

IconMaker v1.03 - The icon grabber for Windows / Dos

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What is IconMaker?

IconMaker is a utility which can capture part of a displayed graphic and convert it into a Windows 3.x icon file or a bitmap file which can be edited using Windows Paintbrush.

Are you tired of seeing the same Dos icon for all your Dos applications and games? Or maybe you don't like the icons provided with your Windows applications? Using IconMaker you can create your own icons the easy and fun way by capturing pictures displayed by the programs themselves.

What can IconMaker do?

IconMaker allows you to choose part of a graphic display to be captured.

IconMaker can automatically scale the chosen portion of graphic to program icon size (32 pixels by 32 pixels).

IconMaker can translate the colours used in the original graphic to the standard 16 colours used by a Windows icon, substituting the nearest colour match.

IconMaker can mix the standard 16 colours to produce hundreds of colour shades for closer colour matching.

IconMaker uses a number of techniques to enable it to pop-up over games.

How to Register

To register IconMaker send £5 or US\$10, cheque or cash to:

Andrew King,
25 Montem Road,
New Malden,
Surrey KT3 3QW,
U.K.

CompuServe: 100112,204
Telephone: (44) 81 949 4283

IconMaker can also be registered using the Compuserve registration facility (GO SWREG) registration id 2550.

When you register you will receive a copy of the latest version of IconMaker with the reminders to register removed (the registered version cannot remove the word 'register' from images created using the unregistered version). An order form is included at the end of this document. See Registration Form below.

How to use IconMaker

IconMaker is a pop-up utility (TSR) which is installed under Dos (before you start Windows). Once installed, it sits around in the background waiting to be activated when you hit a special combination of keys on the keyboard. When you give the correct key combination IconMaker pops-up and allows you to capture part of the screen currently displayed. Once IconMaker has finished, the program you were running before continues.

To Make IconMaker Ready for Use

IconMaker is made ready in Dos as follows.

Either Change directory to the directory where the IconMaker distribution files were installed

eg. *cd \IconMkr*

Or Add the directory where the IconMaker files were installed to your path (in your Autoexec.bat file)

eg. *path=c:\IconMkr*

Then load IconMaker by typing the program name

eg. *IconMkr*

A screen summarising how to use IconMaker will be displayed to remind you of the options available.

The following options can be set when loading the program. These take the form of switches which are appended to the command line after the program name. Multiple switches may be used, with a space between each.

To enable Freeze Action use the /F switch

i.e. *IconMkr /F*

To use the Left Shift key in the hotkey combination instead of the Right Shift key, use

the /L switch

i.e. *IconMkr /L*

How to Remove IconMaker

IconMaker may be removed so that it is no longer sitting in background waiting to be activated.

IconMaker is removed in Dos as follows.

If the directory where the IconMaker distribution files were installed is not in the path
Change directory to the directory where IconMaker is installed

Type *IconMkr /r*

To Activate IconMaker

Once IconMaker has been made ready it can be activated over a graphic display at any time by using a special key combination as follows.

Hold down the *right Shift* key and at the same time hit the *Caret (^)* key (or 6 on the alpha keypad).

(You can optionally set the hotkey combination to use the Left Shift key instead of Right Shift, by adding the */L* switch to the command which loads the program i.e. *IconMkr /L.*)

A box will be displayed on the graphic. The box is used to choose the portion of the graphic to be captured (see below).

If a box is not displayed on the graphic IconMaker is unable to pop-up over this display. The reason for this will be one of the following.

The display mode used by the graphic program is not supported by IconMaker. See below for a list of display modes supported.

Some games programs take control of the timer interrupt which IconMaker needs to be able to pop-up.

If you wish to use a Caret (^) character while you have IconMaker waiting in the background you can still use the left shift key and caret.

To Cancel IconMaker

If you pop-up IconMaker then decide the picture is not suitable to be used, or you have finished saving a series of images, you can cancel by hitting the *Escape* key or the *F10* key. It is usually better to use F10 as the final keystroke is often also read by the program over which you popped.

Movement Keys

Once IconMaker has popped-up, the portion of screen to be captured as an icon or bitmap can be selected by moving the box displayed. The following keys may be used.

<i>Right Arrow</i>	Move box one pixel right
<i>Left Arrow</i>	Move box one pixel left
<i>Up Arrow</i>	Move box one pixel up
<i>Down Arrow</i>	Move box one pixel down

Shift + Arrow Move box ten pixels in direction of arrow

Control + Right Arrow Move right side of box one pixel right

Control + Left Arrow Move left side of box one pixel left

Control + Up Arrow Move top of box one pixel up

Control + Down Arrow Move bottom of box one pixel down

Shift + Control + Arrow Move one side of box ten pixels in direction of arrow

Home Move box to top left corner of screen

Page Up Move box to top right corner of screen

End Move box to bottom left corner of screen

Page Down Move box to bottom right corner of screen

Numeric Pad 5 Move box to centre of screen

Control + Home (or Page Up or End or Page Down or Numeric Pad 5)
Move box to corner of screen and set to 32 pixels by 32 pixels

Shift + Numeric Pad 5 Box whole screen

Insert or E (enlarge) Increase size of box by two pixels in width and height

Delete or R (reduce) Decrease size of box by two pixels in width and height

Shift + Insert or E Increase size of box by eight pixels in width and height

Shift + Delete or R Decrease size of box by eight pixels in width and height

To Accept Chosen Area of Screen

Once the correct portion of the screen is bounded by the box, and all conversion options are set hit *Enter*.

The chosen area of screen is now processed and the output file produced. If a large area has been chosen this may take a few seconds.

Conversion Options

The following options may be set or unset while a box is displayed on the screen.

The option is set by hitting the key indicated in the first column below. Default values for each option are underlined.

When an option is set the edges of the box grows inwards and back out again to indicate that a change has been registered.

The options are defaulted so that an Icon file which most closely matches the captured area of screen is produced. If you switch to bitmap format the defaults will produce the same as the icon but in bitmap format, so that you may edit it before recapturing it as an icon.

B Bitmap The output file will be in Windows bitmap (BMP) format suitable for use with Paintbrush and other painting programs.

I Icon (Windows) The output file will be in Windows icon file (ICO) format suitable for use as a program icon.

N Nicon (Magic Desk) The output file will be in Magic Desk icon file (ICN) format.

- F1* 16 cols (16 driver) The output image will be translated to the standard 16 colours used by a Windows icon, using the closest colour match available. The colours will be suitable for use with a 16 colour Windows display driver. (The shades of the standard 16 colours are different between 16 colour drivers and 256 colour drivers)
- F2* 16 cols (256 driver) The output image will be translated to the standard 16 colours used by a Windows icon, using the closest colour match available. The colours will be suitable for use with a 256 colour Windows display driver. (The shades of the standard 16 colours are different between 16 colour drivers and 256 colour drivers)
- C* Original Colours The output image will use the same colours as in the original. This option is only available for bitmap output.
- F5* RGB Average When scaling an image down to icon size each output pixel will be the colour which most closely matches the average red, green and blue components of the source pixels it represents. This is the better translation rule for complex images.
- F6* Most Common Colour When scaling an image down to icon size each output pixel will be the colour which most closely matches the most common colour of the source pixels it represents. This is the better translation rule for more simple images.
- F7* Mix Colours On The output image will use colour mixing to more closely match the colours of the original. This option produces better colour reproduction of the original but may produce a less clear icon.
- F8* Mix Colours Off The output image will use plain colours. This option may produce a poor colour match to the original but produces a clearer icon.
- P* Pages This option allows you to access other display pages (if any) in the computer's memory.
- Bckspc* Freeze Action This special option changes the behaviour of the program when you are about to pop it up. When this option is set On the current activation is cancelled. Subsequently hitting the Right Shift key (or Left Shift key if the /L option was used) immediately freezes the displayed graphic until either the shift key is released, allowing the program to continue, or the Caret (^) key is hit to cause IconMaker to activate. Freeze Action may also be set on by using the /F option on the load command, i.e. *IconMkr /F*.

Output File

IconMaker creates a file in the current directory for each accepted screen. The file has the extension *.ico* for a Windows icon file, *.icn* for a Magic Desk icon file and *.bmp* for a bitmap file. The filename assigned is the next available name in the series *icon-a* to *icon-z*, eg. *icon-a.ico* or *icon-b.bmp*.

It is recommended that these files be renamed to something more meaningful if they are to be kept.

Display Modes Supported

IconMaker supports the following graphics display modes.

04	CGA 4 colour
05	CGA 4 colour
06	CGA mono - does not work properly
0d	EGA 16 colours, low resolution (320 by 200)
0e	EGA 16 colours, normal resolution (640 by 200)
0f	EGA mono (640 by 350)
10	EGA 16 colours, high resolution (640 by 350)
11	VGA mono (640 by 480)
12	VGA 16 colours (640 by 480)
13	VGA 256 colours (320 by 200)

IconMaker does not support the following display modes and will not pop-up over the display.

00, 01	40 column text
02, 03	80 column text
07	monochrome alphanumeric
6a	VESA 16 colour (800 by 600)
100 -	VESA modes

IconMaker only runs on VGA or more capable graphics cards, it will not run on EGA or CGA only cards.

Windows

IconMaker can pop-up over Windows just like over any other graphic program. To do so IconMaker must be made ready in Dos before running Windows. Don't forget that IconMaker only supports the standard display modes listed above. If you are using a 256 colour driver, many of which are specific to a particular video card, or a VESA driver, you will have to change to the standard VGA 16 colour driver before IconMaker will pop-up over Windows - use the Windows setup program to change video driver. Icons produced by IconMaker can be used with any Windows display driver.

The bitmap option is specially included in IconMaker to allow you to edit an icon before using it. First capture the desired graphic as a bitmap, reduced to icon size and translated to the standard 16 colours used by Windows icons. (The default options for bitmap format will achieve this - simply hit B for bitmap while the box is on the screen). Run Windows and use Paintbrush to edit the bitmap file produced. Pop-up IconMaker over Paintbrush and capture the bitmap as an Icon.

N.B. Use the numeric keypad arrows while popped-up over Windows.

Approximately 70% of DOS games will run successfully under Windows 3.0 and above. Some games run only if an expanded memory frame has been set up. (See your operating system manual).

To Associate an Icon with a Program

To associate an icon with a program under Windows do the following.

Put the program into a Program Group by transferring from the Program Manager display. (See your Windows manual for details).

Click once on the icon which now represents the program (for all Dos programs this is the standard DOS icon). The program will be highlighted.

Click on the File option on the Program Manager menu line. A drop down menu is displayed.

Choose Properties. A small dialogue window is displayed.

Click on the Change Icon button. A second dialogue window is displayed.

Enter the full path and filename of the file which contains the icon you wish to use and click on OK on both of the dialogue windows.

Tips

The following tips for producing icons will help you get the best results from IconMaker.

- 1 Simple, bold images with strong colour contrasts are usually more effective than complex images or those with little colour contrast.
- 2 On the whole, dithered colours (the default setting) produces better icons than plain un-dithered colours. However, if the icon produced looks too complex or confused try producing a non-dithered version.
- 3 You may wish to edit the background for an icon to a plain colour (eg. white) to make the image stand out more. To do this, capture the image as a bitmap and use Windows Paintbrush or another painting program to edit the picture. When you are happy with the image recapture it with IconMaker in icon file format.
- 4 The best results are obtained by capturing a portion of the image which is exactly 32 pixels by 32 pixels (the default box size), even if this means chopping off the hero's legs.
- 5 Flesh colours are very difficult to reproduce in an icon given the limitations of the fixed 16 colours Windows allows you to use for an icon.
- 6 Many games support several different display modes. You may find that the EGA mode produces clearer icons than the VGA mode.

Memory

Some games require a large amount of base memory to run and will not run once IconMaker has been installed. If this happens it may be possible to make additional base memory available by using a special boot configuration. To do this you would need to make special version of your config.sys and autoexec.bat files. Things you can do include loading DOS into upper memory (high) and removing drivers such as disk cacheing and ram disk. Your operating system manual should give details of how to boot the system leaving maximum base memory available to your programs.

IconMaker may also be loaded into high memory to make more room in base memory.

Known Bugs

- 1 Occasionally IconMaker registers a spurious Shift On character when you use the non-numeric keypad arrows. The shift can be cancelled by hitting the Shift key. The problem does not occur if you use the numeric keypad arrows. Spurious keystrokes may also be registered while IconMkr is in memory, it is recommended that you remove IconMkr from memory before proceeding with your other work.
- 2 After popping up in Windows the shift and control status are sometimes left on. To resume normal service hit the shift and control keys after IconMaker has finished.
- 3 There is a problem on completion when saving a 256-colour file to a disk compressed by SuperStor Pro version 1.00, which causes the computer to hang. The same file can be saved successfully to an uncompressed disk.

License

You are licensed to use a single copy of the program.

IconMaker is a shareware product. You may freely copy the unregistered version of IconMaker and pass it to your friends and colleagues. Please encourage them to register if they like it as cheap utilities like IconMaker will only be developed if the Shareware system is respected.

You may not sell icons produced using IconMaker for profit.

Registration Form

The next page contains a registration form for ordering copies of IconMaker. You can print it using File, Print then selecting Pages, From 10 To 10.

First some details of two other programs available from Andrew King - **WallpaperMaker** and **SlowMo**.

WallpaperMaker is a utility which allows you to take snapshots from your favourite games and use them as wallpaper backgrounds for your Windows desktop.

WallpaperMaker makes it easy to scale the picture to fill your screen, at different screen sizes. Or you could take all or part of a game screen and ask WallpaperMaker to scale the image to fit an exact number of times on to your screen.

WallpaperMaker can produce ordinary bitmaps, which you can edit using Windows Paintbrush, or compressed bitmaps (which can be used as wallpaper) which take up less memory.

WallpaperMaker's colour translation and colour mixing features can produce excellent 16-colour bitmaps from 256-colour originals, saving more memory.

WallpaperMaker is the ideal companion to IconMaker. Now you can have an endless supply of great wallpapers to brighten up your desktop!

WallpaperMaker costs just £6 (US\$12) or only £4 (US\$8) if ordered with IconMaker.

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SlowMo is a small pop-up utility which gives you slow motion at the touch of a key.

Are you having difficulty blasting that last alien, or maybe you need a little time to think in battle? **SlowMo** could be just the thing you need.

SlowMo can be configured to any speed from "very slow" to "normal". It can be activated in the middle of a game at the touch of a key and removed again just like that and the speed can be adjusted while playing. **SlowMo** also features Pause and Freeze, so you can stop and think, or answer the 'phone in the middle of a game. **SlowMo** lets you choose the best key for each action and gives audio feedback of all operations.

SlowMo can save the configuration you set for each game, which can be automatically called-up the next time you play the game.

SlowMo - an essential cheat for all action games!

SlowMo costs £4 (\$8) or £2.50 (\$5) if ordered with IconMaker or WallpaperMaker.

- IconMaker £5 or US\$10
- WallpaperMaker £6 or US\$12
- IconMaker + WallpaperMaker £9 or US\$18
- SlowMo* with any of above add £2.50 or US\$5
- SlowMo* £4 or US\$8

All prices include postage

Name []

Address []

[]

[]

[]

[]

[]

- 3½" disk
or
- 5¼" disk

I received my unregistered copy from _____

Please enclose cheque payable to "Andrew King", or cash.

Other currencies please add £2.50 for exchange and send cash notes to equivalent value.

Mail to: Andrew King
25 Montem Road
New Malden
Surrey KT3 3QW
U.K.