

Screen Saver Project

(The eerie how to...)

This Issue

Halloween Scenes - "How It Was Done"

(note: more information can be found at www.screensaverstudio.com)

This simple screen saver was created in an afternoon using four simple tools:

1. A bitmap editing program (Paint Shop Pro in this case)
2. A sound editor (default windows wave creator in this case)
3. Animcomp (beta from Softdisk Publishing, will only be available with the pro version)
4. Screen Saver Studio

Creating the Base Graphics

This screen saver features only six graphics:

1. A Moon
2. A Pumpkin Patch
3. A Flying Witch
4. A Flying Bat (2 frame animation with Animcomp)
5. An Appearing Vampire (5 frame animation with Animcomp)
6. The Ever Important "Positioning Dot"

The graphics were created in the bitmap editing program first. I first made a base graphic and saved it as "bat01.bmp" (for example) and then altered it slightly and resaved it as "bat02.bmp." I was sure to create all graphics with a black background. When I wanted to see black, I set the color settings to "0.0.1." This gave the appearance of black, but was not transparent. I then simply double clicked "animcomp.exe" and it did the rest (creating the files as *.anm [or bat.anm in this case]). The "positioning dot" is a 1x1 pixel black dot. More about this later.

Permanent Positioning -- Moon and Pumpkins

I wanted a "pumpkin patch" motif with a full moon for atmosphere. I knew that I wanted the pumpkins on the bottom of the screen and the moon at the top. The pumpkins were easy. I simply made the graphic appear as graphic #1 (so no graphic would appear on top of it) and set it's motion to "up" and the duration to only one second. From that point on, the motion for this graphic was set to "stationary" and I was sure to mark the "keep old coordinates." I decided to have the moon appear randomly with each loop of the screen saver. To do this, I set the "positioning dot" to have a "down" motion and timed it so the moon would fully appear on the screen. In the next segment, I replaced the dot with the moon graphic and set the motion to "stationary." The "positioning dot" is an easy way to make graphics appear where you want them. The witch appears along the top half of the screen. I did this with a timed positioning dot (moving down for only a few seconds and then replaced with the witch graphic).

Adding the Other Graphics & Sounds

This was a snap with Screen Saver Studio. I simply imported the desired graphics with the desired movements and added segments as needed. The sounds were created in two ways. The bat sound is paper rustling in front of my computer's microphone. The other sounds were downloaded free from www.screensaverstudio.com (as an add on to the program). They were added to the appropriate segments and the duration set to "once."

Ending the Screen Saver

Remembering that all screen savers are "loops," I wanted to make sure to have some fluid transition from the ending to the beginning. This was accomplished by quickly zooming the pumpkins (down motion and quick zoom) and the moon (up motion and quick zoom). I then added a blank screen with just the background, timed for a couple of seconds. This allowed me to begin the first segment with limited disturbance.

Tips Covered:

1. Making objects "black" with the color set to "0.0.1".
2. Positioning objects using the "positioning dot".
3. Making Easy animations with "Animcomp" software.

Press the **How to Use** button for more information on how to install and configure screen savers and the **Manager** button to view them or delete them.