

**GUIFront**

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# Chapter 1

# GUIFront

## 1.1 The GUIFront Preferences Editor

Documentation for  
GUIFront Preferences v1.2  
An editor for the GUIFront  
Dynamic GUI Layout Engine  
Written by Michael Berg  
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This document describes how to use the GUIFront preferences editor. Please select an item from the table of contents listed below:

Introduction	Introduction to the GUIFront Preferences editor
Installation	How to install it
Usage	How to use it
History	Program history
Author	How to reach the author

## 1.2 Introduction

### Introduction

The GUIFront preferences editor is a utility which allows you to customize the visual appearance of GUIFront applications. For example, you can tell an application use a particular font, or change the color of frame headlines for another application. Or a combination of those, of course.

See the section on usage for a complete description of all features.

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## 1.3 Installation

### Installation

The GUIFront preferences editor installs very easily. Simply copy it and its icon into the directory or drawer where you want it. If you want the editor to run localized, you must also copy the necessary catalog files to your LOCALE: directory.

Two versions of the editor have been provided. One runs on all Amigas, while the other requires an Amiga with at least a 68020 processor. To maximise efficiency you should install the version which most closely matches the CPU in your machine.

I shouldn't have to say this, but just in case anyone's wondering - yes, you do need the guifront.library to use the preferences editor :)

Like the GUIFront library itself, the GUIFront editor requires at least AmigaDOS 2.04.

In case you are still confused, simply let one of the installation scripts do the work for you.

## 1.4 Usage

### Usage

The GUIFront preferences editor allows you to change almost all GUI related aspects of a GUIFront application. It also allows you to define a "default" setting, which new applications automatically inherit when they are first run.

To use the editor, either double-click on it's icon, or activate it from a shell. You should see the main editing window pop up.

The listview gadget contains a list of active applications. To edit the preferences of any particular application, first select the application from this list. To edit the default preferences (which are inherited by new applications when they are first launched), select the entry marked with "« Default »").

Pressing the Gadgets button brings up a new window which allows you to change various settings pertaining to gadgets (font, style, etc).

The Frames button opens a window which allows you to modify settings pertaining to frames and frame headlines.

The Backfill button opens a window which allows you to control whether or not an application is allowed to use backfilling, and if so, what color the backfill should have.

The Screens button opens up a window which allows you to configure which existing public screen an application should open GUI's on, or if necessary the attributes of a new public screen for use with this particular

application.

The Misc button opens up a window with miscellaneous other settings. At present the only setting you can control from here is what type of refreshing an application should use, but more controls are planned.

The Info button brings up some information on the currently selected application. Note not every application supply information about themselves, and so some of the fields in the Information window may be empty.

Note that all the above windows are asynchronous. This means you can open and use as many of them as you like at any one time.

The Delete button allows you to delete all settings related to the currently selected application. You will be asked to confirm the operation, and then the application is deleted. Note you cannot undo this by pressing the Cancel button!

The Test button allows you to temporarily test the effects of the changes made to the preferences. Of course, this requires that the application(s) are also running at the time.

Technical note: GUI tests are passive on the part of GUIFront. An application has to explicitly listen for messages from GUIFront telling them their preferences have been changed, or the Test gadget will have no effect on them. If nothing seems to happen when you press Test, the most likely explanations are that the application was written before preferences notification was implemented in the library, or is not currently able to change its visuals for some other reason (like, it is busy loading data).

To permanently save the preferences as they are just now (regardless of which windows may be open), press Save. To use the current settings, press Use. To cancel changes you've made to the preferences, press Cancel.

Note that to `guifront.library`, changes happen only when you press Save or Use. If you launch an application while the preferences window is open, this new application will use the preferences which were in effect before the preferences editor was launched.

The GUIFront preferences editor also has some menus. See the menu section for a more detailed description of these.

Also note that the preferences editor listens for new applications to start. As soon as this happens, a new entry appears in the application listview, regardless of what you are doing with the editor at that time.

Closing the window is logically equivalent to pressing Use, so you won't lose any changes if you do this.

## 1.5 Gadget Preferences

### Gadget Preferences

This window allows you to control which font an application should use for gadgets, plus what style you prefer for various gadget types.

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Select `Screen Font` to have the application use whatever happens to be the current screen font at the time when the application is launched.

Deselect `Screen Font` to have the application use a particular font. Use the `GetFont` gadget to select the font the application should use.

The listview below the font settings contain a list of gadgets which can be rendered in one of two styles: `Xen` or `Normal`. `Xen` differs from `Normal` in that an extra black frame is rendered around the gadget hitbox itself. With the right font and a high graphics resolution, this can look remarkably good, especially for Buttons and Checkboxes.

Note that Checkboxes currently cannot be rendered in `Xen` mode under V36. You'll need at least V39 to enjoy this.

The `Xen Frame Color` palette gadget allows you to select which color should be used for rendering `Xen` frames. `Xen` frames are the thin frames which GUIFront draws around the hitboxes of those gadgets which supports the `xen` mode. You probably want it to be as dark as possible (like black).

## 1.6 Frame Preferences

### Frame Preferences

This window allows you to control how frame headlines are rendered for the selected application.

Select `Screen Font` to have the application use whatever happens to be the current screen font at the time the application is launched.

Deselect `Screen Font` to have the application use a particular font. Use the `GetFont` gadget to select the font the application should use.

The `Color` gadget allows you to select the color of frame headlines.

The `Alignment` gadgets allow you to control if frame headlines should be vertically centered on (`Center` gadget), or rendered above the frame it is written on (`Above` gadget).

The `Attributes` gadgets allow you to change the attributes of frame headlines. Select `Bold` to render headlines in boldface, `Italics` to render headlines in Italics, and `3D` to give headlines a black shadow. Note that the `Color` gadget controls the color of the headline, not the shadow. Selecting black color and `3D` is therefore not a very good idea.

The `Centering` gadgets allow you to control the horizontal alignment of frame headlines. Select `Right` to have headlines rendered rightmost on the frame, `Centered` to have it centered and `Left` to have it rendered leftmost on the frame.

## 1.7 Backfill Preferences

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## Backfill Preferences

This window allows you to control application backfilling.

Select `Enable backfilling` to allow the currently selected application to use backfilling if it wants to.

If you enable backfilling, you can also select the two color components of the backfilling pattern itself, using the `Color 1` and `Color 2` gadgets.

## 1.8 Public Screen Preferences

### Public Screen Preferences

This window allows you to control public screen settings. The listview allows you to select which screen the currently selected application should open on.

Initially the listview contains three default entries:

- `Default`

Specifies that application GUIs should open on the user's current default public screen.

- `Workbench`

Specifies that application GUIs should open on the Workbench screen.

- `Frontmost`

Specifies that application GUIs should open on the frontmost public screen.

To create new public screens, press `New`. A new GUI will appear, allowing you to specify the various attributes of the new screen. Use the string gadget below the listview to enter the name of the new public screen. Note that this is not the title of the screen, rather the symbolic name by which it will be known internally by the rest of the system and by other applications.

If you wish to edit existing screen definitions, press the `Edit...` gadget. To delete screen definitions, press `Delete...` (you will be asked to confirm the operation).

The screen definition GUI contains a heap of gadgets which each control one attribute of the new screen. Most of it should be self explanatory, but I'll give a quick run-down of the gadgets anyway. First, however, please note that this GUI is sensitive to which OS version you are using, so that if for example you are using kickstart 2.04 (V37), not all gadgets will be visible because those features weren't yet available in that OS. Also, the Screen Mode selection (see below) will appear differently under V37, V38 and V39+.



The Screen Mode selector allows you to pick one of the existing Amiga screen modes. This in turn controls the size and depth (number of colors) that the new screen will have, and under V38+ also if it should be autoscrolling. (In pre-V38 (2.1) systems, the AutoScroll feature will be separately controllable in the Properties section).

The Screen Font selector allows you to pick the default screen font for the new screen. Applications which do not require any particular font will use this one, as will the system's window- and screentitles, plus menu strips. Select Default if you wish to use the screen font of the user's default public screen (determined at runtime, of course).

Moving down to the Properties section, the Screen Title gadget allows you to enter the title of the new screen. This title will appear visually in the screen's drag bar.

Show Title does not (however suggestive it sounds) indicate if the screen title is to be displayed or not, rather it tells the system if the title is to be rendered on top of or below backdrop windows. Since GUIFront does not currently support backdrop windows the usefulness of this gadget is debatable, but it is included for completion and in preparation for future upgrades.

The Interleaved gadget controls whether or not the screen should be interleaved. Interleaved screens generally show less flickering when scrolling CLI windows etc, because bitplanes are stored in a special format internally. I recommend always enabling Interleave, since the system can override it in case the resolution and/or depth you've selected somehow prohibits it (i.e. the screen won't refuse to open, it'll just not be interleaved).

The Open Behind gadget allows you to specify that the screen should open behind all existing screens.

The Leave Open gadget tells GUIFront to leave the screen open after the application quits. The default action is to try to close the screen again when the application exits.

The Quiet gadget tells the system not to render the default system screen gadgets (tofront/toback) on this screen.

The Draggable gadget is used to define if the screen should be draggable by mouse or not.

The Share Pens gadget controls how drawing pens should be handled by applications. It's a long story, but to make it very short you generally want this to be ON.

The Exclusive gadget is used to specify that the screen should always appear in whole, i.e. never be obscured by another screen (not even by dragging).

## 1.9 Miscellaneous Preferences

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## Miscellaneous Preferences

This window allows you to control miscellaneous GUI settings for the currently selected application.

The Refreshing gadgets allow you to control what type of window refreshing the application should be using. Select Smart to use Intuition's smart refreshing scheme, and Simple to use manual refreshing.

The difference between the two methods is the old memory-versus-speed compromise over again. Smart refreshing looks great, it is quick and results in a minimum of visual flickering when windows are moved around. The drawback is that this type of refreshing is quite expensive in terms of memory usage. Worst case it uses twice the amount of memory it normally would.

Simple refresh is very cheap in terms of memory usage, but takes longer to execute. On slower machines, the flickering of the refresh cycle will probably be a bit too obvious.

A general rule of thumb for configuring refresh is to use smart refreshing when memory permits and simple refreshing when CPU power permits. I own a 68040 @ 28 mhz myself, and for me simple refreshing works like a charm. I expect the same to be true for 030 and even some 020 based machines.

## 1.10 Application Information

### Application Information

This window simply shows you some information about the current application. Note that not all applications supply information about themselves. For such applications the information fields will remain empty.

## 1.11 Menus

### Menus

The GUIFront preferences editor currently has the following menu items:

Project/

Open...

This menu item allows you to load a complete set of preferences into the editor. Note that the current preferences (plus any changes you've made) will be lost in the process.

Save As...

This menu item allows you to save the current preferences to a

file. Note that doing this has the side effect of making the saved preferences the actual, current preferences, just like if you had pressed Use.

About...

This menu item shows you some incredibly important information.

Quit

Select this menu item to quit the GUIFront preferences editor. The current settings will be lost in the process.

Edit/

Reset to Defaults/

This entry

This menu item will reset the current application to some internal, standard values. Note that this takes effect immediately (it may be cancelled, however)

All entries

Select this menu item to reset all application preferences to internal default values. Again note that this takes effect immediately (it may be cancelled, however).

Last Saved

This menu item resets the current settings to whatever you last saved using the Save gadget.

Restore

Select this menu item to undo all changes you've made to the current preferences.

Options/

Create Icons?

Check this menu item if you want project icons to be saved along with the preferences, every time you select Save As... from the menu.

GUIFront uses the image of the first of the following icons it can locate, for the icon to be saved:

ENV:Sys/def\_guifront  
ENVARC:Sys/def\_guifront  
ENV:Sys/def\_project  
ENVARC:Sys/def\_project

If you design your own icon and store it under one of these names, GUIFront automatically uses this icon.

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## 1.12 Program history

Program history

15.07.95 - Release 1.2, library version 38.1

- Added public screen support
- Fixed problem with refreshing in Frame configuration GUI
- Added missing icon for italiano installation script (sorry, Michele!)

7.10.94 - Release 1.1, library version 37.3

- Added italiano translation (Michele Giorato, 2:333/707.4)
- Corrected a few minor bugs
- If guifront.library could not be opened, the program would crash
- Added Test gadget to main GUI

20.6.94 - Release 1.0, library version 37.2

## 1.13 Author

Author

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