

Chapter 5

Animation

The Animator Screen

Creating Animations

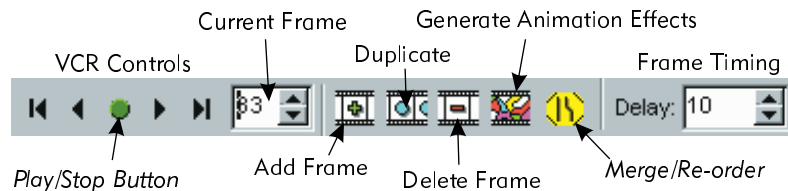
Merging

Animations consist of a series of images (called frames or cels), which are displayed in succession to give the illusion of movement. The special features of the Animation editor screens are described below.

The Animator Screen

Creating a new animation is the simple process of creating a sequence of separate images:

- Select *New* from the *File* menu.
- Set the size of the animated area (use smaller sizes, as animation files tend to get very large very quickly).
- Mark the *Make new image an animation* option and click *OK*.
- Use the painting tools to create your first image.
- Click the Duplicate icon (blue circles) to create an additional frame (2) containing the same image.
- Go to the second frame and alter it slightly.
- Repeat for additional frames.
- Preview your animation using the VCR controls.



- Use *Save As* to save the animation in one of the supported animation formats (e.g., .AVI, .GIF, etc.).

⇒ *Trick: You can also save animation sequences as BMP film strips by specifying a .BMP format file extension when you use Save As to save the image. This places the frames into sequential order on either a horizontal or vertical single image. This format is used in various programming languages and to change the animations in some programs such as Internet Explorer. Since the frames are saved as a single image, you cannot reopen the saved image as individual frames, so you may also want to save a separate copy in the .AVI format.*

Animation Window Controls

Editing a Frame

Use the tools from the toolbar to paint just as you would for a normal image. This includes placing items onto the Objects layer, etc.

Moving a Frame

To move a frame to a different position in the animation sequence, click on the *Merge* icon (the yellow diamond). The *Merge* function shows all of the frames as a series of thumbnails. Simply click on a frame and drag it to a new position.

Adding a Fixed Background

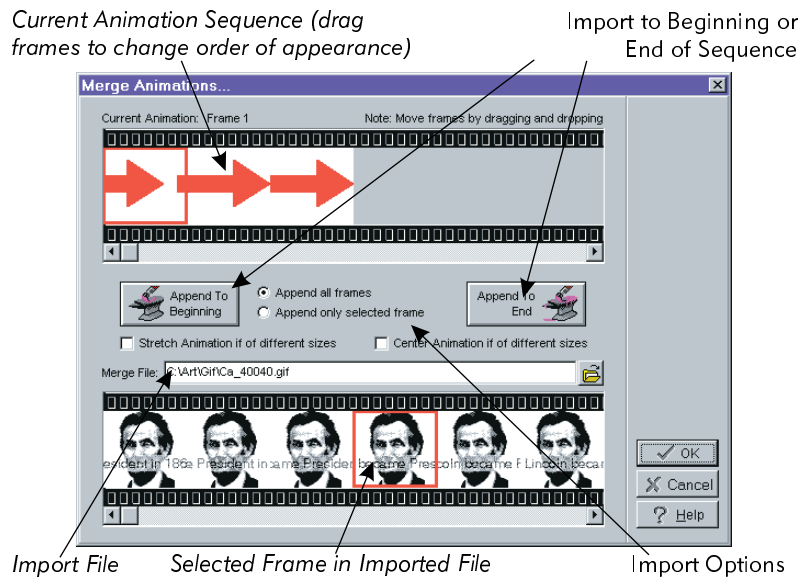
Create the background as a separate image. Save this image. You may then import the image into your animation frame(s) using the *Composite* tab's merge feature (or simply cut and paste from the original

image). To restore parts of the background in an individual frame, simply use the *Paint with Image* brush to paint in the original background.

Tip: We recommend that you select as small a sized animation as possible. This is because larger animations quickly consume disk space and because some larger animations do not play back well, since a great deal of material must continually be read from the disk (or over a network). If you have a large area, consider making several small animated files, and then placing them at different locations on the screen, using a static image as a background.

Merge

Click the *Merge* icon either to rearrange the sequence in which the frames are displayed, or to import frames from another animation file into the current animation.



To change the position of a frame within the current animation, click on the frame you wish to move, then drag the highlighted frame to a new position.

To import frames from another animation, select a file name in the *Merge File* field. Use the yellow folder button to choose a file from the GIF, AVI, ANI and FLC animations stored on your system. The frames imported from the second animation will be displayed in a strip along the bottom of the dialog.

Mark the *Append all frames* option if you will be importing all frames from the specified animation. Mark the *Append only selected frame* option if you only want to import one frame at a time. Scroll through and select the frame you want to add, then click on either the *Append to Beginning* or *Append to End* buttons to add the frame. You may then drag the added frame to a new position in the sequence at the top of the dialog.

If the imported frame is a different size, you may use the *Stretch Animation* and *Center Animation* options to adjust the imported frame to the new animation size.

Frames from .ANI format files (Windows animated icons or cursors) may also be imported into existing frames. Specify the ANI's filename, then select a frame from the animated icon by clicking on the arrow buttons to find the desired frame. You may position the ANI's frame within an existing frame by dragging the smaller selection box to the desired position.