

Microsoft Image Composer 1.0 Readme

This document covers information that will help you install and use Microsoft Image Composer. Please read the entire document. For late-breaking information, see the ReadFirst.wri file in the Image Composer directory of your compact disc.

Be sure to check our web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/imagecomposer/> for the latest news, sample images, and a GIF Animator utility.

To view this Readme file in Windows Wordpad, maximize the Wordpad window. To print this file, open it in Wordpad or another word processor, and then use the Print command on the File menu.

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Installation

System Requirements

To use Microsoft Image Composer, you need:

- A personal computer with a 80486 or higher processor
- Microsoft Windows 95 or Microsoft Windows NT Workstation version 3.51 or higher
- 16 MB of RAM (32 MB recommended)
- 15 MB (compact), 30 MB (typical) and 300 MB (complete) available disk space
- CD-ROM drive
- 256-color VGA (SVGA TrueColor with 2 MB of Video RAM recommended)
- Microsoft Mouse, Microsoft IntelliMouse, or compatible pointing device

Microsoft Image Composer also supports the following options:

- Windows-compatible tablet with mouse emulation for basic mouse support, or WinTab compatible tablet for full-pressure support
- Any scanner or digital camera that provides 32-bit TWAIN version 1.601 compliant drivers.

Notes and Known Problems

- If you have a previous beta version of Microsoft Image Composer, you must use the Image Composer 1.0 Setup program icon or the Add/Remove Program icon in the control panel to remove your previous copy before installing this version.

- If you choose to install to a directory containing the string "Program Files", you might have problems uninstalling on Windows 95 from the Add/Remove Programs icon in the Control Panel.
- If you choose Custom Install, the Change Folder button is not available. To change the installation location for Microsoft Image Composer, go back to the previous dialog box and change the location you want to install to.
- If you are a DBCS (double-byte character set) user, we recommend you use a Super VGA display, which allows you to view the full user interface when using your character set.
- If your display system supports true color display, we recommend that you take advantage of it for optimum results while running Image Composer.
- If you install under Windows NT 3.51, then later upgrade to Windows NT 4.0, reinstall Microsoft Image Composer to make sure the program is registered and functions correctly.
- If you use Microsoft Internet Assistant 2.0, you will not be able to read .htm files in that product after installing Image Composer. For more information, see the Internet Assistant web page at <http://www.microsoft.com/msword/internet/ia/>.
- Image Composer ships with many fun and useful sample sprites. To install these sample sprites to your hard disk, choose the Custom Install dialog box. Because these files take a large amount of disk space, we recommend that you keep them on the compact disc. You can also browse thumbnail sketches of all the samples without installing the samples by choosing Sample Sprites Catalog from the Help menu.

Uninstalling

To remove Microsoft Image Composer, use the Image Composer 1.0 Setup program item or the Add/Remove Programs icon in the Control Panel. Other methods (for example, deleting directories or files) can cause system instabilities or problems with future installation of this product.

Online Help

The online Help file in Image Composer contains reference information as well as step-by-step procedures and a tutorial. To discover the extent of the Image Composer feature set, explore the visual elements in the online Help file, or use context-sensitive Help directly in the user interface.

Known Problems

- Three of the 19 sample gradient ramps included in the product do not have online Help topics:
 - Cool Steel
 - Copper
 - Tequila Sunset
 To see a list of gradient ramps, use the Patterns and Fills tool palette. To find information on the other gradient ramps, see online Help.
- In the online Help topic for Paint Tools Overview, the description of the Transfer tool that is displayed when you click on the Transfer button is incomplete. The Transfer tool makes a copy of the non-transparent areas of a sprite and allows you paint the contents of the source sprite, including both color and texture, onto a destination area. The destination area can be in the same sprite or in another.

- In the glossary in online Help, the definition of Current Color is incomplete. The current color setting is used for many more actions than those stated. For example, the Color Enhancement tools on the Warps and Filters palette all use the current color, as do many of the Paint tools, such as the paintbrush, airbrush, pencil, and tint tools.
- On Windows NT 3.51, there is no context-specific help on common system dialog boxes, such as the Select Font dialog box or the Open dialog box.

Tutorial

To view a set of lessons on using Image Composer, choose Tutorial from the Help menu. The tutorial requires a set of sprites, installed when you choose Typical from Image Composer Setup. If you choose Custom instead, check the Tutorial Samples option to install the tutorial sprites. After installing, you can find the tutorial sprites in the Tutorial directory under Microsoft Image Composer. You can also find three sample compositions in the Tutorial directory.

Notes

Selection

To select sprites, use the Arrange button on the toolbox.

Gamma Processing

Image Composer performs gamma processing on image input and output operations to ensure that:

- Image Composer images viewed on different output devices (computer monitors, video monitors, printers, and so on) look identical.
- All image processing is performed on linear data (with no gamma correction applied) for optimum precision.

The default gamma settings are usually the best choice, but some image and color palettes saved from Image Composer might appear slightly lighter or darker than the original image or palette as a result of the gamma processing. To adjust for this effect, turn off gamma processing by following these steps:

- 1 From the **Tools** menu, click **Options**.
- 2 In the **Gamma** tab, clear all the check boxes.

Optimizing the Color Palette for a GIF Image

Some images have palettes that look great in one Web browser, but not in others. You can optimize the colors in a Web image by changing to the Balanced Ramp palette with these steps.

- 1 In **Image Composer**, click **Save As** on the **File** menu.
- 2 In the **Save As** dialog box, select **Balanced Ramp** in the **Color format** box and then click **Save**.

Your original image and palette are retained.

Here are some other guidelines on how to optimize a GIF file for the Web by using the settings on the Save As dialog box.

- Make the Composition Guide small by using the composition property page (choose Composition Properties from the File menu). Your composition will be cropped to the size of the Composition Guide when you save to GIF format. A smaller GIF file displays faster.

- Since not all browsers support transparent GIF files, make your transparency color the same color as your Web page background. This allows the GIF file to blend better on your Web page.
- To create an 8-bit palette for your Web page or to load the one you are currently using for your Web page, use the **Custom Palette** tab of the **Color Picker** dialog box. You can display the **Color Picker** dialog box by clicking **Color Swatch** in the toolbox.
- Set the **Color format** to the 8-bit color palette you want to use on your Web page.

Interoperability

- You can transfer your images between Microsoft Office applications and Image Composer using cut, copy and paste commands.
- You can edit frames of a GIF animation by using Microsoft's GIF Animator and dragging the frames to and from Image Composer. If you attempt to open a GIF animation directly into Image Composer, only the first frame of the animation is loaded.

Known Problems

- If you have a file name that has a leading space, add single quotes around the file name (' Myfile.mic' for example) when you type its name into the Open dialog box.
- If a tool palette is off your screen and inaccessible, select any of the toolbox buttons that display a tool palette to reset tool palette display to an accessible, default location.
- If you are creating a sprite using the shape creation tools on the Shapes tool palette and you use the Zoom or Pan tool from the toolbox, your shape will be completed and rendered using the current color.
- If you are creating a spline with the spline tool on the Shapes tool palette, you can zoom in or out during the creation of the spline without rendering the spline by
 - 1 Selecting the **Zoom** tool from the toolbar
 - 2 Moving the cursor to the center of the view window and then
 - Holding down the + key on the numeric key pad to zoom in
 - or-
 - Holding down the - key on the numeric key pad to zoom out
- When scanning, make sure you have a minimum of 5 MB of free disk space. Without sufficient disk space, your scanning results will be unpredictable and you could lose data because of low system resources.
- If you change your default printer while Image Composer is running, you might need to exit and restart Image Composer for the change to be recognized.
- If you unplug a tablet while using Image Composer, make sure that you remove the driver or you can have unexpected results. See your tablet documentation for the steps to remove the driver.
- If you try to insert a large number of files using the Insert dialog box, your insert might fail. To work around this limitation, do one of the following:
 - Select the files in the Windows Explorer and drag and drop them directly into the Image

Composer window.

-or-

- Choose fewer files in the Insert dialog box.

- If your display is set at or only supports 256 colors, you might notice color flashes when you switch between windows in the following situations:
 - When the splash screen is displayed as you start Image Composer.
 - While displaying the Impressionist plug-in.
 - When switching between online Help and Image Composer.
 - When switching between other applications and Image Composer.

- If your display device appears to need updating, use the display refresh function, assigned to function key F5. For example, you can redisplay the composition when viewing it with a custom color palette.

- Image Composer supports Photoshop files. Image Composer will open any version of a Photoshop file; however, it saves only as Photoshop version 3.0 or higher.

- In Photoshop, if you save an image with no alpha channel as a 32-bit TGA file, it will appear transparent in your compositions. Photoshop sets the alpha channel to 0 (transparent) instead of setting it to 255 (opaque). To have the image appear opaque, save the file in Photoshop as a 24-bit TGA file.