

Using Microsoft® GIF Animator

A Workshop for San Diego State University Students



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Where to Find Help When You Need It

Student Computer Help Web Site

The computer help web site for students provides information about the type of help you can get and locations where help is available. To find this information, look to: <http://rohan.sdsu.edu/~students>

Help from the BATS Web Page

BATS (Baseline Access, Training and Support) is a California State University initiative to provide all students, faculty, and staff with "baseline" access to information resources via networks, training in the uses of baseline hardware and software systems, and ongoing professional and technical support for utilization of computer resources at San Diego State University. You can access the BATS Web Page by pointing your browser to: <http://rohan.sdsu.edu/~bats/>

Help in the Love Library Student Computing Lab

The Student Computing Lab's purpose is to facilitate students in completing assigned class work, as well as provide assistance to students having computer problems relating to the Internet, Netscape, SPSS, File Transfers, PC Operating Systems, Microsoft Office Software and Business Databases.

Location: 2nd floor of the Love Library building in LL-224

Hours:

10:00am – midnight	Sunday
7:00am – midnight	Monday - Thursday
7:00am - 6:00pm	Friday
10:00am - 6:00pm	Saturday

Help from the Student Computing Help Desk

Phone: 594-3189

Location: Love Library 220

Hours:

8:00am – 4:30pm	Monday
8:00am – 4:30pm	Tuesday
8:00am – 7:30pm	Wednesday
8:00am – 7:30pm	Thursday
8:00am – 4:30pm	Friday

E-mail: problems@rohan.sdsu.edu

Using Microsoft GIF Animator

Would you like to enhance your web pages with eye-catching motion? The Microsoft GIF Animator is a small program designed to be used in tandem with the basic image-editing program, Microsoft Image Composer 1.5. Both of these programs come on the SDSU site licensed Microsoft FrontPage 98 CD.

Workshop Level: Intermediate

Prerequisite: Creating a Web Page without HTML or equivalent knowledge.

The following topics will be covered...

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GIF Animator Overview

With Microsoft GIF Animator, you can create animated GIF files that add eye-catching motion to your Web pages. Animated GIF files contain one or more images that display sequentially to produce an animated effect, much like a traditional cartoon flipbook.

GIF Animator includes a toolbar, an animation (frames) display column, a scroll bar, and three tabs:

Options Tab

The Options tab controls the way GIF animator manages your files.

Animation Tab

The Animation tab controls characteristics of your animation.

Image Tab

The Image tab controls characteristics of individual frames in your animation.

Adding an Image

There are three ways that you can add an image to the animation display column.

- Dragging it in from the Image Composer workspace
- Pasting it in from the Clipboard into a frame
- Opening an existing GIF file from within GIF Animator

You can add as many images to an animation as your computer memory allows. Before you add images to your animation, you should set the Import Color Palette options in the Options tab. You can use the scroll bar to view all the images in the current animation.

NOTE: The display and other functionality of GIF Animator files depends on the capabilities of the browser used to view the files. Large files increase download times and might also display interrupted sequencing on computers with low memory.

Toolbar

The GIF Animator toolbar includes the following buttons:

New

Creates a new file.

Open

Opens an existing file. If you use this while a file is open, GIF Animator warns that current changes will be lost and prompts you to save your changes.

Save

Saves changes that have been made to the active file.

Insert

Inserts an additional .gif file into the current animation. The file is inserted before the current selected frame.

Save As

Save changes to a new file name.

Cut

Removes the selected image and copies it to the Clipboard.

Copy

Copies the selected image to the Clipboard.

Paste

Places a cut or copied image from the Clipboard at the insertion point.

Delete

Removes the selected image without copying to the Clipboard.

Select All

Selects all images in the current animation.

Move Up/Down

Positions the selected image one-frame closer to the beginning or to the end of the current animation.

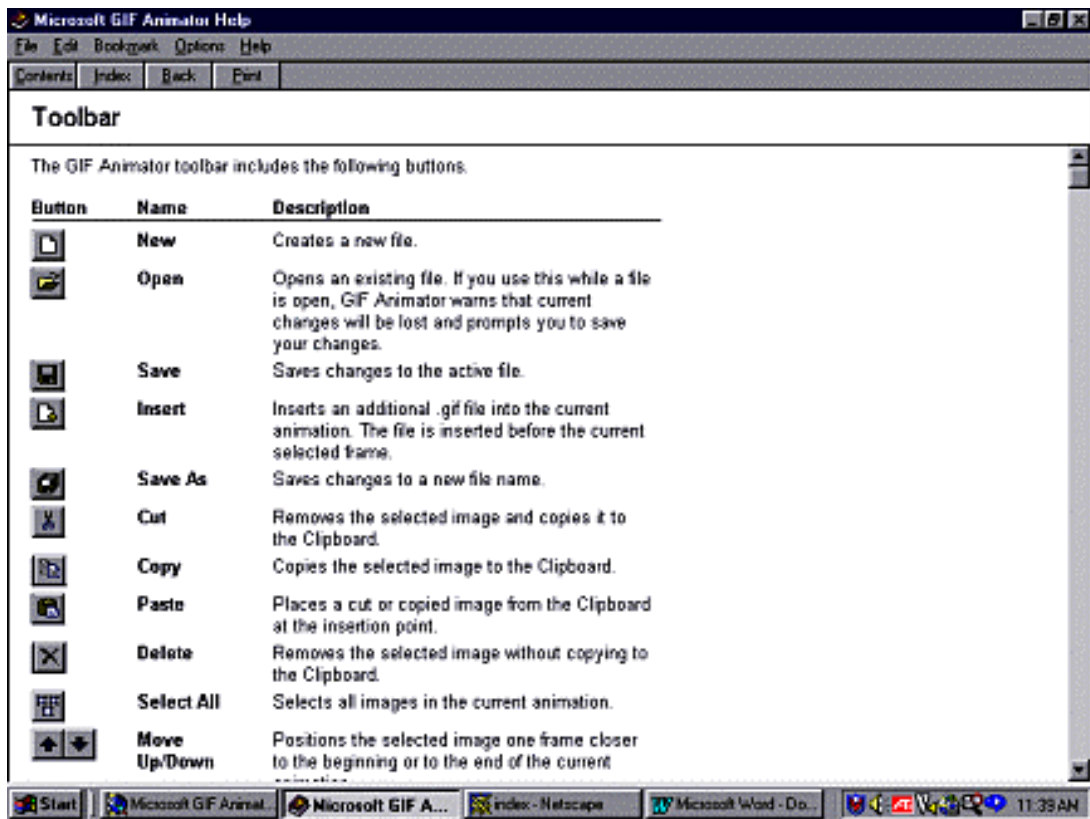
Preview

Play the results of your work without saving it.

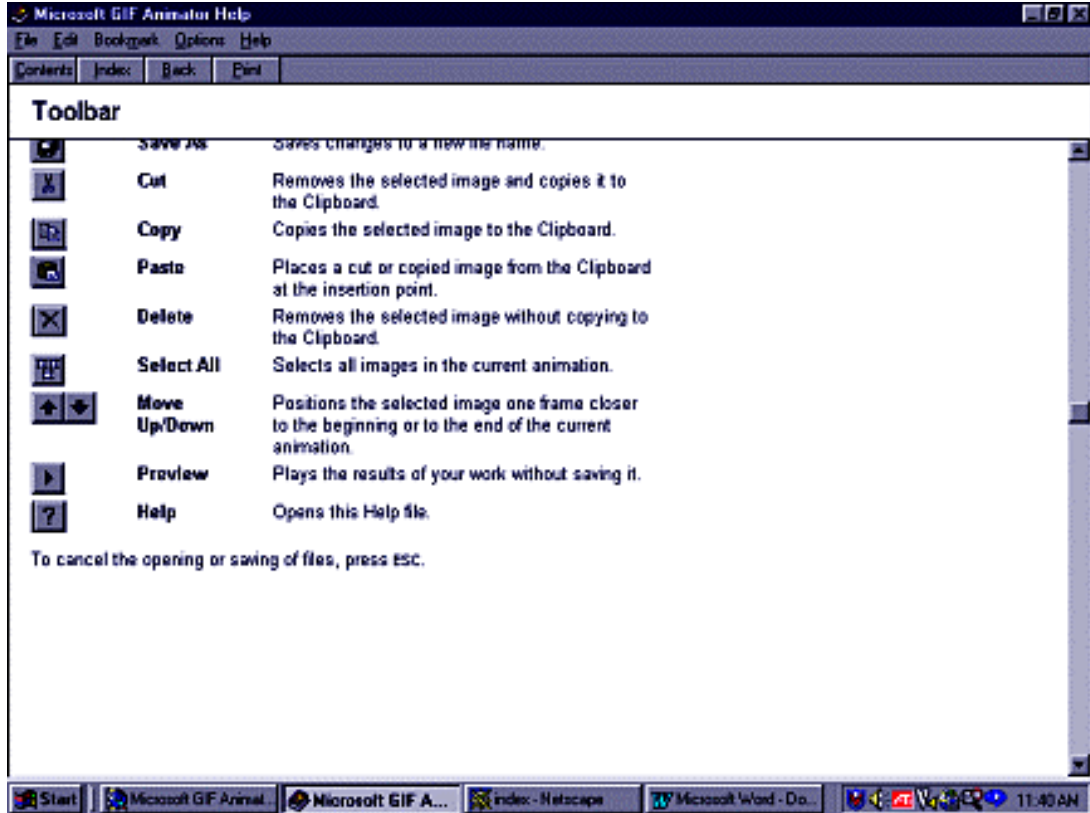
Help

Opens this Help file.

To cancel the opening or saving of files, press ESC.



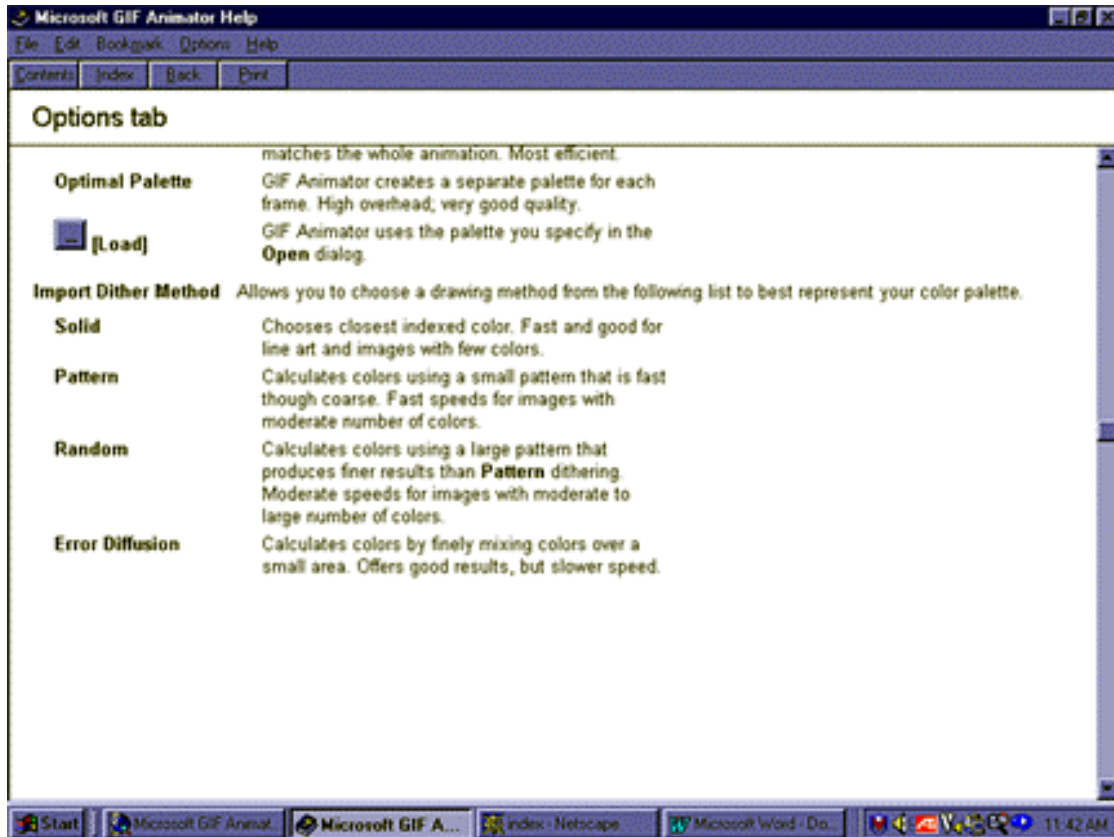
Top Half of Toolbar Help Screen for GIF Animator



Bottom Half of Toolbar Help Screen for GIF Animator

Options Tab

Use the **Options tab** to specify the palette that GIF Animator uses to represent the images within the animation. You can also use this tab to control the how the colors are represented in your saved image.



Options tab help screen for GIF Animator.

Thumbnail Reflect Image Position

Select this check box to see each image in the animation space that you specify in the Animation tab instead of as a full-frame image.

Main Dialog Window Always on Top

Select this check box to enable the GIF Animator window to remain the front most window on your desktop. Note that selecting this option disables drag-and-drop operations to GIF Animator.

Import Color Palette

Allows you to choose between the Browser palette, which provides a direct match to the most common Web browsers, and an "optimal" palette that you specify by clicking the dialog button to locate the Windows .pal file you want to use.

- **Browser Palette**

GIF Animator uses a single palette that best matches the whole animation. Most efficient.

- **Optimal Palette**
GIF Animator creates a separate palette for each frame. High overhead; very good quality.
- **[Load]**
GIF Animator uses the palette you specify in the Open dialog.

Import Dither Method

Allows you to choose a drawing method from the following list to best represent your color palette.

Solid

Chooses closest indexed color. Fast and good for line art and images with few colors.

Pattern

Calculates colors using a small pattern that is fast though coarse. Fast speeds for images with moderate number of colors.

Random

Calculates colors using a large pattern that produces finer results than Pattern dithering. Moderate speeds for images with moderate to large number of colors.

Error Diffusion

Calculates colors by finely mixing colors over a small area. Offers good results, but slower speed.

Animation Tab

The Animation tab in GIF Animator lets you control the size, duration, and transparency attributes of an animation.

Animation Width

Allows you to specify the width of the space in which the animation plays. GIF Animator supplies a default value that you can modify. Specify a wider space for frames that move horizontally.

Animation Height

Allows you to specify the height of the space in which the animation plays. GIF Animator supplies a default value that you can modify. Specify a taller space for frames that move vertically.

Image Count

Displays the number of frames in the current animation. More images with smaller movements provide smoother motion, but create larger files and longer download times.

Looping

Select this check box if you want your animation to repeat.

Repeat Count

Allows you to specify the number of times you want your animation to repeat.

Trailing Comment

Allows you to attach a comment to the animation.

Image Tab

The Image tab of GIF Animator lets you control the characteristics of individual images within the animation.

Image Width

Displays the width of the selected image.

Image Height

Displays the height of the selected image.

Left

Allows you to specify the position of the left edge of the selected image within its frame.

Top

Allows you to specify the position of the top edge of the selected image within its frame.

Duration (1/100 s)

Allows you to specify the amount of time, in 1/100 of a second increments, that the selected image appears during the animation sequence. Varying duration throughout an animation can enhance the appearance of starts and stops and other effects.

Undraw Method

Allows you to specify how frames appear in the animation.

- **Undefined**
Directs the browser to do nothing to the background before displaying the next image.
- **Leave**
Directs the browser to leave the previous graphic image as the next is drawn. This choice can create a shadowing effect.
- **Restore Background**
Directs the browser to redraw the original background as the current image is drawn.
- **Restore Previous**
Directs the browser to redraw the previous image as the current image is drawn.

Transparency

Select this check box if you want to specify that one color in your animation will not display.

Transparent Color

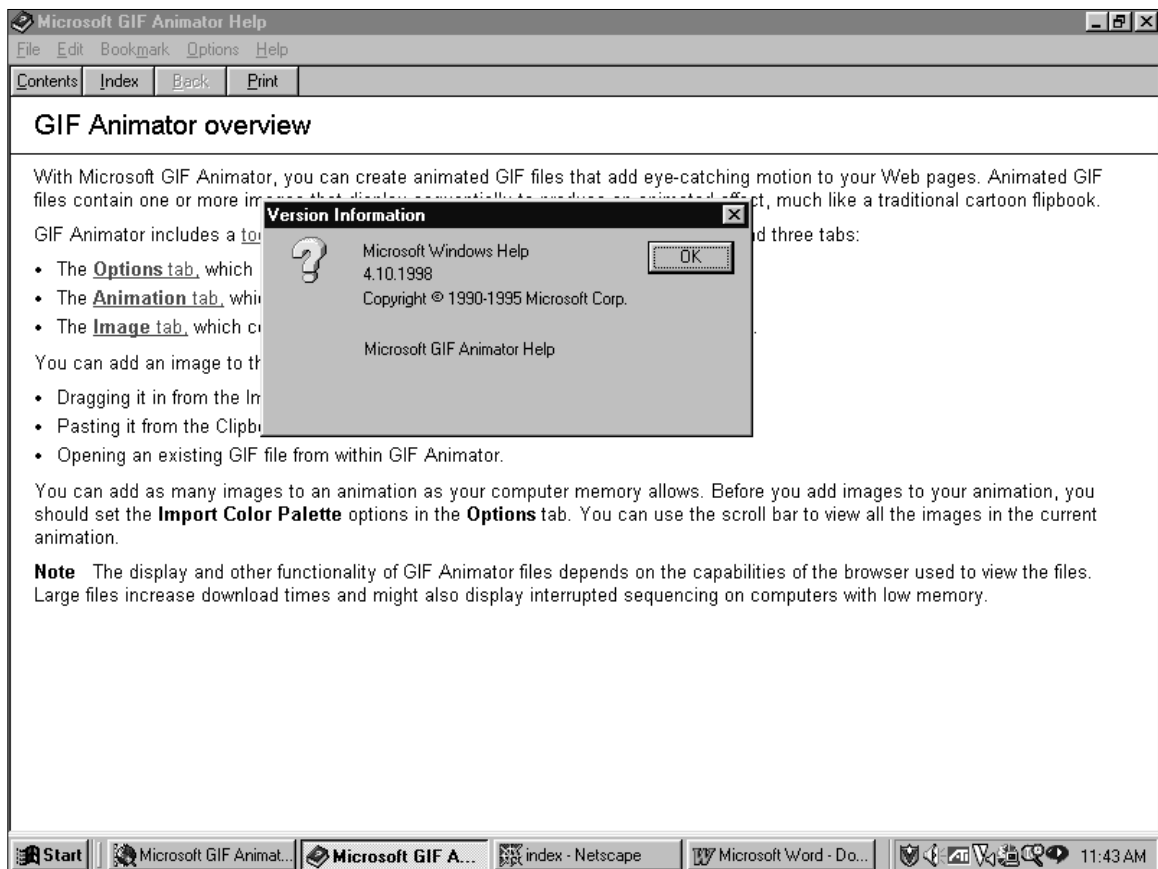
Select the color chip to display a palette from which you can choose a color that GIF Animator treats as the transparent portion of the image. You can choose only one transparent color.

Comment

Allows you to attach a comment to the active frame.

Congratulations!

You have completed the Using Microsoft GIF Animator workshop for Students at SDSU. All material covered in this handout can be found in the onscreen help for GIF Animator. For further information about material covered during this workshop, please feel free to contact your instructor for. Also, please feel free to take advantage of the help resources listed at the beginning of this handout.



Copyright information from the Properties Window of Microsoft GIF Animator.