

Asymetrix 3D F/X Release Notes

Using Asymetrix 3D F/X, you can incorporate high-quality 3D graphics in multimedia titles, online presentations, and word-processing documents. These Release Notes provide important information about

- system requirements.
- using Asymetrix 3D F/X.
- troubleshooting.

System requirements

This section contains updated system information to run Asymetrix 3D F/X properly.

OLE 2.0 requirements

You must have MS DOS 5.0 or later installed to run Asymetrix 3D F/X. To use Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) version 2.0 you must install the DOS utility SHARE. You should install SHARE as a TSR in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. For more details about installing SHARE, type *HELP SHARE* at the DOS prompt.

NOTE If you are using Windows for Workgroups, you do not need to run SHARE.

For details about sizing embedded or linked Asymetrix 3D F/X scenes, see "Using Asymetrix 3D F/X" below.

Swap files

Due to the memory demands of creating 3D scenes, we advise that a large virtual memory swap file (20MB or more) always be available when running Asymetrix 3D F/X. For details about creating a virtual memory swap file, refer to the online Help for the Windows Control Panel.

Using Asymetrix 3D F/X

This section contains important information about Asymetrix 3D F/X catalogs, models, animation paths, support for various color depths, generating snapshots and animations, and using Asymetrix 3D F/X as an OLE 2.0 server application.

NOTE During normal operation, Asymetrix 3D F/X creates temporary files (~CAT*.TMP, ~TDL*.TMP, ~3DF*.TMP) on your hard disk; ~ is a wildcard character for any single character, and * is a wildcard character for all characters. Asymetrix 3D F/X deletes these files when you exit the program. If you DO NOT want Asymetrix 3D F/X to delete temporary files (for example, if the deletion of temp files causes a conflict with another program), in the [General] section of the 3DFX.INI file, add this entry:

```
ForceDeleteTemp=0
```

TIP To take screen shots in Asymetrix 3D F/X, use the Print Screen key or press Alt+Print Screen. Do not use Ctrl+Alt+Print Screen.

Catalogs

If you do not install your Catalog on your hard drive, but run it off the Asymetrix 3D F/X CD-ROM, the first time you drag and drop a Catalog entry to the scene, Asymetrix 3D F/X will display this message: "Unable to find the source file for this Catalog entry. Do you want to search for the source file?" Click Yes, then in the Browse dialog box, locate your CD-ROM drive, and the directory that contains the Catalog tab entries you wanted to use. Asymetrix 3D F/X will then store the Catalog's location, and you will not need to search for files again.

Models

This section contains update information about creating, importing, and modifying models.

Applying a surface to a model with sub-parts

If you apply a surface to a parent text model or picture model with sub-parts, that surface will replace any individual surfaces you have assigned to the model's sub-parts.

Warping a model's sub-parts

To alter the position, size, or rotation of a warped model's sub-part (or child model): Select the model; from the Models menu, choose Modify Warp, click Disable Warp, and then click OK.

To modify the sub-part: Select it, from the Models menu, choose Modify Warp, click Enable Warp, and then click OK.

You cannot warp an individual sub-part of an already-warped model. If a model is warped, its sub-parts will share its warp. To warp a sub-part of a model, you must start with a model to which no warp is applied.

Setting trace options for picture models

To set the trace options for a picture model created from a bitmap, you must import--not paste--the bitmap into Asymetrix 3D F/X.

Creating picture models from metafile images (.WMF)

To create a picture model from a metafile image, you must import--not paste--the metafile into Asymetrix 3D F/X. If you paste a metafile image, Asymetrix 3D F/X will create a picture model from a bitmap of the metafile, not from the metafile itself.

Displaying an imported model correctly

If an imported model does not display correctly, you may need to adjust its mesh. Select the model, choose Modify Model from the Models menu, and then click Help for details about using the dialog box to adjust your model. For more details, see the topic "Modifying Imported Models" in "Using Asymetrix 3D F/X" in online Help.

Importing .DXF files as models

There are two types of .DXF files: two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D). Asymetrix 3D F/X can only create a model from 3D .DXF files, however, it cannot distinguish between the file types until a file has been imported. To create a model from a .DXF file, import the file using the Import Model command. If you cannot import the file, it is a 2D .DXF file.

Animation paths

This section contains update information about animation paths.

Staggering model sub-parts

An animation path that staggers sub-part movement or spin does not affect the parent model. For example, if "Sphere Main" is a model that has the sub-parts "Sphere Sub1" and "Sphere Sub2," applying a staggered animation path to "Sphere Main" animates only "Sphere Sub1" and "Sphere Sub2."

NOTE You can set a stagger factor greater than 100% for an animation path, which will add a pause between the animation of each sub-part.

Rotating animation paths

For animation paths that rotate a model, you can only determine the starting point of the animation, not the ending point.

Support for 4-bit, 8-bit, and 16-bit color depth

This section contains update information about support for color depths in Asymetrix 3D F/X.

4-bit mode (16 colors)

Although you can generate in 4-bit mode, the output may not appear as you anticipated. Snapshots or animations may not appear correctly because 16 colors are not enough to create the appearance of smooth surfaces. The minimum configuration for running Asymetrix 3D F/X is 8-bit.

8-bit mode (256 colors)

In 8-bit mode, white models and black models may be indistinguishable from each other in Solid Model view because there may not be enough colors available to make them look distinctly white or black. However, when you generate the scene using a Realistic or Ray-traced style, the models will appear correctly.

16-bit mode (65,536 colors)

You cannot apply 16-bit bitmaps or .AVIs as surfaces, reflection maps, bump maps, or environment maps. To be able to use a 16-bit bitmap at all, from the File menu, choose Open, then select the file. From the Tools menu, choose Convert Snapshot, then convert the file to a 24-bit image.

Asymetrix 3D F/X only supports the 5-5-5 16-bit configuration. If you use another configuration, you will get anomalous colors. If you are running in 16-bit mode, generate your snapshots or animations in 24-bit mode for best results. If you must generate at 16-bit, avoid using gradients, and avoid converting a snapshot to or from 16-bit. Gradients can be created in 24-bit mode, then saved as bitmaps if you truly need them to work in 16-bit mode.

When printing 16-bit bitmaps, Asymetrix 3D F/X converts the file to a 24-bit format. If you have a printer driver that supports printing 16-bit images, you can override the default Asymetrix 3D F/X behavior by adding the following entry to the [General] section of the 3DFX.INI file:

```
CanPrint16bppDIB = 1
```

NOTE 16-bit mode is a newly developed display mode. Few video drivers and fewer applications support it.

Generating snapshots and animations

This section contains update information about support for generating snapshots and animations in Asymetrix 3D F/X.

Generating in Solid Models or Wireframes style

Snapshots and animations generated in Solid Models style will not generate in a size larger than your screen, and are always generated in 256 colors.

Snapshots and animations generated in Wireframes style are always generated at the color depth of your video driver.

Previewing and generating gradients

Gradients always preview in 8-bit mode, regardless of the color depth of your video driver.

Gradient backdrops in snapshots and animations will only generate at the color depth of your video driver. (The rest of your image will generate at the color depth set in the Snapshot & Animation Settings dialog box).

About surfaces

Bitmap surfaces that are tiled will not appear tiled onscreen, but will be tiled when generated.

Models with bitmap surfaces and a transparent value for transparency will not appear transparent when generated.

Scenes can make extensive use of external files for backdrops, bitmap surfaces, bump textures, reflection maps, and environment maps. When a scene containing references to external files is moved, Asymetrix 3D F/X uses several search strategies to locate the external files.

Asymetrix 3D F/X checks for the files in

- the directories specified in the 3DFX.INI file in the [General] section in the TexturesDir, BumpmapsDir, and ReflectionsDir entries.
- the current scene's directory.
- the Asymetrix 3D F/X program directory.

The external files listed in the Modify Surfaces & Color dialog box are stored in the following directories:

- Bitmap surfaces are stored in CATALOG\SURFACE\BITPATRN.
- Bump textures are stored in CATALOG\SURFACE\BUMP.
- Reflection maps are stored in CATALOG\SURFACE\REFLCTN.

About animations

If you don't name an animation before you generate it, Asymetrix 3D F/X generates it using the name 3DFX.AVI and stores the animation in the Asymetrix 3D F/X program directory.

You must set an 8-bit or higher color palette for a scene to be able to use a video compressor in generating. A scene that uses a 1-bit or a 4-bit palette will be saved as an 8-bit .AVI file with the appearance of a 1-bit or a 4-bit image.

For optimal compression, set the size of your animation to 320 by 240 pixels.

If you want to generate an animation to a custom size, set the width and height of your animation to values divisible by 4. If you enter a custom width or height that is not divisible by 4, some video compressors will make every frame a keyframe, ignoring any keyframe value you may have entered, and creating larger files that will not play back as well.

NOTE If you enter a custom size for an animation, some video compressors may change the size of animations slightly to fit their internal storage and playback requirements.

Sizing embedded or linked Asymetrix 3D F/X scenes

To resize an embedded or linked scene, from the Scene menu, choose Snapshot and Animation Settings, click the Size tab, enter the size you want, and then click OK.

NOTE Embedded or linked scenes cannot be larger than the resolution of the display device of the system you are working on.

For details about using Asymetrix 3D F/X as an OLE 2.0 server application with a particular container application, refer to the container application's documentation.

Troubleshooting

This section contains information you can use to troubleshoot as you work in Asymetrix 3D F/X.

Issue: Asymetrix 3D F/X and other Windows applications don't run.

If you have less than 520K of RAM free when you start Windows, and you're having problems loading .AVI files after you generate an animation, you may be running out of low DOS memory. If you have problems, you can

- try to maximize your DOS memory by exiting Windows and running the DOS 6 utility MEMMAKER.EXE from the DOS prompt.
- use a different display driver, such as the 8514/a driver.
- avoid running other Windows applications while running Asymetrix 3D F/X.

Issue: When you generate a large animation, your system freezes.

You may have a Display Power Management System (DPMS) feature enabled for your computer which is interrupting Asymetrix 3D F/X. DPMS features provide auto-shutdown for monitors and computers. To disable a DPMS feature, refer to the documentation provided with your monitor and system.

Issue: A bitmap previews correctly, but does not import correctly.

If you can preview a bitmap, but it does not display correctly as a backdrop, bump texture, surface, environment map, or reflection map, it may be a run-length-encoded (RLE) bitmap or an OS/2 format bitmap. To correct the display, open the bitmap in Bitmap Editor, then save it as a Microsoft Windows DIB format bitmap.

Issue: A picture file previews correctly, but imports a completely different file.

If you can preview a picture file, but a completely different file displays when it is imported, a bitmap file of the same name with a .BMP extension may already exist in the IMAGES directory. To import the correct file, delete or rename the .BMP file currently in the IMAGES directory, then import the file again.

Issue: A picture model created from a metafile (.WMF) appears to be a single rectangle.

If a picture model you create from a metafile appears to contain only a single rectangle, a background color from the original file may have been added to the model as a sub-part. To remove the rectangle, double-click the model's icon in the Scene Contents window to display its sub-parts, then select the sub-part named "4 Points" and delete it.

Issue: You can't import the type of graphic you want.

You may have deleted the ASYM.INI file in the WINDOWS directory. To correct this, reinstall the graphics filters from your original Asymetrix 3D F/X disks.

Issue: When stepping backward through an .AVI file, the frame numbers are incorrect.

Stepping backward through an .AVI file may display incorrect frame numbers in the status bar. To accurately identify a particular frame's number, stop on the frame you want, back up one frame, then step forward one frame.

Issue: Asymetrix 3D F/X freezes, fails to fully generate, or encounters a General Protection Fault while generating a snapshot or animation.

A combination of hardware and software problems may cause your system to freeze, fail to fully generate, or encounter a General Protection Fault while generating a snapshot or animation. Such problems have occurred only with some older 486 systems with more than 16MB of RAM, where a virtual memory swap file has been created. Generally, due to the memory demands of creating 3D scenes, we advise that a large virtual memory swap file (20MB or more) always be available. This may help in avoiding running out of memory while generating. However, in machines with the problem configuration, this can be

counterproductive. Until the exact nature of the problem configuration is determined, if you encounter these difficulties, the only known workaround is to completely reinstall the latest version of Windows-- Windows 3.11.