

Using Personal TV Studio

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Animating with Personal TV Studio

The shareware version comes with the Paint Book and the Tool Palette. In order to create an animation for your web site, or create a movie with sound, you need to know a little about animation in general.

Have you ever made a "flip book"? This is where you draw a series of images in the top right corner of a note book and thumb the pages. As the pages flip past your thumb, it looks like the animation in the corner of the notebook is playing. That is the basic principal of animation. A series of pages or "frames", each image altered slightly.

When you create an animated GIF or AVI, you first have to draw frames, and save each one as a bitmap. Once you have your set of images, you load them into a utility one at a time, and create one animation file.

There are many utilities available on the net that are free or shareware that will take your individual bitmap image frames and convert them into one animation file.

The one I recommend is AVIEdit. It creates AVI files. Windows comes with the ability to play AVI files. There is a link to get this file for free from Microsoft's web site on our Info sites.

AVI Files (Audio Video Interleave)

An AVI can be compressed or uncompressed. An uncompressed AVI is usually very large. For instance, a 60 second AVI could easily require 50 meg of harddisk space. Windows comes with numerous formats for "encoding" or "decoding" AVI files.

These "codecs" compress and uncompress the AVI file, saving greatly on disk space.

There are other formats such as Netshow Real Video, which can compress an AVI and create an RM file that can be played in real-time across the net with a 28 k modem.

When you use your video camera and play video through your graphic capture card in your computer, (if you have one) and capture a stretch of video, it should be uncompressed

so that you can edit each frame or add frames to it.

When using Personal TV Studio, we recommend you use the AVI format rather than MPG to allow for editing with AVIEdit.

Once you have finished editing your video, you can save the AVI as a MPG with any conversion utility if you wish.

Using the Main Paint Book

The Paint Book is the main component of Personal TV Studio. It reads and saves both BMP and JPG file formats.

A windows bitmap (BMP) is not compressed and therefore they are very large files. That is why people use JPG or GIF files on the world wide web.

Creating a New Image

Select <FILE> <NEW> and you will be shown a dialog box with several choices of image size. Choose the size you want, then select OK.

You may now select a tool from the tool palette and apply the tool to the blank page.

Opening an Existing Image

When you select <FILE> <OPEN> the "Image Browser" dialog box is displayed. You can click on the Drive, Directory or Filename areas to select a file into the window.

Once you have selected a file that you wish to edit, click on "Load" to load the image into the "Main" page of Paint Book.

Using the Image Browser

At the top of the image browser are several other buttons. You can select the way you like a JPG to be loaded. Quality or Speed, 8 or 24 bit color (256 color mode or True color mode) or greyscale. You need to set these options prior to loading the file or leave them at the default.

There is also a very handy "Copy to Clipboard" button at the top

right that allows you to capture an image and paste it into the Paint Book Main Page. This is very handy because it does not affect the image currently loaded into Paint Book. In this case you use the "Copy" button and then minimize the Image Browser window or close it, and then continue working on your currently loaded image in main. Simply select the "Paste" button and you can paste an image into your current work.

You can resize the clipboard image as you paste it so size is not a concern when you first capture the image from the image browser.

Capturing to the Clip Board

There are many ways to load the Windows Clipboard with an image. You can use any other graphics program or select one of the many buttons in "Paint Book" or the "Tool Palette".

Whenever you capture an area, you need to select the paste button manually or choose <EDIT> <PASTE> before you will see the captured image. It does not paste automatically.

At the top of Paint Book, on the tool bar, are several methods for capturing images.

Outline Capture or Lasso Capture

This is a very important tool. In most paint programs you are expected to encircle an area freehand, while holding the left mouse button down. Have you ever tried to do this? It is very difficult. In fact it is almost impossible to outline an area precisely.

With Personal TV Studio, you lay out a series of points by clicking one at a time. When you have outlined the area, you click the Right Mouse Button, to complete the capture.

You can also zoom in first and really get accurate. (Providing the entire area appears on the screen at one time)

Once you have captured an area with this tool, the area around the clip will be transparent when pasted. In this way, when you paste, only the irregular shaped clipping will be pasted, and not the background area surrounding it.

An example of this would be to outline-capture a person in one photograph, and superimpose them onto a second photograph,

to include them in the family photo.

Capture Box

Use the "capture box" button to capture a rectangular area. Press and hold the Left MouseButton while dragging to surround the area to be captured to the clipboard. When you release the button, the area is placed on the clipboard.

You can then use the "Paste" button or paste the area into another graphics application.

Paste

Choose <EDIT> <PASTE> to paste the image from the clipboard onto the page. You can then press, hold and drag the clipping into place on the image.

When you paste onto the page, the "paste panel" appears on the right hand side bar of the Paint Book. There are numerous options there for manipulating the pasted image. You can resize the clipping, or move it into place by clicking on one of the buttons. This allows you to move the clipping very accurately into place.

You can also rotate the clipping by clicking on the "clip rotate" button.

There are two other very important buttons on the bottom of the paste side bar. They are "Dark Imprint" and "Light Imprint". If you have loaded a photograph, you can do some great effects by pasting an imprint onto the photograph.

For instance, to emboss some text onto the photo, you use the "text" button to load some text onto the clipboard as a bitmap, then paste a dark imprint first, onto the page. Then do a light imprint onto the same area but offset by one pixel down and one pixel to the right. This will imprint the text onto the photo. Experiment with these two buttons and you will find many ways to enhance your images.

Copy Entire Image

When you select <EDIT> <COPY> the entire image is copied to the clipboard. There is a button on the tool bar, and also one in the "Image Browser" to accomplish this as well.

Resize

Use the resize button to resize the current page. There are 2 buttons on the dialog box that appears. One is for doubling the size, and one is for reducing the size by a half. These are provided for convenience.

I often first double the image size before editing. This allows for more detailed work. You can reduce the image by half when finished editing. This requires more RAM than normal. If you have lots of RAM in your computer, this is an easier way to work on an image than using the zoom button when editing an image.

It is always a good idea to work on an image size larger than your finished size. The finished image will be of much higher quality.

Paste From File

Use this button to load an image from file, onto the clipboard. You will need to use the "paste" button manually in order to paste once the image has been loaded onto the clipboard.

There is a clipboard viewer included with Windows that you could load and keep minimized to view the contents of your Windows clipboard. See your Windows documentation regarding loading the "Clipboard Viewer".

Paste to File

You may wish to make a clipped region the entire image. First you save the clipped area to file, using this button, then load that image into Paint Book.

You may also just want to save a captured region for some other purpose such as to use as a shape template for morfing.

The Clip Size Manager

This utility is provided to allow you to resize your captured frames. Often you will create an animation frame on a page that is smaller than the entire page. Once you have captured an area, you can set the exact size with this utility. All frames in an animation should have the exact same dimensions before being converted to the AVI or MPG format.

Morf Paste Clip

This brings up a handy utility for morfing a clipboard image onto another shape. You can use a previously saved shape as a template. Copy a region with the "outline tool" and "Paste to File". Then once you have captured another region to the clipboard and have loaded the "Morf Paste Clip" utility, you can morf the current clipboard image onto the shape of the previously captured area.

You can also choose a standard shape such as a circle or rectangle, as a template.

Once you have completed the process, the newly shaped clipping will be pasted.

Rotated and 3D Text

Use this utility to create fancy text and paste it onto your page.

It takes a bit of practice to get it right because the text uses some high level filters to smooth out the edges of the letters by blending the text with the background color. (White by default).

When you paste the text onto an area of your page that is not white, you will see this as discoloration. Experiment with the settings provided in the Rotated and 3D Text dialog box .

Multiple Line Text

Use this notepad to prepare text to be pasted onto the page. The Personal TV Studio development kit interface on CDROM has an RTF format editor that allows you to paste fancy formatted text onto the page.

You cannot paste ordinary text such as text that originated from the Windows Notepad, because it is not in bitmap format. You will get an error message when you attempt to paste.

Load the text first into the Multiple Line Text utility, then "Copy as Bitmap", then you can paste it onto the page.

The Animation Manager

This utility is used to preview your animation prior to creating an AVI file.

Once you have drawn an image or altered a photo, and have therefore created an animation frame, you drag it from Paint Book to

the Animation Manager Drag and Drop Save spot, to save the frames to disk. This will allow you to preset a filename that will be constant for the entire set of images that will make up your animation series. They will be similar to Myimage1.bmp Myimage2.bmp Myimage3.bmp etc.

See the help provided there for more details.

Getting More Help

Once you have mastered the program you will be able to quickly and easily create Web content for clients, or edit your home videos into academy award material. People will actually want to come over and watch your home videos, instead of heading for the door whenever you make the suggestion to your friends and family.

If you have a little talent and a bit of equipment like a camcorder, sound card and video capture card, there is no limit to the possibilities.

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