Clip Director
Version 1.0

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File Menu

The menu bar "File" command activates a drop-down menu containing the following command:

Open AVI File...
This command opens a file dialog box from which any .AVI file may be selected for play. From the dialog box, the user can select an .AVI file from a listbox control (or by typing the filename or pathname in the "File Name" edit control), and play the file by pressing the "OK" pushbutton control.   An .AVI file can also be played by double-clicking on the filename entry in the left-hand file listbox control.

The "Open AVI File" dialog box allows users to easily play .AVI files located on any accessible disk drive (physical, logical, local, remote, or removable).   Users are *not* limited to playing files located on their CD-ROM drive.   Bear in mind, though, that .AVI playback from a standard floppy disk drive will suffer from *significant* performance degradation, and is not recommended.

Note: Like the "PLAY" button in the main program window, the "Open .AVI File" function will play an .AVI file in the current display context (windowed or full-screen) as selected from the menu bar "Options/Preview In Window" and "Options/Preview Full-Screen" commands.

See also...
How To Play AVI Files From a CD-ROM Drive
How To Play AVI Files From a Different Drive

Exit
This command closes Clip Director.

Note: You can also close Clip Director by using the program window system menu (the "minus" sign icon in the upper-left corner of the program window), the Alt-F4 key-combination, or via the Windows "Task List" utility.

Options Menu
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The menu bar "Options" command activates a drop-down menu containing the following commands:

Select CD-ROM Drive...
This command opens a drive selection dialog box providing the user a means of selecting the CD-ROM drive to scan and browse.   This selection need only be made once (the selected drive letter is written into Clip Director's initialization file), unless the CD-ROM drive letter is changed, or the drive itself is removed.

Clip Director *requires* that the CD-ROM drive selection be correct.

Preview In Window
Clip Director implements its own built-in .AVI player for displaying full motion .AVI clip files in a window or full-screen.   This command configures Clip Director for previewing .AVI files in a standard child window.   When a clip is played in a window, the user is able to move the preview window on the screen and retains access to the Clip Director button commands.

Selecting this menu command will de-select the Preview Full-Screen selection.

Preview Full-Screen
This command configures Clip Director for previewing .AVI files in a full-screen mode.   On most systems, the display is rendered in the center of the screen at 320x240 resolution. When a clip is played full-screen, the user is unable to move the preview window on the screen and loses access to the Clip Director button commands (an .AVI file clip running in full-screen may be closed before completion with a click of the left mouse button or by pressing the keyboard spacebar).

Selecting this menu command will de-select the Preview In Window selection.

See also...
How To Configure AVI Playback

Help Menu

The menu bar "Help" command activates a drop-down menu containing the following commands:

Contents
This command launches the Windows Help System and automatically loads the CLIPDIR.HLP file, which provides run-time help on a variety of topics dealing with the use of this program.

The Windows Help System also provides a quick and easy method of printing selected topics from this Help file via the Windows Help menu bar "File/Print Topic" command, a handy feature that allows you to turn this "manual on disk" into a hard copy reference.

About Clip Director...
This command displays a dialog box with this program's version number and copyright information.

How To Configure AVI Playback

Clip Director is capable of playing .AVI files in two different display contexts, windowed and full-screen.

On most systems, the *windowed* display is rendered at the resolution of the current Windows video mode setting.   When a clip is played in a window, the user is able to move the preview window on the screen and retains access to the Clip Director button commands for playing, pausing, restarting, or closing the .AVI file.

Note: On many systems, early Video for Windows drivers do not accomodate resizing of the .AVI playback window.   Attempting to resize or stretch the playback window may distort or scramble the image.   Subsequent releases of the Video for Windows driver set will correct this problem.

On most systems, the *full-screen* display is rendered in the center of the screen at 320x240 resolution.   As a result, .AVI movie clips that might display in a window measuring 160x120 pixels can display at twice that size when previewed full-screen.   When a clip is played full-screen, the user is unable to move the preview window on the screen and loses access to the Clip Director button commands (an .AVI file clip running in full-screen can always be closed with a click of the left mouse button or by pressing the keyboard spacebar).

.AVI playback is usually smoother when the file is played in a window rather than full-screen. In addition, synchronization between the interleaved video and audio tracks is maintained more accurately with a windowed playback.

See also...
Options Menu

How To Play AVI Files From a CD-ROM Drive
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Clip Director offers three different ways to play .AVI files located on a CD-ROM disk:

1. By double-clicking a listbox control description.
2. By making a selection in the listbox, then pressing the PLAY pushbutton control.
3. By browsing the CD-ROM drive via the Play .AVI File dialog box (accessed via the menu bar "File/Play .AVI File..." command).

If the CD-ROM disk is part of a collection bundled with Clip Director, or set up for use with Clip Director, the disk can be successfully scanned via the SCAN CD-ROM DRIVE button.   If the scanned CD-ROM disk is recognized by Clip Director, the .AVI file clips stored there will appear in the listbox control on the left side of the Clip Director screen.   You may then select a clip and play it either by double-clicking the listbox clip description or pressing the PLAY pushbutton control.

Whether or not a CD-ROM disk is recognized by Clip Director (you may have other CD-ROM disks containing .AVI files), you can *always* play an .AVI file via the Clip Director menu bar "File/Play .AVI File..." command.   This opens a familiar "File Open" dialog box (pre-set to search for files with the .AVI extension).   You can easily navigate through the CD-ROM directories and select any file to play.

During .AVI file playback, the STOP pushbutton control is automatically enabled, and may be used to halt play and close the playback window.

Files played in any of these ways will display according to the Clip Director display setting (windowed or full-screen), which may be changed via the menu bar "Options/Preview In Window" and "Options/Preview Full-Screen" commands.

How To Play AVI Files From a Different Drive

Clip Director is not limited to playing .AVI files located on a recognized CD-ROM disk.   Clip Director offers a quick and easy means of playing .AVI files located on *any* installed (local, fixed, removable, or remote) disk drive accessible from your system.

You can select and play an .AVI file via the Clip Director menu bar "File/Play .AVI File..." command.   This opens a familiar "File Open" dialog box (pre-set to search for files with the .AVI extension).   You can easily navigate through the any drives and/or directories and select any file to play.

During .AVI file playback, the STOP pushbutton control is automatically enabled, and may be used to halt play and close the playback window.

Files played in any of this way will display according to the Clip Director display setting (windowed or full-screen), which may be changed via the menu bar "Options/Preview In Window" and "Options/Preview Full-Screen" commands.

Troubleshooting Index

Troubleshooting a problem you might be having with Clip Director, or with your current hardware/software setup, is usually a simple matter of eliminating a number of possible causes until the most likely cause is the only one remaining.

The following troubleshooting topics may be of some use in tracking down the source of video playback difficulties.

Video Drivers
Audio Problems
Bitmap "Still" Color Rendering

Video Drivers

The current Microsoft Video for Windows driver technology demands much from even the fastest personal computer processors.   Even so, not all performance problems are caused simply by a slow processor.   Most users can improve the playback performance of .AVI files by updating to the latest video driver set released by the manufacturer of their video card. Beyond that, hardware upgrades involving additional memory, a faster 16-bit or local bus video card (or, better yet, a Windows-optimized video accelerator), and a monitor capable of handling faster refresh rates can all add up to increased performance.

All things being the same, .AVI playback will be smoother when the file is played in a window rather than full-screen.

The Video for Windows driver itself has a configuration routine that allows the user to enable/disable off-screen buffering of the .AVI image; this, too, can have an effect on performance.   This configuration dialog box is accessible from the system menu of any active .AVI playback window.

Driver Recognition

Before playing a selected .AVI file, Clip Director verifies your current Video for Windows driver configuration.

If your Video for Windows driver is not installed, or is incorrectly configured, Clip Director will post an error message informing you of this condition.   Though you will be unable to play .AVI files without the Video for Windows driver, you will still be able to browse through the contents of your CD-ROM disk, and will still be able to view the bitmapped "stills" from your clips.

See also...
How To Configure AVI Playback

Additional Information

Installation of Video for Windows upgrades not only the capabilities of Windows Media Player, but its run-time help as well.   As a result, questions regarding the configuration of the Video for Windows driver can usually be solved by consulting the Media Player help file.

Media Player itself is a handy tool for checking the capabilities of your system.   If an .AVI file can be played by Media Player, odds are it can be played from Clip Director as well.

Audio Problems
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The current Microsoft Video for Windows driver technology does not require the installation of a sound card or other audio hardware on most systems, though having audio hardware adds immeasurably to the multimedia experience of real-time video.

The latest release of Video for Windows run-time supports 11, 22, or 44 kHz audio in 8-bit or 16-bit format.   The driver attempts to synchronize audio and video tracks to within 1/30th of a second.   To protect audio/video synchronization, the driver can be set to drop selected video frames.   Even with this feature, though, longer .AVI clips are prone to a slight "lag" in audio.   This can be minimized by playing the files in a window rather than full-screen.

Troubleshooting Audio Problems

There are typically five causes of poor or missing audio during .AVI video clip playback:

1. You may not have Windows-compatible audio hardware installed on your PC.
2. Your audio (waveform/.WAV) driver set is not configured correctly.
3. Your Video for Windows driver may be configured for silent operation.
4. The audio and video portions of your .AVI file may be falling out of synchronization.
5. The selected .AVI file may not use an audio track (not all of them do).

If you are not obtaining satisfactory audio performance during .AVI video clip playback, you should perform the following checks:

1. Test-play a waveform (.WAV) file using Windows Media Player.   If the waveform file plays correctly, you know your problem isn't related to your installed audio hardware or drivers. One caveat: Video for Windows doesn't support the Microsoft Windows speaker driver.   As a result, the audio portion of an .AVI file will probably be unavailable if your only sound hardware is the PC case speaker.

If the file does not play correctly, you should check your sound card owner's manual for hardware/driver setup information.   Check to make sure that your hardware is correctly installed and that your waveform drivers are the latest versions and correctly configured.

2. Open an .AVI file in Windows Media Player and display it in a window (not full-screen).   In the system menu of the .AVI window, there is a "Mute" menu item.   Make sure it is not checked, as this feature forces all video playback from Media Player to run silently.

3. If you are attempting to play a video clip from a CD-ROM drive not compatible with the MPC standard, the audio and video portions of the selected .AVI file are probably falling out of synchronization.   This effect can be minimized by playing the clip in a window rather than full-screen.

Additional Information

Installation of Video for Windows upgrades not only the capabilities of Windows Media Player, but its run-time help as well.   As a result, questions regarding the configuration of the Video for Windows driver can usually be solved by consulting the Media Player help file.

Bitmap "Still" Color Rendering

Many of the bitmapped "still" images used for previewing selected .AVI clip files were prepared in 16-color bitmap format.   This format was preferred because it provides for the fastest possible screen updates during CD-ROM scanning and gives an acceptable approximation of what the actual .AVI images will look like at their normal display resolutions.

At the same time, if you are running Windows in a 256-color or higher display mode, the appearance of the 16-color "still" images will obviously not appear as vivid or well-defined as the images rendered by the Video for Windows driver when the associated .AVI file is played. This is normal, and should be no cause for concern.

Other still images, prepared in a full 256-color format, will appear almost exactly the same as their associated .AVI clips during playback.

Introduction

Clip Director is a CD-ROM file utility designed to provide a quick and easy means of browsing through .AVI movie clip files on a compact disk.   Clip Director provides a variety of useful information about each .AVI clip, including a file description, file size, playing time, as well as background information about the motion picture from which the clip was obtained.   Clip Director can also display a "still" picture from each clip.

Best of all, Clip Director provides a built-in .AVI file viewer, which can play the selected clip directly from the CD-ROM drive.   Clip Director's .AVI playback functions are not limited to files on the CD-ROM disk.   The program provides an .AVI File Open function, allowing quick and easy playback of .AVI files anywhere on the user's system (i.e., from any installed physical or logical drive).

Note: Clip Director requires that a version of the Video for Windows driver set be installed and correctly configured for your system.   The run-time version of this driver set may be included on your CD-ROM disk or on the Clip Director master disk.   The run-time version of Video for Windows can also be ordered directly from Microsoft Corporation, or downloaded from public bulletin boards or on-line information services like CompuServe and Prodigy. Instructions for the installation and configuration of the Video for Windows driver set is included with the driver files.

Getting Started

Clip Director requires very little in the way of configuration or setup.

Following the installation process, the essential program files (CLIPDIR.EXE and CLIPDIR.HLP) should reside in their own directory on your hard disk (e.g., C:\CLIPDIR).   A few ASCII text files will also be present; these text files are handy sources of program information, but are not necessary for running the program.

The CLIPDIR.INI file will be automatically created the first time the program is run, and is stored in your default Windows directory (i.e., C:\WINDOWS or C:\WIN).

Clip Director can be run from a Windows File Manager command line (via "File/Run") or from a Program Manager icon.

The *first* time Clip Manager is run, the program's CD-ROM drive letter setting (i.e., D, E, F, etc) should be entered.   This is accomplished by selecting the menu bar "Options/Select CD-ROM Drive..." command.   This command opens a dialog box containing a single drop-down listbox control.   You should select the letter of your installed CD-ROM drive and close the dialog box with the OK button.

See also...
Options Menu

Once this selection is made, the drive letter is written into Clip Director's initialization file and used as the program default.   This default will be placed into effect every time Clip Director is run.   As a result, you should not have to make the drive selection again unless you change your system hardware setup or disk drive assignments.

If you *do* change your system setup to add, remove, or replace an installed CD-ROM drive, you will probably need to re-set Clip Director's   CD-ROM drive default.

Note: The CD-ROM drive setting must be correct, or Clip Director will not be able to access the correct library file on the desired CD-ROM disk.

If you like, you may select the format in which your movie clips will be played.   By default, the program will play .AVI files in a window which may be moved or minimized.   You can easily toggle between window and full-screen display via the menu bar "Options/Preview In Window" and "Options/Preview Full-Screen" commands.

See also...
How To Configure AVI Playback

With this simple selection, Clip Director is now ready for use!

Using Clip Director

When Clip Director is up and running, the selected CD-ROM disk should be inserted into the CD-ROM drive.   As with any removable media, you should take care to see that the CD-ROM disk is inserted correctly and that the drive tray, door, or latch is secured.   When it is loaded, the disk is ready to be scanned by Clip Director.

Scanning the CD-ROM Disk

To scan the CD-ROM disk, simply press the SCAN CD-ROM DRIVE pushbutton control.   Clip Director will verify that a recognizable CD-ROM disk is loaded in the drive and will load the clip file descriptions into the listbox control located on the left side of the program window.

Note: If Clip Director does not recognize the loaded CD-ROM disk, or encounters a problem scanning its contents, an error message will be posted, giving you the chance to change disks or check the CD-ROM drive to make sure the disk is inserted correctly.

Assuming the disk has been successfully scanned, you are free to browse through the clip descriptions in the listbox control.   Note that this control contains *all* .AVI clips contained on the CD-ROM disk, regardless of their directory locations.

When a clip description is selected, the .AVI file name and file size are displayed in the status boxes located along the bottom of the program window.   Some detailed background information about the selected clip may also be provided in the large status box located on the right side of the program window.   If available, a clip "still" from the .AVI file will be displayed, as well.

Playing an .AVI File

A selected .AVI file clip can be played at any time by pressing the PLAY pushbutton control, or by double-clicking the mouse pointer on the clip description in the listbox control.
The .AVI file will play in its own window or full-screen, depending on Clip Director's current display option setting.

See also...
Options Menu

When a clip is opened, Clip Director is able to access the Video for Windows driver for additional information about the .AVI file itself.   This information is displayed during playback.

When previewed in a window, playback can be halted by pressing the STOP pushbutton control.   When previewed full-screen, playback can be halted by clicking the left mouse button or pressing the keyboard spacebar.

Note: Clip Director supports playback of only one .AVI file at a time.

See also...
How To Play AVI Files From a CD-ROM Drive
How To Play AVI Files From a Different Drive

Limited Warranty

Before release, our applications software is tested on a wide variety of hardware configurations, under the most rigorous test conditions possible.   We therefore warrant that the software will perform in substantial compliance with the specifications set forth in this text and in the accompanying text file, provided that the software is used on the computer hardware and operating system(s) for which it was designed.

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About Clip Director

Clip Director (1.0) was written for use in the Microsoft® Windows™ operating environment (versions 3.1 and higher).

We at Pegasus Development hope you enjoy this program and find it useful.   We encourage users to contact us and let us know what they like, or don't like, about our applications. Customer comments, questions, and suggestions represent an important source of ideas for improvements and new features for future versions of our programs.

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Clip Director
Version 1.0

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