

README.WRI for Action! 2.0 for Windows

Action! 2.0 includes exciting new features which make your presentations easier and more exciting:

- Motion Charts with data import and DDE links
- a runtime player, called PLAYACT.EXE
- Import Presentations from other Windows applications in a single step
- MIDI sound support
- automatic synchronization of elements over time
- interactive buttons which can highlight and play a sound
- and many more...

We at Macromedia have made every effort to deliver the highest quality product for your use. However, as with all software, you may encounter some problems. This document contains information about problems you may encounter, and workarounds where possible. This document is several pages long, and contains hints and tips as well. You may want to print this file for easier reading.

General Information

Action! cannot import PAL palettes from Windows Paintbrush. The PAL file format that Action! recognizes is created by the program PALEDIT.EXE provided with the Windows Software Development Kit.

Pauses created in templates will not take effect until the template is applied to a scene.

You may want to compress Action! player files to be able to fit more onto a floppy disk. Use a popular compression tool like PKZIP.EXE or LHARC.EXE.

Shadows do not apply to grouped objects.

Before using the CTRL and SHIFT-CTRL keys to place a pause or loop in the timeline, move the playback head out of the way.

Objects pasted into the content list will start at 0 seconds.

Action! supports a maximum video mode of 256 colors. Settings higher than 256 will cause images to display incorrectly and may result in erroneous error messages when saving files.

Select All... selects ALL objects in the current scene, whether they are visible on screen at the time or not. Be careful when using Select All when deleting, making groups and applying motion or sound.

Solid lines you create with the line tool can be any width. Dotted or dashed lines can only be one pixel wide.

In full screen mode the menus are still available. Just click at the top of the screen.

When playing an Action! presentation, the cursor will change from an arrow to a square when playback is paused. Press the spacebar to resume playback.

Gradient backgrounds are slower to redraw than solid or bitmap backgrounds. Use solid backgrounds for best on-screen performance.

You can set a background for multiple scenes simultaneously by selecting them in the Scene

Sorter and choosing the Set Background command from the Scene menu.

Choose Play Presentation while the Control Panel is in Stop. This assures that the presentation will play correctly from the beginning of the first scene.

You can jump to the next or previous scene by pressing Page-Dn or Page-Up during playback.

In the Timeline, you can drag the end-of-scene line to change the duration of the current scene.

Action! presentations play more smoothly the second time (and subsequent times) they are played through. This is because Windows bitmaps and fonts draw completely the first time, but thereafter are loaded into available memory whenever possible. This is generally true for most Windows applications.

Action! creates files with a TMP extension as you work. When you quit Action!, these files are deleted. If you encounter an error while running Action!, there may be TMP files that don't get deleted because of the abnormal exit. You should delete these TMP files manually after closing all other Windows applications.

If a presentation is started from the Control Panel and then the Control Panel is closed while the presentation is running, the presentation will stop after the current scene rather than proceeding to the next scene. Use the key sequence CTRL-5 to start the presentation instead.

Certain angled lines may display outside the object's boundaries on Orchid Fahrenheit 1280 display cards in 256 color mode. This is apparently a problem with the display card drivers. Contact Orchid for updated Windows drivers.

The hourglass cursor does not appear for some operations which take some time to complete.

Hold effects and ink settings do not apply to grouped objects.

Scene names may be duplicated when changing the name of the first scene if only two scenes exist in the presentation.

Under Windows 3.0, switching between scenes containing gradient backgrounds with the Use Palette option selected may cause a bar the color of the menu bar to appear across the top of the screen.

Certain ink and highlight options may cause the selected object to appear with bands of colors when used against a gradient background with the Use Palette option selected.

The ink effect White Transparent only applies to bitmap objects. It has no effect on other object types.

If the Timeline is maximized and an object is given a motion of Path Edit, after editing the object's path, the Timeline will not be refreshed correctly. Close and reopen the Timeline to refresh the screen.

Animations (Movies)

Note: MacroMind Director is a Macintosh-based multimedia authoring tool. The animations created with Director can be converted to Windows with the MacroMind Windows Player, available separately. These converted animations have the file extension .MMM. Action! can directly import .MMM files. We refer to these files as "animations" or "movies."

After importing a movie, open the timeline and set the movie duration to a few seconds. Then

play the movie to see how long you want this object to appear. If the duration set is longer than the animation, the animation will loop for the set duration if you checked the Loop box in the Import dialog.

MacroMind Director animation objects (movies) always appear on top of the Action! scene - no object can be placed on top of an animation.

When copying or moving presentations that contain MMM movies, be sure to put the MMM files in the same directory as the Action! presentation.

Inks have no effect on Director animations. The animations always play as imported.

In the Scene Sorter, previews (thumbnails) for scenes will not display imported Director movies.

Custom 8-bit palettes used in MacroMind Director movies created on the Macintosh do not import as part of the movie when used on a 16-color VGA system. The standard palette is used, so animations may appear to have the wrong colors.

When saving a presentation containing multiple MMM movies, the first frame of each movie will appear onscreen as the presentation is saved. This does not affect the use of the presentation.

If a template with a movie is applied to a scene containing a movie, the movie in the template must be removed before the sound of the scene movie will be audible.

Charts

Text which is set to white in a chart with a transparent background will not appear. Use light gray instead.

Charts may take a few seconds to update when new data motion is applied. An hourglass may not appear during this time.

Action! does not directly import Excel 4.0 files. Save them as Excel 3.0 format before importing.

A template chart's default background color can be changed in scene view without promoting the chart. This may mistakenly lead a user to think that the chart itself has been changed. You must promote the chart in the template to the current scene prior to making changes.

The enter and exit transitions "Boxy Squares" and "Boxy Rectangle" may not refresh completely after the transition is finished, when these transitions are applied to chart elements.

If a chart which has data motion applied to it is duplicated, the duplicate's data motion may not be applied correctly. Resize the duplicated chart to correct this problem.

When data motion has been applied to pie charts with data labels showing, the data labels appear behind the pie slices. Without data motion the data labels appear in front of the pie slices.

If the chart data range contains text, the invalid data range error message will appear each time you change the chart options or apply data motion. Change the data to valid data to avoid multiple occurrences of this error message.

100% Area charts will give a floating point exception error if you plot a two-value chart.

Importing from Other Applications

When importing or pasting a metafile from another application, the file may appear full-screen.

This is dependent on the source application since many save metafiles as full-screen. Use the mouse to resize the metafile once it appears in Action! by clicking and dragging the size handles in the corners of the image.

You can import (or paste) and explode WMF (metafiles) that have been created in other applications, using the Explode Metafile command on the Object menu. This command cannot be un-done.

Action! saves metafiles as single objects that cannot be used with the Explode Metafile command.

CorelDraw copies drawings to the clipboard as metafiles which can be pasted directly into Action! and exploded. You may also export drawings as WMF files and import into Action! and explode. Some color loss may occur with CorelDraw metafiles, but you may reassign colors in Action!.

3D pie charts created in Aldus Persuasion 2.1 and exported to WMF are not correctly imported in Action!. Use 2D pie charts instead.

WMF files imported from Harvard Graphics for Windows or Aldus Persuasion are placed one pixel too low on the screen. Use the up arrow key to reposition the graphic.

Separating all objects in imported WMFs which contain gradient backgrounds will cause the gradient to disappear. Set a new gradient background in Action!.

RLE (Run-Length Encoded) DIB files are not supported.

Networks

When installing to a network, you may need to type the full path of the drive where you want to install the program rather than any alias to that drive (for example, F:\PUBLIC\APPS\ACTION2 rather than F:).

Novell networks have an option to display the double dot character which allows the user access to the parent directory. If SHOW DOTS=ON is not present in the SHELL.CFG, you must type the full path to the parent directory to move to that directory.

If the PROGMAN.INI is marked read only, the Install program may fail to create a Macromedia program group and install the icons required to run Action! properly. You may install the icons into any program group manually using the procedure described in your Windows manual.

Preferences

Changes to the Preferences settings do not take effect immediately for the current document. Save the document and load it to see the changes. When setting a custom stage size in the Preferences dialog, the changes will not take effect until you create or load a new document.

The ACTION.INI file contains one undocumented setting, `EnablePaletteFades`, with one of two values assigned to it (1 or 0). When this option is set to 1 (as in `EnablePaletteFades=1`), a black fade will occur between scenes. To disable this effect, change this line to read `EnablePaletteFades=0` and restart Action!.

Runtime Player (PLAYACT.EXE)

Presentations containing charts must be saved as a player file (ACP) rather than as a standard presentation (ACT).

If a chart is given a border style of None and a transparent fill against a gradient background with the Use Palette option selected, the border may continue to display in the Player. Moving the chart may cause the border to disappear.

Opening a presentation in the Player and in Action! simultaneously is possible, but not recommended, since the file would be updated from two sources at once.

Sounds

To use MIDI sound, be sure your Windows MIDI Mapper is configured for all 16 channels, rather than the default 10.

You cannot delete a sound that is associated with an object. To suppress the sound, set the duration for the sound to zero seconds by double-clicking the object and choosing the Sound attribute in the Edit Object dialog box.

Action! maintains access to the CD-ROM drive when loaded. If you want another program to use the CD-ROM drive instead of Action!, load that program before loading Action!

Setting a loop (using the Set Loop command in the Control menu) around a short sound may cause the sound to play back at a slightly different time in each loop. This is caused by the time required to load the sound, and varies depending on the speed of your PC.

When using CD audio, load the CD before launching Action! to assure correct operation.

CD audio will always start and stop 0.1 seconds before the chosen times.