

Getting The Most out of MMF's importing

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Introduction

MMF can import just about any graphic file you need to create a game or application. Some users use other programs to create their graphics. This can be a problem for some who are using the wrong format to export to.

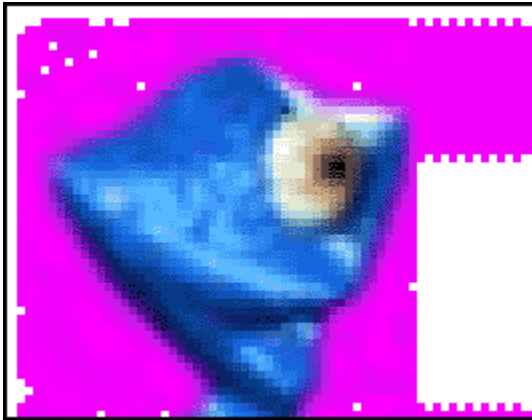


Fig 1. Too much to clean up.

If you have a character that has over 10 frames of animation in just one direction, you don't want to waste time editing or cleaning up the image in MMF itself. Sometimes when you import a graphic, you'll get artifacts around your image. Even if you tell MMF to make the background color transparent, it doesn't get it all. I'm sure no one wants to clean up every edge around each frame of animation. So what's the solution?

Chose your format, wisely

First, let's not blame MMF. It has nothing to do with MMF. Check what format you are using. The reason why you may have 12 different shades of your background color around your object is because of the format you exported your image to. This is especially true with JPG format. Using JPGs other than for backgrounds may not be intuitive as you may think. Sure, the file sizes are small but JPG uses a compression method that even on the highest quality JPG, there will still be compression.

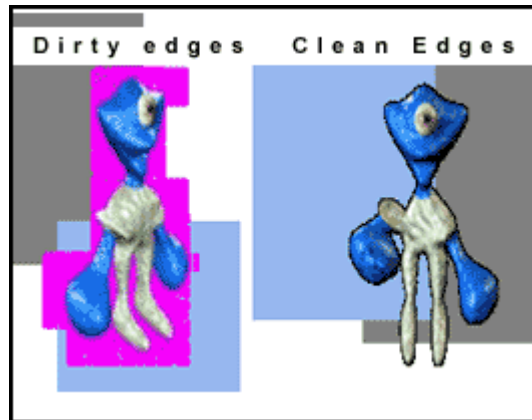


Fig 2. Dirty and clean edges around the graphic.

So, don't use JPG? What format should I use then? Any graphic format that doesn't compress images: BMP, TGA, TIFF, etc. These files do take up hard drive space so before exporting your animation, make sure you have sufficient room on your hard drive. Try to avoid JPGs, GIFs, and even AVIs (if you used a compression codec) for importing graphics in which you want to background color transparent.

Let's go back to using AVIs. You can use them, however when exporting, make sure when you select a codec (if your software allows it, most do) select the option "full frames (no compression)".

Animation

Importing loads of animation in MMF isn't fun? Actually, MMF 1.5 has the ability to import image sequences. For example, if you have files named my_file.1.bmp, my_file.2.bmp, etc. Just go to file-> import-> animation and select a BMP file (this only works for BMPs as of MMF 1.5 build 110) MMF will ask if you want to import the whole sequence. If you have an animation over 10 frames, you may notice it only imported frames 1-9. Just go back to file -> import animation and select frame 10, then MMF will do the rest.

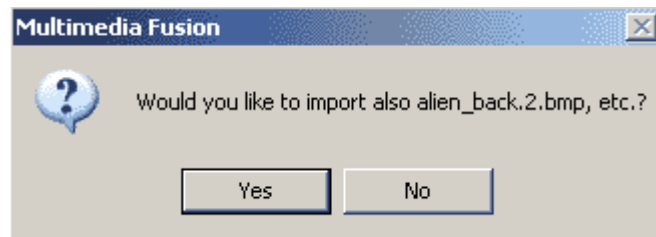


Fig 3. Import multiple bitmaps at once.

Glow, explosions, lense flares

Having graphics with any type of glow can cause some issues because around the glow is different shades of color and it is impossible to totally clean. Even if you did clean your glows, your graphics wouldn't look as nice as they did with the glow.

The best solution for glows is to either put them on a background which is the background color or use MMF's ink effects. With MMF 1.5, you can also change the objects ink effects at runtime.

Just like with anything, you'll have to experiment. Depending on the color of your graphics, you'll need to figure out which ink effect will suit you best. Also, try using different background colors by either creating a background or backdrop.

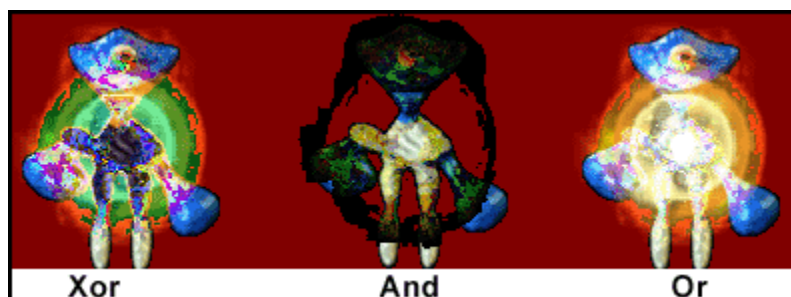


Fig 4. Using MMF's different ink effects with explosions.

Conclusion

Multimedia Fusion does include a full blown image editor however if you're

importing graphics from any other software package, you really don't need to spend much time using it except for cropping, changing hot spots and action spots, etc. You shouldn't need to use it for cleaning up images.

****This also applies to Jamagic, since it uses the same image editor as Multimedia Fusion.****