hat's New?

This file describes the changes in version 2.0 of IconBuilder Pro. Most of these changes were made to support Mac OS X.

User interface update

Let's just say that Aqua changed a lot of the rules on us :-)

The user interface should be familiar, but there are quite a few new features. Please take a moment and review this file. We have also updated the Recipes and Tips sections of the Read Me file.

We also have some other cool Mac OS X features planned for a future release, and the new interface gives us some room to grow. We hope you like it.

Added support for 128 x 128 pixel icons

The new icon size used in Mac OS X is fully supported. To create a "thumbnail" icon, you should be working on a Photoshop canvas that is at least 128 x 128 pixels.

To create the icon, select the All Mac OS, OS 8.5+ or Mac OS X format. There is no problem putting a 128 x 128 pixel icon in a file that will be used on earlier versions of the Mac OS (it won't be displayed, but it won't cause any errors.)

After selecting the file format, switch from the Grid to Aqua and copy both the data and mask from your Photoshop layer. You can then use the controls (described below) to preview the icon at various sizes.

You should also add 16 x 16 and 32 x 32 pixel icons to the Mac OS X icon. These icons may be used in the Mac OS X Finder depending on the user's settings. Adding the smaller icons makes it possible to add detail that is lost as the thumbnail icon is scaled down.

The smaller icons are also required when you are saving the icon on Mac OS 9. There is a bug that will cause you to lose the 128 x 128 data if the Grid section of the icon is missing.

New controls for Aqua icons

There are two ways to preview the thumbnail icon that will be displayed in Aqua:

The first way is to click and drag in the preview (above the slider control.) This will simulate how the icons are displayed in the Mac OS X dock. The closer you are to the center of the icon, the larger your icon will be displayed. The slider below the preview shows the size of the icon.

You can also use the slider below the preview to adjust the size of the icon. Clicking on one of the tick marks will snap the size to 16, 32, 48, 64, 96 or 128 pixels. You can also click and drag the slider to view other sizes.

Saving a file for Mac OS X DP3

Mac OS X DP3 uses a different file format than Rhapsody or previous versions of the Mac OS. The icon data is stored in a ".icns" file. These files are typically placed in packages and referenced through an internal property list.

When you save a .icns file from IconBuilder Pro, it will be displayed as a generic document on your Mac OS 9 desktop. There also appears to be a bug in the Mac OS X Finder which causes you to be logged out if you try to display a .icns file in DP3. We have reported the problem to Apple and expect this problem to be fixed in a future release.

In the meantime, we recommend that you use "All Mac OS" to save your icons. These files will display correctly on Mac OS X and Mac OS 9.

Make sure that you have filled in both the Grid and Aqua sections of the icon before you save and exit the filter. If you save only the Aqua portion of the icon and exit the filter, you will lose the data and get a generic icon the next time you run the filter. This is a bug in Mac OS 9.

If you are having problems with Aqua icons, please follow the recipe in the Read Me file.

Tips from the Foreman

Want to get some helpful tips for making Mac OS X icons? Check out the foreman's recipes and tips in the Read Me file!

Updated Windows Guide

Not everything in this release is for Mac OS X!

Several additions have been made in our Mac User's Guide to Making Windows Icons. We've discovered several problems for making icons on Windows NT and share the solutions in this PDF guide. We've also updated the guide with information on Windows 2000.

If you are making icons for Windows, check out the recommendations at the end of the file. They can save you a bunch of time!

Highlighting tabs

The Grid and Aqua tabs also light up when there is data in the view. This makes it easy to spot what's in the Grid and Aqua sections of the icon.

If the highlight is blue, there is data in the section.

No limit to selection sizes

In previous versions of IconBuilder, a selection size of 48 x 48 pixels was required before running the filter. In this version, the filter can be started with any size selection.

This feature allows you to work with any size canvas in Photoshop. You should set your canvas size to the maximum

size needed for the icon you are building.

For your reference, the maximum sizes for desktop icons are:

Mac OS 7.5 to Mac OS 9   - 32 x 32 pixels

Windows 95, 98 and NT - 48 x 48 pixels

Mac OS X - 128 x 128 pixels

Automatic grid reset

After saving an icon to your desktop or a folder, IconBuilder will automatically reset the grid if you move the saved icon into another folder.

This change makes it quicker and easier to produce a large batch of icons. If you save an icon into a working folder, and then manually move the icon into a finals folder, IconBuilder will be ready to create a new icon the next time you run the filter.

New textures

We have updated the textures for some of the backgrounds. Some of the patterns are more modern and should be helpful in developing your Mac OS X icons.