

Questions, suggestions, and problem reports are welcome and can be made through US Mail or electronic mail on CompuServe (id 76356,2254). Our address is:

AmariliSoft
977 East Stanley Blvd. Suite 226
Livermore, California 94550
USA

We have made every effort to make this product as bug free as possible, however if you found a problem, we would like to receive as much information as possible, so as to diagnose the source of the problem and look for corrective actions. Among other things, we would like to know: your system software version number, you Macintosh model, which Inits are currently installed, how much memory, any special hardware installed, how and when the problem occurs, and if the problem is repeatable. MugShot, a utility written by James K. Miles is good for reporting your system configuration (this utility is available through most online services).

VII. How Do I Register?

To register your copy of QuickGIF™ we need to know your name, address, and preferably a daytime phone number. You may also include information about your current machine configuration and how you got hold of a copy of QuickGIF™, which will help us in targeting our products to our customers needs. If you have any comments or suggestion, please include them also. We are always looking for feedback from our users.

The registration fee is $30 dollars in USA funds. If you are a California resident, we are required by law to collect sales taxes (Regulation 1502), since tangible property is being transacted (the diskette). Once your registration fee is received and collected, you'll receive a written receipt and a diskette containing a copy of QuickGIF™ Plus.

Registered users will receive notification of future products and upgrades. We reserve the right to charge a nominal fee for processing upgrades.

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MacPaint is a trademark of Claris, Inc.
PICT is a copyrighted file format of Apple Computer, Inc.
Boomerang is a shareware application by Hiroaki Yamamoto.
MugShot is a freeware utility by James K. Miles