Microangelo™ Quickstart User Guide

ATTENTION!

Icons can contain MULTIPLE IMAGES that support a SINGLE ICON. If you only read some of this document, be SURE to read the next few sentences before proceeding, to insure enjoying Microangelo as much as possible.

Versions of Windows beginning with Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 use multiple-image icons. These operating platforms and new applications created for them contain several image formats for every icon. The multiple images are used to support small and large icon displays and the higher resolutions available with some video cards and monitors. Windows will choose the image format that will appear best on your desktop or in a control when it is time to be displayed.

Microangelo provides complete access to all images within an icon. When an icon library is opened with Microangelo Librarian for viewing or managing, and when an icon resource is opened with Microangelo Studio for editing, be aware that there may be more images that support the icon than the one that you are looking at. Both the Librarian and the Studio have drop-down combo list controls towards the right on their tool bars.   Open the combo box and you will see a complete list of all of the image formats available. Click on any image format to select it for use.

The remainder of this document will tell you the most important things to know about Microangelo. It will take only a few minutes to read, and will provide you with valuable information that is guaranteed to help you get the most out of Microangelo.

Another important source of information is Microangelo's online Help. This document will provide a good foundation to begin with - the online Help will provide you with much more information and tips to make your work easier. You are encouraged to refer to (or even browse) the online Help index for specific tips and step-by-step instructions as you work.

More on Multiple-image Icons

Windows can automatically select the best looking image for your display from multiple image formats within an icon. The term image format refers to the size of the icon and how many colors can be included in the image. All new 32-bit Windows programs should contain icons that have image formats using 16 colors in 16x16, 32x32, and 48x48 in size. Some of the best icons will include 256 color image formats as well. Windows selects the best appearing image format for your display from those that are available every time an icon is displayed.

To see this first hand, open the Application Extension "Shell32" found in your Windows "System" folder. Users running under Windows 95 with the Microsoft Plus! package should examine the "Cool" Application extension file.

What's an Application Extension?

Windows NT and Windows 95 introduce long filenames and move towards eliminating the three character file extension that many of us are used to. Files are no longer referred to by cryptic three character types, but by descriptive names. For example, program files, or "EXE" files, are now referred to as "Application" files. Here are a few important file types and their new names under Windows 95 and Windows NT.

Old File Type	New Type Name
EXE	Application
DLL	Application Extension
ICO	Icon Resource

ICL   Icon Library

Microangelo uses the new type names when referring to files. Also, the term "icons" is frequently used when referring to Icon Resource files, and "libraries" is used to refer to Application, Application Extension, and Icon Library file types.

With that behind us, let's move on to the fun!

Where to start?

This Microangelo package contains three components: the Browser, the Librarian, and the Studio. Here's a quick description of each component - more hot tips for each one appear below.

The Browser   Use it to assist you whenever you use Microangelo. The Browser provides access to icons and files that contain them, such as Icon Libraries, Applications, and Application Extensions. You can open these files types to work with them, and be returned to the Browser when your work is complete.

The Browser has intelligent tabs in its main window that you can set to any drive and folder. The tabs are labelled to indicate the type of file(s) that each one will access. Each tab seeks out files of its type and displays only those that contain icons. What a time saver!

The Librarian   Use it to view, create, and manage libraries of icons. The Librarian can open Icon Library, Application, and Application Extension files. You can create new library files and then drag and drop icons or other libraries into the Librarian from Windows Explorer or from Microangelo's Browser.

Double-click on any icon to edit the images that it contains. All image formats that support the icon will be passed to the Studio for your edit session.

The Studio   Use it to create or edit icons. Microangelo Studio provides a rich set of editing tools and controls that will help you edit icon images in all sizes and color formats. It is the only editor that we are aware of outside of development tools used by programmers that provides this level of performance.

The Studio can also import and scale 256 color bitmap images to create stunning icon images with just a few clicks of the mouse.

More on the Browser

Although Microangelo Librarian and Studio can be launched by simply double-clicking on an Icon Resource or Icon Library from Windows Explorer, many users will find that the Browser can make their work even easier. Also, Windows hides Application Extension files from its own pre-defined list of file types by default when you install it. The Browser will display and allow access to all Icon Resource, Icon Library, Application, and Application Extension files that contain icons.

- Double-click on any image in a tab and the Browser will open the file for work. Icon files are opened with the Studio for editing and library files (files with more than one icon) are opened with the Librarian.

- The Browser's tabs have three display modes controlled by the tool buttons directly above the Welcome tab. Select Report Mode to view details on icon files. Click on a column heading to sort the items according to the information contained in the column (clicking on Date or Time will sort on both Date and then Time). Sort by "Icons" to find files with many icons, or by "Date" to easily work on recent projects.

- The tabs will stay positioned to the drive and folder that you set each of them to until you move them to a new location. Each tab will also remember the last viewing mode it was set to - set the view that you prefer for the different tabs.

More on the Librarian

Microangelo Librarian can update icon images within Application and Application Extension files. These file types usually contain program code and other resources in addition to icons. Microangelo only allows copying or editing of the existing image types. Adding or deleting icons or icon images could very likely cause undesirable results or failures within the components that rely on the contents of these files.

The Librarian supports the creation and maintenance of custom Icon Library files. These file types are 100% compatible with Windows and other applications that normally read icons from Application and Application Extension files.

- A small "traffic light" at the left of the Librarian's status bar will indicate yellow when and Application or Application Extension has been opened to remind you that the icons or images cannot be added or removed. The traffic light will display green when an Icon Library is open and full updating is allowed.

- If you see any icons in an Application or Application Extension that you would like to collect into a new custom library, from the File menu, click on New Window. Then drag the icons into the new Librarian window. You can add as many icons you want before saving the new library. Please refer to Microangelo's online Help for more information and tips on selecting and dragging icons.
- Select an icon with a right button click to access a pop up menu of commands related to the icon, including a Properties page that displays information on the current image and other available images. Right click on any area not occupied by an icon to access the Property page for the Librarian's current workspace.

More on the Studio

Microangelo Studio provides equal or better editing features and access to icon images than most commercial and professional icon editors. The Studio allows you to work on all images contained in an icon in the same edit session. You can copy and paste images from of one size and color format to another, making it easier to create multiple-image icons. Separate "Undo" and "Redo" buffers are used for each image being edited, and each 256 color image uses a separate color palette that can be edited as required.

All editing Is performed in the grid area of the main window. The status panel to the left of the grid displays an actual size view of the image currently being edited, and the current A and B colors associated with the left and right mouse buttons by many of Studio's drawing tools. The B color can also used as a background color when dragging a selection or pasting. On the Tools menu, click Drag and Paste to select opaqueness or transparency of Color B for these operations.

The View menu contains toggle selections for displaying or hiding Studio's accessories. The color box contains color wells for every color used in the current image. The tool box contains tool button access to all of the drawing tools. The main window, color box, and tool box remember their last position on your desktop and initialize to the same places when used later.

- Click on the New Image Format tool button on the far right of the tool bar to add a new image to the current icon. You can select the size and color format of the new image. The Studio will open a new image filled with "screen". Use the Image Format drop-down

combo box to the left of the New Image Format button to move to any image format in the current icon.

- Use the Color Eraser tool to easily change one color to another. Select the old color as Color A and the new color as Color B, then click and drag in the grid area to selectively change pixels of one color to another.

- Use Undo and Redo generously to experiment. The Studio can Undo many changes, and Redo them back again. You cannot Redo changes that have been undone after deciding to continue with more drawing.

- On the Edit menu, Paste Special increases the power of standard paste operations. You can paste directly from a 16 or 256 color bitmap on disk, and paste into a currently selected area of your image for controlled sizing and scaling.

- Also on the Edit menu, Open Bitmap As New Image provides a better alternative for using 16 and 256 color bitmaps than Paste Special when you are creating a new image and would like to preserve the colors from the source bitmap. Using the Open Bitmap As Image command causes the color of the bitmap file to be read in and used for the image. This contrasts with using Paste Special to paste a bitmap image, because the Studio will always keep the current color palette and translate the incoming information when a Paste operation is performed.

For more information, please refer to Microangelo's online Help, available on the Help menu or Help button of any Microangelo component.

We hope that you find Microangelo useful enough to decide to register it and continue to enjoy using it on your computer. We believe that you will see that Microangelo does much more than any other icon or cursor utility, and offers you a higher return in value for your investment.

Thank you for taking the time to evaluate Microangelo. We hope to hear from you soon!

The Impact Team