
Subject: Re: animated png: a new format for scientific animations

Posted by [jeffnettlles4870](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 17:45:25 GMT

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On May 21, 11:38 am, Vince Hradil <hrad...@yahoo.com> wrote:

> On May 21, 9:28 am, pgri...@gmail.com wrote:

>

>

>

>> Hi folks,

>

>> production of animations (i.e. movies) is one

>> perennial subject of discussion in this group.

>> One of the main difficulties is the large number

>> of mutually incompatible formats, not always

>> equally well supported by different platforms

>> and softwares.

>

>> Furthermore, scientific animations are not well

>> suited to lossy compression schemes (i.e. jpeg,

>> mpeg etc.) such that the quality is in general

>> low, or the file size huge when higher bitrate

>> is used.

>

>> For still images, the alternative png format

>> has been available for some time, and has

>> become the format of choice for plots etc.

>> So it seems quite logical that

>> png animations should be the way to go.

>> The mozilla folks have come up with a new

>> specification for animated pngs that is supported

>> in firefox 3. I tried out the new format and

>> I can confidently say that the quality is much

>> better than any other movie format I have ever

>> seen, and the file size is quite reasonable.

>

>> I've put up an example, but bear in mind that

>> to be able to see the animated png you'll need

>> the firefox 3 beta (release candidate)!

>

>> The web page show the animated png and 3 quicktime

>> movies of increasing quality (and file size!).

>

>> <http://hea-www.harvard.edu/~pgrigis/scianim/index.html>

>

>> Of course, the availability (finally!) of a good

>> format specification for scientific animations does

>> not mean that it is easy or convenient to use.

>> The main problem now are the fact that only a few
>> player and encoders are available.
>
>> On the other hand, you can play the movies with
>> firefox 3 and you can endcode the images using
>> a (cosed source) command line java utility
>> (<http://www.reto-hoehener.ch/japng/>), therefore
>> at least a minimum of multiplatform support already
>> exist.
>
>> Anyway, if you are willing to live with the limited
>> support for the format, it will probably give you
>> the best quality for your scientific animations
>> (and arguably is still a better solution than having
>> IDL open and issuing for i=0,100 do tv,img[*,* ,i] ;-)
>
>> Ciao,
>> Paolo
>
> Nice - thanks for the demo. I'd also like to point out that XnView
> (v1.92 or greater) can view the APNG.

I wouldn't be surprised if ImageMagick didn't also support these files very soon. I know they already support creating .MNG files which I believe is an older specification of the animated PNG format. I mention this because ImageMagick has popped up in other discussions on this newsgroup recently :)

Jeff
