

Microsoft Explorapedia Tips

This document contains information that will help you get the most out of Explorapedia and your system.

To read this file on-screen, use the Page Down and Page Up keys on your keyboard. You can print the file by choosing the Print command from the File menu.

Sending suggestions, content enhancements, and errors

If you have suggestions for features you would like to see in future editions of Explorapedia or comments about the current version, please send them to:

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Comments about errors, comprehensiveness, or validity of information presented are welcome. Please send these comments by FAX, U.S. mail, or e-mail.

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1. Problems During Setup

Because Explorapedia installs system files that may be shared with other applications, it is best to close other applications before setting up.

If Setup is interrupted by a loss of power, a power surge, or some other unexpected incident, restart Microsoft Windows before you run Setup again.

Refer to your Explorapedia User's Guide to find out about minimum system requirements.

If you receive the error message "WinG has encountered a problem with your video display driver. Contact the manufacturer of your video card to obtain the most recent driver. Your WinG applications will still run, but at reduced speed," it most likely means that you have old video drivers. Check the documentation that came with your video card or computer to find out where you can get the latest video drivers for your system. Refer to "Section 4, Video Cards and Display Problems" in this document for more information about how to obtain more recent drivers.

2. General Tips

You can always click the F1 key on your keyboard to get help from Tad.

Using "Find a certain word" is a quick alternative to get to any topic. Click on Find in the ship or on the Exploratron (or click on Tad and then click on "Find something"), and then click on "A certain word" on the list.

Ship's Window--The labels at the top of the ship (which change as you move the cursor) correspond to the 13 scenes in Explorapedia, The World of People.

Changing audio, scene actions, or color of leap words is easily accomplished by clicking on the "Settings" button in the ship, or by clicking on Tad to see a list of options.

There are three ways to establish connections to a Writing or Painting application:

Click on the notepad or easel in the ship, which provides the most direct way to connect to the application.

OR

Click on the "Settings" button in the ship, and then choose "Connections to writing or painting programs."

OR

Click on Tad, and then choose "Something else," then "Change Settings," and finally "Connections to writing or painting programs."

Once you've reached the "Stand by. I'll connect you to your program" bubble, you must next click the "Connect" button. A dialog box will appear. By selecting an executable program (a file with an .EXE file extension; for example, WRITE.EXE) and clicking OK, you will establish the connection. Subsequent clicks on the appropriate icon will IMMEDIATELY start that application.

3. Installing with a Previous Version of Nature

Explorapedia: World of People includes updated software that works with Explorapedia: World of Nature. If you encounter problems running Nature after installing People, reinstall Nature. Both products should then work correctly.

If you install People and Nature to different Disk Drives (e.g. C: and D:) then Nature will not have any of the updates that are in People.

4. Explorapedia and Windows Performance Issues

There are several ways to make Explorapedia run faster. Many of the methods described below are general tips to improve the performance of any Windows application. Consult your Windows user's guide for more details.

Microsoft Explorapedia uses your computer's memory (RAM) to display pictures and play animations and sound. If Explorapedia runs slowly or you see "out-of-memory" errors, Explorapedia may not have enough memory. Below are some tips to make the best use of your available memory.

- * Close all applications that you are not using.

- * Set up a permanent Windows swap file.

Windows works best when there is hard disk space allocated for swapping a file into or out of your computer's memory. To set up a permanent Windows swap file on your hard disk, open Control Panel (usually in the Main group of Program Manager), and then click 386 Enhanced. Click the Virtual Memory button to see if your current swap file is temporary or permanent, to check the size of the current swap file, and to make changes. Windows usually creates a temporary swap file by default, but if your disk is full or fragmented, this temporary file may be unavailable. If you can, make the size of the permanent swap file at least 8192 KB.

Look at the Help menu in Control Panel or in your Windows documentation for more information.

- * Defragment or optimize your hard disk by running a defragmentation program.

For example, MS-DOS 6.0 includes a utility called Microsoft Defrag. Some other popular utilities are PC Tools, Norton Utilities, and Mace Utilities.

- * Add more RAM (memory) to your computer.

You can determine how much memory is available by starting MS-DOS, typing **mem**, and pressing ENTER. This starts a program that will tell you how much memory you have. You need at least 4 megabytes (sometimes listed as 4096 kilobytes or KB) of RAM, and 8 megabytes is recommended.

- * Add a cache to your CD-ROM drive.

SmartDrive in MS-DOS 6.2 and utilities such as Norton Speedcache+ can significantly improve the performance of CD-ROM products by helping to eliminate unnecessary seeks and reads. If you have an older or slow CD-

ROM drive, the performance difference is very noticeable.

* Run Microsoft MemMaker from MS-DOS.

MS-DOS version 6.0 and later features a utility called MemMaker that can increase the amount of low memory available to applications. This can improve the performance of many Windows applications as well as MS-DOS applications. Refer to your MS-DOS user's guide for more information on MemMaker.

For more details on improving performance, consult your Windows and CD-ROM manuals.

5. Video Cards and Display Problems

Explorapedia does not run in 16-color mode. The standard VGA driver that comes with Windows and almost all video cards can show only 16 colors. However, unless you have a VGA-only video card or monitor, you can change your display to 256 colors. Your system may already have a driver installed that displays 256 colors or more. For instructions on how to determine what video driver you have installed and how to install or change drivers, go to the Help menu in Windows Setup. To get there, click Windows Setup, usually in the Main group of Program Manager.

In some situations, Explorapedia may encounter video display problems when using high-resolution video drivers from various video-card manufacturers.

There are several things you can do if you encounter problems like this:

- * Obtain updated drivers from your video-card manufacturer.

Most problems can be fixed by obtaining new drivers from your video-card manufacturer. Contact the manufacturer of your video card to determine if there are newer versions available. The company's phone number should be in the manuals that came with your video card or personal computer. Another option for obtaining updated drivers is the Microsoft Download service, an electronic bulletin board that can be accessed via a modem at (206) 936-MSDL (206-936-6735).

- * Change to a different display mode.

An alternative to obtaining a new or updated display driver is to change your video mode to a standard video mode, such as 640 x 480 resolution with 256 colors.

- * Use the drivers that shipped with People.

There are drivers for Cirrus Logic and S3 chipsets on the CD-ROM, as well as the Generic SVGA drivers from Microsoft, in the \PEOPLEWINSYS\DRIVERS directory. To install these drivers refer to the Help menu in Windows Setup. To get there, click Windows Setup, usually in the Main group of Program Manager.

PALETTE PROBLEMS WHEN RUNNING WITH MICROSOFT BOB

When running Explorapedia from Microsoft Bob, the colors in Explorapedia can become temporarily corrupted. Opening the Exploratron will fix the colors in most cases.

PROBLEMS WITH THE S3 Corp. 86C928 CHIPSET

When running this chipset in a 256 color mode, you may get 'snow' in the video playback. To correct this, remove the line that reads:

device=dva.386

from the [386enh] section of the SYSTEM.INI file in your windows directory.
(note: this has been observed on the #9GXE video card)

ATI mach32 cards and Crystal Fonts

Explorapedia will not correctly detect a 256 color mode if you have the Crystal Fonts feature enabled on the mach32 card. To run Explorapedia People, turn off the Crystal Fonts in the ATI Video card applet in the mach utilities program group in the Program Manager.

6. Audio Problems

The following are some suggested solutions for common problems with audio in Explorapedia.

SOUND DOES NOT PLAY AT ALL

1. Check the volume.
2. If the volume is turned up and you still hear no sounds, something may be wrong with your audio card installation. Check to see that the audio card software is installed correctly, and reinstall it if necessary.
3. If the software is installed correctly, the audio card may need to be pressed more securely into its slot or have a jumper setting changed.
4. If you have both an audio card and special software that bypasses the audio card to play sounds through the PC speaker, we suggest you remove or disable the special software (the PC speaker driver). Explorapedia requires an MPC-compatible audio card; it is not meant to run with just the PC internal speaker or any combination of that speaker and special software.

SOUND PLAYS BUT IS DISTORTED OR "FUZZY"

Sound distortion is often caused by sending a higher volume or amplitude of sound than the speakers are able to handle. Also, if the volume control on your audio card is set too high, it may cause distortion from the amplifier on the audio card. Sometimes lower-quality speakers will distort at a lower volume than better speakers will (compare a clock radio speaker to a big stereo system; the stereo speakers can play much louder with no distortion). For example, if the volume for your audio card or "WAVE file output" is set to near its maximum it will produce distortion just like a radio with the volume turned up too high. To learn how to change your audio-card settings, check the manuals that came with your audio card. Changing the volume settings is normally done either with a volume dial on the back of your audio card (in the back of your computer where the speakers plug in) or with a program that is often called a "mixer" (usually found in Control Panel in the Main group). Some audio cards use both types of controls, and they must both be adjusted.

Another possible cause of distortion is that you are using a 16-bit sound card set to a lower Direct Memory Access (DMA). Sounds that appear scratchy while using a low DMA will sound better using a higher DMA. In the case of the Media Vision Pro Audio 16 sound card, a DMA setting of 7 will correct any scratchy sounds. To change the DMA channel, go to Control Panel and choose Drivers. In the Drivers section, select the sound card driver and then choose Setup. You should be able to select a higher DMA setting here. If the driver will not allow you to change the DMA setting, refer to your sound-card manual.

SOUND VOLUME WHEN RUNNING WITH MICROSOFT BOB

The volume control in Bob controls the system sound volume. If you are running Explorapedia from Bob and the sounds in Explorapedia are very low, adjust the volume setting in Bob to a louder volume.

SOUND PLAYS BUT HAS SKIPS

If audio breaks up or skips periodically, it is usually an indication that the CD-ROM drive does not fully meet the MPC (Multimedia PC) specification for the Data Transfer Rate. Since Explorapedia requires a double-speed CD-ROM drive, any audio skipping or breakup should be minimal. If you are trying to run Explorapedia with a single-speed drive, you may experience audio loss during videos and animations.

SOUNDS ARE CUT OFF

Most audio cards can play only one sound at a time; therefore, other sound-producing applications could interrupt the sounds from Explorapedia. Some sound-producing applications may take over the audio capability and prevent other Windows applications from being able to make sounds. If you suspect you have such an application, do not run it at the same time as Explorapedia.

ERROR MESSAGE: "NO WAVE DEVICE THAT CAN PLAY FILES . . ."

If you get the error message, "No wave device that can play files in the current format is installed. Use the drivers option to install the wave device" when trying to play some sound clips or dialogues, the Microsoft audio-compression manager and drivers may not be installed correctly. Run the Explorapedia setup program from the CD-ROM to correct the problem.

7. CD-ROM Problems

Common solutions to problems with CD-ROM drives

***NOTE:** Do not remove the Explorapedia compact disc from your CD-ROM drive while running Explorapedia.*

Explorapedia requires a double-speed CD-ROM drive.

If Explorapedia cannot find the data files it needs to run, you will see an error message prompting you to correct the problem. To find the source of the problem, do the following:

- * Make sure the Explorapedia compact disc is correctly inserted into the CD-ROM drive.
- * Make sure that the drive is connected to your computer correctly and it is functioning in MS-DOS. If you have an external CD-ROM drive, make sure the power is turned on. You can test the function in MS-DOS by viewing a directory of the drive at an MS-DOS prompt. To do this, change to the CD-ROM drive at an MS-DOS prompt, type **dir**, and then press ENTER.
- * Make sure that Explorapedia is looking for the compact disc on the correct drive. Check that the EXPLORA.INI file is in the Windows directory.

If you still see an error message, try running the setup program from the Explorapedia CD-ROM again.

8. Running Explorapedia on Windows NT and Windows 95

Running on Windows NT

Explorapedia may need to copy some files to your system directory. In order for Setup to do this, you must be a member of the Administrator group when you log on. Otherwise, Setup will not be able to copy these files to your drive. You can check your user status with the User Manager.

Explorapedia runs well on Windows NT with the following exceptions:

- * Explorapedia does not support Windows NT version 3.1. You must have Windows NT version 3.5 or later in order to run Explorapedia.
- * Playing videos on the TV in Tad's ship will temporarily cause the ship to appear in an incorrect color palette. This is a known problem. Going to a scene will restore the palette.
- * Non-Intel Windows NT machines (i.e., Mips or Alpha processor) are not supported.

Running on Windows 95

Explorapedia runs well on Windows 95 with the following exceptions:

- * If Explorapedia is the only application running on Windows 95, use Ctrl-Esc to access the Task Bar. (Alt-Tab does not work.)
- * There is a known redraw problem using the Cirrus Logic drivers on Windows 95. A black line will appear on the right side of the character balloons.

9. Mouse/Cursor Function

If you find that the mouse cursor jumps around on the screen when you perform certain actions in Explorapedia, and you are using Microsoft Intellipoint mouse software, you need to turn off the “snap-to” option. Open Control Panel (usually found in the Main group in Program Manager), and choose the Mouse option. Turn off the “snap-to” option in the Mouse Manager dialog box, and close Mouse Manager and Control Panel.