Appendix B   WebAnimator Hints & Tips

This appendix provides you with hints and tips for creating your WebAnimator scenes. These tips will help you reduce file and download time and provide valuable information for using colors and fonts.

Think small!

Most users access the Internet with modems operating at 28,000 bps or slower. While WebAnimator's compression ability and vector-based graphics make it easier to reduce the size of an uncompressed scene, you must exercise good judgment when importing graphics and sounds. The use of Master Sounds is highly recommended if there is duplication of sounds within your scene.

Remember that most users are acutely aware of the time it takes to download anything over the Web. WebAnimator scenes must be fully downloaded before they begin playing, so every byte you shave from your scenes' file sizes will save your users download time.

Graphics   Import as few graphics as possible. Using WebAnimator's drawing tools to create graphics wherever possible will save you much memory and download time. Make sure that the graphics you do import are as small as possible.

Sounds   Use 8-bit, 11 kHz sounds, if a sound file is too big. While the quality of the sound may suffer to some degree, this will also save precious memory and download time.

Use the System color palette

In order to conserve memory and disk space, WebAnimator stores all bitmap images (images created in paint programs like Adobe™ Photoshop™, ColorIt, and Fractal Design Painter®) in 8-bit (256 color) format.

WebAnimator's default color palette is the Macintosh/Windows System palette. The system palette provides a good overall set of colors that will be appropriate for most uses.

If you create images in more than 256 colors, WebAnimator will reduce the colors in these images and apply the system color palette. In most cases, you will obtain better results by creating your images in 16-bit (thousands of colors) or 32-bit (millions of colors) modes, and then converting them to the system palette in your paint program. Then, you can save your image from your paint program knowing exactly how it will look when imported into WebAnimator.

You can create and import images that use different color palettes, but this can cause standard display color changes (i.e., window borders change color, icons change color, etc.) when the scene is played back on a system that has only 256 colors. Remember that many computers are only able to display 256 colors at a time, and you cannot load two images with different color palettes at the same time without at least one of them losing some color integrity.

Use only standard fonts

One of WebAnimator's advantages is its ability to render fonts as it draws items. This reduces file size dramatically because it avoids storing text in bitmap form.

However, in order to achieve predictable results, this also requires that the user viewing the scene have installed all of the fonts with which the scene was originally created.

WebAnimator automatically substitutes fonts when it cannot find the original font on the user's system. It makes an attempt to substitute a similar font, but if a non-standard font is used when the scene is created, this results in less-predictable layout when the scene is played on a machine where the font is not present.

For this reason, always use standard fonts like Helvetica and Times for your scenes.

If you want to use different fonts or use anti-aliased text, you can create your text in a paint program and import it into your scenes. Remember, however, that importing bitmaps results in larger scene sizes.

More Hints and Tips…

Check the DeltaPoint Web site at `http://www.deltapoint.com` for more WebAnimator hints and tips, as they become available.