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Subject: Re: Animations: A can or worms?

Posted by [Michael Wallace](#) on Wed, 18 Feb 2004 23:54:59 GMT

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>> It would be nice to see RSI add some support for MNG. Just as PNG is  
>> replacing GIF, MNG should be replacing animated GIFs. For simple  
>> animations, MNG would be viable especially now that web browsers are  
>> starting to support it. However, this is all a pipe dream since IDL  
>> doesn't support the format. Oh, well.  
>>  
>> mw  
>  
>  
> Michael,  
>  
> The LZW algorithm patent has expired in many countries, and it's a  
> fairly simple process to get permission from UNISYS to use LZW in  
> non-commercial work, whereupon RSI will activate GIF in your IDL licence.  
>  
> Ask, and ye might receive...

Yes, it is a fairly simple process to activate GIF in IDL, but you don't have to do anything special to use write\_png. We've been using PNGs for years now with no problems. PNG was specifically designed as a patent-free replacement for GIF and even managed to improve on the compression technique. Like GIF, PNG also has transparency, but unlike GIF, PNG also supports opacity. And PNG can support a greater color depth. As far as I can tell, PNG is a superior format. The only reason to even think of using GIF is if you want animation.

And the LZW patents haven't expired everywhere yet. The US patent expired last June, but the patents in Canada and most of Europe won't expire until sometime this year.

mw

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