Capturing icons

If you are not very artistic, it is often easier to create an icon by modifying an existing icon or a bitmap containing a design that you want to use.

There are two ways by which you can get images into Icon Designer.   You can open a bitmap file (*.BMP), then use the scroll bars that appear alongside the editing area to pan the 32 x 32 window until the graphics you want are positioned in the window.   Then you can edit the graphics in the normal way.
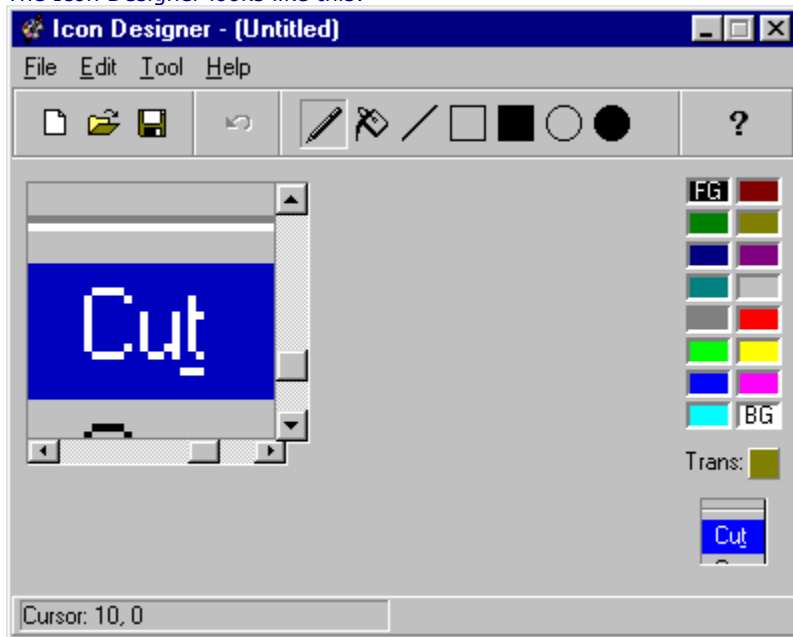
You can also paste bitmaps into the editor from the clipboard.

To capture an icon from another program, use Explorer to show the folder containing the program file as large icons, scroll the Explorer window until the icon is in view, press Alt + PrtScr to capture that window to the clipboard, then use Edit / Paste to copy the window into the Icon Designer.   Then use the scroll bars to move the editing area to the icon you want.

Icon Designer

The Visual DialogScript enables you to create or modify icons to use with your scripts. You can access the Icon Designer from the Tools menu.

The Icon Designer looks like this:

Click on the various controls to get a description of what they do.
See also:

Creating new icons

Capturing icons

Converting bitmaps to icons

Converting bitmaps to icons

You can convert bitmap files (*.BMP) to icons using the Icon Designer.   This means that you can use another bitmap editor (such as a paint program) to create your icons, if you prefer.   You can open a bitmap file from the File / Open menu using the Open tool bar button.

Bitmaps must be the correct size for an icon (32 x 32 pixels).   If the bitmap is larger you will have to use the scroll bars to select the 32 x 32 area you want.

Next you must change the background of the design to the transparent color by selecting that color in the color box and using the Fill tool.   If you don't want your icon to have a transparent background then make sure that the selected transparent color is not used in the icon.

Then save the icon using File / Save or the Save tool bar button.

Creating new icons

To create a new icon from scratch choose File / New or press the New button on the tool bar.   The icon editing area will be cleared showing only the current transparent color.

Choose the foreground and background colors by clicking with the left and right mouse buttons on colors in the color box.   Then select drawing tools, and draw with them using the left or right mouse button to chose the color to use.

Use Edit / Undo (or press the Undo button) to reverse the effect of your last change.   To erase areas of the icon use the drawing tools (such as the Pen) with the background color selected.

When an icon is displayed in Windows, the window background shows through those pixels that have been defined as transparent.   Usually these are the border or background of the icon.   The icon editor lets you choose which color to use to represent the transparent areas of the icon.

You use the color box to select the colors to be used by the drawing tool.   Clicking on a color with the left mouse button selects it as the foreground color.   Clicking on a color with the right mouse button selects it as the background color.

This is the area in which you create and modify your icon.   It is displayed at 4 x magnification to make your work easier.

You edit the icon by choosing a drawing tool and then drawing with it using the mouse.   If you hold down the left mouse button, the foreground color is used.   If you hold down the right mouse button, the background color is used.

The Edit menu lets you paste a bitmap from the Clipboard into the editor window, or copy the icon to the Clipboard. You can also undo the last action.

This button selects the Ellipse drawing tool.   Use this to draw open ellipses and circles.

The File menu allows you to open icon or bitmap files, save icons, or create a new icon.

This button selects the Fill drawing tool.   Use this to flood fill an area with a color.

This button calls up the online help.

The Help menu item lets you call up the online help.

This window displays the icon in its real size, so you can see how it will look.

This button selects the Line drawing tool.   Use this to draw straight   lines.

Use this button to create a new icon.

Use this button to open an icon, DLL, executable or bitmap file. Icon Designer 3.0 can extract icons from executables and DLLs.

This button selects the Pen drawing tool.   Use this to draw pixels and freehand lines.

This button selects the Rectangle drawing tool.   Use this to draw an open rectangle.

Use this button to save the icon.

These scroll bars are only displayed when importing a bitmap file using File / Open or Edit / Paste.   You can use them to position the bitmap image within the 32 x 32 icon area. As soon as you use another drawing tool, the scroll bars disappear.

This button selects the Filled Ellipse drawing tool.   Use this to draw filled ellipses and circles.

This button selects the Filled Rectangle drawing tool.   Use this to draw filled rectangles.

The status bar shows the current cursor position in X and Y co-ordinates.

The Tools menu lets you select the drawing tools, as an alternative to using the tool bar buttons.

This control indicates the color currently selected as the transparent color.   When the icon is created, all the pixels that are this color will be made transparent, so that when the icon is displayed in Windows, the background color shows through.

To change the transparent color (in case you want to use this color in your icon) click on the control with the left or right mouse button to select the current foreground or background color to represent transparent.

Use this button to undo the last editing action.

When an icon is displayed in Windows, the window background shows through those pixels that have been defined as transparent.   Usually these are the border or background of the icon.   The icon editor lets you choose which color to use to represent the transparent areas of the icon.