

CheapColor

By Jeff Skaistis

Introduction

CheapColor is a utility that converts PICT2 and PixelPaint documents into a format that allows them to be printed in color on an ImageWriter printer with a color ribbon. Also, it can save these in a format that can be used by applications that support the original eight QuickDraw colors, such as SuperPaint, and they should display correctly on a ColorVue SE system. It will work on a Plus, SE, SE/30, II, or IIfx system.

How It Works

CheapColor breaks down an RGB image in either PICT2 or PixelPaint format into dithered overlays of the eight original QuickDraw colors. For those who never realized that the Mac ever had color before the Mac II, all versions of QuickDraw support eight colors; black, red, green, blue, magenta, cyan, yellow, and white. By dithering these colors together, a fairly accurate representation of a 256 color picture can be achieved.

Using CheapColor

Here are descriptions of CheapColor's menu commands:

About CheapColor...

Shows information about the program, including the shareware notice (see below). For those with Color QuickDraw systems, there is also an example of a conversion of a 256 color picture.

Open PICT...

Opens a PICT file. If the file is a version 1 picture, CheapColor opens and displays the picture. If the file is a version 2 picture, CheapColor will convert it and display it.

»»»NOTE««« For non-Color QuickDraw systems, the pictures will display pretty messily since every color except white will show up as black. Also, since CheapColor manipulates PICT2 documents manually when Color QuickDraw isn't present, some documents may not load into CheapColor. This is not a problem with PixelPaint documents.

Open PixelPaint...

Converts a PixelPaint document and displays it.

Close

Closes the current window and image.

Save...

Saves the current image in PICT format. These documents can be opened and used by applications that support the eight original QuickDraw colors.

»»»NOTE««« For reasons unbeknownst to me, even though MacDraw II supports and uses the original QuickDraw colors, it ignores any color information in PICT files it opens or pasted in to it. However, you can manually re-color CheapColor images. See below for a discussion of this.

Page Setup...

The usual.

Print...

Prints the current image. If printing on a ImageWriter with a color ribbon, it will be printed in color. If the image size is larger than the current paper size, a dialog box will come up with a miniature image and a paper outline that moves with the mouse. Position the paper rectangle with the mouse and click where you want it to print. For best results, you might want to use a little heavier bond paper.

Quit

See you later...

Potential Problems

Converting a PICT2 or PixelPaint document requires a lot of memory. If your machine has only 1 Meg., you won't be able to convert very large images. In fact, it won't be enough to convert a 512 x 512 image. Hopefully, DRAM prices will go down soon.

If the program runs out of memory, it will quit gracefully (hopefully) to avoid any other problems.

Re-Coloring CheapColor Images

To re-color CheapColor images in MacDraw II, open the document and follow these steps:

1. Create solid patterns of the six non-B/W colors. If you can't see the colors, they are red, green, blue, yellow, cyan, and magenta from left to right.
2. The CheapColor image is made up of seven overlaid bitmaps, each representing a different color. The top one is the black overlay. Select it and choose Send To Back from the menu.
3. Select the new top image. Click on the foreground color display symbol (the one on the right side of the pattern bar) and then click on the magenta color pattern. Choose Send To Back from the menu.
4. Repeat step 3 with the rest of the colors in the following order: cyan, yellow, blue, green, and red.

Miscellanea

Version 1.0.1 fixes some bugs from version 1.0:

One that caused a crash while converting a PICT2 document with a non-standard CLUT on a Color QuickDraw machine running without MultiFinder.

One that caused a crashed somtimes when converting a PICT2 document without Color QuickDraw.

One that messed up the menus when starting the application by double-clicking on a document.

Version 1.02 corrects the problem in previous versions of only saving the part of the image that is displayed in the window.

Version 1.0.3 fixes a problem while converting a PICT2 on a Mac with Color QuickDraw. It had some problems with mismatching colors in pictures with more than one bitmap object.

The dithering filter used by CheapColor was developed by Daniel Burkes. Thanks Daniel, it makes the images look great.

This program is shareware. If you use it, please send \$1 to:

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Questions, comments, bug reports, etc. you can contact me at the above address or email me:

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Have Fun!