
Subject: Re: mpeg quality

Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Wed, 21 Apr 2004 03:44:56 GMT

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In article <1Zbhc.1597\$Ua5.1269400@monger.newsread.com>,
"David Jackson" <jacksond@dickinson.edu> wrote:

> Sorry if this has been asked before, but does anyone know how to improve the
> quality of an mpeg written from IDL's Xinteranimate command. I tried
> changing mpg_quality and mpg_bitrate but I always got a file that was
> exactly the same size and quality. I must be doing something silly.

Because MPEG was mainly designed to handle "photographs", I have never liked what it does to scientific graphs (line graphs, in particular). I find that it is better to TVRD each frame and then write the image to a file (I prefer PNGs, but there are other options ... see WRITE_IMAGE). Then use a utility to convert the images to a movie using a codec that is better suited for graphics (e.g, lossless). On the Mac I use GraphicConverter (shareware) with the "Animation" codec. QuickTime Pro will also do the conversion, I believe. QuickTime Pro is available for Windows. Other readers can provide other suggestions.

Ken Bowman

Subject: Re: mpeg quality

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Wed, 21 Apr 2004 16:57:08 GMT

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David,

I quit using the mpeg routines because of the crummy quality. I am pretty happy with the idl2avi.dlm from Ronn Kling and the vp3 codec, which can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.vp3.com>. I have been using this solution for a several months and it works great.

Haje

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Subject: Re: mpeg quality
Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 02:18:11 GMT
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Haje Korth wrote:

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By the way, is there an IDL 6.0-compatible version of idl2avi? I looked
at <http://www.kilvarock.com/freesoftware/dlms/avi.htm> and could only
find files for versions 5.3 to 5.6.

--

Mark Hadfield "Ka puwaha te tai nei, Hoesa tatou"
m.hadfield@niwa.co.nz
National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)

Subject: Re: mpeg quality
Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 02:48:25 GMT
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Mark Hadfield wrote:

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> at <http://www.kilvarock.com/freesoftware/dlms/avi.htm> and could only
> find files for versions 5.3 to 5.6.

Answering my own question: the IDL 5.6 version seems to work with IDL 6.0.

--

Mark Hadfield "Ka puwaha te tai nei, Hoesa tatou"
m.hadfield@niwa.co.nz
National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)

Subject: Re: mpeg quality

Posted by [Yunxiang Zhang](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 06:31:11 GMT

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What's the best choice for Unix/Linux guys?

On Wed, 21 Apr 2004, Haje Korth wrote:

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Subject: Re: mpeg quality

Posted by [Miguel Angel Cordoba](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 09:16:00 GMT

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Hi Haje,
can you explain where can we find the idl2avi.dlm module and how we can
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Thanx

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Miguel Ángel

Haje Korth wrote:

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Miguel Angel Cordoba <mailto:cordoba@grahi.upc.es>
Tel. +34 934 017 371
Fax. +34 934 054 194

Grup de Recerca Aplicada en Hidrometeorologia (GRAHI-UPC)
<http://www.grahi.upc.es>

Centre membre de la Xarxa d'Innovacio Tecnologica XIT
<http://www.cidem.com/xarxait>

Subject: Re: mpeg quality
Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 11:44:58 GMT
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quality/file size ratio. Unlike MPEG it is good for scientific presentation.

Haje

"Miguel Angel Cordoba" <cordoba_nospam@grahi.upc.es> wrote in message
news:40878D50.4070901@grahi.upc.es...

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Subject: Re: mpeg quality
Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 11:49:25 GMT
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Mark,
I actually compiled my own version from the source code. I sent the binary
to Ronn Kling for posting on his web site. Unfortunately, he has not gotten
around to post it. I would offer it on my web server, but I do not want to
take credit for something that I have not created.

Haje

"Mark Hadfield" <m.hadfield@niwa.co.nz> wrote in message
news:c67a16\$ppv\$1@newsreader.mailgate.org...

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> Mark Hadfield "Ka puwaha te tai nei, Hoesa tatou"

> m.hadfield@niwa.co.nz

> National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)

Subject: Re: mpeg quality

Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Thu, 22 Apr 2004 21:49:16 GMT

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Yunxiang Zhang wrote:

> On Wed, 21 Apr 2004, Haje Korth wrote:

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> What's the best choice for Unix/Linux guys?

For many purposes, the FLIC format, which was designed some time ago by
Autodesk as a format for CAD animations. The big limitation with FLIC is
that it supports only 8-bit colour. If you can live with that, I think
it's your best bet.

You can generate FLIC files with a command-line program, ppm2fli, and
view them on Unix with Xanim.

I have an HTML page that talks about different animation formats & shows
examples. It's normal home is hidden behind the NIWA firewall, but for a
limited time only you can see it at

<ftp://ftp.niwa.co.nz/incoming/m.hadfield/animation/index.htm> I

The discussion is a bit disorganised and does not take full account of all the valuable info that Rick Towler has posted to the IDL newsgroup over the years (though I do mention this). Also, the page suffers a bit from being uprooted & transplanted in a new location, but it may give you some useful info. Please be sparing when viewing the animation files for the second example: they're big!

--

Mark Hadfield "Ka puwaha te tai nei, Hoesa tatou"
m.hadfield@niwa.co.nz
National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)

Subject: Re: mpeg quality
Posted by [DPJ](#) on Sat, 24 Apr 2004 23:18:42 GMT
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Thanks Haje...it looks like this will work.

David

"Haje Korth" <haje.korth@jhuapl.edu> wrote in message
news:c68b7q\$aus\$1@aplc0re.jhuapl.edu...

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Subject: Re: mpeg quality
Posted by [Rick Towler](#) on Mon, 26 Apr 2004 17:47:11 GMT
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This may be obvious but remember that in order to play back an animation created with vp3 the user needs the vp3 codec installed. If your animations are intended for a limited audience which you have some control over you're usually fine. But if you are making these available to a wide audience then you're in for a bit of a headache.

Not that there is much you can do to limit the pain though. The only codecs that are shipped with most every OS are the Radius Cinepack codec and some version of the MPEG-1 codec. Both are poor codecs for scientific animation so there is no universal solution.

If you are going to be presenting your animations find out well ahead of

time if you can use your own laptop. Most seminars/conferences I attend these days seem to strongly encourage all speakers to use a single laptop to cut down on laptop/projector "issues". I don't know if this is a trend... (Physicists insert joke about how biologists can't use computers here.) Using custom codecs in this scenario takes extra effort.

-Rick

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