

# ANIMATING WITH MICROSOFT GIF ANIMATOR

Gif Animator comes with a program called Image Composer, which in turn ships with Microsoft Front Page. It's reasonably easy and allows you to make a simple, but non-interactive animation for your website.

A word about file formats. JPGs and Gifs are the standard file types for pictures on the Web. Both are small (compressed) to speed up the time it takes to load a page.

JPGs are normally associated with photographs or higher-quality graphics. Gifs are more for drawings with simple colours.

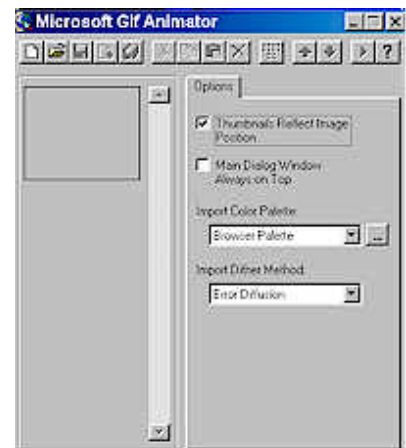
Choosing to save your image as a Gif comes with a trade-off in quality, but allows you to do two important things.

First, you can make Gifs transparent. That is, you can make parts of an image see-through so that your web page background can still be seen.

Secondly, you can make Gif animations. A Gif animation is made up of a collection of still images, stuck together to give the appearance of animation.

**Step 1. Open Image Composer / Gif Animator.**

- Find the Image Composer icon. Click to open.
- Go to **TOOLS > GIF ANIMATOR** to open the program.
- For now, minimize Gif Animator and go back to Image Composer.



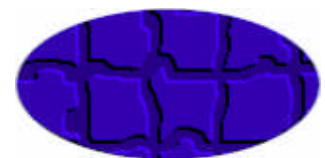
**Step 2. Create an image to animate.**

- We'll make a simple flashing lights logo for a web page, but you can animate anything – text, characters, colours.
- Choose a colour for your logo from the Colour Swatch
- Open the Shapes tool. I've chosen an oval shape. Choose a shape and drag out a shape on the screen. Not too big, as that white space represents a whole page!
- Make sure 'Fill' is checked. Click Create.
- You should have a basic shape on your screen.



**Step 3. Add a special effect.**

- If you want to you can add a special effect to your logo.
- Click on your shape to select it.
- Open the Effects tool. Experiment with different effects until you find one you are happy with.



**Step 4. Add some text.**

- Open the Text tool.
- Choose a colour, font and font size.
- Click on your image and type something like 'Welcome!'
- Notice that you can move around that text box until you are happy with it. You can even add a special effect to the text, just like in the last step.



### Step 5. Make some lights.

- Using the process learned in Step 2, make some circles, positioning them around the outside of your image.
- It doesn't really matter what colour yet.
- To make them all the same size, create one and duplicate it using Copy/Paste.



### Step 6. Modify the image.

- Click on one of the lights you have made
- Choose a new colour and use the Colour Fill tool to paint the light.



### Step 7. Load the image into Gif Animator.

- Drag an imaginary box around the entire image. It should all be selected.
- Click Copy, then reopen Gif Animator.
- Click on the Paste icon. Your image should be loaded into Frame 1 of Gif Animator



### Step 8. Modify the image further.

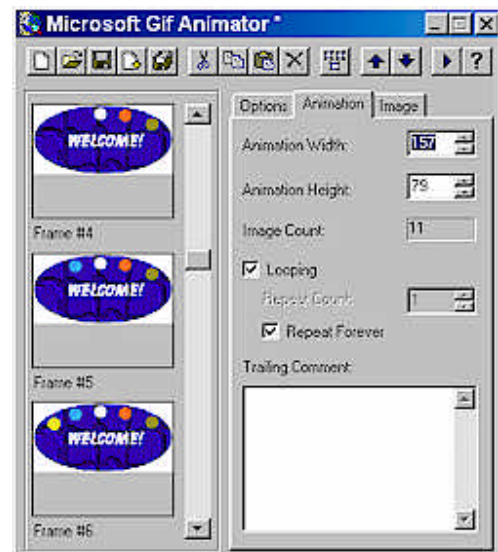
- Follow Step 6 to change the colour of another light.
- Follow Step 7 to copy and paste this modified image into frame 2 of Gif Animator.
- Follow this process until all your images have been loaded into Gif Animator. You'll probably have around 8 frames.

### Step 9. Setting animation properties.

- After loading your frames into Gif Animator, place a tick in 'Looping' and 'Repeat Forever' under the 'Animation' tab.
- Other settings will also affect how your animation plays – experiment a bit.
- Press Play to see your animation.



- When you are happy with your animation, save it as a Gif file. You now have a simple animation to use for your website!



Would you use this with kids? Definitely, if they are making web pages. It's all too easy to grab an existing animation from the web and use it just like clip art, from which they learn nothing. By introducing a scanner and original artwork, the possibilities are further expanded.

Even if they are not making web pages it can be a good problem solving activity. For example

- design a character with moving eyes
- create a toy with a moving part
- show an Olympic athlete running.