MakeIcons

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MakeIcons

1.1 MakeIcons

MakeIcons.ifx

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An ImageFX ARexx script for creating icons for images.

Note: This AmigaGuide is written for Workbench 3.1. It may look a little odd with older versions of amigaguide.library.

1.2 requirements

For best results, you need:

Workbench 3.0 or higher

Because ImageFX doesn't have a multiple-file requester, I use the OS 3.x RequestFile command. To use under OS 2.x, you must install a RequestFile command clone, or modify the script to use e.g. RexxReqTools.

ImageFX 2.0 or higher

There are slight incompatibilities between ImageFX 2.0 and 1.5. To use with ImageFX 1.5, you must replace "SaveRenderedAs Icon" with "SaveRenderedAs Amiga". Perhaps some other changes too.

NewTool 2.6 or higher (from aminet:util/wb/NewTool26.lha)

Not strictly necessary, but very nice: This little program adds a "Default Tool" to the created icons. You can have different tools for different image formats.

Please note that you need at least version 2.6 of NewTool; alternatively, if you use 2.5 or earlier, you need to add "AUTO" to the NewTool call in the MakeIcons script.

1.3 installation

First of all, copy "MakeIcons.ifx" to your ImageFX:Rexx drawer.

In addition, you should create an ImageFX palette containing your Workbench colours. The simplest way is to just select "Grab" and then "WORKBENCH" from the Palette panel in ImageFX, and save the palette as "Workbench".

But there are some problems, especially when using Workbench 3.x. If you want to use more than four colours in your icons (as most people do), you must take certain precautions because of the palette sharing system in Workbench 3. I can recommend two ways of achieving this:

The simple way: Grab the Workbench palette as described above. If your Workbench has less than 256 colours, copy the last four grabbed colours to positions 252-255 in the palette. Fill positions 4-251 with copies of one of the first four -- black, for instance (copy colour 1 to positions 4 and 251, then create a "Range" between the two). From MakeIcons' requester, select 8 bitplanes.

Advantages: Icons look good with any depth from 3 to 8 planes. No external programs needed.

Disadvantages: Only 8 colours. Slow icon display. Excessive disk and chipmem usage.

The slightly more advanced way: Get a program like "ProcurePens" from aminet, which is run from the User-Startup, and with which you can set and lock any pens you want. Myself, I lock colours 4-7, and my ProcurePens config file looks like this .

As before, grab the Workbench palette, and set all palette entries except the ones you use (in my case, 0-7), to black. When running MakeIcons, select the desired number of bitplanes (in my case, 3).

Advantages: Icons look good at any depth that has room for your pens in the palette. Small and fast icons. Not dependent on the MultiColour pens.

Disadvantages: Needs an external program.

The wrong way: You could just grab your Workbench palette and use all the colours in it, too. But this is not recommended, as the pens are dynamically allocated, and can change at any time -- if you change your Workbench backdrop, load an image into MultiView, or start the Pointer editor, for instance.

1.4 usage

After starting the script from ImageFX (or from the supplied ImageFX project file), you are presented with a multiple-file requester. After one or more files are selected, MakeIcons' main requester appears.

Contrast, Gamma:

Same as the corresponding sliders in ImageFX's Balance requester. Optimal values depend on your Workbench palette; the default values give decent results on my system.

Sharpen:

As you might expect, will sharpen the image a bit. Can be very useful.

Max Size:

This is the maximum width and height (in pixels) of the icons. My default values are 80 and 60. The images are scaled with image aspect preservation; for instance, an 800x600 image will be scaled to 80x60, and a 256x512 image will be scaled to 40x80 (with the default values).

Step Size:

The icons will be scaled to an integer multiple of the values supplied here. For instance, with (the default) Step Sizes of 4, the only allowed icon widths and heights are 4, 8, 12, 16, etc. Set these values to 1 if you want any size (up to the specified maximum).

Bitplanes:

Number of bitplanes to render the icons to. See here for some advice on how many bitplanes to use.

Use Aspect?

If this option is enabled, any aspect ratio information in the images will be used. Very useful e.g. with LoRes-Interlaced ILBM pictures. If switched off, a 1:1 pixel aspect ratio is assumed for all pictures.

Grayscale?

Enable this if you want black-and-white only icons.

HAM?

Creates HAM icons, suitable only with a HAM Workbench screen. Select 5 or 6 bitplanes for HAM8 icons, 1-4 for HAM6.

The values you enter are not saved. This was a deliberate decision. If you want to change the defaults, edit the script.

1.5 hints

For the best results, choose your palette colours carefully. In particular, if you want colour icons, be sure to have one red, one green, one blue, one white, and one black colour. A gray and a yellow would help much too. Actually, the default 8-colour palette is very good for colour icons.

As an example, I've included a grab of a part of my Workbench screen. The icons use palette colours 0-7 only.

If you have any questions or comments, I can be contacted by e-mail as peh@ffi.no.