

ADOBE® AFTER EFFECTS® 4.1 READ ME

This file contains late-breaking product information, updates to the Adobe After Effects documentation, and troubleshooting tips. Please refer to the user guide for installation instructions. You will find the After Effects 4.1 User Guide Supplement PDF on the CD. It describes all the changes to After Effects since version 4.0. For further troubleshooting and performance information, see the User Guide or online Help. This file includes the following sections:

- * Installation Notes
- * Third Party Compatibility
- * General Notes
- * Using After Effects with Mac OS
- * Using After Effects with Windows
- * Changing settings in the After Effects .ini file

Important: Please complete your registration card and mail it today or use the on-line registration software provided with Adobe After Effects software to register your copy. You must register to receive technical support and important product update information.

INSTALLATION NOTES

Do not install After Effects 4.1 into the same drive location as an earlier version. Either uninstall the earlier version or make sure you choose a new folder to install into.

The After Effects Production Bundle version includes the option to install an After Effects Render Engine. Note that you have the choice between the Render Engine and the normal Production Bundle – you cannot install both. The Production Bundle includes all features of the Render Engine, so there is no need to install both.

To use After Effects' QuickTime™ features, Apple's QuickTime 3.0 or later must be installed on your computer. If it is not already installed, you can find QuickTime for your platform on your After Effects 4.1 CD.

The After Effects Production Bundle installs the latest version of the Sentinel hardware key system drivers (v5.37) on Windows. If you use other Sentinel-protected applications such as LightWave 3D, Kinetix 3D Studio Max, Avid MCXPress or others, you already have an older version of the Sentinel driver on your system. You may wish not to install the newer driver, as it is incompatible with some older software such as Kinetix 3D Studio MAX 1.0. After Effects Production Bundle will work with the older Sentinel software.

When installing on Mac OS 8.6, be sure to disable Virex first, otherwise the After Effects Help installation may fail.

After Effects Production Bundle on Mac OS uses an ADB hardware key. If you are running After Effects on a machine without ADB, such as iMac, you can exchange your ADB key for USB hardware. Inside your After Effects box is a return envelope and ADB to USB hardware key exchange form – enclose your ADB key and follow the return instructions on the form.

Before attaching the hardware key, be sure to power down your computer to avoid damage to the key and your computer.

Home Use of After Effects 4.1 Production Bundle

For use of After Effects at both work and home, the Adobe End User License Agreement allows the primary user to install After Effects on one home computer as long as both copies of the software are not used at the same time. For more information on the Home Use clause, please consult the Adobe End

User License Agreement.

Since After Effects Production Bundle requires a hardware key to use the Production Bundle features, you must move the hardware key between computers when using the software on your secondary computer. If you require a different flavor of hardware key for your secondary computer (for example, you need a Mac OS ADB hardware key on your primary computer and a Mac OS USB hardware key on your secondary computer) you will not be able to use the Production Bundle features on both computers since Adobe does not sell multiple hardware keys for a single license. Please note that you can still use the features included in the Standard version of After Effects if a hardware key is not installed.

THIRD PARTY COMPATIBILITY

After Effects 4.1 now allows custom effect slider ranges. Some third-party effects may not render as expected when setting their parameters beyond the default slider range.

Some third-party plug-ins, such as older versions of Final Effects' FE Glass and Mr. Mercury, can crash in the Windows version of After Effects 4.1. Older versions of ICE-enabled plug-ins may give errors when After Effects 4.1 Windows has performed a cache purge, such as when Edit>Purge>All is selected. Contact ICE (<http://www.iced.com/>) for information about the availability of updated plug-ins.

On Windows, selecting "About" to get information about a specific codec in the AVI Output Module Options dialog can cause a crash for some codecs, such as the Targa 2000 or the DVSoft codec.

On Windows using Targa 2000 3.0 or later, enabling both Video For Windows and QuickTime compatibility options in the Targa 2000 Service Selector can cause After Effects to hang or crash.

Electric Image EIZ

After Effects Production Bundle supports Electric Image's Z-buffer output file (EIZ). This file contains 32 bit floating point numbers representing the distance from the camera to the objects in the scene. There are two types of EIZ files:

Planar: All objects the same Z distance from the face of the camera get the same Z-buffer value.

Spherical: All objects the same vector-length from the face of the camera get the same Z-buffer value.

To trigger EIZ output in Electric Image, set the adaptive min and max anti-aliasing settings in the Render Control window to the following:

For Planar Z-buffer: Min = 255, Max = 0

For Spherical Z-buffer: Min = 255, Max = 128

The resulting EIZ file must be named the same as the corresponding RGBA file, but with ".eiz" as the extension.

For Electric Image Support call: 714-433-0400

E-mail: support@electricimage.com

Web: <http://www.electricimage.com>

GENERAL NOTES

In earlier versions of After Effects, PICT files could have either ".pct" or ".pic" as their file extension. The ".pic" extension is now used for Softimage PIC files. If you have PICT files that end with ".pic", use Import As... to import them.

If you experience missing footage when importing a Premiere project, open the project & resave from

Premiere on the machine running After Effects.

On the Quick Reference Card, the shortcut for "Open selected footage item or composition" should be listed as "Double-click or enter on *numeric* keypad".

After Effects 4.0 required that all sequences be named with sequential numbers. In After Effects 4.1 you can import sequence files alphabetically, but only if the file you choose in the import dialog has no numbers in its name. All other files of the same type (with numbers or not) will be imported in alphabetical order. To avoid reverting to a numerical sequence, make sure the first file in the folder has no numbers in its filename.

The Mac OS Finder sometimes creates an invisible file called "Icon<cr>" in a file system folder. This file is created when you paste a custom icon into a folder, but can also be created at other times. If this file exists in a folder containing a footage sequence, it can cause two problems. On the Mac, it may prevent drag & drop importing of that folder. On Windows, it may prevent the sequence from being imported at all. To work around this problem, on the Mac use the Import dialog instead of drag & drop. On Windows, move the files into a new folder.

The interpret footage option for anti-aliasing Illustrator footage (Faster vs. More Accurate) is not retained when using Remember Interpretation and Apply Interpretation.

When converting 3.x or earlier projects containing Numbers, Path Text, or Basic Text effects, After Effects may not be able to convert the font name correctly – be sure to check any applications of these filters by selecting the effects' "options" dialog. If you're using Numbers, note that the placement of the text may have shifted.

When working with many masks on a layer (more than 70 or so) you may need to increase the memory allocated to After Effects. Avoid nudging large numbers of selected masks.

Don't render to or initiate Watch Folder mode (Production Bundle Only) on the root of a volume or a shared folder that appears as root when viewed from another machine. Render or watch a subfolder on the volume instead.

Mesh Warp's (Production Bundle Only) information display shows the rows and columns of its mesh keyframes, which may be different from the current settings of the rows and columns slider. New keyframes will always be created at the density of the current time's rows and columns setting.

Interior points of a Mesh Warp can be dragged outside of the layer, but the Mesh Warp effect will only stretch the buffer accordingly if the boundary points are stretched as well.

The Diaquest DDR plug-in that shipped with After Effects 3.x Production Bundle is not designed to work in After Effects 4.1. While it will appear in the interface, its dialogs cannot be selected. Included on the After Effects 4.1 CD is a plug-in for the Accom family of DDRs. Diaquest offers a plug-in for After Effects that supports additional DDR models from such manufacturers as Sierra Designs and Abekas. Contact Diaquest (<http://www.diaquest.com/>) for more information.

The User Guide erroneously states that you can delete graph points from the Curves effect using the delete key. You can delete a graph point by dragging it over its neighbors.

Photoshop plug-ins applied in After Effects (any effect listed in the menus as PS or PS+) are not retained when moving a project across platforms; whenever possible, use plug-ins designed for After Effects in projects that you intend to move to another platform.

In Particle Playground (Production Bundle Only), you can achieve more precision (and smoother collisions) for a wall by using the Add Point tool on its mask to give it more control points. When using Persistent or Ephemeral image maps, avoid gradients containing alpha channels as your resulting values

will be diminished by the alpha value.

When pasting a mask from Photoshop, After Effects assumes that its images are at 72dpi – if you see your paths changing size unexpectedly, make sure that your image resolution is set to 72dpi when you copy the path from Photoshop.

After Effects cannot paste an Illustrator path that contains gradient mesh or other gradient information. You can work around this by removing the gradient information before copying in Illustrator.

Pasting of mask shapes from Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop is supported via a plug-in – if you cancel loading of plug-ins or otherwise disable them, you may lose the ability to paste masks from external applications. If you are unable to paste mask shapes from external applications, make sure the AIPaths.8BY (Windows)/Adobe Illustrator Paths (Mac) plug-in is installed in your plug-in folder.

After Effects 4.1 cannot open files saved in Illustrator 6.0 format by Illustrator 7.0 – the workaround is to re-save the files in Illustrator 7.0 format or re-save the file in any version using Illustrator 8.0.

The audio waveform (or any other graph) in the Time Layout window can be resized by dragging its border up and down. Note that the cursor may not change to a resize arrow.

Position values as displayed in the Info floater are in original composition coordinates; for many items, a second coordinate will appear (X', Y') which will give you the coordinates using the ruler origin.

Command/Ctrl-clicking on a keyframe will change its interpolation type from linear to bezier or vice-versa. To select multiple keyframes, use shift-select instead of command/ctrl-select. Note that command/ctrl-clicking is used elsewhere in the application for discontinuous selection, including layers.

After Effects was not designed to be run from a remote server or from a read-only folder – install it on your local hard drive.

Some programs, such as Shake and Maya, use the IFF extension for their image formats. Even though these files have the IFF extension, they are not Amiga IFF format. After Effects can only import Amiga IFF such as those generated by LightWave or Photoshop.

3D Channel sequences will not show 3D Channel information in the project window thumbnail description. Import a single file from the sequence to see which channels it contains.

Watch Folder notes (Production Bundle only)

Using the same machine to both serve a watch folder to other computers and run After Effects in watch folder mode is not recommended. Use a dedicated server to serve your watch folder, and don't run After Effects on that machine.

The rendering status html pages that are generated by Watch Folder rendering contain links to the After Effects web banner from the adobe.com web site. If this causes problems in your browser, you can suppress the banner by enabling the No Web Banner plug-in. The default installation includes the plug-in named "(No Web Banner)" or "(No Web Banner).aex" located in the Keyframe Assistant folder inside the Pro Bundle plug-ins folder. Just rename it without the parentheses to stop your watch folder status files from linking to the Adobe web site for graphics.

If your Netscape browser crashes when you choose "Browse Progress..." from the Watch Folder, upgrade your browser to a later version.

When watch-folder rendering sequence output to a Windows NT Server, some of the rendered frames might not be visible from a Mac OS client. When you import these sequence files, you'll get a missing file

alert on the Mac. This is apparently a Windows NT Services for Macintosh bug.

Watch Folder will not render reliably when connecting to a Novell NetWare server from a Macintosh using Mac IPX protocol.

Make sure all volume names (including mounted network volumes) are unique.

When running on a Japanese, Chinese, or Korean system, if you want to use a web server to see your HTML progress files, make sure that the project name, the output folder name, and the watch folder name don't contain any double-byte characters. This is necessary to avoid double-byte URLs which most web servers do not support.

USING AFTER EFFECTS WITH MAC OS

The User Guide Supplement mentions that the enhanced Open & Save dialog boxes (Navigation Services) preference is enabled by default. This is incorrect. Feel free to enable it, but if After Effects is not stable when using the enhanced dialogs, turn it back off. You can momentarily reverse the setting of the preference when importing, loading, or saving by holding down the Shift key when choosing the menu item. As of Mac OS 8.6, mounting network volumes from within the enhanced Open & Save dialog boxes (Navigation Services) can cause a crash, and importing some audio files can leak memory. These problems may be fixed in later Mac OS versions.

When you open a project with source footage that has been dragged into the Trash, After Effects will still find the files in the trash and use them. To avoid this, empty the trash before opening the project. Similar problems may arise even *after* emptying the trash when using TechTool Pro's Protection Control Panel (because the files aren't actually thrown away, just hidden).

On newer Mac G3 and G4 computers the higher speed processors may also have higher bus speeds. Be sure to purchase RAM that has a synchronous clock speed matching your bus speed or you will experience random machine lock-ups. This can strike any application; in After Effects it is most likely to occur during RAM preview or rendering.

There is a known problem in Mac OS 8.5 using third-party ADB devices, such as the hardware keys used by After Effects Production Bundle and other hardware-key protected applications. If you experience messages that After Effects cannot locate its hardware key, obtain the free Mac OS 8.5.1 updater from Apple.

It is not recommended that you run After Effects with Mac OS virtual memory as it can degrade performance of RAM preview and other After Effects features. If you do use Mac OS virtual memory and experience system instability, make sure that your hard disk drivers are up-to-date with your OS, especially if you are running Mac OS 8.5 or later.

Problems using context menus may be due to a conflict with Apple's "Context Menu Enabler" extension. Use the Extension Manager control panel to disable "Context Menu Enabler" (not "Context Menu Extension".)

When performing RAM previews using Avid Media Composer-compressed QuickTime movies, you may experience unreported decompression failures. This can result blank or duplicated frames when working at decreased resolution. If this happens, change your composition's resolution to full or preview fewer frames. You can also work around the problem by using MoviePlayer to transcode your Avid movies to other software codecs, such as MJPEG-B. Contact Avid (<http://www.avid.com/>) for the latest version of the Avid codec.

USING AFTER EFFECTS WITH WINDOWS

If you install more memory in your machine, make sure to increase the size of the Windows Page File to at least the recommended amount. The Page File size is set using Start > Settings > Control Panel > System > Performance > Virtual Memory.

If some fonts become invisible when rendered (e.g. Arial), you may need to quit After Effects and delete these two files (they will be rebuilt automatically):

C:\program files\common files\adobe\typespt\adobefnt.lst

C:\program files\common files\adobe\fonts\adobefnt.lst

The shortcut for RAM Preview Every Other Frame (shift+keypad-zero) does not work when NumLock is on. Shift-clicking the RAM Preview button does work with NumLock on.

On a Chinese system, the display of vertical single-byte characters using SimHei and SimHun fonts may be cut off.

When playing back rendered Targa AVI files with audio through some Targa cards on Windows you may hear repeated clicking. To fix this, route your audio through your SoundBlaster or other non-Targa sound card or try rendering to QuickTime instead.

After Effects 4.1 Production Bundle installs version 5.37 of the Rainbow Technologies Sentinel hardware key driver. While it is recommended that you install the latest version of the driver, some older Sentinel-protected applications (Such as Kinetix 3D Studio Max 1.x) may not be able to run with the new driver. After Effects 4.1 will run with older versions of the driver if your other applications require it.

If you are using Windows NT®, you can specify configuration information for the hardware key using the Devices control panel. In most cases, the hardware key configures itself automatically and no user intervention is needed. For more documentation on these settings, see the hardware key help file in your system folder – it's located inside your NT system folder in system32/sentinel.hlp

After Effects can be run under Windows NT for Intel-based systems only. It will not run under other types of Windows NT such as Windows NT for DEC Alpha or Windows NT for PowerPC. While After Effects may run under FX!32 emulation on a DEC Alpha machine, it was not designed to be run in this environment.

If you use After Effects on a double-byte system such as Japanese, Chinese or Korean, be sure that you're running a double-byte version of QuickTime. Using the English version of QuickTime on these systems may cause common QuickTime dialogs to crash.

Adobe After Effects' initialization file (AfterFX.ini) is located in the Prefs subfolder in the folder where After Effects is installed. The initialization file contains Windows-specific configuration information – see later in this file for documentation on its entries. The preferences file (AEPrefs4.txt) is also located in the same Prefs folder. Though this has a text extension, there is no human-readable information in this file.

When running on Windows 98, It is recommended that you turn off BIOS power saving options to avoid system crashes when working with imported AVI files. You can tell if you have BIOS power saving enabled by the presence of the Suspend command in your Start menu just above Shutdown.

CHANGING SETTINGS IN THE AFTER EFFECTS .INI FILE (WINDOWS ONLY)

The After Effects initialization file (AfterFX.ini) contains a few user-editable parameters for configuring After Effects. This section explains various settings in the AfterFX.ini file that can be useful for troubleshooting purposes. There are other entries in AfterFX.ini that are not documented – it is not recommended that you edit these. To restore the default .ini settings, delete the .ini file and a new one will be created the next time you run After Effects.

This section is for experienced After Effects and Video for Windows users only.

[codec] Section

KeepOpen=

After Effects normally initializes a compressor/decompressor (codec) only as needed, and releases it when not in use. Some hardware-based codecs exhibit problems when they are reinitialized frequently, so this setting leaves them initialized for the duration of a work session. The allowed value is a comma-separated list of four character IDs that identifies the codec, for example, MJPG

By default, After Effects installs this entry:
KeepOpen=MJPG

[After_Effects] Section

DontCheckSpaceDrives=

When rendering, After Effects will check the free space of a drive and warn the user when space is almost gone. If you are using the NT virtual file system feature of a Perception Video Recorder, Hollywood Video Recorder, or other product from Digital Processing Systems, you may get erroneous "File Not Found" or "Error getting file size" messages when rendering to the virtual file system. If this occurs, adding the appropriate drive letter to this line in AfterFX.ini will prevent After Effects from checking the free space on the drive. By default, this value is set to DontCheckSpaceDrives=P, as P is the default drive letter for the PVR. If your PVR, PAR or HVR is set up on another drive, change the letter in this entry. If you have multiple drives formatted for these capture cards, list them all with no commas in between.

PadAVIFiles=

Some hardware-specific AVI players expect their files to be constructed in a very specific way, where the video and audio samples are aligned to specific byte boundaries. If you receive errors from your player, you may want to set this value to 1 to turn this alignment on. Setting this value to 1 aligns AVI files to 512-byte boundaries, which is the value preferred by many such hardware players. If you know the specific byte boundary desired, (for example 2048) you can also set this value explicitly, i.e. PadAVIFiles=2048. Note that files constructed in this way may not be compatible with all applications.

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