

GIF Animator overview

With Microsoft GIF Animator, you can create animated GIF files that add eye-catching motion to your Web pages. Animated GIF files contain one or more images that display sequentially to produce an animated effect, much like a traditional cartoon flipbook.

GIF Animator includes a toolbar, an animation (frames) display column, a scroll bar, and three tabs:

- The **Options tab**, which controls the way GIF Animator manages your files.
- The **Animation tab**, which controls characteristics of your animation.
- The **Image tab**, which controls characteristics of individual frames in your animation.

You can add an image to the animation display column by:














- Dragging it in from the Image Composer workspace
- Pasting it from the Clipboard into a frame
- Opening an existing GIF file from within GIF Animator.

You can add as many images to an animation as your computer memory allows. Before you add images to your animation, you should set the **Import Color Palette** options in the **Options** tab. You can use the scroll bar to view all the images in the current animation.

Note The display and other functionality of GIF Animator files depends on the capabilities of the browser used to view the files. Large files increase download times and might also display interrupted sequencing on computers with low memory.

Toolbar

The GIF Animator toolbar includes the following buttons.

Button	Name	Description
	New	Creates a new file.
	Open	Opens an existing file. If you use this while a file is open, GIF Animator warns that current changes will be lost and prompts you to save your changes.
	Save	Saves changes to the active file.
	Insert	Inserts an additional .gif file into the current animation. The file is inserted before the current selected frame.
	Save As	Saves changes to a new file name.
	Cut	Removes the selected image and copies it to the Clipboard.
	Copy	Copies the selected image to the Clipboard.
	Paste	Places a cut or copied image from the Clipboard at the insertion point.
	Delete	Removes the selected image without copying to the Clipboard.
	Select All	Selects all images in the current animation.
	Move Up/Down	Positions the selected image one frame closer to the beginning or to the end of the current animation.
	Preview	Plays the results of your work without saving it.
	Help	Opens this Help file.

To cancel the opening or saving of files, press ESC.

Options tab

Use the **Options** tab to specify the palette that GIF Animator uses to represent the images within the animation. You can also use this tab to control the how the colors are represented in your saved image.

Thumbnails Reflect Image Position Select this check box to see each image in the animation space that you specify in the **Animation** tab instead of as a full-frame image.

Main Dialog Window Always on Top Select this check box to enable the GIF Animator window to remain the frontmost window on your desktop. Note that selecting this option disables drag-and-drop operations to GIF Animator.

Import Color Palette Allows you to choose between the Browser palette, which provides a direct match to the most common Web browsers, and an "optimal" palette that you specify by clicking the dialog button to locate the Windows .pal file you want to use.

Browser Palette

GIF Animator uses a single palette that best matches the whole animation. Most efficient.

Optimal Palette

GIF Animator creates a separate palette for each frame. High overhead; very good quality.



[Load]

GIF Animator uses the palette you specify in the **Open** dialog.

Import Dither Method Allows you to choose a drawing method from the following list to best represent your color palette.

Solid

Chooses closest indexed color. Fast and good for line art and images with few colors.

Pattern

Calculates colors using a small pattern that is fast though coarse. Fast speeds for images with moderate number of colors.

Random

Calculates colors using a large pattern that produces finer results than **Pattern** dithering. Moderate speeds for images with moderate to large number of colors.

Error Diffusion

Calculates colors by finely mixing colors over a small area. Offers good results, but slower speed.

Animation tab

The **Animation** tab in GIF Animator lets you control the size, duration, and transparency attributes of an animation.

Animation Width Allows you to specify the width of the space in which the animation plays. GIF Animator supplies a default value that you can modify. Specify a wider space for frames that move horizontally.

Animation Height Allows you to specify the height of the space in which the animation plays. GIF Animator supplies a default value that you can modify. Specify a taller space for frames that move vertically.

Image Count Displays the number of frames in the current animation. More images with smaller movements provide smoother motion, but create larger files and longer download times.

Looping Select this check box if you want your animation to repeat.

Repeat Count Allows you to specify the number of times you want your animation to repeat.

Trailing Comment Allows you to attach a comment to the animation.

Image tab

The **Image** tab of GIF Animator lets you control the characteristics of individual images within the animation.

Image Width Displays the width of the selected image.

Image Height Displays the height of the selected image.

Left Allows you to specify the position of the left edge of the selected image within its frame.

Top Allows you to specify the position of the top edge of the selected image within its frame.

Duration (1/100 s) Allows you to specify the amount of time, in 1/100 of a second increments, that the selected image appears during the animation sequence. Varying duration throughout an animation can enhance the appearance of starts and stops and other effects.

Undraw Method Allows you to specify how frames appear in the animation.

Undefined	Directs the browser to do nothing to the background before displaying the next image.
Leave	Directs the browser to leave the previous graphic image as the next is drawn. This choice can create a shadowing effect.
Restore Background	Directs the browser to redraw the original background as the current image is drawn.
Restore Previous	Directs the browser to redraw the previous image as the current image is drawn.

Transparency Select this check box if you want to specify that one color in your animation will not display.

Transparent Color Select the color chip to display a palette from which you can choose a color that GIF Animator treats as the transparent portion of the image. You can choose only one transparent color.

Comment Allows you to attach a comment to the active frame.

