

**MainActor:Docs/English/MainActor**

**COLLABORATORS**

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# Chapter 1

## MainActor:Docs/English/MainActor

### 1.1 MainActor:Docs/English/MainActor.guide

MainActor 1.55 Documentation

\*\*\*\*\*

Warm Up

Disclaimer

Disclaimer and legal stuff

Installation

How to install MainActor

Introduction

What is MainActor ?

The User Interface

The Menus

All about MainActors menus

The Windows

and windows

Reference Chapters

The Modules

Description of the modules in 1.55

Sound Support

How MainActor handles Sound

The Arexx Interface

MainActors arexx interface

MainView

All about MainView, MainActor's  
external player

Other Stuff

Tutorial

Starting the easy way

Tips and Tricks

Useful things to know

Registration

How to register MainActor

The Future

Thoughts on MainActors future

Credits

The author wants to thank ...

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Index of this document

## 1.2 MainActor.guide/Disclaimer

Warm Up

\*\*\*\*\*

MainActor is shareware. The program may be freely distributed and copied as long as the following conditions are acknowledged:

- The sales price must not be higher than the cost of an (empty) disk plus a nominal copying fee plus costs for shipping. The total price must not be higher than US 6 \$ or 10 DM.
  - All parts of the program and the documentation must be complete. The distribution of single parts is not allowed.
  - MainActor or parts of it must not be sold in combination with commercial software without the written permission of the author.
  - Program and documentation must not be changed in any ways. The repacking of this distribution with different packers is, however, allowed.
  - Permission is granted to include this archive in Public-Domain collections, especially in Fred Fishs Amiga Disk Library (including CD ROM versions of it).
  - The author is not responsible for misuse, or damage caused by MainActor.
-

## 1.3 MainActor.guide/Installation

Installation

\*\*\*\*\*

Just copy the MainActor drawer to a device of your choice and add an assign to your user-startup, like

```
assign MainActor: <Path>
```

The Locale, Rexx and Docs directories should stay in the MainActor directory.

The default configuration file will clone your Workbench, the positions of the windows are however saved according to my setup and may look strange on yours.

If you have an older version of MainActor installed, make sure to delete it before installing the new version (except perhaps the preferences files).

## 1.4 MainActor.guide/Introduction

Introduction

\*\*\*\*\*

MainActor is a full featured animation program. You can create / edit / time / play animations of any size on your native amiga chipset or your graphic card (if supported).

What is MainActor ?

The concept of MainActor

Features

Features of MainActor

New features in v1.1

New features of version 1.1

New features in v1.2

New features of version 1.2

New features in v1.5

New features of version 1.5

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## 1.5 MainActor.guide/What is MainActor ?

What is MainActor ?

=====

MainActor is a modular animation package for the Amiga. At the moment, there exist five different kinds of modules:

- 1) Animation Loaders
- 2) Animation Savers
- 3) Picture Loaders
- 4) Picture Savers
- 5) Sound Players

This can change in the future.

You can handle up to five projects; every project can have an animation or picture loader, as well as an animation or picture saver. This makes it possible to convert everything in any ways, the number of available modules can be easily upgraded.

Additionally, you can associate the Sound modules to every frame of your animation or picture. Allowing MultiMedia demonstrations.

## 1.6 MainActor.guide/Features

Features

=====

- Intelligent caching/tracking, MainActor can cache your animations and picture lists, if you have not enough memory it will directly access your data from any device. This makes it for example possible to create/edit/play a 400MB animation on your 2MB Amiga.
  - If you run OS 3.0 or higher, you will get an extra speed bonus on animations by the use of the new graphic routines. For OS2.0/2.1 users there are specific routines in the modules, which will give them the best playback speed possible on their system (and my knowledge :)).
  - Under OS 3.0 you will get the extra features of showing pictures or playing animations in a scrollable, resizable window on your MainActor or Workbench screen. The colors will be properly adjusted to your screen attributes.
  - The modules have play routines of their own, so it will be possible to redirect the input/output of special modules to graphic boards or other hardware.
-

- The play routines support a timecode per frame option. A sound module (per frame) option will be there in one of the next releases.
- MainActor has a totally user reconfigurable GUI. The settings of your sessions can be saved, this includes the size/position of windows as well as the status of the projects.
- MainActor has an arexx port, nearly all functions can be accessed through it. You can for example scale or dither whole animations on the fly through the use of an image processor, scripts are included.
- MainActor lets you setup and save nearly everything concerning the display mode for playing an animation or showing a picture. For example you can set the X/Y offsets, the display mode ID of your screen (view) and so on.
- MainActor supports localization (wb 2.1+ required).

## 1.7 MainActor.guide/New features in v1.1

New features in v1.1

=====

- You can now map your arexx scripts to the function keys.
  - New IFF-Anim8\_32, IFF-Anim8\_16, PCX modules.
  - The new Universal modules allow you to easily load all of the supported graphic formats. The Universal\_Picasso-II modules remap the output of all modules directly to the Picasso-II graphics board from Village Tronic.
  - MainActor now has a powerful external player named 'MainView', it can view all animations/pictures for which MainActor has the proper loader module. It is executeable from the Workbench or CLI and supports, per tooltypes or CLI arguments, all of MainActors view options.
  - MainActor now (optionally) saves icons for your newly created animations or pictures, enabling you to view the animations/pictures by selecting their icons. These icons support the same tooltypes as MainView.
  - You can now control how many times MainActor/MainView plays animations.
  - The new 'Flash' option allows you to profile your animations.
-

## 1.8 MainActor.guide/New features in v1.2

New features in v1.2

=====

- MainActor/MainView now have a center option which allows highly accurate centration of your images or animations.
- New BorderBlank option.
- MainActor has a new window called Project Information Window. The new functions included in the window are:
  - \* An information window which will give you detailed descriptions of your current animation or picture list.
  - \* You can now view the size and time profiles of your projects as a graphical representation.
  - \* You can compare the decompression times of your projects through new timer functions.
- New GIF/FLI/FLC/DL loader modules and FLI/FLC saver modules.
- Chunky pixel modules (GIF/FLI/FLC) will fly if loaded through universal modules which support graphic cards (like Universal\_PicassoII etc.). You can of course also view them on your native chipset as normal.
- Introduction of a new (light) registration package. It does not have the handbook or the disk based updates but is cheaper.
- You can now use the save/append functions again, even if you have not registered MainActor. You will have to deal with requesters though.

## 1.9 MainActor.guide/New features in v1.5

New features in v1.5

=====

- Major hd playback improvements of all modules. Average speed increase is about 2 - 5 times the speed of v1.2, giving you maximum performance.
  - Sound Support. MainActor now has Sound Modules which allow you to associate sound effects to every frame of an animation. This works for pictures too. The sound information is module independent, that means that you could use the same sound information ("#?.snd") on every module type MainActor supports.
  - New Real3D, IFF-Anim3, IFF-AnimJ, Picasso and AVI animation loader.
-

- The usage of the Append function is now easier. The saver module now recognizes automatically if the destination project is of the right type. That means that you can now use the universal modules for appending.

## 1.10 MainActor.guide/The Menus

### The Menus

\*\*\*\*\*

You are able to access most of MainActor's functions through the various menu items and their equivalent shortcuts. Some functions can only be accessed in the menus.

#### Project Menu

The Project Menu

#### Text Buffer Menu

The Text Buffer Menu

#### Selection Menu

The Selection Menu

#### Miscellaneous Menu

The Miscellaneous Menu

#### Arexx Menu

The Arexx Menu

#### Windows Menu

The Windows Menu

## 1.11 MainActor.guide/Project Menu

### Project Menu

=====

#### Open New Project

will open a new project window. You can open up to five project windows, see

Project Window

.

The attributes of the project window will be set, according to the defaults selectable in the

MainActor Preferences Window

.

## Project

Consists of several submenu items, their functions are identical to the gadgets of the

Project Control Panel Window

.

## Open Prefs

Opens an ASL-requester which lets you choose a MainActor preferences file, saved with one of the two following menu items. When you have chosen a prefs file, the display AND all projects and their contents will be closed, MainActor will then be reopened with the settings of the preferences file.

You can also activate MainActor by simply clicking on the icons of the preferences files.

## Save Prefs As ...

Saves your current setup of MainActor; nearly everything will be saved : the complete project information, all view settings, the actual project name, the size and position of all windows, the settings of the system preferences ... .

An self-executing icon will be created for the preferences file. You should save every setup you use frequently !

## Save Prefs As Defaults

This will save your setup as the default preferences file, which will be automatically loaded when you start MainActor. The default preferences file is MainActor:Prefs/Default\_Prefs. Replace the default by your most used setup.

## Iconify

MainActor will be terminated and the MainActor icon will be placed on your Workbench. If you want to reactivate MainActor, just click on the icon.

## About

Gives you some information of the current version of MainActor and it's author.

## Quit

Will close all projects and quit MainActor.

---

## 1.12 MainActor.guide/Text Buffer Menu

Text Buffer Menu

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MainActor uses the  
Text Buffer Window  
for presenting feedback to the  
user.

Print Buffer

Prints the information stored in the Text Buffer Window.

Save Buffer As ...

Will let you choose a file into which the contents of the Text  
Buffer Window will be saved.

Clear Buffer

Will clear the Text Buffer Window and delete its buffer.

## 1.13 MainActor.guide/Selection Menu

Selection Menu

=====

The Selection Menu is very important for easy selection of the items  
in your source project. You can select or deselect all or a range of  
items. The menu items are only accessible when a project is loaded  
into the source project.

Select All

Will select all items (frames/pictures) in your source project.

Select Range

A requester will pop up, just enter the start/stop frame for the  
range of items to be selected.

DeSelect All

This item will deselect all frames/pictures in your source project.

DeSelect Range

A requester will pop up, just enter the start/stop frame for the  
range of frames/pictures to be deselected.

Invert

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Inverts the selection status of the items in the source project. All selected items will become deselected and all deselected items will become selected.

## 1.14 MainActor.guide/Miscellaneous Menu

### Miscellaneous Menu

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The menu items of this menu will only be accessible when a project is loaded into the source project. The Set Timecode item will only be activated if an animation project is loaded into the source project.

#### Project Information

This menu item is identical to the Project Information function of the

Project Information Window

.

#### Size Profile

This menu item is identical to the Size Profile function of the

Project Information Window

.

#### Time Profile

This menu item is identical to the Time Profile function of the

Project Information Window

.

#### Set Sound

This function opens the Sound Module Requester, which allows you to associate sound effects to every frame of an animation or picture (list).

The listview requester to the right shows you the name of the pictures for which a sound effect was associated. Only one effect per picture is possible. You can select the pictures in the listview requester with your mouse, the name of the currently selected picture is visible in the text field to the right of the Choose Frame gadget.

#### Add Sound

This gadget will add a new item to the listview requester named Choose Frame. You can now select a picture for it through the Choose Frame gadget.

#### Clone

If you have selected an item in the listview requester, you can

use this gadget to add a new item to the listview requester. This new item will have the same Choose Sound Module and Choose Sound Object fields of the old item. The only thing you have to do is to select a picture for it.

#### Remove

If you select this gadget, the currently selected item in the listview requester will be removed from the list.

#### Test

If you have initialized the currently selected sound item correctly, you will be able to test it through this gadget.

#### Channel Cycle Gadget

You can choose between three different settings :

##### Left Sound Channel

If you have choosen this setting, the sound effect will only use the left sound channel (and therefore only the left speaker).

##### Right Sound Channel

The same as above, only for the right sound channel.

##### Stereo Sound

This setting will enable stereo mode, the sound effect will use both sound channels at the same time.

#### Choose Frame

You can (re)select the picture for the currently selected sound effect by clicking on this gadget. You can see the currently selected picture for the sound effect to the right of this gadget. If this field contains Choose Frame, you will have to select a picture for it, otherwise it will not be saved.

#### Choose Sound Module

Select the sound module in the requester, the sound module should bear the anme of the format of your sound object. If you have, for example, selected a sample as sound object, you will have to use the IFF-Sample module as sound module. You can see the currently selected sound module to the right of this gadget.

#### Choose Sound Object

Choose the sound object itself in the ASL-Requester or enter the name in the string requester to the right. You can select the initial path for your sound objects in the Choose Sound Path gadget of the

MainActor Preferences Window

.

If you want to test if the combination of sound object and sound module is ok, just select the Test gadget.

#### Ok

This gadget writes the sound information to your harddisk under the name of the source project + ".snd". You can test it out by playing the animation or showing the pictures for which a sound



effect was added.

Cancel

Will quit the Sound Module Requester without saving the changes.

If you want an example how to use the Sound Module Requester, load the provided example animation and examine the settings of the sound items.

Set Timecode

Enter the timecode in the requester which you want to be applied to all selected frames in the source project. Remember to hit return after you typed a new value into the integer gadget. The new timecode will be set immediately. All timecodes are entered in 1/60 of a second, MainActor calculates the right timecode for your vertical beam frequency itself.

After setting the timecode, playback of the animation will be adjusted to the new timecodes. If you for example set the new timecode for frame 1 to 120/60 of a second, playback will stop for two seconds at the first frame of the animation.

## 1.15 MainActor.guide/Aréxx Menu

Aréxx Menu

=====

See

The Aréxx Interface  
, for more information of MainActor's aréxx

capabilities.

Install Aréxx Scripts

This menu item will open a window in which you can map your most used aréxx scripts to the function keys. The cycle gadget in the upper part of the window will let you choose the function key on which you want to install an aréxx script. The function keys are displayed as F1 ... F20, F10 ... F20 mean the function key + one of the shift keys. You can choose the function key by clicking on the gadget or (the faster method) by simply pressing the appropriate function key. (Remember that you have to press F1 together with the shift key to get the F11 key).

Below the cycle gadget are the Select Script ... gadget and a string gadget. The aréxx script which is currently associated to the actual function key displayed in the cycle gadget is visible in the string gadget. You can enter a new aréxx script or edit the name of the existing one in the string gadget. You can use the Select Script ... gadget to choose the aréxx script via an ASL-requester.

The three gadgets in the lower part of the window are labeled Save,

Use and Cancel.

Save

saves your definitions of the function keys, they will be automatically reloaded the next time you start MainActor.

Use

will keep the definitions, but will not save them

Cancel

ignores the changes you made to the definitions.

Start Arexx Script

Will let you choose an arexx script, which will then be executed.

## 1.16 MainActor.guide/Windows Menu

Windows Menu

=====

This menu will let you open/close the different MainActor windows by simply selecting the desired menu item.

## 1.17 MainActor.guide/The Windows

The Windows

\*\*\*\*\*

The windows are MainActor's main interface to the user. Their use is however optional, you can close all of them (except the Project Windows) and only use the menus. The choice is yours. The position and status of the windows will be saved in the preferences files.

The following is a detailed description of MainActor's windows and their gadgets.

Project Window

The Project Window

Project Control Panel Window

The Project Control Panel Window

Project View Settings Window

The Project View Settings Window

Project Information Window

The Project Information Window

System Preferences Window  
The System Preferences Window

MainActor Preferences Window  
The MainActor Preferences Window

Text Buffer Window  
The Text Buffer Window

## 1.18 MainActor.guide/Project Window

Project Window

=====

A new Project Window will be opened by selecting the Open New Project menu item in the Project Menu

.

You can open up to five Project Windows, the number of your Project Window will be displayed in the title bar, in front of the project name, like 1: HAM8\_Animation. If no project is loaded, the title is Unused Project.

The Project Windows are mainly controlled by the

Project Control Panel Window

.

Project Mode Gadget

Depending on your project's mode, it will be labeled Source Project, Destination Project or DeActivated Project.

The Source Project

You can only have one source project. This is the project on which all actions from the

Project Control Panel Window

will be

executed. The gadgets of the Project Control Panel and the Project View Settings will be set up according to the source project.

The Destination Project

This is the project into which all selected data from the source project will be appended through the Append gadget of the Project View Settings Window.

There can only be one Destination Project.

The DeActivated Projects

These projects are waiting to be switched into the source or

destination mode. There can be more than one DeActivated Project.

You can change the project mode by clicking on the Project Mode Gadget, for example if you click on the source project's Project Mode Gadget, it will be changed into the destination project and the former destination project will be changed into the source project.

If you click on a DeActivated project's Project Mode Gadget, it will change into the source project.

If only one Project Window is open, you cannot change the Project Mode Gadget.

Everytime you switch the source project, the gadgets in the

Project Control Panel Window  
and the  
Project View Settings Window  
will

be adjusted to the settings of the new source project.

#### Caching

This is a simple toggle gadget. If it is checked, it means that your project is cached or is going to be cached in ram.

If you do not have enough ram, you will have to disable it. That means that, for example animations will be directly played from your harddisk, which will be much slower than playing them directly from ram.

You can only toggle the status of the Caching gadget when the project window is unused. As soon as you load a project, it will become ghosted.

#### Select Load Module

When clicking on this Button Gadget, a requester will appear in which you can select the load module for this project.

The cycling gadget in the requester will let you switch between Picture Loaders or Animation Loaders.

When hitting the Load gadget in the  
Project Control Panel Window

MainActor executes the animation/picture loader you have selected for the source project.

The name of the current load module is visible in a text gadget directly under the Select Load Module gadget. Next to the name is a small recessed box with an A or P in it. They stand for Animation or Picture loader.

The Select Load Module gadget will be ghosted as soon as you load a project.

#### Select Save Module

---

When clicking on this button gadget, a requester will appear in which you can select the save module.

The cycling gadget in the requester will let you switch between Picture Savers or Animation Savers.

When hitting the Save gadget in the  
Project Control Panel Window

MainActor executes the animation/picture saver you have selected for the source project.

The name of the current save module is visible in a text gadget directly under the Select Save Module gadget. Next to the name is a small recessed box with an A or P in it. They stand for Animation or Picture saver.

The Select Save Module gadget will only be accessible when a project is loaded.

#### The Scrolling Frames/Picture List

The scroll list will let you choose the frames or pictures you want to execute a certain operation on.

If you have an animation loader for this project window, the scroll list will show you the numbered frames of the animation along with their timecodes.

If you have a picture loader, the scroll list will show you the names of the pictures you have loaded.

Just (de)select the frame/picture by clicking on it's text. For multiple selection do not release the mouse button and move over the items to be selected. The list will scroll if you come to the top or bottom border.

See

MainActor Preferences Window

, you can select how many items

shall be displayed in the scroll list. You can also select a special font for it. (The default is Topaz 8 for the font and 8 for the number of items which shall be visible).

## 1.19 MainActor.guide/Project Control Panel Window

Project Control Panel Window

=====

This window executes it's functions on the current source

Project Window

## Load

If you have an animation loader selected for the source project, an requester will appear in which you have to select an animation of the appropriate type.

If you have a picture loader selected, the first requester will ask you about the first picture, after selecting this picture the second requester will ask you about the last picture. MainActor will now alphabetically sort the pictures and load them. For example, if you have a picture list:

```
Amiga_Pic.00001
Amiga_Pic.00002
.
.
Amiga_Pic.00155
```

and select Amiga\_Pic.00055 in the first requester and Amiga\_Pic.00100 in the next, all pictures from Amiga\_Pic.00055 to Amiga\_Pic.00100 will be loaded. The second requester is optional, that means you can abort it by clicking on Cancel if you just want to load one picture.

MainActor checks the icon (if there is one) of the project for the following tooltypes: Window, FrameInfo, NoCaching, BBlank, XOffset, YOffset, Repeat. If you saved the project with MainActor, these tooltypes will restore the settings of the Project View Settings Window.

The Load gadget is only available if you have not loaded a project into the source project yet.

## Unload

Is the gadget directly under the Load gadget. It will unload the current project of the source project.

It is only available when you have loaded a project into the source project.

## Play

Is next to the Load gadget. It is only available when you have loaded an animation project into the source project.

If you play your animation on a screen, there are two routines available. MainActor checks automatically if you run an OS Version lower than Amiga OS 3.0 and will play it the old fashioned way. If you have OS 3.0 or higher you will profit from the new double buffering routines.

The animation will be played according to the settings of the

Project View Settings Window

The following keys can be used to control the playing of the animation:

#### ESCAPE OR A MOUSEBUTTON

will abort playing the animation

#### SPACE

will stop playing the animation. While the animation is stopped you can use the TAB key to flip to the next frame.

#### RETURN

will enable the timecodes you see in the scroll list of the source project and which you can change (these timecodes are default).

#### THE CURSOR KEYS

scroll the display, the offset changes will be shown in the Project View Settings Windows x and y offset gadgets.

#### N

#### M

If you have activated the Frame Info option, you can cycle the color of the info text using N and M up and down.

#### THE FUNCTION KEYS

are used to set the frame rate, they override the defaults. You can reactivate the defaults by pressing RETURN.

#### F1

sets the timecode to 1/60 Second (60 fps)

#### F2

sets the timecode to 2/60 Second (30 fps)

#### F3

sets the timecode to 3/60 Second (20 fps)

#### F4

sets the timecode to 4/60 Second (15 fps)

#### F5

sets the timecode to 5/60 Second (12 fps)

#### F6

sets the timecode to 10/60 Second (6 fps)

#### F7

sets the timecode to 20/60 Second (3 fps)

#### F8

sets the timecode to 40/60 Second (1.5 fps)

#### F9

sets the timecode to 60/60 Second (1 fps)

#### F10

sets the timecode to 120/60 Second (0.333 fps)

---

## Show

Is the gadget under Play. It will display all the frames/pictures you have selected in the source project's scroll list. This gadget is available for both animation and picture projects.

The frames/pictures will be shown according to the settings of the  
Project View Settings Window  
.

The following keys can be used to control the showing of the pictures:

ESCAPE OR A MOUSEBUTTON  
will abort showing the pictures.

SPACE  
will show the next pictures you have selected.

THE CURSOR KEYS  
scroll the display, the offset changes will be shown in the Project View Settings Windows x and y offset gadgets.

## Save

If you have an animation saver activated in your source project, it will ask you about the name of the new animation. Then it will build up the new animation in the appropriate animation format. It will only save the frames you have SELECTED in the source project's scroll list. If you just want to convert or resave the animation, you have to select all the frames in the scroll list.

If you have a picture saver activated in your source project, a requester will appear in which you have to select the directory and the base name of the pictures.

Example: You have activated an animation loader and a picture saver and loaded an animation. The animation is called Example\_Anim. Now you select the first ten frames of the animation and click on the Save gadget. In the requester, you type Ram: for the Directory and Example\_Pics for the base name. The ten pictures will then be saved as

```
Ram:Example_Pics.00001  
Ram:Example_Pics.00002  
.  
.  
Ram:Example_Pics.00010
```

This is also valid if you have a picture loader and a picture saver.

If you have an animation saver, some more requester will appear and ask you for some specific attributes of the new animation, like Palette per Picture and Looping Animation.

The following combinations are possible:

---



1. Animation Loader and Animation Saver
2. Animation Loader and Picture Saver
3. Picture Loader and Animation Saver
4. Picture Loader and Picture Saver

In this way, you can easily convert any picture/animation format into any picture/animation format.

If frames or pictures of the source project, which have MainActor generated sound effects associated to them, are saved, the sound information for these frames will be saved for usage in the new project.

#### Append

You can append the frames/pictures you have selected in the source project to the destination project. The destination project has to be an animation project.

The source project's animation saver has to belong to the destination's loader module (for example the IFF-Anim5 loader and saver). The destination project must NOT be cached.

Some animation types have to fulfill some other attributes, for example the

IFF-Anim5

format can only append to non-looping animations.

When you want to append frames to a loop Anim5 animation, just resave it and select NO in the loop animation requester, then append the frames.

If you want to add a loop to a non-looping animation, just append two pictures which are identical to the first two, then reload the animation.

See

The Modules

, for more information about the specific attributes of the modules.

## 1.20 MainActor.guide/Project View Settings Window

Project View Settings Window

=====

This window controls the output of the Play and Show gadgets of the

Project View Settings Window

. The values will be set individually for each project and will be saved with the preferences files.

---

## Select Display

You can choose the view mode for your project with this gadget. This will override the old value, if you resave the animation/picture, the new view mode id will be saved. This gadget will be disabled if you view your project in the window mode.

## X/Y Offsets

With these two integer gadgets, you can select the offsets for your project. If you scroll a frame (while playing an animation or showing a picture), the values of the gadgets will immediately be set up to the new values. These gadgets will only be enabled if the Center option is disabled and you dont use the window mode.

## Display Mode

This cycle gadget will let you choose between the screen and window mode. In the screen mode the animation/pictures will be shown on a screen (view) of its own.

In the window mode your project will be shown in a resizable, scrollable window on your MainActor screen.

THIS OPTION IS ONLY AVAILABLE ON SYSTEMS RUNNING OS3.0+.

The more colors the MainActor screen has available (see

System Preferences Window

), the better is the dithering of your frame/picture. If you show a 256 color picture on a 4 color screen, you will be disappointed by the result. The timecodes of the animation will be ignored, the animation will be displayed as fast as possible.

## Number of Repeats

This integer gadget controls how often MainActor will play an animation. If it contains for example a "1", MainActor will play it one time. Possible values are 1 to 9999.

This gadget is only enabled if the source project contains an animation.

## Frame Info

This switch (when activated) will give you informations about the current frame while playing animations, it is only available if the source project contains an animation.

If playing on a screen you will see the info on the top right edge of the screen. When you see no info text, use the M and N keys while playing to cycle the color of the info text up and down.

When playing in a window, the window's title text will display the infos for the current frame.

This gadget is only enabled if the source project contains an

---

animation.

Center

If you enable the center option, MainActor will automatically center the display for your project. The x and y offset gadgets will be disabled but will contain the values for centration. The gadget will be disabled if you use the window mode.

BBlank

If you enable the BorderBlank feature (BBlank), MainActor/MainView will set the color of the border of your display to black.

Example:

You have an 320\*200 animation with blue as color 0. Without the BorderBlank option the whole screen has blue as color 0. If you enable the BBlank option only your animation (320\*200) will have blue as color 0, the border (the rest of the display) will be black.

The BBlank gadget is only available if you view your images in the screen mode.

## 1.21 MainActor.guide/Project Information Window

Project Information Window

=====

This window will supply you with informations about your current source project.

Project Information

This gadget opens an information window which should give you all needed information about your current source project. The window is opened centered on the visible part of your working screen. It's title bar shows you which project you are informed about (the actual source project that is).

Width, Height :

This line shows you the width and height of your project in pixels.

Number of Pictures/Frames :

Shows you the number of frames in your animation or the number of pictures in your picture list.

Number of Colors :

Shows you the number of colors of your project.

Special Flags :

This line shows you special attributes of the project (if there are any). The flags can currently be:

---

for no flags

HAM

for HAM pictures or animations

EHB

for extra halfbrite images

Size of Project in Bytes :

Shows you the size of your animation or the total size of all pictures in your picture list in bytes.

Supports Chunky Pixels

This line will only appear if your source project is chunky pixel based. Chunky pixel based formats are for example : GIF/FLI/FLC. If you dont have a chunky pixel device (like Retina or the Picasso-II), decompression time of these formats are higher, as they have to be converted to the amiga's bitmap format. You can prove that for yourself through the BitMap/Chunky Pixel Time functions.

Animation Text

This line will only appear if your source project is an animation. It informs you if you have a color palette per frame or only one color palette per animation and if the animations has a loop or not.

Picture/Frame List Gadget

This gadget (the one under the black line) lists your frames or pictures. You can only select one at a time, the size and compression attributes of the currently selected picture are given in the two gadgets below. If you have a looping animation, this gadget will contain two more pictures which are not given in the Number of Pictures : line ! These two pictures represent the loop. Some animation formats (like the IFF-AnimBrush loader) need only one picture for the loop information.

Size in Bytes

This gadget shows the size of the currently selected picture or frame in bytes.

Comp. Method

Informs you about the compression method used for the currently selected picture. For example ByteRun for IFF images or Delta5 for IFF-Anim5 frames. Consider that the first frame of an IFF-AnimX animation mostly has an IFF-ByteRun image for the first frame.

Size Profile

This function opens a window and shows you the sizes of the images in your animation/picture list as a graphical representation. The largest picture has the biggest vertical image, the smallest picture the smallest one. The graphic is layed out to be 600 pixels in width, so the horizontal pixel width for every frame is calculated by :  $600 / \text{Number of Pictures}$ . If there are more than 600 Pictures in your source

project the pixel width will be 1 for every picture and you may have to scroll with the windows scroll gadgets to see the whole graphic.

#### Time Profile

This function opens a window and shows you the time needed to decompress the images in your animation as a graphical representation. The image which has the slowest decompression time has the biggest vertical bar, the fastest the smallest one.

The bars can have two different colors:

#### black

This indicates that this image could not be decompressed in the given timecode. If for example image nr.3 of your animation has a timecode of 3/60 of a second, its bar will be black if the decompression time is bigger than 3/60. The first frame of your animations have mostly black bars, as these images can not be stored with delta compression.

#### blue

Everything is ok. This image could be decompressed within its timecode.

Things you have to consider:

- \* If you have black bars, consider that these images will decompress fast on fast machines and slow on slow machines. Try to increase the timecode of these frames until they have blue bars.
- \* If you want to be sure your animation runs smoothly on an A1200, remember to check the color of the bars on an A1200, your current machine (A3000 etc.) could be faster.
- \* The Time Profile function will always decompress the animations in their native format : Bitmap based animations will be decompressed in bitmap mode, chunky animations will be decompressed in chunky mode.

The graphic is layed out to be 600 pixels in width, so the horizontal pixel width for every frame is calculated by :  $600 / \text{Number of frames}$ . If there are more than 600 frames in your animation the pixel width will be 1 for every frame and you may have to scroll with the windows scroll gadgets to see the whole graphic.

The Time Profile function is only available if your source project is an animation.

#### BitMap Time

If you select this gadget MainActor will decompress the whole source project one time in bitmap format. That means that chunky formats like FLI will take more time due to the conversion to the amiga's bitmap format.

If the source project is an animation, MainActor will decompress the animation (without the loop frames) one time, if the source project is

a picture list, MainActor will decompress each picture in the list one time.

The time needed for decompression is given in the text gadget below the BitMap Time gadget. The time is displayed in seconds.

Note that the time given for decompression has nothing to do with the time needed to actually play the animation on a screen. The decomp. time function will just decompress the frames as quickly as possible and does not care about time codes or vertical blank interrupts. It is therefore quite accurate.

It is quite useful to be able to compare the decompression time of animations who have different animation formats. Choose the format who has the best decompression time and compression ratio and suits you best.

### Chunky Time

This gadget will only be enabled if the source projects module format supports chunky pixels (i.e. FLI/GIF etc.).

If you select it, MainActor will decompress the whole source project one time in chunky format.

If the source project is an animation, MainActor will decompress the animation (without the loop frames) one time, if the source project is a picture list, MainActor will decompress each picture in the list one time.

The time needed for decompression is given in the text gadget below the Chunky Time gadget. The time is displayed in seconds.

## 1.22 MainActor.guide/System Preferences Window

### System Preferences Window

=====  
This window handles everything concerning the outer appearance of MainActor.

#### Select Font

Choose your font for MainActor. This font will then be used for all windows, gadgets, menus. Only the list items of the

Project Window

will

be displayed in a different font, you can select it in the

MainActor Preferences Window

.

The actual font and it's size are displayed beneath the gadget. The Select Font gadget is not activated when you clone the Workbench screen.

---

OS 2.0 will display the font requester only on the workbench screen and not on the MainActor screen.

#### Select Display

ONLY AVAILABLE AT OS 2.1 +

Choose your display mode for your MainActor screen. The current display mode is displayed beneath the gadget.

This gadget is only activated when

- \* MainActor has a screen of its own
- \* You dont clone the Workbench screen

#### Use own Screen

If enabled, MainActor uses a screen of its own, if not, MainActor will use the Workbench screen or the actual public screen.

#### SHANGHAI Windows

If enabled, MainActor uses the SHANGHAI public screen mode, that means that for example shell windows will automatically pop up on the MainActor screen.

This gadget is only activated when you run MainActor on a screen of its own.

#### Screen Size

This gadget is only available when you have enabled the Use own Screen gadget. You can choose MainActor's screen size and it's overscan mode with this cycle gadget. The screen size of the current mode is displayed in the two integer gadgets to the right of the Screen Size gadget. The screen size depends on the screen mode you selected with the Select Display gadget.

You can select the following screenmodes:

#### WorkBench

Clones the Workbench screen properties (screen size, overscan mode, display mode, font)

#### Custom

Enter MainActor's screen size in the two integer gadgets to the right.

#### Standard

Use the standard screen size, without overscan ( for Example 640 \* 512) at Pal: HighRes Interlace).

#### Text Overscan

The normal overscan mode, which the Workbench uses.

---

#### Video Overcan

Tries to open as big a screen as possible. Flickers on normal displays at the right border.

#### Max Overscan

Slightly smaller than the Video Overscan mode, but as useless on normal displays due to its flicker.

#### Palette Size

Select the colors of your palette with this gadget. The value left to the slider gadget shows the current colors available on your MainActor screen.

This gadget only makes sense if you display pictures or play animations in the window mode. More colors == better dithering of your frames/ pictures. (the window mode is only available under OS 3.0 +).

This gadget is only activated when

- \* MainActor has a screen of its own
- \* You dont clone the Workbench screen.

#### Use System Preferences

If you want to enable the changes you have made to your display just click on this gadget.

## 1.23 MainActor.guide/MainActor Preferences Window

### MainActor Preferences Window

=====

This window lets you choose/enter some special MainActor attributes.

#### Select Default Load Module

Lets you choose the default load module. Everytime you open a new project window, the default load module will be the one choosen for this new project's load module.

#### Select Default Save Module

Lets you choose the default save module. Everytime you open a new project window, the default save module will be the one choosen for this new project's save module.

#### Select List Item Font

Choose the font for your list items in your  
Project Window  
, this



font must have a fixed width, the current font and its size are displayed to the right of the gadget, the default is topaz.font 8.

#### Select Sound Path

Select the initial path for your sound objects. This path is then used by the Choose Sound Object function, integrated in the Sound Module Requester.

#### Number of List Items

You can enter how many list items will be displayed in the project windows with this integer gadget, the default is 8.

#### Save Icon

If you enable this gadget, MainActor will save an Workbench icon for every animation/picture you create. You can then view them by double clicking on their icons. The icons support the same tooltypes as MainView, see

MainView

. The initial settings of the tooltypes clone the settings of the source project (from which you create the new animation/picture).

#### Use MainActor Preferences

Will enable the changes made to the MainActor preferences.

## 1.24 MainActor.guide/Text Buffer Window

Text Buffer Window

=====

This window shows and buffers messages for feedback to the user. You can use the cursor up/down keys to scroll the text one line up/down. Control+cursor up/down will move to the start/end of the buffer. You can also use the window's scrollbar to scroll through the buffer.

See

Text Buffer Menu

, for more functions concerning the text buffer.

## 1.25 MainActor.guide/The Modules

The Modules

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MainActor has animation and picture modules of which each has load and save modules. Since Version 1.5, MainActor has also sound modules, which can be associated to every frame or picture of the source project.

The Animation Modules

The Picture Modules

The Sound Modules

## 1.26 MainActor.guide/The Animation Modules

The Animation Modules

=====

Universal

Universal\_EGS

Universal\_Merlin

Universal\_PicassoII

Universal\_Retina

MainActor 1.55 is able to read/write the following animation formats:

AVI

DL

FLI

FLC

IFF-Anim3

IFF-Anim5

IFF-Anim7

IFF-Anim8

IFF-AnimBrush

IFF-AnimJ

Picasso

Real3D

## 1.27 MainActor.guide/Anim Universal

Anim Universal

-----

This module examines the animation format and executes the proper animation module. You should mostly use the universal modules as they are able to directly redirect the output of the modules to special hardware (PicassoII,Retina etc.).

Peculiarities:

- The Append function will not work if the destination project has an Universal loader.

## 1.28 MainActor.guide/Anim Universal\_EGS

Anim Universal\_EGS

-----

This module examines the animation format and executes the proper animation module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the EGS system from VIONA-Development.

Peculiarities:

- The function keys control the speed of the animation as normal, additionally you can use the Frame Info option for frame information during animation playback. The functionality of playback within the EGS system is similar to playback in an intuition window, the playback speed is however much faster, especially for chunky pixel formats.
- MainActor opens the window on the default EGS screen.

## 1.29 MainActor.guide/Anim Universal\_Merlin

Anim Universal\_Merlin

-----

This module examines the animation format and executes the proper animation module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the Merlin board from X-Pert.

Peculiarities:

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- Attention : During playback you have to use the digi keys (1 - 0) to adjust playback speed, \*NOT\* the function keys like normal.
- It is faster to view animations of the bitmap formats (like Anim-5/7/8) on the native chipset as these formats have to be converted to the Merlin's chunky pixel mode.
- Animations of the chunky formats like FLI/FLC are of course much faster on the Merlin than on the native chipset.
- The frame info, display mode etc. options have of course no meaning for this module, the handling of the time codes is however correct and you can still stop the animation and flip to the next frame like normal. The digi keys also control the speed of the animation.

### 1.30 MainActor.guide/Anim Universal\_Picassoll

Anim Universal\_PicassoII  
-----

This module examines the animation format and executes the proper animation module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the Picasso-II board from VillageTronic.

Peculiarities:

- It is faster to view animations of the bitmap formats (like Anim-5/7/8) on the native chipset as these formats have to be converted to the picasso's chunky pixel mode.
- Animations of the chunky formats like FLI/FLC are of course much faster on the Picasso-II than on the native chipset.
- The frame info, display mode etc. options have of course no meaning for this module, the handling of the time codes is however correct and you can still stop the animation and flip to the next frame like normal. The function keys also control the speed of the animation.

### 1.31 MainActor.guide/Anim Universal\_Retina

Anim Universal\_Retina  
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This module examines the animation format and executes the proper animation module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the Retina board from MacroSystems.

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Peculiarities:

- It is faster to view animations of the bitmap formats (like Anim-5/7/8) on the native chipset as these formats have to be converted to the retina's chunky pixel mode.
- Animations of the chunky formats like FLI/FLC are of course much faster on the Retina than on the native chipset.
- The frame info, display mode etc. options have of course no meaning for this module, the handling of the time codes is however correct and you can still stop the animation and flip to the next frame like normal. The function keys also control the speed of the animation.

## 1.32 MainActor.guide/AVI

AVI

---

This is the Video for Windows format from MicroSoft. It is chunky pixel based and mostly has audio streams associated with the animation.

Peculiarities:

- MainActor supports CRAM and BI\_RGB codecs, MainActor is also currently limited to 8 bit animations.
- Audio streams are ignored, it is not yet possible to play them within MainActor.
- It is not possible to influence the timecodes of AVI animations.

## 1.33 MainActor.guide/DL

DL

--

DL animations are chunky pixel based and dont support data crunching. MainActor supports type 1 and type 2 DL animations. Type 1 animations are fixed to an resolution of 160\*100, type 2 animations can contain resolutions of 320\*200, 160\*100 and 80\*50. The image depth is fixed to 8 bit.

Peculiarities:

- The images of DL animations are stored as raw data, therefore no loop frames are needed.
  - MainActor plays DL animations in a linear fashion, the playlist at
-

the end of DL animations is ignored.

## 1.34 MainActor.guide/FLI

FLI

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FLI animations are created by Animator Pro, an animation program only available on pc computers. It is quite old, it can only contain 320\*200 animations and its depth is fixed to 8 bit. The successor of FLI is FLC. I have included the FLI modules because a lot of animations (especially on CD-ROM) are in this format.

Peculiarities:

- FLI animations always contain a loop, so it is not possible to append to FLI animations. The FLI saver is therefore not able to append to FLI animations.
- FLI animations have only one (global) timecode, it applies to all frames of the animation. The Set Timecode function will therefore only be able to set the global timecode and will not set a timecode per frame as usual.
- Because of the missing timecode per frame feature, a lot of animations contain 'Dummy' frames. These are empty frames who shall time the animations. N Dummy frames will for example delay the playback of the animation for  $n * \text{global timecode}$ . You can recognize Dummy frames in the Project Information Window, they have a bytesize of 0 and a compression type of Dummy.

## 1.35 MainActor.guide/FLC

FLC

---

FLC animations are created by Animator Pro, an animation program only available on pc computers. FLC is the successor of FLI. FLC animations are not fixed to 320\*200 resolutions like FLI and have faster DELTA chunks.

Peculiarities:

- FLC animations always contain a loop, so it is not possible to append to FLC animations. The FLC saver is therefore not able to append to FLC animations.
  - FLC animations have only one (global) timecode, it applies to all frames of the animation. The Set Timecode function will therefore only be able to set the global timecode and will not set a timecode
-

per frame as usual.

- Because of the missing timecode per frame feature, a lot of animations contain 'Dummy' frames. These are empty frames who shall time the animations. N Dummy frames will for example delay the playback of the animation for  $n * \text{global timecode}$ . You can recognize Dummy frames in the Project Information Window, they have a bytesize of 0 and a compression type of Dummy.

## 1.36 MainActor.guide/IFF-Anim3

IFF-Anim3

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The opcode 3 animation format is very old. I did find some old Tobias Richter animations which used this format and decided to support it.

Peculiarities:

- Some odd sized animations can cause trouble on AGA machines as opcode3 animations assume that the bitmap width should only be divideable by 8. AGA machines in higher fetchmodes need bitmaps which are divideable by 32/64, if you experience this, your only chance is to avoid higher fetchmodes by selecting a LowRes display.

## 1.37 MainActor.guide/IFF-Anim5

IFF-Anim5

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The IFF-Anim5 specification was created by Electronic Arts.

It is a "good at compressing but slow at playing" format.

Peculiarities:

- You cannot append to looping animations. You can bypass this by resaving it to a non-looping animation and then appending the frames. You can make a non-looping animation to a looping animation by appending two frames which are identical to the first two (you have to reload the animation to make the loop appear).
- There are some bad animation packers out there, which do not save the first ANHD chunk before the BODY chunk. In this case MainActor cannot insert the timecode for the first frame and will give you an error message (the other timecodes will be set). If you want to time the first frame, just resave the animation with MainActor to avoid this problem.

## 1.38 MainActor.guide/IFF-Anim7

IFF-Anim7  
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The IFF-Anim7 specification was created by Wolfgang Hofer.

It is a quite good compromise between speed and animation size. The IFF-Anim7\_16 modules use words (16 bits), the Anim-7\_32 modules longwords (32 bits) for compression. Therefore the 16 bit variant compresses slightly better than the 32 bit modules, but playback is slower.

The IFF-Anim7\_32 modules are, in my opinion, the best choice for timeable, fast animations.

Peculiarities:

- You cannot append to looping animations. You can bypass this by resaving it to a non-looping animation and then appending the frames. You can make a non-looping animation to a looping animation by appending two frames which are identical to the first two (you have to reload the animation to make the loop appear).
- There are some bad animation packers out there, which do not save the first ANHD chunk before the BODY chunk. In this case MainActor cannot insert the timecode for the first frame and will give you an error message (the other timecodes will be set). If you want to time the first frame, just resave the animation with MainActor to avoid this problem.
- The modules do NOT support animations with a DLTA chunk instead of a BODY chunk as the first frame.
- Make sure that the width of the animation is divideable by 16 for IFF-Anim7\_16 animations or 32 for IFF-Anim7\_32 anims. Otherwise you will see a small area to the right of the screen which will not be updated correctly.

## 1.39 MainActor.guide/IFF-Anim8

IFF-Anim8  
-----

The IFF-Anim8 specification was created by Joe Porkka of ASDG.

Peculiarities:

- You cannot append to looping animations. You can bypass this by resaving it to a non-looping animation and then appending the frames. You can make a non-looping animation to a looping animation by appending two frames which are identical to the first two (you have to reload the animation to make the loop appear).
-



- There are some bad animation packers out there, which do not save the first ANHD chunk before the BODY chunk. In this case MainActor cannot insert the timecode for the first frame and will give you an error message (the other timecodes will be set). If you want to time the first frame, just resave the animation with MainActor to avoid this problem.
- The modules do NOT support animations with a DLTA chunk instead of a BODY chunk as the first frame.
- Make sure that the width of the animation is divideable by 16 for IFF-Anim8\_16 animations or 32 for IFF-Anim8\_32 anims. Otherwise you will see a small area to the right of the screen which will not be updated correctly.

## 1.40 MainActor.guide/IFF-AnimBrush

IFF-AnimBrush  
-----

The IFF-AnimBrush specification was created by Dan Silva of Electronic Arts. Anim Brushes are used/saved by DPaint.

Peculiarities:

- There is no save module at the moment.

## 1.41 MainActor.guide/IFF-AnimJ

IFF-AnimJ  
-----

The IFF-AnimJ (.movie) format was created by Eric Graham, who also made the famous Juggler demo. Which in fact is an IFF-AnimJ animation.

Peculiarities:

- This animation format is quite old and is supported for nostalgic reasons only.

## 1.42 MainActor.guide/Picasso

Picasso  
-----

This animation format was especially created for the Picasso graphic

---

board from VillageTronic. The modules can handle resolutions of 8/16/24 bit. Picasso animations are only recognized by the Universal\_PicassoII universal module.

Peculiarities:

- The functionality of the Picasso modules are the same as that of the IFF-AnimX. That means that you can add a loop to animations, select if you want to have a color palette per frame (of course only in 8 bit mode), set the timecode for each frame etc.
- If you want to create a 24-Bit animation you will be asked if the resolution shall be dithered down to 16-Bit. 16-Bit is faster than 24-Bit and offers nearly the same image quality so you should give it a try.

## 1.43 MainActor.guide/Real3D

Real3D

-----

The Real3D animation format is used by Real3D, a commercial raytracer available for the Amiga.

Peculiarities:

- The animation format only allows one color palette per animation, animations always contain a loop.
- No compression is used on the delta data, which allows fast playback but results in bigger animations.

## 1.44 MainActor.guide/The Picture Modules

The Picture Modules

=====

Universal

Universal\_EGS

Universal\_Merlin

Universal\_PicassoII

Universal\_Retina

MainActor 1.55 is able to read/write the following picture formats:

GIF  
IFF  
PCX  
Workbench-Icon

## 1.45 MainActor.guide/Picture Universal

Picture Universal  
-----

This module examines the picture format and executes the proper picture module. You should always use the universal modules.

## 1.46 MainActor.guide/Picture Universal\_EGS

Picture Universal\_EGS  
-----

This module examines the picture format and executes the proper picture module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the EGS system from VIONA-Development.

Peculiarities:

- Pressing the space bar will show the next picture, closing the window terminates the operation.
- MainActor opens the window on the default EGS screen.

## 1.47 MainActor.guide/Picture Universal\_Merlin

Picture Universal\_Merlin  
-----

This module examines the picture format and executes the proper picture module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the Merlin board from X-Pert.

Peculiarities:

- The frame info, display mode etc. options have of course no meaning for this module. The only options you have is to press
-

space for the next picture or escape to abort viewing.

## 1.48 MainActor.guide/Picture Universal\_PicassoII

Picture Universal\_PicassoII  
-----

This module examines the picture format and executes the proper picture module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the Picasso-II board from VillageTronic.

Peculiarities:

- The frame info, display mode etc. options have of course no meaning for this module. The only options you have is to press space for the next picture or escape to abort viewing.

## 1.49 MainActor.guide/Picture Universal\_Retina

Picture Universal\_Retina  
-----

This module examines the picture format and executes the proper picture module. It redirects the output of the modules directly to the Retina board from MacroSystems.

Peculiarities:

- The frame info, display mode etc. options have of course no meaning for this module. The only options you have is to press space for the next picture or escape to abort viewing.

## 1.50 MainActor.guide/GIF

GIF  
---

A widely spread image format, designed by CompuServe. Revisions 87A and 89A are supported.

Peculiarities:

- This format is chunky pixel based, so it will be fastest if viewed through the universal modules which support chunky pixel devices (like Universal\_PicassoII etc.), otherwise the module will convert the image to your native chipsets bitplane mode, which will take somewhat longer.
-

- No saver module yet.

## 1.51 MainActor.guide/IFF

IFF

---

This is the standard Interchangeable File Format (IFF), the specification was designed by Electronic Arts.

Peculiarities:

- Starting from MainActor Version 1.02, the IFF modules can load/save IFF24 (24-Bit) pictures.

## 1.52 MainActor.guide/PCX

PCX

---

PCX is a picture format heavily used on PC's, it was designed by ZSoft.

Peculiarities:

- No save module yet

## 1.53 MainActor.guide/Workbench-Icon

Workbench-Icon

-----

These modules support the Workbench icons.

Peculiarities:

- The save module will append ".info" to the save name.

## 1.54 MainActor.guide/The Sound Modules

## The Sound Modules

=====

MainActor 1.55 is able to play the following sound formats:

IFF-Sample

### 1.55 MainActor.guide/IFF-Sample

IFF-Sample

-----

The IFF-Sample module is able to play back samples of any size.

Peculiarities:

- Stereo samples are not supported, you can however play mono samples in stereo mode.
- The IFF-Sample module does not support fibonacci compressed samples.

### 1.56 MainActor.guide/Sound Support

#### Sound Support

\*\*\*\*\*

MainActor's sound support is module independent. That means that you can use the same sound information file on every animation or picture format MainActor supports.

If you use the Sound Module Requester, available through the Set Sound function of the

Miscellaneous Menu

, to apply sound to a loaded

project, MainActor will write an information file to your harddisk which has the name of the source project + ".snd". The sound information for the supplied example animation Examples/CountAnim7\_32 has for example the name Examples/CountAnim7\_32.snd.

Now imagine you have a 200 frame FLI animation with the name Test and want to use the same sound information for it. To do this, just rename the CountAnim7\_32.snd file to Test.snd. It does not matter if Test has more or less frames than CountAnim7\_32: MainActor/MainView will check if the frames for which sound information is supplied exist within the provided animation.

The same, of course, applies to single pictures or picture lists. It does not matter if the .snd file points to an animation or picture (list).

Remember that the sound objects will have to be cached in chip-ram, MainActor does not yet support to play the objects directly from hd. The maximum amount of chip-ram you can have is 2mb, so be careful which and how many samples you use inside your animation.

For further information have a look into the Set Sound function or into the Tutorial.

## 1.57 MainActor.guide/The Arexx Interface

### The Arexx Interface

\*\*\*\*\*

MainActor's arexx port name is MAINACTOR.

Format:

<>

Parameters in these angle brackets have to be supplied

[]

Parameters in square brackets are optional

|

Vertical bars mean OR and are used to separate options of which you can choose one : [ON | OFF]

The result variable contains the result of the operation, it's possible contents are listed in the command reference.

Look at the MainActor:rexx directory for examples. Note that MainActor does not support blanks in filenames, which are arexx arguments.

The arexx commands integrated in MainActor 1.55 are:

Append

DeSelectAll

DeSelectRange

DeSelectRangeRequest

GetSPInfo

---

GetSPLoader  
GetSPName  
GetSPSaver  
Invert  
LoadProject  
OpenNewProject  
PlayProject  
PrintTxt  
PrintAndStoreTxt  
Quit  
RequestFile  
RequestInteger  
RequestSaveFile  
Save  
ScreenToBack  
ScreenToFront  
SelectAll  
SelectRange  
SelectRangeRequest  
ShowPictures  
SetSPLoader  
SetSPSaver  
SetTimecode  
SwapDeActivatedToSource  
SwapProjects  
UnloadProject  
Version  
WBToFront

---



## 1.58 MainActor.guide/Append

Append

=====

Format:

Appends the selected frames/pictures of the source project to the destination project.

result: -

## 1.59 MainActor.guide/DeSelectAll

DeSelectAll

=====

Format: DeSelectAll

Deselects all frames/pictures in the source project.

result: -

## 1.60 MainActor.guide/DeSelectRange

DeSelectRange

=====

Format: DeSelectRange <start> <stop>

Will deselect all frames/pictures in the source project from the integer value start to stop.

result: -

## 1.61 MainActor.guide/DeSelectRangeRequest

DeSelectRangeRequest

=====

Format: DeSelectRangeRequest

The DeSelectRange requester will appear, letting you choose the frames or pictures to deselect.

result: -

---

## 1.62 MainActor.guide/GetSPInfo

GetSPInfo  
=====

Format: GetSPInfo

Returns information about the current source project:

The width of the source project, followed by it's height, followed by the amount of colors (HAM6,HAM8,EHB will be given back literally for AdPro compatibility), followed by the number of frames/pictures in your project, followed by CACHING=NO or CACHING=YES depending if you have caching en/disabled, followed by LOOP=YES or LOOP=NO depending on the loop status and at last CPF=YES or CPF=NO depending on your color per frame status.

Picture lists have LOOP disabled and CPF enabled.

result: width height colors #ofpics caching loop cpf

Examples:

```
result=320 256 HAM6 220 CACHING=YES LOOP=YES CPF=NO
```

```
result=320 256 16 10 CACHING=YES LOOP=YES CPF=YES
```

## 1.63 MainActor.guide/GetSPLoader

GetSPLoader  
=====

Format: GetSPLoader

Returns two arguments, the first is ANIM or PIC depending of the load module type of the source project. The second argument is the name of the module itself.

result: ModuleType ModuleName

## 1.64 MainActor.guide/GetSPName

GetSPName  
=====

Format: GetSPName

If the source project has an animation loaded, it returns the full animation name with path, else it returns two arguments, the first is the name of the first picture with full path, the second is the name of

---

the last picture without it's path.

result: Name of animation or name of first and last picture.

## 1.65 MainActor.guide/GetSPSaver

GetSPSaver  
=====

Format: GetSPSaver

Returns two arguments, the first is ANIM or PIC depending of the save module type of the source project. The second argument is the name of the module itself.

result: ModuleType ModuleName

## 1.66 MainActor.guide/Invert

Invert  
=====

Format: Invert

This function inverts the selection status of the items in the source project. All selected items will become deselected and all deselected items will become selected.

result: -

## 1.67 MainActor.guide/LoadProject

LoadProject  
=====

Format: LoadProject <Name1> [Name2]

LoadProject will load an animation or picture list, according to the type of the load module of the source project.

Name1 is the name of the animation or the name of the first picture of the picture list.

Name2 is only needed if you want to load a picture list, it is then the name of the last picture.

Examples:

---

```
LoadProject Graphics:CountAnim.00001 Graphics:CountAnim.00010
```

```
LoadProject Graphics:CountAnim.00001 CountAnim.00010
```

```
LoadProject Graphics:Test/mandel7_32
```

```
result:-
```

## 1.68 MainActor.guide/OpenNewProject

```
OpenNewProject
```

```
=====
```

```
Format: OpenNewProject [CACHING]
```

Opens a new project window (up to five). If you supply the CACHING parameter, the project window will have caching enabled, otherwise it will be disabled.

```
result: -
```

## 1.69 MainActor.guide/PlayProject

```
PlayProject
```

```
=====
```

```
Format: PlayProject
```

Plays the animation contained in the source project, will fail if the source project is a picture list.

```
result: -
```

## 1.70 MainActor.guide/PrintTxt

```
PrintTxt
```

```
=====
```

```
Format: PrintTxt <text>
```

Displays text in the  
Text Buffer Window

```
.
```

```
result: -
```

---

## 1.71 MainActor.guide/PrintAndStoreTxt

```
PrintAndStoreTxt
=====

Format: PrintAndStoreTxt <text>

    Displays and buffers text in the
        Text Buffer Window
        .

result: -
```

## 1.72 MainActor.guide/Quit

```
Quit
====

Format: Quit

    Closes all projects and quits MainActor.

result: -
```

## 1.73 MainActor.guide/RequestFile

```
RequestFile
=====

Format: RequestFile <text>

    This command pops up an ASL-file requester, text will be displayed
in the requester's title bar.

Example:

    RequestFile "Select File Name"

result: full path of selected file
```

---

## 1.74 MainActor.guide/RequestInteger

RequestInteger  
=====

Format: RequestInteger <InitValue> <text>

This command pops up an integer requester, text will be displayed above the integer value which was initialized with InitValue.

Example:

```
RequestInteger 640 "Enter new Width"
```

result: integer value

## 1.75 MainActor.guide/RequestSaveFile

RequestSaveFile  
=====

Format: RequestSaveFile <text>

This command pops up an ASL-savefile requester, text will be displayed in the requesters title bar.

Example:

```
RequestSaveFile "Select Save File Name"
```

result: full path of selected file

## 1.76 MainActor.guide/Save

Save  
=====

Format: Save <Name> [CPF=YES|NO] [LOOP=YES|NO]

An animation saver will save the selected frames into a new animation under the name you put in the Name parameter. CPF decides whether you want a color palette per frame or not, LOOP decides if you want to have a looping animation. LOOP and CPF overrule the normal behaviour, if you don't supply them, everything will be saved as though you had activated the Save gadget.

If you have a picture saver, Name is the base name for the pictures, LOOP and CPF have, in this case, no meaning.

result: -

---

## 1.77 MainActor.guide/ScreenToBack

ScreenToBack  
=====

Format: ScreenToBack

Flips the MainActor screen to the back.

result: -

## 1.78 MainActor.guide/ScreenToFront

ScreenToFront  
=====

Format: ScreenToFront

Flips the MainActor screen to the front.

result: -

## 1.79 MainActor.guide/SelectAll

SelectAll  
=====

Format: SelectAll

Selects all frames/pictures in the source project.

result: -

## 1.80 MainActor.guide/SelectRange

SelectRange  
=====

Format: SelectRange <start> <stop>

Will select all frames/pictures in the source project from the integer value start to stop.

---

result: -

## 1.81 MainActor.guide/SelectRangeRequest

SelectRangeRequest  
=====

Format: SelectRangeRequest

The SelectRange requester will appear, letting you choose the frames or pictures to select.

result: -

## 1.82 MainActor.guide/ShowPictures

ShowPictures  
=====

Format: ShowPictures

Shows the selected pictures/frames of the source project.

result: -

## 1.83 MainActor.guide/SetSPLoader

SetSPLoader  
=====

Format: SetSPLoader <ModuleType> <ModuleName>

Sets the load module of the source project to the module type ModuleType with the module name ModuleName.

EXAMPLES:

```
SetSPLoader PIC IFF
```

```
SetSPLoader ANIM IFF-Anim5
```

result: -

---



## 1.84 MainActor.guide/SetSPSaver

SetSPSaver  
=====

Format: SetSPSaver <ModuleType> <ModuleName>

Sets the save module of the source project to the module type  
ModuleType with the module name ModuleName.

EXAMPLES:

```
SetSPSaver PIC IFF
```

```
SetSPSaver ANIM IFF-Anim5
```

result: -

## 1.85 MainActor.guide/SetTimecode

SetTimecode  
=====

Format: SetTimecode <Timecode>

Sets Timecode (a value from 1 to 999) to the selected frames of the  
source project.

result: -

## 1.86 MainActor.guide/SwapDeActivatedToSource

SwapDeActivatedToSource  
=====

Format: SwapDeActivatedToSource

Flips the first deactivated project to the source and the source  
project to the destination project.

result: -

## 1.87 MainActor.guide/SwapProjects

SwapProjects  
=====

---

Format: SwapProjects

Flips the destination project to the source and the source project to the destination project.

result: -

## 1.88 MainActor.guide/UnloadProject

UnloadProject

=====

Format: UnloadProject

Unloads the current project of the source project.

result: -

## 1.89 MainActor.guide/Version

Version

=====

Format: Version

Will return the actual version string of MainActor.

result: MainActor xx.xx (xx.xx.xx)

## 1.90 MainActor.guide/WBToFront

WBToFront

=====

Format: WBToFront

Flips the Workbench screen to the front.

result: -

## 1.91 MainActor.guide/MainView

## MainView

\*\*\*\*\*

MainView is MainActor's external player. It can display all animations/pictures for which MainActor has the proper load modules.

The key commands while playing animations or showing pictures are the same as if you would view them directly with MainActor. That is the reason for not listing them here again, have a look at the

Project Control Panel Window  
under Play and Show.

If MainActor saved an icon for the animations/pictures to view, MainView will take the view settings from this icon (overruling its own settings)! You can change this behaviour through the IgnoreIcons option.

MainView will use MainActors center option (which centers the display of your animations or pictures) by default. If you specify an X or Y Offset the center option will be disabled and the specified offsets will be used instead.

You can start MainView from the workbench or from the cli.

Starting MainView from the Workbench

If you start MainView from the Workbench (per icon), you can select the file(s) to view in an ASL-requester. For multi selecting just press one of the shift keys and select the files with the mouse. (Starting from OS 2.1+)

MainView supports the following tooltypes:

### Window

This tooltype enables the window mode, all animations or pictures will be displayed in a window on the current public screen. It is disabled by default.

### FrameInfo

FrameInfo enables the FrameInfo mode. It is disabled by default.

### NoCaching

Disables caching. With caching disabled MainView plays direct from the harddisk (or whatever). This allows you to play big animations even if you have not much ram. It is disabled by default.

### IgnoreIcons

Ignores the icons of the animations/pictures It is disabled by default.

### BBlank

Enables the BBlank option. It is disabled by default.

### XOffset=<Value>

You can directly set the start x offset. 0 is the left border. If

you specify an XOffset centration will be disabled !

YOffset=<Value>

You can directly set the initial y offset. 0 is the top border.  
If you specify an YOffset centration will be disabled !

Repeat=<Value>

Repeats the animation <Value> times. For example Repeat=1 would play the animation one time. Defaults to 100.

Directory=<Path>

This is the initial directory for the ASL-requester.

Anim\_Module=<Module>

Chooses the default load module for animations. Default is the Universal module.

Pic\_Module=<Module>

Chooses the default load module for pictures. Default is the Universal module. If you want to view all pictures for example on the Picasso-II gfx board, choose the Universal\_PicassoII module.

Starting MainView from the cli

Starting MainView from the CLI will give you enhanced functionality. You can, for example, define patterns for animations or picture lists.

Usage is : MainView [-<options>] <file>

You can enter as many files as you like.

MainView supports these options :

```
-w           : enables the window mode
-fi          : enables the frameinfo option
-nc          : turns caching off
-i           : ignores the icons for the animations/pictures
-bb          : enables the BorderBlank (BBlank) option
-xvalue     : value describes the initial x offset
-yvalue     : the same for the y offset.
-rvalue     : value describes how often the animation
              should be repeated
-amodule    : where module is the default animation loader
              for example -aUniversal selects the universal
              loader (default).
-pmodule    : where module is the default picture loader
              for example -aUniversal selects the universal
              loader (default).
              If you want to remap your pictures to the
              Picasso-II board enter -pUniversal_PicassoII
```

Examples:

MainView -nc -r1 Graphics:Pics/#? Animation/#?8\_32 will show all files in the Graphics:Pics/ directory as well as all files in the Animation/ directory which end with '8\_32' and all animations will be directly played from the harddisk (one time).

MainView -pUniversal\_PicassoII Graphics:#?\_24Bit will display all pictures which names end with '\_24Bit' on the Picasso-II board.

## 1.92 MainActor.guide/Tutorial

Tutorial

\*\*\*\*\*

This tutorial will try to (quickly) explain the tasks you can perform with MainActor. It is just meant to give you the idea behind MainActor, you still have to read all of the documentation to get the most out of MainActor.

This tutorial will tell you how to

Load Animations

Load Picture(s)

Play Animations

Show Pictures

Create-Convert Animations

Save Pictures From Animations

Convert Picture Formats

Append To Animations

Time Animations

Associate Sound Effects

Execute Arexx Scripts

Show Pics-Anims On Graphic Boards

## 1.93 MainActor.guide/Load Animations

Load Animations

=====

You need an unused project to load an animation into MainActor. Select the Select Load Module gadget of the

---

Project Window  
and select  
the proper animation format (if you, for example, want to load an

IFF-Anim5  
animation, select the IFF-Anim5 loader or the Universal  
loader). If you want to cache the animation (buffer the animation in  
memory), enable the Caching gadget. Now select the Load gadget of the

Project Control Panel Window  
and select the animation in the opening  
ASL-requester. MainActor will now examine the animation and load it  
into memory (if caching is enabled). After that, the frames of the  
animation are listed in the scroll list area of the project window,  
also all gadgets (except the Load and perhaps the Append gadget) of the  
Project Control Panel Window are now enabled.

## 1.94 MainActor.guide/Load Picture(s)

Load Picture(s)

=====

You need an unused project to load a picture or a picture list into  
MainActor. Select the Select Load Module gadget of the projects window  
and select the proper picture format (if you, for example, want to load an  
an

IFF  
picture, select the IFF loader). If you want to cache the  
picture(s) (buffer the picture(s) in memory), enable the Caching  
gadget. Now select the Load gadget of the  
Project Control Panel Window  
and select the first picture of the picture list in the opening  
ASL-requester. If you want to load only one picture, you can cancel the  
second requester, otherwise select the last picture of the picture list  
in the second requester. MainActor will now load the selected  
picture(s) and buffer them into memory (if caching is enabled). After  
that, the picture(s) are listed in the scroll list area of the project  
window, also all gadgets (except the Load and Play and perhaps the  
Append gadgets) of the Project Control Panel Window are now enabled.

## 1.95 MainActor.guide/Play Animations

Play Animations

=====

You have to load an animation first. Just click on the Play gadget  
of the

Project Control Panel Window

. For further details have a look into the documentation.

## 1.96 MainActor.guide/Show Pictures

Show Pictures

=====

You have to load an animation or a picture list first. Select the pictures you want to show in the source project's list view gadget, after that simply press the Show gadget of the

Project Control Panel Window

. For further details have a look into the documentation.

## 1.97 MainActor.guide/Create-Convert Animations

Create/Convert Animations

=====

You have to load an animation or a picture list first. Select the pictures which should be included in the new animation in the source projects list view gadget. After that select the Select Save Module gadget and select the proper animation format. Now click on the Save gadget of the

Project Control Panel Window

and enter the name of the

new animation. MainActor will then create the animation, you may have to answer some requesters (looping or non looping animation and so on). For further details have a look into the documentation.

## 1.98 MainActor.guide/Save Pictures From Animations

Save Pictures From Animations

=====

The procedure is exactly the same as before, just select a picture save module instead of an animation module. For further details have a look into the documentation.

---

## 1.99 MainActor.guide/Convert Picture Formats

Convert Picture Formats  
=====

The procedure is exactly the same as before, just load a picture or a picture list and select another picture format's save module.

## 1.100 MainActor.guide/Append To Animations

Append To Animations  
=====

Load an animation or picture list into the source project and an animation into the destination project. The Append gadget of the

Project Control Panel Window

should now be enabled. Select the pictures you want to append (to the destination project) in the source project. After that select the Append gadget, MainActor will now append the selected pictures of the source project to the animation in the destination project. For further details have a look into the documentation.

## 1.101 MainActor.guide/Time Animations

Time Animations  
=====

Load an animation and select the pictures you want to give a new timecode. Now select the Select Timecode item in the

Miscellaneous Menu

and enter the new timecode into the integer gadget. MainActor ↔

will now

write the new timecodes to the animation, you can check the new timecodes by playing the animation.

## 1.102 MainActor.guide/Associate Sound Effects

Associate Sound Effects  
=====

Load an animation or picture (list) and select the Set Sound function of the

---



### Miscellaneous Menu

.

Choose the Add Sound gadget and select the picture for the sound effect with the Choose Frame gadget, select the sound module type with the Choose Sound Module gadget and choose the effect file itself through the Choose Sound Object gadget.

If you want to test the sound effect, just press on the Test gadget.

Now click on Ok and play the animation.

Load the supplied CountAnim7\_32 animation in the Examples directory as example how to use the Sound Module Requester.

For further information have a look at the Set Sound function and at the

Sound Support  
chapter.

## 1.103 MainActor.guide/Execute Arexx Scripts

### Execute Arexx Scripts

=====

You can directly execute arexx scripts by selecting the Start Arexx Script item in the

Arexx Menu

and selecting the arexx scripts. You can

map arexx scripts to the function keys through the Install Arexx Scripts item (again in the Arexx Menu). You can really speed up your work by using them, take a look at their header to get a short description of what they do.

## 1.104 MainActor.guide/Show Pics-Anims On Graphic Boards

### Show Pics/Anims On Graphic Boards

=====

Just use the proper universal module (like Universal\_PicassoII), they remap the output of every module to the proper gfx board. Note that it is faster to view animations of the bitmap formats (like Anim-5/7/8) on the native chipset as these formats have to be converted to chunky pixel modes. Chunky pixel animation formats like FLI/FLC are on the other hand faster on the graphic boards as on the native chipset.

## 1.105 MainActor.guide/Tips and Tricks

### Tips and Tricks

\*\*\*\*\*

- \* Remember that the Amigas native display is bitmap based ! Chunky pixel based animation formats like FLI/FLC/DL or the GIF picture format have to be converted to bitmaps ! This is slow ! You have to have a chunky pixel based display (like the Picasso-II or Retina gfx cards) to be able to view them full speed (use the Universal\_#? loader). On the other hand bitmap based formats like IFF-Anim5/7/8 are slow on these cards as they have to be converted from bitmap to chunky pixel.
- \* Always try to create animations with only one color palette per animation (CPA). They are faster than animations with color palettes per frame (CPF), especially if you have deeper (8-bit) displays. CPF animations also have slower playback rates from hd.
- \* Remember that FLI and FLC animations are always identified as CPF animations, even if they dont have a color palette per every frame. Try to convert them to an CPA animation first if you are not sure if the color palette changes inside of the animation.
- \* IF you use the IFF-Anim7\_16 or IFF-Anim8\_16 animation savers, remember that the source frames should have a width which is divideable by 16 ! The same for the IFF-Anim7\_32 and IFF-Anim8\_32 savers which need a width which is divideable by 32. If you ignore this, you will get a small area to the right of your screen which is not updated correctly.
- \* The preferences files are \*SNAPSHOTS\* of your current setup of MainActor, that means that if you save a prefs file and start MainActor later with it you will have exactly the same environment as before.

## 1.106 MainActor.guide/Registration

### Registration

\*\*\*\*\*

If you want to register MainActor you can choose between two different packages :

#### Package One

The registration fee for this package is \$50 (85 german marks) or any aquivalent sum in your local currency.

What you get for this package:

- \* A packet consisting of:
  - A TeX set, printed handbook

- The latest version of MainActor
- A keyfile
- \* Two free disk based updates (you have to contact me for your free updates)
- \* Additional updates are \$20 (30 DM) with and \$10 (15 DM) without a new handbook

#### Package Two

The registration fee for this package is \$25 (40 german marks) or any aquivalent sum in your local currency.

What you get for this package:

- \* A packet consisting of:
  - The latest version of MainActor
  - A keyfile
- \* Additional updates are \$20 (30 DM) with and \$10 (15 DM) without a new handbook

#### How to order MainActor

##### Germany

If you live in germany, you can simply order your copy of MainActor per phone or fax

##### Europe

If you live in europe, the best way is to send eurocheques, cash or directly transfer the money to our bank account.

##### Rest of the World

If you dont live in europe, simply send us cash or transfer the money to our account. Note that we have to request a small fee for our bank costs. The price of MainActor for oversea transactions is \$55 or \$30.

MainConcept, GbR Moenig/Zabel  
Im Johannistal 36  
52064 Aachen  
Germany

Tel : 49 - 241- 707032  
FAX : 49 - 241- 707839  
BBS : 49 - 241- 707138

If you prefer direct transfer:

MainConcept, GbR Moenig/Zabel  
NO. 20020251  
Sparkasse Aachen  
BLZ 390 500 00 (Germany)

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Usage: MainActor

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THE TRANSFER ORDER !!

If you have questions/suggestions feel free to contact us through email:

Internet zeus@jupiter.oche.de

Internet moenig@pool.informatik.rwth-aachen.de

ADSP markusm@tolkien.adsp.sub.org

## 1.107 MainActor.guide/The Future

The Future

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Future enhancements which are on my list:

- An animation loader/saver for VRLIs Vista Pro format (VANIM).
- More picture and animation modules (in general).
- Far more arexx scripts (sinus (de)-acceleration scripts and more).
- German documentation.
- Special modules for commercial hardware (digitizers,gfx boards ..) are possible.

Your suggestions are always welcome.

## 1.108 MainActor.guide/Credits

Credits

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This package was developed by usage of the following products:

- Dice, from Obvious Implementation Corp
- Devpac 3.04, from HiSoft
- WShell2.0 and Arexx, from Wishful Thinking Corp
- TurboText from Oxxi

Thanks for producing high quality software.

Special thanks to:

- Stefan Becker for his Amiga knowledge, without him this project would not have been become possible

- Thanks to Marc Podlipec for descriptions of some of the supported animation formats
- Philippe Brand for the french translation of the documentation
- Oliver Koenen for the german translation of the documentation
- All registered users for their support and trust in my work
- Claudia for her patience and love
- Norbert Bogenrieder for the icons

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