

Widget Workshop™ for Windows Interactive Demo

This is an interactive demo version of Widget Workshop, The Mad Scientist's Laboratory software from Maxis Kids.

Ask for Widget Workshop at your local software retailer, or order directly from Maxis by calling: 1-800-33-MAXIS (1-800-336-2947)

Last Minute Information

This document will be easiest to read if you maximize it, and can be printed if you have a printer attached to your computer.

Contents

Using Write to View This Document

Help!

Windows Version Special Issues

Technical Help

Getting More Technical Help

How to Reach Maxis Customer Support

Using Write to View This Document

To make this document easier to read, you can enlarge the Write window to its maximum size. To do so, click the Maximize button in the upper-right corner of the window. Or open the Control menu in the upper-left corner of the Write window (or press ALT+SPACEBAR), and then choose the Maximize command.

To move through the document, press PAGE UP or PAGE DOWN. Or click the arrows at the top and bottom of the scroll bar along the right side of the Write window.

To print the document, choose Print from the File menu.

For Help on using Write, press F1.

Help!

Any time while playing the Widget Workshop Demo, you may press F1 for help. This will open a Windows Help file about Widget Workshop for Windows. Also, for help and hints about how to use a part, double-click on the part and Doc will give you some pointers.

Windows Version Special Issues

Here is some helpful last-minute information specific to the Windows version of Widget Workshop.

Additional Mouse/Keyboard Shortcuts

There are some shortcuts when using the mouse to cut/move/point. While using the Pointer as your main tool, hold down one of the following keys to temporarily activate the Cut or Move tool: **Cut = Shift key, Move = Ctrl key.**

The Huge Work Area

The Windows version of Widget Workshop has a potentially huge Work Area. This is great if you want to make huge widgets, but can be inconvenient if you want to see your whole widget at once, or if you want to share your widget with someone who has the Macintosh version of Widget Workshop (which has a smaller Work Area).

Because of this, we've added a couple of special features to the Windows version:

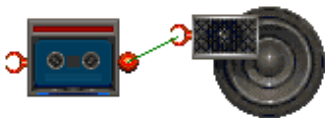
1. **Fit Work Area...** has been added to the Edit Menu. This is a feature that automatically moves all the parts of your widget closer together so they'll fit onto a smaller space. It won't remove any parts or connections, but it might not look very pretty--and most of the text labels won't be put into the right places. So you may want to clean up the widget after you shrink it.

Sound Switch / Microphone Issues

The Sound Switch will only work if you have a sound card that supports a microphone--and, of course, you also need a microphone.

If you have a sound card that supports a microphone (and you have a microphone) and still have problems with the Sound Switch, make sure your microphone is connected to your sound card's Microphone jack. If the switch still isn't working properly, contact the vendor or manufacturer of your sound card and have them set up your sound card properly for microphone input.

Sound Recorder / .WAV File Importing



Widget Workshop's Sound Recorder device can import about 3-4 seconds of any standard .WAV audio file. If the playback sounds too slow, too fast, or un-natural, use a third-party sound editor program to conform the .WAV file to the following parameters: **8-bit, Mono, 11.025 KHz sampling rate.**

Slow, Erratic, or "Choppy" Performance

Video performance may appear choppy or sluggish. This is due to the difference in performance between video cards. Certain video cards can only go so fast. Video memory and the overall speed of the video card directly influences performance of the product.

Also, Widget Workshop must update sound as well as video. If your widget appears to be sluggish when running, turn off the sound. Turning off the sound will increase performance of some widgets.



When playing lots of sounds at once, you may notice a change in volumes. Be prepared to adjust your speaker volume as necessary.

Memory Issues

The bigger the widget you build, the more memory you'll need. Parts that use sound--like the Sound Recorder--use up the most memory. If you're building a widget and run out of memory, you can free up some memory by quitting all Windows programs except Widget Workshop. If you still run out of memory, try to use less sound parts.

When you run out of memory, a dialog box will warn you that you're out of memory and suggest that you save your widget. **SAVE YOUR WIDGET!** Then quit Widget Workshop and any other applications you have running. After that, you can restart Widget Workshop and reload your widget.

If you see an error message that says, "Widget Workshop is unable to record sounds," this means you're out of memory.

If you see an error message that says, "An error occurred while writing to disk. Your disk is probably full," and you're disk is not full, this means Widget is out of memory, too.

If you see a red X over a sound part, it means that you're out of memory and the sound part won't work.

Memory may also be an issue in running widgets (regular or stand-alone) that you get from other people. If they have more memory than you, they can create a widget that is too big to run on your computer. If this happens, try quitting all programs except Widget Workshop. If you still don't have enough memory, you may be out of luck (unless or until you add more RAM to your computer).

Mac vs Windows: Portability issues (NOT AVAILABLE IN THE DEMO VERSION)

We've taken the time to make sure that saved widgets from all versions of Widget Workshop are as compatible as possible, but there are a few details you should be aware of when porting widgets from Mac to PC or vice versa:

» When porting widgets from Windows to Macintosh (or vice versa), you will need a third-party conversion program to convert the different versions. PC Access, Access PC, or PC Exchange are a few of such programs which will allow you to convert PC files for use with the Macintosh.

In addition, widgets from the Macintosh must be renamed to have a **.WGT** extension before they can work under Windows. And before widgets from Windows can work with the Macintosh version of Widget Workshop, you must use a utility program like Disktools or ResEdit to make sure the file's Type is set to **Gadf** and the file's Creator is set to **Gadg**.

One more thing: since the Work Area in the Windows version can be much larger than the Work Area in the Macintosh version, if you want to share your widgets with someone who has the Macintosh version of Widget Workshop, be sure to keep your widget from spreading out too far, or let Widget Workshop automatically shrink it for you with the **Fit To Work Area...** item in the Edit menu.

Printing Issues

If you receive a low memory message when trying to print a widget, you may need to increase the amount of free memory available in Windows (quit all programs except Widget Workshop).

Mouse Distance Measurer Calibration

The Mouse Distance Measurer is a part that lets you measure distances with your mouse. Every mouse and mouse driver is different, so even though it should be pretty accurate for most mice, it can be calibrated to be more accurate with your mouse.



To calibrate it, use a ruler to mark an exact distance (like 4 inches) on a piece of paper. In Widget Workshop, measure the distance with the Mouse Distance Measurer--be sure to move the mouse SLOWLY when measuring. If it measures too short, then you need to increase your mouse's sensitivity. If it measures too long, then you need to decrease your mouse's sensitivity.

Technical Help

If you have trouble running the Widget Workshop for Windows Interactive Demo or get error messages (heaven forbid!), here are some basic helpful tips.

Most technical problems involve one or more of these issues:

1. Conflicts with other programs concurrently running under windows
2. Memory: the amount of RAM you have
3. Video card installation and drivers
4. Sound card installation and drivers

The first thing to do is to find the documentation and disks that came with Windows and with your video and sound cards and keep them handy.

Conflicts with Other Programs

One of the great things about Windows, is that it lets you run more than one program at once. The drawback is that sometimes these different programs don't get along--they fight over memory or other resources. If you have trouble running Widget Workshop along with any other program, exit all programs but Widget Workshop.

Memory

If you run out of memory while building a widget, you will see an "Out of Memory" message. When this happens, you should delete some of the widgets' parts and make your widget smaller (so it'll fill less memory). Sometimes, you might not even have enough memory to delete parts. If this happens, then save the widget, exit and restart Widget Workshop then reload the widget. If you still can't delete parts, then save it again, exit and restart Widget Workshop again and reload the widget again. The second time should be the charm.

Video Card Installation and Drivers

There are a lot of different video cards, and they all work a little differently. That's why they all have special "interpreter" software, called drivers. Programs like Widget Workshop can talk to the drivers and the drivers talk to the video cards. If it weren't for drivers, software makers would have to redesign all their programs (and rip out their hair in frustration) every time a new video card came out.

The gist of this is that you have to have the right driver for your video card, especially to work with a program like Widget Workshop, that works best with your monitor set to 256 colors.

Please refer to the documentation and disks that came with your video card for details and drivers. Phone numbers for many video card manufacturers can be found in the Widget Workshop Quick-Start Guide.

Here are some special notes on particular types of video cards:

Cards with the Cirrus Logic Chipset

Certain older drivers shipped with Cirrus Logic video cards may be incompatible with Widget Workshop for Windows. Make sure you have the absolutely most recent versions of the video drivers for your card or use the Microsoft Generic SVGA drivers, available on most online systems or from Microsoft.

Diamond Stealth 64 DRAM/VRAM

>>**Important! Really Important!**<< If you have a Diamond Stealth 64 VRAM or DRAM video card, you need to disable **all** "Power Saver" features (**even the DOS ones!**)! Otherwise, your system may inexplicably power off while Widget Workshop is in the foreground.

Sound Card Installation and Drivers

There are almost as many sound cards as there are video cards, and they need their drivers, too. Please refer to the documentation and disks that came with your sound card for details and drivers. Phone numbers for many sound card manufacturers can be found in the Widget Workshop Quick-Start Guide.

Problems with Sound

If your computer hangs up (stops working) when you play sounds in Widget Workshop, make sure you have the latest drivers for your sound card. If that doesn't fix it, then you (and we) most likely have a problem with your actual sound card. Some sound cards fool Widget Workshop and tell it that they can play more than one sound at a time, but they can't.

To fix this, there is a way to make Widget Workshop play only one sound at a time. Here's what you need to do:

1. BE CAREFUL! You are about to edit an **.INI file**. Please follow these instructions carefully, and don't change anything else in the file.
2. From the Start Menu select **Run...**
3. Browse with Explorer until you locate and select **widget.ini** [Enter]
4. When Notepad opens, find this line (it'll be near the top):
;SimpleSoundPlease=1
5. Delete the semicolon (;) so it looks like this:
SimpleSoundPlease=1
6. Save the file and exit Notepad.

Now Widget Workshop will only play one sound at a time no matter what your sound card tells it--and no more hangups! (Note: this may make your widgets run a little slower. If you turn off sounds by clicking on the sound button in the Control box, they will run at normal speed.)

If you change your sound card or update your sound drivers, you want to put the semicolon back in and test it. If it hangs up, remove it again.

Getting More Technical Help

Besides the documentation for your computer, Windows, your video card and your sound card, there is another source of technical help.

The Maxis Tech Support crew gathered solutions to the most common problems that our customers have, and put them into a Write file. This file is on the Widget Workshop CD, and is called Techtips.wri. When Widget is installed, an icon is created for Techtips.wri, but the file won't be copied to your hard drive, so you'll have to put the Widget Workshop CD into your drive to view it.

How to Reach Maxis Customer Support

What To Do Before You Call Customer Support

Before you call Customer Support, please be sure that you have read this file and any other appropriate material first. When you are at your wit's end, scratching your head and grumbling, read on to find out what to have ready when you call, so that we can get you up and running as quickly as possible.

Note: Please make sure that your computer system meets or exceeds the requirements defined on the system label. The system label is located in the lower-left portion on the front of the box or on the spine of the box. If your computer doesn't meet these requirements, then there's nothing Maxis Customer Support can do for you. Sorry.

What You Should Have With You When You Call

1. If you are getting error messages or General Protection Faults (GPFs), write down *exactly what the error message says*. That will help us diagnose the problem.
2. Write down all of the steps you have taken to solve the problem. If we know what you've already done, we may be able to get you running faster.
3. Have your program disk, your manual, and your Quick-Start Guide available and within easy reach.

Where You Should Be When You Call

Please, please, when you call us, be *in front of your computer!* We need to have you at your computer to explore your system to identify what is causing your problem.

Let's Do the Numbers!

There are a number of different options that you can use to contact Customer Support. The best way to reach us is by e-mail, FAX, or telephone. If you decide that you would like to call and hear a friendly voice, you'll find the number for Customer Support listed on the Maxis Maxims sheet, included in the box your

program came in. There's lots of other useful info there, so keep your Maxis Maxims somewhere handy.

In order to better serve you, we have established an automated Support service in addition to our live Support team. Automated Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By calling our Customer Support technical line, you may select automated Support in lieu of live assistance. Calling during non-Support hours will automatically prompt you for automated Support. Automated Support allows us to help you find a solution quicker, and helps to reduce on-line waiting time.

We are on all of the major on-line services and the Internet if you subscribe to any of these services. If you don't currently subscribe, many on-line services will give you a 30-day trial membership. Refer to the Maxis Maxims for more information.

If you have a modem, on-line support is often the best option. We maintain a BBS that is free-of-charge (excluding long distance charges from your phone company) to all registered users of Maxis products. The BBS number is (510) 254-3869 and it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We support up to 14.4k bps and currently have four nodes. The settings are 8-N-1. You can also find the latest FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), hints and tips from other users and other good stuff.

Fill in that card!

Make sure you register your software! We've included a handy little postcard for you to send in. This will entitle you to FREE Customer Support for the life of the product. The product life ends when a new version is released or the product is discontinued.

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