

Garshneblanker

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Chapter 1

Garshneblanker

1.1 Garshneblanker Documentation

Garshneblanker Release 3.5 (Version 38.6)

It's the new Garshneblanker! Have no fear in running the Install script. There's a Remove script if you decide you don't like it (aren't I nice). If you are currently running Garshneblanker on your system, be sure to quit that one because running this one will just pop up the interface for any other currently running Garshneblanker and I wouldn't want you to confuse yourself. Then, run the installer script and read what it says while you install it. Other than that, check out the following things:

New stuff

Things to note when using GBlanker

On the agenda

If you have any questions, suggestions or other comments regarding Garshneblanker or just the state of the universe, please send them my way at either of the following addresses:

Electronic Mail: mbayne@qualcomm.com

Physical Mail:

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1.2 New Stuff in This Release

Version 38.6 Release 3.5

- o Broke down and used MagicWB icons in the distribution. You 4 color non-interlaced Workbench having users are just going to have to cope.

- o Rearranged the user interface a bit since the addition of the blank corner cycle gadgets made it look a bit long.
 - o Took out the menus since they didn't do anything important. Lost the "About" requester. No more shameless plug for the author. If anyone just can't do without the menu hot keys or something, let me know and I'll put 'em back in.
 - o Made a version of the interface that uses MUI. Fell out of my chair when I found out that it used 250k more memory than the gadtools version. Got excited when BGUI came out. Weeped over the fact that it was 100k. Played with a BGUI version of the interface. Look for a full-on BGUI version with BUI modules as well in the near future. If anyone really digs MUI and has RAM falling out of their machine, email me for the MUI version.
 - o Removed all of the code shared among the blankers and put it in a shared library. "Shared" code, "shared" library. Isn't that keen. That made all the blankers a nice bit smaller.
 - o Reorganized the main program with regards to source file organization and some other groovy internal stuff. Also cleaned up the whole source tree in general and wrote some nifty scripts to make compiling the modules easier.
- Version 38.5 Internal 3.4
- o Added stuff to the blankers that people had asked for. Fading on the ones that copy the top screen. If you're using V39+, palette extension for smoother color transitions in Plasma and Interference. Unfortunately, in V37 the "Extend Palette" gadgets don't do anything. Oh well. Get OS3.1. Added some other stuff. Stared at the Puzzle source and wondered where it could possibly have a divide by zero error.
 - o Implemented the blank corners thing that a few people have suggested. I'm not entirely happy with it's performance because in order not to suck down huge amounts of CPU, I chuck all but the last mouse event. However, as a result of that, sometimes when you put the pointer in the corner, the last mouse position I looked at wasn't when the mouse was at 0,0.
 - o Took out reqtools.library dependancy in main blanker interface. The only thing still using reqtools.library in the main program was the "About" requester and the "Info" display. Changed those to use EasyRequests. Alas, no more pressing return to make them go away. Also, the "Info" display is no longer asynchronous. Do if you are browsing through the blankers and run out of the house, GBlanker will be locked up because the "Info" panel is up. Your screen is just going to burn. Tragic, I know.
 - o Fixed bugs and probably changed other stuff. It's been so long since 38.4 that I don't remember what was in 38.4.

Version 38.4 Release 3.3a

- o This is mostly a bug-fix release. A number of people reported problems with the CPU load checking feature and others reported problems with the screen simply refusing to unblank at times. So I've tried to fix both problems. (The difficult part here being that neither problem occurs on MY machine. :) The CPU load checking is simply turned off but the unblank problem should be fixed. Be sure to let me know if it recurs.
- o Also in this release is a nifty new Maze blanker that I wrote. It's cool have a look.

Version 38.3 Release 3.3

- o If the module doesn't respond to a blank request in a timely manner (ie. you're compiling and it's being starved because of it's -5 priority) a black screen is put up.
- o When the blankers are running, they call a particular function every so often to see if they should unblank. If these are too far and few in between, they quit and the main program puts up a black screen. This means two things: one, maybe I've got it calibrated for an A3000 matching my machine's description and this totally won't work on every one else's machine (I hope not, I think this should work, give it a chance and e-mail me if blankers bail out unnecessarily on your machine), and two, if a blanker starts using too much of the CPU time itself (you just love to watch Swarm struggle with 500 wasps on your A500) it might quit of it's own accord. That's too bad. GBlanker won't load your machine down TOO much regardless of what's running. I like this solution because it doesn't use any CPU time keeping track of CPU usage. I tried another method where I had a low priority task send the main program messages at specified intervals and blanked with a black screen if the low priority task wasn't getting much CPU time, but that used 50% of the CPU time when the machine was idle. Ack. Anyhow, let me know how this works because I've moved away from all my beta testers (they're back at school, I'm on the other side of the country now, happily employed. :)
- o Lots of little changes to the modules that people have suggested. Like multiple speed toasters, puzzle moves blocks smoothly, stars are back, etc.

1.3 Things to note when using GBlanker

Ok. The interface is really straightforward. You should be able to figure all that out, but some things have consistently eluded many people in previous releases so be sure to note this stuff:

- o Look at the tooltypes of the Garshneblanker icon! If those aren't there, strange things might happen. (GBlanker is not happy when it doesn't know where it's blanker modules are.) Check them out, it should be apparent what they are. This is where you can change stuff. If you want to change the pop key. Change the CX_POPKEY tool type to the new pop key. This goes for all of them. Also, when you click "Save" the location of the window is stuck into the WIDTH and HEIGHT tool types and the currently selected blanker gets stuck into the BLANKER tool type. The rest don't change.
 - o When you click on a blanker in the list view, it runs that process. So, don't go clicking like a maniac on the list view because DOS has a hard time keeping up with loading all those processes and such.
 - o If a blanker bails out because the CPU load is too high, it quits. So, GBlanker will blank with a black screen until you tell it to load another module. You can just open up the interface and click on the blanker again to load it. Or if you have it on "Random" then it should automatically load a new blanker when you try to blank the screen again. (This entry is not presently in effect. Look for CPU load checking to come back in a version or two with much more reliable performance.)
 - o The "Toggle" button tells GBlanker whether or not you want to consider the selected blanker when picking a random blanker. If a blanker is shown in parenthesis (ie. "(FlyingToasters)"), then it won't be picked as a random blanker. If you parenthesise ALL of them and select "Random", Garshneblanker will do strange stuff (it will hang out until you select another blanker and then blank with that one). I know. Don't do that. (Unless you think it's fun, in which case do it all day long, at least it doesn't hurt animals.)
 - o All the modules will default to the same screen mode as your Workbench screen (and differing numbers of colors). Some of them don't look very good in HiRes. Until I mess with the BestScreenMode() stuff in V39 intuition, try some of the blankers in low-res, they look a lot better and run much faster (like Life, Fireworks, Interference, etc.). Resolution is often not as important as number of colors. In fact, Plasma looks really cool in 256 colors on a 160x100 screen (obscure AGA mode).
 - o Check out the "Info"s on the modules. Some of them say useful things. Also they should all give credit to those who have supported Garshneblanker by writing their own modules or porting them from other blankers, :).
- That's about it. Again if you have any questions comments or suggestions. E-mail me. I'm more likely to respond to regular postal mail than I was before but it'll take a heck of a lot longer. So if you can email, do that first.
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1.4 Things on my agenda for Garshneblanker

Ok. Here's where I get to list all the stuff that would be cool to have. Some are suggestions from others, so it could be that I've gotten your suggestion but have simply chosen to ignore it :) or more likely haven't had time to get to it yet. My damned boss thinks that I should work for him 8 hours a day which I think is really silly, but I guess I have to put up with it.

Here we go:

From arigr@cc.uch.gr

- A bazillion things that would take a team of programmers two lifetimes to implement (just kidding :). However I won't list them all.

- Sound support
- Analog clock
- Fade to blanker screen

From he241sc@unidui.uni-duisberg.de:

- A Tetris blanker
- An Eyes blanker
- Lightning (arcs coming down the screen and flashing)

From jayrymal@utcc.utoronto.ca:

- Rushing through parallel squares that form a tunnel

From Ken Pierce:

- Falling cow blanker

From numerous people:

- Joystick port monitoring
- Password protection

From others who I didn't write down:

- Multiple prefs files for each blanker (like earlier and more complicated version 2.0 :)
- Change a .plan file somewhere to reflect that owner is away from machine (for netted Amigas)

Stuff I want to do:

- Run MaxxonMAGIC blankers (bastard's are trying to SELL a screen blanker, what do they think this is, a Mac?)
- Redo the interface in sizeable Boopsi interface objects (Boopsi's a pain)

If anyone feels up to the adventurous task of writing their own modules. I suggest the following plan of action. Look at the source code for some of the simple ones like Fade and Worms. Then change the stuff in one of those to work for yours (this is really simple) and then clean it up and make the prefs do what you want and voila! your very own blanker. Then hoard it to yourself or mail it to me or make it publicly available at your local ftp site. If you send it to me (and it's relatively bug free :) I'll include it in the distribution.
