Quick Start

GET UP AND RUNNING WITH GIF CONSTRUCTION SET

This document will show you how to use GIF Construction Set to:

• Create a transparent GIF file
• Create an animated GIF file
• Create an animated GIF file with transpaency
• Create an interlaced GIF file

This is a very cursory tutorial which discusses the most commonly used functions of GIF Construction Set. For complete information baout all the features of GIF Construction Set -- most of which are not discussed here -- please see the GIF Construction Set documentation.

Create a Transparent GIF File

This section will discuss adding transparency to an existing single-image GIF file. A transparent GIF file is one in which one of the palette colours of the file is defined as transparent -- everywhere the transparent colour would normally appear, the background will appear instead. Only one colour can be declared as transparent for each image in a GIF file. If the background area of your GIF file actually consists of more than one colour, such as a dither pattern, the whole area will not appear transparent. Some image editing might be called for.

1. Select **Open** from the **File** menu of GIF Construction Set.

2. Select the GIF file you with to make transparent.

3. When your file is open, click once on the block immediately before the **Image** block -- this will usually be the **Header** block.

4. Select **Insert** from the button bar of GIF Construction Set.

5. Select **Control** from the **Insert** dialog. A new Control block will appear immediately before the Image block in your GIF file.

6. Double click on the **Control** block. A Control block editor will appear.

7. Enable the **Transparent Colour** option.

8. Click on the **Eyedropper** tool. The image in your GIF file will appear.

9. Click somewhere in the area you wish to make transparent. The image will vanish and you'll be returned to the Control Block editor.

10. Click on **OK** and save your GIF file.

You can preview your GIF file to make sure the transparency is behaving as you wish by clicking on the **View** button. In some cases, it's difficult to see transparent areas in a GIF file you've created -- if the background colour of your GIF file is white, for example, and the area you made transparent was also originally white, not much will appear to have changed. You can get around this as follows:

1. Double click on the **Header** block of your GIF file. A Header block editor will appear.

2. Click on the **Background** button. A colour selector will appear.

3. Select a fairly obvious colour, one which is unlike the original background colour of your GIF file before you made it transparent.

4. Click on OK and click on **View** to previous your image. The background colour should show through the transparent areas.

Note that the Background colour in the Header block of a GIF file is ignored by web browsers, which use the background of your page as the image background. As such, you can leave the Header block Background colour set to anything you like.

Create an Animated GIF File

This section will discuss the simplest way to create an animated GIF file with GIF Construction Set. There are others -- this approach assumes that all the cells of your animation exist as individual GIF files, and that they have more or less similar content and colour palettes. If either of these assumptions is not the case -- or if your resulting

GIF file doesn't look like you think it should -- you probably need to get more deeply into GIF Construction Set's features. See the GIF Contruction Set documentation and Frequently Asked Questions document.

Having said this, most animated GIF files can be successfully created this way.

1. Select **Animation Wizard** from the **File** menu of GIF Construction Set.

2. Click on **Next** to accept each of the defaults until you reach the file selection screen.

3. Select the individual source GIF files which will comprise your animation. You can do this one at a time, or all at once by holding down the **Crtl** key and clicking on each file name in sequence. Click on **Open** when you're done. Note that you must select at least two images to create an animation.

4. When you have finished selecting files, click on the **Cancel** button in the **Open** dialog, which will return you to the Animation Wizard window. Click on **Next**.

5. Click on **Done**. Animation Wizard will build your animation and open it in the main GIF Construction Set window when it's done.

6. You can preview your animation by clicking on **View**. Save your animation to a new GIF file by selecting **Save As** from the **File** menu of GIF Construction Set.

Note: this process discards any transparency information which might exist in your source GIF files. See the next section for a discussion of transparent animated GIF files.

Create an Animated GIF File with Transparency

This procedure assumes that the area to be made transparent in each of the images in your GIF file is the same colour. This will usually be the case. If it's not so, you'll find a solid background colour flashing on and off as your GIF file animates. In this case, you will have to set the individual background colours by hand, editing each of the Control blocks of your GIF file individually, as discussed earlier in the the section on creating a single transparent GIF.

1. Begin by creating an **animated GIF file** as discussed in the previous section of this document.

2. When your new GIF file has been opened in GIF Construction Set, go to the **Block** menu and select **Manage**.

3. Click on the **Select All** button in the **Manage** dialog.

4. Select **Set All Existing Controls** if it's not currently selected.

5. Click on **Apply** in the **Control Block** group.

6. A **Control Block** editor window will appear.

7. Enable the **Transparent Colour** option.

8. Click on the **Eyedropper** tool. The first image in your GIF file will appear.

9. Click somewhere in the area you wish to make transparent. The image will vanish and you'll be returned to the Control Block editor.

10. Open the **Remove By** combo box near the bottom of the Control Block editor and select **Background**.

11. Click on **OK** and save your GIF file.

See the discussion of transparency in the section of this document dealing with single-image transparent GIF files.

Create an Interlaced GIF File

An interlaced GIF file displays in coarse pixels in a web browser when it begins to download, and becomes more clearly defined as the download proceeds. It displays in single lines in GIF Construction Set, which are ordered to ultimately display the entire image. Interlaced GIF files offer no performance improvements -- they're wholly cosmetic.

Note that while you can create interlaced animated GIF files with GIF Construction Set, web browsers will not display them as such -- they'll de-interlace the downloaded image frames before they're displayed. There's no worthwhile reason for creating such a GIF file.

1. Select **Open** from the **File** menu of GIF Construction Set.

2. Select the GIF file you with to make interlaced.

3. When your file is open, double click on the **Image** block. An Image block editor will appear.

4. Enable the **Interlaced** option.

5. Click on **OK** and save your GIF file.

Click on View to see your GIF file displayed in an interlaced pattern. Note that this differs visually from the way web browsers display interlaced images.