

in

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Contents

1	in	1
1.1	YAFA	1
1.2	Introduction	1
1.3	Features	2
1.4	Software	2
1.5	Wildfire	2
1.6	YP	3
1.7	Disclaimer	5
1.8	Copyright	5
1.9	Authors	5

Chapter 1

in

1.1 YAFA

The YAFA-Format

Introduction

Features

Software

Disclaimer

Copyright

Authors

(Last changes: Friday 26-Apr-96)

1.2 Introduction

1.1 Description

YAFA is a new powerful animation-format for the Amiga-computer-series of the new generation. Unlike the popular formats like "ANIM" or "SSA" the internal representation of the graphical data isn't fixed. So it's possible to create animations which run fast on every machine. Because of the realtime-zoom-feature you can now create full-screen-animations on your A1200 which run at 50 fps.

1.2 Motivation

I like fast and long animations containing special-effects. To decrease the size and the render-time I produce only halve-screen-images (but thousands of them).

Therefore I need a program which loads and zooms the animation in realtime in a fast manner. Because one looping animation is boring a program is required which plays 50 animations sequentially without any delay or flickering between the transitions. 50 animations without sound are boring, too. So we need a program which plays sound-modules or frame-synchronized samples.

But there is no other software with such features - so we had to produce our own animation-system. Now it's in a nearly finished state - all planned features are implemented - and many more. I think that the "YAFA"-format is worth to become a standard-format like "ANIM" because it has really amazing features. Because it has an open structure it's purpose isn't restricted to a particular use.

1.3 Features

The following format-specifications are currently implemented

- image data (depth 1-8 bit) is stored as bitplanes or chunky pixels
- optional delta compression (BYTE,WORD,LONG)
- optional post compression (XPK)
- timecodes
- static or dynamic palette
- annotations

All these options can be mixed. This makes it possible to create animations with run smooth on every machine. The optimum depends on the kind of animation, of course.

1.4 Software

The following two programs are nearly in a finished state:

The Converter

Wildfire

The Player

YP

If you want to develop own software (commercial or whatever) contact one of the authors for the YAFA format specification.

1.5 Wildfire

Wildfire is a real professional program which offers unique features. Because it has for example more than 300 ARexx-commands it's impossible to create a complete features-list.

Main features:

- very fast converting
 - input: YAFA, ANIM5, ANIM7S, ANIM7L, IFF-pictures
 - output: YAFA, ANIM5, ANIM7S, ANIM7L, IFF-pictures
- preview-function for all operations
- project-editor with time-profile-editor which allows to create complicated projects with a few mouse-clicks
- processor: this program-part is made for the power-user: it allows to create time-dependant special-effects using ADPro in a very easy way, another use is to import every picture-format into the converter or to convert an animation of the resolution 640x480x8 in another one with a resolution of 352x280x5 (I'm sure - you wont want to miss it)
- envelope-editor
- timecodes-editor
- powerful player-interface
- nice animation-information-function which displays size-profiles etc.
- all categories of generated data (animations,projects,processes, variables,envelopes,converter-sessions,annotations) can be loaded and saved to different user-defined locations with user-defined file-tags
- font-sensitive GUI without MUI
- ARexx-port
- macros, custom-windows, docks

1.6 YP

The program 'YP' is a player for YAFA animations. We have been developing it for nearly one year, and now it runs quite stable and has a lot of the features we wanted to implement. The demo 'Data World' which won second price at The Party 95 was the first big release using the YAFA format and an early version of 'YP'. All you people out there having 'Data World' on your HD or CD-ROM: please don't worry about all the bugs in the old player anymore, use the new one instead! :-)

requirements:

- AGA Amiga (AGA gfx, 68020+, OS V39+)

recommended extras:

- hard disk
 - FastRAM
-

-better processor (68030 40MHz is ok, 68060 is cool!)
-xpkmaster.library V2 and compressors

some features of YP:

-animations can be played directly from disk (HD, CD-ROM)
or can be preloaded (caching) for higher playback rates
-display types: hardware style (fast!), intuition screen, public window
-realtime 2x2 zooming
-batch files (animation sequences are played without any gaps or delays)
-frame-synchronous sound effects
(PT-modules, IFF-samples (mono, stereo), NOT IN EVALUATION VERSION)

Now a short description of all the options the program knows:

GENERAL OPTIONS (not for use in batch files)

-pubscr <name> a window on the specified public screen is used;
note that this method is very slow on normal Amigas;
it does not support double buffering so you will notice
some flickering especially in anims with dynamic palette.

-modeid <hex> a screen (actually two) in the specified mode ID is used;
note that this is also very slow but there is at least
no annoying flickering;
a window will be opened on the default public screen, this
is used for keyboard input, so if you deactivate it you
can't tell the player to quit or whatever, you will have
to reactivate that input window.

-info don't play, just show some information about the anim(s).

-verbose show some information about anims, sounds, options.

-stats show statistics at exit (played frames, time, rate).

-freecpu useful for public window mode only; uses as less CPU power
as possible while playing; can cause a slight slowdown.

-nodeactivate useful for public window mode only; don't pause anim when
window is deactivated.

-nochipmem useful for public window and intuition screen; only makes
sense on graphics boards that don't need any ChipRAM.

-fastblit public window: faster but can cause more flickering;
intuition screen: slightly faster, higher CPU load.

ANIMATION OPTIONS (set for every single anim in batch files)

-firstframe <num> skip frames before the specified one.

-lastframe <num> end playing when the specified frame is reached;

can be greater than the number of frames in the anim, the anim will be looped until that frame.

-speed <num> override the speed setting in the anim. (lower=faster)

-buffers <num> set number of loadbuffers (default: 6); more buffers can make loading and playing smoother.

-caching the complete anim will be preloaded.

-loadall the complete anim will be preloaded and decrunched. (XPK)

-zoom do realtime 2x2 zooming. (hardware display only)

-dither do realtime 2x2 zooming and simple dithering. (hardware display only)

1.7 Disclaimer

No Warranty

This documentation and the YP program are provided "as is" without any warranty, either expressed or implied. You use this software on your own risk.

1.8 Copyright

The YAFA format is developed by WK-Artworks and Infect. If you want to use it in your own software contact one of the authors for the specification.

The player program YP is (c) 1996 by WK-Artworks and Infect. The evaluation version of YP is freely distributable, commercial use is strictly prohibited.

1.9 Authors

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