

## Chapter 5

# Importing/Exporting

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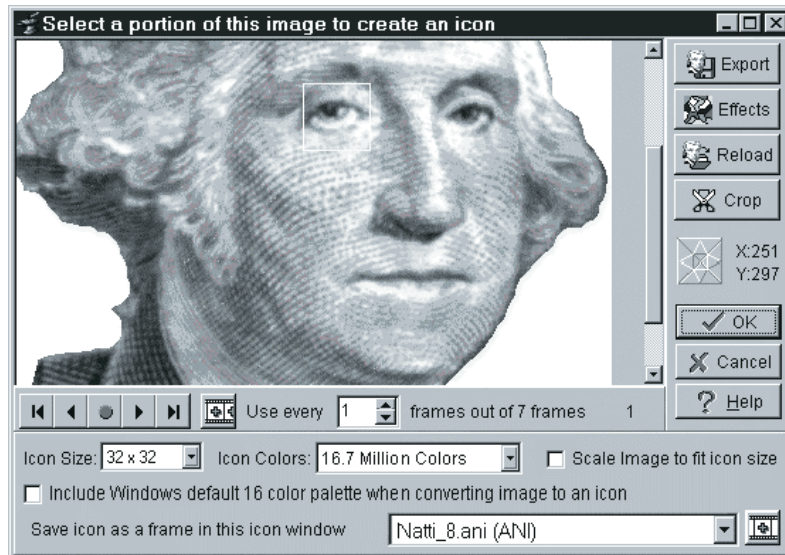
You may use *IconForge* to import icons from within program files, image files, other icon formats, animation files, screen capture, scanned images, etc.

## Importing an Existing Image

### ***Importing from an Image File***

You may import bitmap image files created in paint programs, image editors, scanner software, etc. Use the *Open* command from the *File* menu and select the *Type* of file containing the image to be imported.

The image from the file you've selected is shown in the large preview panel. A dotted selector box shows the portion of the image which will be used for the icon (*see illustration next page*). If you have selected an animation, a control bar will be placed



#### *Import Options*

beneath the image to allow you to scroll through and select from the frames within the image (you can select from a single frame or multiple frames, and use the “+” button to place the frames into another animation which is being edited).

If the image in the file which you wish to import is other than one of the standard sizes used for Windows icons and cursors, you will be given the option to either scale the image to a standard size, or to clip a portion from the larger image.

Set the size using the *Icon Size* drop-down list. To scale the image to the size you've selected, enable the *Scale Image to Fit* option. You may also choose the number of colors which will be contained in the image by clicking on the *Icon Colors* drop-down list.

To clip out an icon-sized area from the larger image, set the *Icon Size* from the drop-down, but do not check the *Scale Image to Fit* option. Then use your

mouse to drag the selection frame to that portion of the image which you wish to use as an icon or cursor.

If you wish to use the standard Windows 16 color palette for the image (recommended for most Windows uses), check the *Use Windows default 16 color palette* checkbox.

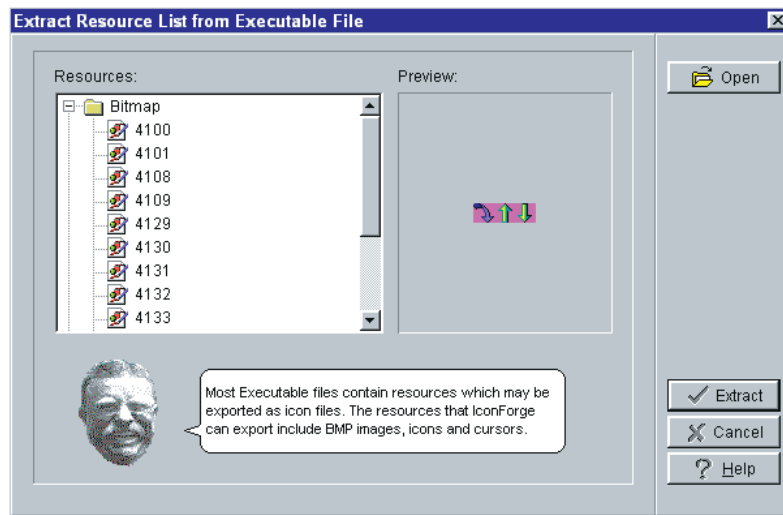
If you have already loaded an Animation, Multi-resolution Icon or Icon Library, you can also add the imported image directly to those editing windows. To select a file, select the filename from the drop-down list box, then click on the “+” button (see also the *Importing an Animation* topic which follows).

Use the *Effects* button to apply a special effect filter to the image before importing it. If you wish to save the entire image file once you’ve applied an *Effects* filter, click on the *Export* button (e.g., if you wish to save the altered image before it is resized and imported into *IconForge*).

### **Acquiring from Resources**

You may use the *File* menu’s *Acquire from Resource* option to extract icons, cursors and other graphics from a program file’s internal resources. These functions will work with most programs, but there are some instances where items may not be readable, particularly when the program file is highly compressed or in an older file format. In these instances, either extract icons directly using the *Open* function from the *File* menu, or run the program and do a screen capture (*see following topic*).

The images found within the program will be listed in the panel on the left side of the window. You may click on various folders, and any images will be displayed in the preview panel on the right.



To choose another program file, click the *Reload* button.

Once you find an image which you like, click the *Extract* button. The image will be loaded into the image import window, where you may either import it into *IconForge* for editing as an icon or cursor, or where you may use the *Export* or *Edit* buttons to save the image without turning it into an icon or cursor (e.g., if you extract a large image which you do not wish to reduce to icon size).

As always, please respect the rights of the owners of any images you find. You should assume that these images are protected under Copyright laws and treaties. Avoid plagiarism of works by others, unless you have written permission to use the image(s) or should you know that the program is in the public domain. When in doubt, contact the program's author.

➤ **Note:** You cannot use this function to write images back into programs.

## Grabbing Icons from the Screen

To capture an icon from your screen, first go to the screen containing the icon which you want. Next, run *IconForge* and go to its *File* menu. Select *New*, and then *From Screen Capture*.

The screen behind *IconForge* will be loaded into the image import window, and you will be able to select the portion of the screen to use for your new icon or cursor.

## Importing an Animation

To import an existing animation from your system, go to the *File* menu and select the *Open* function.

Select an animation file from your system (e.g., an animated .gif). Click the *Show Preview* option at the bottom of the screen to allow you to view the images contained in the files. Once you have selected your animation file, click the *OK* button.

The animation images will be loaded into the image import window, which contains controls for determining which portions of the animation will be imported. In the Preview area, drag the dotted selection box to surround the portion of the image which you wish to use in creating your animation. You can move the selection in single-pixel increments by clicking the *Nudge* arrows on the panel to the right of the Preview area.



You may click through the animation's frames using the VCR-style buttons just below the Preview area. The number of the currently viewed frame is displayed at the right side of this bar. You may reduce the number of frames in the animation by increasing the number in the field (e.g., "1" will

import each frame in the animation, "2" will import every second frame, "3" will import every third frame, etc.).

Once you are satisfied with your choices, either click the *OK* button to load the currently selected frame into the editor, or click the green + arrow below the *Preview* area to load the selected frames into a new animation editing window.

### **Resolution Options**

You may further define the image to import by using the following controls:

- *Scale Image to Fit*: Checkmark this option to shrink (or expand) the image to fit the dimensions specified in the Size box (see below).
- *Icon Size*: Currently, Windows only supports a size of 32x32 for displaying .ANI format images. If you wish to make an animation with a different size, use the included *ImageForge* program to create the animation in the .AVI format.
- *Icon Colors*: Use this option to choose the *Color Depth* for the animation which you will be editing. Usually, the images you will be producing will contain either 16 and/or 256 colors, but you may wish to import at a higher resolution for editing purposes. You may always change the *Color Depth* in the editor itself.
- *Include Windows 16 Colors*: Use this option to insert the standard 16 Windows colors into the animation's color palette (recommended).
- *Save Icon as a Frame*: If you currently are editing an animation (or a multi-resolution icon) in *IconForge*, you can add the selected image or animation frame directly to an open editing window by choosing the window's title from the drop-down list, and then clicking the green + button.

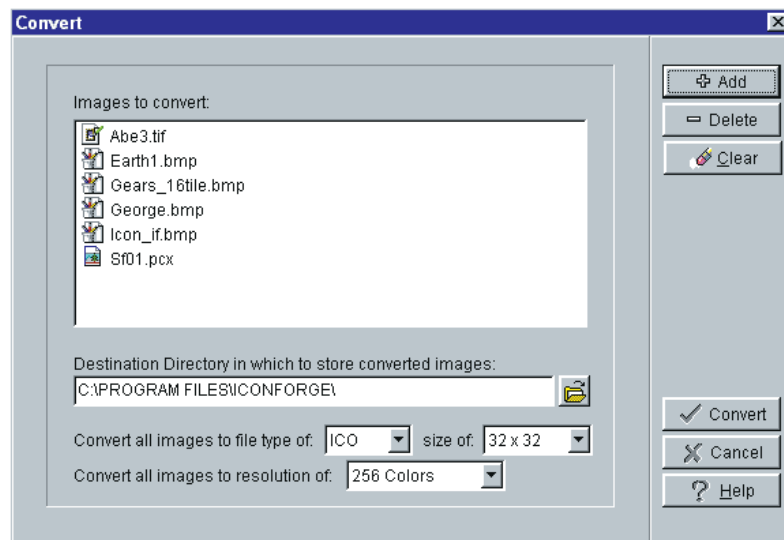
## Exporting to another File Format

To export an image to a non-icon format, use the *Save As* function under the *File* menu.

If you know the three-letter filename extension for the format you wish to export, you can simply type in the full filename in the *File Name* field. The three letter extension for supported image formats will be automatically recognized and the file exported (note: you must use this method if you are using the standard *Windows-style File Selector* option under the *File* menu).

If you wish, you may also simply choose a format from the *File Type* field at the bottom of the *Save As* dialog. Click on the arrow at the right side of the field to display file format choices. The three letter extension for the format you select will be automatically added to the name in the *File Name* field (*Enhanced-style File Selector* only).

If you wish to change the formats for a group of files at once (e.g., from .ICO to .GIF), go to the *File* menu



and select *Group Conversion*. Use the Add button to select the images to convert. Select a folder and format from the options below. If converting to an icon or cursor, you may also specify the size for the new icons/cursors. Click the *Convert* button to write out the images in the new format.

## Inserting Icons into Program Files

When you import an icon from EXE, DRV, SKL, VBX, DBX, OCX, SKL, CPL or DLL program files using the *Open* function from the *File* menu, IconForge will attempt to save it back into the program file when you use the *Save* command. IconForge will give you an opportunity to abort the Save process when editing an icon from within an EXE file. When editing a program file, you should normally use the *Save As* function to save the file as an ICO or other file format, instead of using *Save*. If you wish to attempt to replace the icon within a program, you should only work on a COPY of the program file, and **not** the original file. Replacing a programs icon can cause that program to become unstable or unusable. In addition, it is often a violation of a programs license agreement to alter its icon or other items of its appearance. And some programs simply do not allow such alterations and will no longer function, so exercise caution. *E.g., changing the logo icon for the Windows NT4 Start button (which is contained in the USER.EXE file) will cause an error message to be displayed when you boot into NT.*

- ⇒ **Notes:** Windows sometimes refuses to update its settings unless you restart your system. If this occurs, go to the *Edit* menu and select the *Rebuild Icon Cache* option. Sometimes, more than one reboot is necessary before all items are rewritten. When rebooting, use the normal shutdown method, and not a Fast Shutdown method.

## Creating Icon Libraries

IconForge allows you to produce several types of Libraries to contain your files. Use *Icon Library* format files (.ICL) to contain groups of static icons which can be called by the Windows desktop or other programs. Use *Cursor Library* format files (.CUL) to hold static cursors for use in programming projects (much like a .DLL file). You can also create stand-alone *EXE Library* programs to hold and install your images without the need for additional software.

### ICL and CUL Library Files

The Library window for creating and editing *.ICL* and *.CUL* format files contains a large display area, with controls arrayed along the top of the window. Select icons or cursors from within the library by using the scroll bar on the window's left side to move through the collection, then click on the desired image.

Once an image is selected, it may be edited, duplicated, deleted or repositioned to a new location within the library using the controls. The bar at the top of the screen also displays the size and color depth of the currently selected icon. You may also specify a title for the selected image by typing text into the field on the right side of the bar.

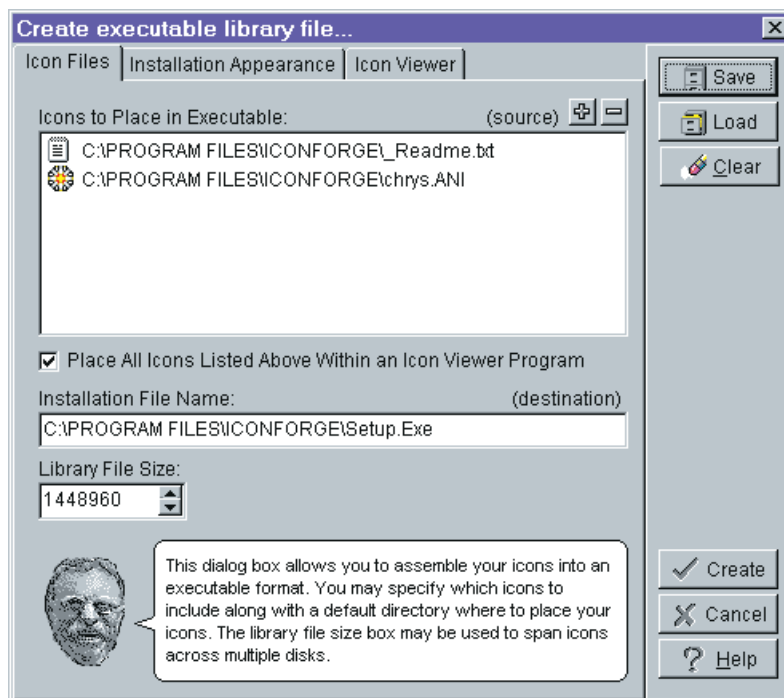
*Icon / Cursor Library Window*



.ICL Library files are often used to group your icons into a convenient form. This can save space on some systems and can also make it easier to move a group of icons from one system to another. Some artists and publishers sell professional quality icon collections in ICL format. Another use for Icon Libraries is for programming projects in which all the icons in an application are stored in a single ICL (normally, the Windows API *ExtractIcon* call is used to locate the icon within the file).

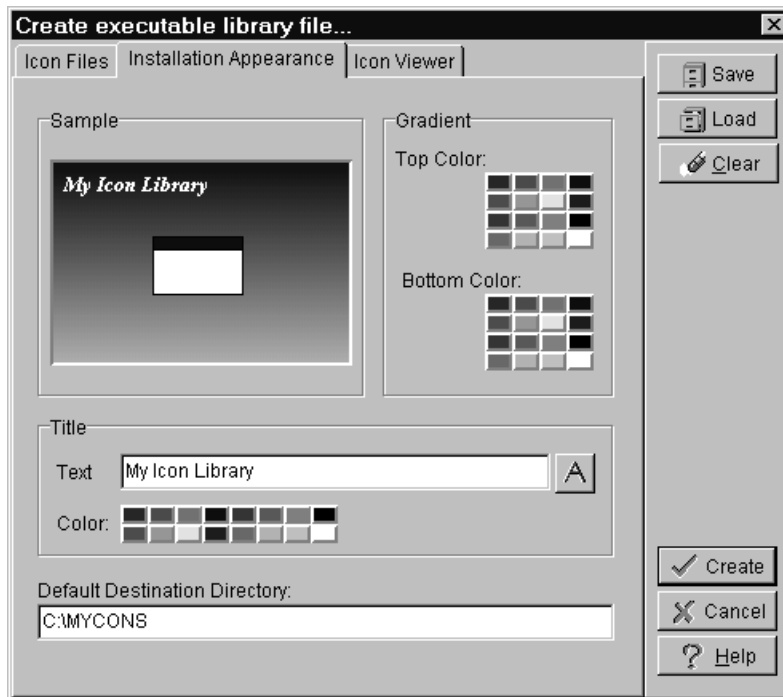
### Stand-alone EXE Libraries

Stand-alone *EXE Libraries* may also be created from the Library menu selection. You may use this function to create a simple installation program to place your files onto a user's disk. To do this, do **not** checkmark the *Place All Icons Listed Within an Icon Viewer Program* option. Instead, simply click on the



“+” button to create a list of the files to be installed. The *Installation File Name* field allows you to assign a filename to your install program.

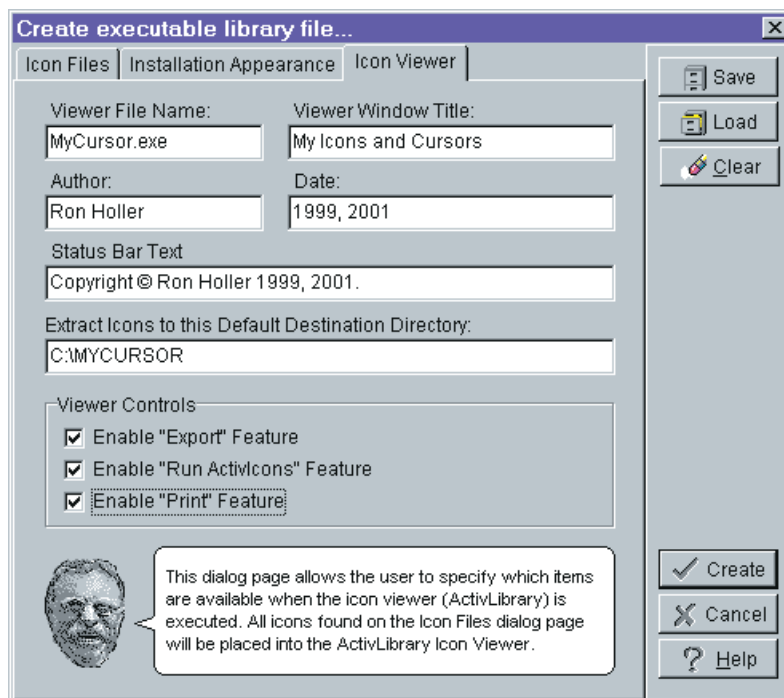
Use the *Installation File Size* field to specify the maximum size of the media used to distribute the compressed Library. E.g., if you are using 1.44 MB diskettes, you might type 1448960 (the number of bytes which a 1.44 MB diskette can contain). If the Library is larger than the value specified here, the files will be split into pieces which may be placed on separate diskettes. The filenames for each piece will end in a numeral to denote the disk order (e.g., for a 3 disk set: sample.001 would go onto the first disk, sample.002 would go on disk 2, and sample 003 would go onto the last disk). Be sure to label the media so that the user knows which diskette to insert when the installation program requests a disk.



If you place all the pieces on a single drive directory folder capable of holding them, the user will not be prompted to swap disks. This means that you can usually place the same set of files on both multiple diskettes and on a single CD-ROM disc.

You may also click on the *Installation Appearance* tab to set colors and a title for your install program.

You can produce a more sophisticated stand-alone Library program if you checkmark the ***Place All Icons Listed Within an Icon Viewer Program*** option. When you do this, an *Icon Viewer* tab will appear at the top of the window. All selected files will be written into a *viewing* program, which is copied to the user's disk by the installation program.



The *Icon Viewer* tab allows you to specify the name of the viewing program, and other information used in the viewing program's window.

You may select whether to allow users to export images from the viewer (do not checkmark this option if you only want users to view, and not use, the files), whether to allow users to print the images, and whether to include a copy of the *ActivIcons* utility with the viewer so that users may change their various Windows system icons and cursors.

Once you have created a list of files and configured the settings for your Library, click on the *Create* button to begin building the program. The files will be compressed, and if the end result is larger than the size specified in the *Library File Size* field on the *Icon Files* tab (e.g., if you are placing on diskettes), then the program will automatically be split into sections. Once the program has been created, then it is simply a matter of placing the program on diskettes or other media. If several pieces were created, then place each piece on a diskette which has been labeled to indicate which piece resides on the diskette:

E.g., If your *Setup* program is split into 3 sections:  
*SETUP.EXE* and *SETUP.001* would go on *Disk 1 of 3*  
*SETUP.002* would be placed on *Disk 2 of 3*  
*SETUP.003* would be placed on *Disk 3 of 3*

When users run the *SETUP.EXE* program to install your library, they will be prompted to insert each diskette in turn.

⇒ **Note:** If you develop lists of icons, color schemes and other settings that you may want to use again, use the *Save* button to save the current setup. Use the *Load* button to load previously *Saved* settings. The *Clear*

button is a quick way to clear the list of files on the Icon Files tab.

## Using an Icon Library as a .DLL

You may also convert ICL or CUL Icon/Cursor Library files into a DLL type files, simply by renaming their three-letter filename extensions to “.DLL”

As a .DLL, you can access the icons directly from Windows and other programs. Programmers may also access icons from within .ICL, .CUL or .DLL files using the Windows *ExtractIcon* and/or *LoadImage* API's.

⇒ **Note** that most .DLL's contain programming material in addition to icons and cursors. To edit an existing .DLL, use the *Open* command from the *File* menu and edit individual icons directly. You cannot add, subtract or change the resolution of icons within a .DLL or other program file, since this would risk corrupting the file.

If you know that a .DLL contains only icons (i.e., it is a .DLL which you originally created as an .ICL or .CUL), then you can rename its filename extension back to .ICL and edit it using the *Library* menu's functions.