

Vine Micros Scan-converto & Genlock/Scala MM100 bundle

Q. What is this bundle?

A. The enclosed software is a fully functional version of Scala MM100 with on-line user help. The only thing missing is a manual, which may be ordered separately. Also included is a demonstration file giving more information on Vine and its products - this file may auto-run if you have Windows 95 on your system.

Scala MM100 is a very sophisticated piece of software, and these sheets are intended to help you troubleshoot and solve problems you may have. The questions & answers are broken down into 'Top 10', 'Installation', 'Editing', and 'Performance' - but please always check the Top 10 first.

The following is reproduced with permission from Scala. For the latest FAQ list, see: <http://www.scala.com/cgi-bin/faq-mmmain.pl>

Scala MultiMedia Top Ten 'Frequently Asked Questions'

Q. My sound doesn't work.

A. There are a number of issues when configuring sound. First, be sure that your audio hardware settings are correct. Scala sometimes assigns the wrong information during the Autodetect process. You must check the settings in Scala against the settings from your operating system.

If sound used to work, and you are using a Plug & Play (PnP) system e.g., Windows95, your settings may have been changed when you restarted your system. You can correct this under Windows 95 by letting Windows 95 set the PnP settings for the card. Then edit the properties of your Sound Card in Device Manager section under Control Panel and turn off the "use automatic setting" in the Resource section of your sound card settings. This will prevent Windows 95 from changing the hardware settings for your sound card every time it boots.

If you are using a laptop with a docking station, you will need to reset your Scala sound settings if your docking station has a sound card installed. Additional information is provided later in this section.

Lastly, make sure you have your speaker cable plugged into the proper jack on your sound card.

Q. Diag utility "Autodetect" scan, reports Creative Labs AWE32 even though a SoundBlaster 16 is installed in the system.

A. Creative Labs (Creative Technology) has been known to use the same audio chipsets on both products in recent years. In any case, the audio card should work properly. You can manually set MM to use SB16 and test. Better recognition of audio cards will be added in a subsequent maintenance upgrade.

Q. I've included a large FLI/FLC animation in my script, but MM won't play it. I'm running it under standard MS-DOS, not a Windows DOS Shell. What's going on?

A. MM can only playback FLI/FLC animations from memory (RAM). If the animation is larger than available RAM, MM100 will skip it and move on to the next event.

Here are some tips on how you can make the animation(s) run:

If the animation is very large (i.e. Your system only has 8 MB of RAM and you are attempting to run a 4 MB FLI or FLC animation), you can split up the animation into smaller segments and saving the segments as individual FLI/FLC files. You will need to use an FLI/FLC animation program (i.e. Autodesk Animator Pro). You will need to run the files consecutively (in order) in the script.

Depending on the performance of your system, only a short pause between the segments may be visible. See the Scalatore (scalator.sca) demo script on the CD-ROM to see an example of how this can be done. Please note that playing the Scalatore demo from your hard drive will probably yield better performance than from your CD-ROM drive.

When watching the Scalatore demo, notice that the segments only occur during a scene change. Using this technique will make pauses less noticeable by the audience. Of course, it will not be as effective if your animation only has one or two scenes.

Try running MM from a DOS Shell under Windows 3.x. By using Windows virtual memory feature, it is possible to playback the animation. Be aware that playback may be slow and/or jerky depending on how much memory swapping Windows requires to playback the animation.

If the animation only needs a few more kilobytes to run, try disabling Smartdrive (SMARTDRV.EXE or SMARTDRV.SYS) or reducing its memory requirements (Smartdrive defaults to allocating 2 MB of Extended RAM). Smartdrive is not needed by MM100.

As a last (but highly recommended) resort, buy more RAM for your system. Not only will this benefit MM100, but you should see a significant improvement in running your Windows applications as well. It is a very worthwhile investment.

Q. Can Scala run in 15/16/24 bit video modes?

A. Scala currently runs in 8 bit (256 color mode). It has a special real time palette mapping system to make the best use of colors even when more than 256 colors would be needed. For example, you can load a 24 bit image, and Scala will automatically pick the best colors. You can improve color usage by turning on Dither for clips, or going to Design Palette and clicking on Optimize for a page.

Q. I have a system that has 32 MB of RAM installed. MM100 says that it sees only 16 MB when I start MM from Windows '95, but sees the full 32 MB if I run MM in the Windows DOS mode. What gives?

A. The default memory setting for the Properties of the MM icon, is set for 16384 bytes (16 MB). You can manually change the "Extended (XMS) memory" and/or the "MS-DOS protected-mode (DPMI) memory" settings to the available RAM on your system. You will need to enter the amount of RAM in bytes. For example, 32 MB is equal to 32,768 bytes. We recommend leaving Windows some reserved RAM, so instead of 32 MB, enter 24 MB (24,576 bytes) instead.

Q. Why do I have to have an MPEG decoder card to play MPEG?

A. Software based MPEG playback has limitations, however we will consider this in the future. Our philosophy is to aim for full screen, full speed display; hardware playback meets those criteria.

Q. I got an error saying "There was not enough memory." What does this mean? I have 16 Megabytes (MB) of RAM!

A. There are two issues to be aware of. One, is that Scala keeps all graphics buffered in memory in case they are needed again. Sometimes, this can put a strain on memory usage even with 16 MB of RAM installed on the system. Of course, when memory runs low, Scala starts unloading files. The second issue is that large files, like FLC animations, must be loaded into a continuous block of memory - something that may be hard to come by if your script has lots of files that are being buffered as well. In the Option menu, there is an option to control this buffering, called "Snapload". It has two settings - Dynamic (the default) and None (turns off the buffering). You can temporarily switch to None to force the buffers to be flushed, or leave it set that way to avoid further memory errors (at the cost of performance since files are re-loaded even when used more than once).

Q. My display card is not supported by any of the Scala drivers, but is VESA compatible and is using the Scala VESA driver. However, performance is slow. Is there anything else I can do to get better performance?

A. It could be the VESA driver built-in to the display card's ROM is old, inefficient or even buggy. Check with your computer or video card manufacturer to see if there is a newer ROM you can buy for your display card. They may even have a software (TSR) based VESA driver that you can load into your system, overriding the old ROM on your card. Indeed, some card manufacturers do not have VESA drivers in ROM, but do provide them in software form. Check the manual and diskettes that came with your system or display card for these VESA drivers.

You could use SciTech's UniVBE/Lite VESA driver included on the Scala CD-ROM or even obtain the latest, full version of UniVBE, which can be directly purchased by SciTech, to see if performance improves. Please note that MM will look for a software VESA driver (TSR) first. If it can't find the driver, it will then load the VESA driver from ROM, if available. Also, if your system or video display card uses a TSR for VESA compatibility and you want to use the UniVBE VESA driver instead, be sure to add a "REM" statement in front of its entry in the CONFIG.SYS file. (i.e. REM DEVICE=C:\VESA\VESA.SYS)

As a last resort, you could buy a new video display card that has a chipset supported by our Scala drivers. See the appendix in the MM100 Installation and Setup Guide for a listing of VGA chipsets supported by MM100. But before doing that, be sure to visit the Scala Website (<http://www.scala.com>) regularly to see if new Scala video drivers have been released since you purchased your copy of MM. The drivers may also be available to CompuServe users, in Scala's forum. Scala's forum is located in Multimedia Vendor B area (GO MULTIB), section 8.

Q. Under DOS and/or Windows 3.x, do you recommend the use of memory management programs like Microsoft's EMM386 or Quarterdeck's QEMM to improve performance?

A. If it all possible, no. Most memory management programs will affect MM, by slowing down its performance. In very rare cases, it may cause incompatibilities between our program, drivers (TSRs) and even hardware. Still, you could do some experimentation to find out if the difference in performance will affect your application. If MM works fine with the device drivers and performance is to your satisfaction, then by all means, you can use the memory management program.

One possible solution is to configure an MS-DOS Boot Menu, which will allow you to startup different AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files. In this case you want to setup a configuration that does not load a memory manager. Other configurations can be setup for a Windows session, different drivers, etc.

See the section "Advanced Topics" in the README.TXT file in the DOCS directory on the CD-ROM. Or, consult your MS-DOS manual, for more information on how to setup an MS-DOS Boot Menu.

Q. Which Operating System is best suited for Scala software?

A. Microsoft MS-DOS 6.2x, Microsoft Windows '95, IBM OS/2 Warp, Microsoft Windows 3.x

The operating systems are rated based on their best compatibility and stability in running with DPMI (DOS Protected Mode) programs.

Installation - Operating System Issues

Q. Which Operating Systems allow virtual memory for MM100?

A. Windows '95 and Windows 3.1 and IBM OS/2 Warp. If your system uses virtual memory but has a less than optimal memory configuration (i.e. 8 MB), you may experience performance degradation. Under MS-DOS 5.x or higher, performance is limited to available RAM. No virtual memory is available.

Q. Does MM work with Novell DOS (aka Dr. DOS)?

A. Regretfully, no. For best compatibility use MS-DOS 6.22.

Q. Strange errors occur during startup of MM100, running under MS-DOS/Microsoft Windows 3.X.

A. One or more DOS settings are not configured optimally to run MM100. Check the following in the CONFIG.SYS file:
Set FILES option to at least 60 (i.e. FILES=60).
If Smartdrive (SMARTDRV.EXE or SMARTDRV.SYS) is enabled, set Buffers to 10 (i.e. BUFFERS=10).
If Smartdrive is disabled set Buffers to a higher value (i.e. 500 MB drive set BUFFERS=30, 1 GB set BUFFERS=60, etc.).
Check to make sure Stacks is set to 9,256 (i.e. STACKS=9,256) and not 0,0 which some memory managers (i.e. Quarterdeck's QEMM) set during optimization.

Q. Sometimes during startup a "disk-write protected" is displayed.

A. If using MS-DOS/Windows 3.x, check to make sure the CONFIG.SYS settings are setup for MM100 use. See the question listed above.

Q. My Toshiba "Tecra" series notebook computer crashes with Windows 3.x installed. How can I fix this?

A. Certain versions of EMM386 have been known to crash MM100 from DOS or Windows. Apparently the installed copy of Windows 3.x, that comes with the Tecra, includes a version of EMM386 that does not allow MM100 to work properly. We suggest creating a "DOS Bootup Menu" with a configuration that does not load EMM386. See MM100 "Setup and Installation Guide" for more information or MS-DOS manual that came with user's system. Otherwise, another possible solution is to upgrade to Windows '95.

Installation - Sound Issues

Q. SoundBlaster Pro compatible card "autodetects" as "Business Audio" instead of SoundBlaster Pro.

A. Some sound cards use chipsets (i.e. ESS) that can be configured for "Business Audio" or "SoundBlaster Pro". If "Business Audio" configuration works, use it vs SoundBlaster Pro, as "Business Audio" has the ability to playback 16-bit audio files, vs SoundBlaster Pro's limited 8-bit capabilities.

Q. I have a laptop. I configured my audio and video settings while I was docked to use my VGA monitor and SoundBlaster. However, Scala won't work when I'm undocked.

A. Currently you'll need to change the settings on your laptop when you dock and undock. If Scala won't run at all, you will have to delete the configuration files to get back to defaults. (SCALA\CONFIG\VIDEO.SCA and SOUND.SCA). A possible work around is to create a backup of your VIDEO.SCA and SOUND.SCA files when docked and undocked. Use the appropriate version when necessary. Be sure to use unique names for the backups, so Scala doesn't use the wrong files i.e. SOUND.DOK or SOUND.LAP. We expect to address this issue in a subsequent maintenance release of MM.

Q. Sound in Windows '95 no longer works when switching to, or after running MM100.

A. This is a known problem on some systems, depending on which sound card is installed. Try getting latest Windows '95 sound drivers for card. Better compatibility will be addressed in a subsequent maintenance release of MM.

Installation - Display Issues

Q. Scala won't run. It says "Couldn't find a compatible video driver."

A. We have provided support for the most popular video card chipsets on the market today including VESA (standard generic video interface). However, there are video cards that don't work with our VESA or custom drivers. But if you're getting this error, either Scala failed to work with your card's VESA features, or your card doesn't support VESA. Your best options are to use the universal VESA program (SciTech's UniVBE) included with MM100 or to upgrade to a different video card.
See the Scala Installation Guide for more information on trouble shooting video problems.

Q. Playing FLI/FLC animations or running a script locks up the system when Windows '95 screen blanker activates.

A. Many screen blanker programs don't work well with Scala and other DOS programs. Be sure the "shortcut" properties for the MM icon, has the Foreground "Allow screen saver" option turned off, in the "Misc" section. This is the default setting when you install MM on your system. Otherwise, in order to enable the screen blanker, switch back to Windows by pressing the Alternate (ALT) key and the TAB key; ALT + TAB. This key combination will allow you to switch between Scala and Windows.

Q. I have a laptop. I configured my audio and video settings while I was docked to use my VGA monitor and SoundBlaster. However, Scala won't work when I'm undocked.

A. Currently you'll need to change the settings on your laptop when you dock and undock. If Scala won't run at all, you will have to delete the configuration files to get back to defaults. (SCALA\CONFIG\VIDEO.SCA and SOUND.SCA). A possible work around is to create a backup of your VIDEO.SCA and SOUND.SCA files when docked and undocked. Use the appropriate version when necessary. Be sure to use unique names for the backups, so Scala doesn't use the wrong files i.e. SOUND.DOK or SOUND.LAP. We expect to address this issue in a subsequent maintenance release of MM.

Q. I have a notebook computer (i.e. Winbook XP series) that uses the Western Digital 90C24 "Rocketchip" display accelerator. The specifications in the notebook manual states that it has 1 MB of display memory, but MM sees only 512 KB. Should I be concerned?

A. In general, it should not affect overall performance, however, it does prevent the 1024x768 resolution from being added to the list of available display modes in the "Menu", "Display", and "Play" resolution menus.

If using the 1024x768 resolution is necessary for your application, then use a vendor supplied (i.e. Western Digital) VESA driver and configure MM to use the Scala VESA driver. Use the "Diag" utility to configure MM to use the Scala VESA driver. Be aware that using the VESA driver, may affect the performance of MM.

Installation - Pointing Device Issues

Q. Scala won't run. It says "No mouse driver installed."

A. When running under DOS or Windows 3.1, you need to have a DOS mouse driver running. Most computers have a driver installed (but maybe not activated) or at least on floppy/CD.

Q. Some mice or other pointing devices (i.e. trackball) are not recognized by MM100, but work fine under Windows '95. Why?

A. Make sure the Windows '95 Microsoft Mouse DOS driver has been installed in the AUTOEXEC.BAT. If this doesn't work, then you probably need to update the Windows '95 DOS mouse driver and/or switch to a Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device.

Installation - Miscellaneous

Q. Scala won't run. It says "There is a problem with your installation."

A. This indicates that critical Scala files are missing. You need to reinstall Scala. Consult the MM100 Installation Guide for more information on the various installation options.

Q. Setting "Key Repeat Delay" and/or "Key Repeat Speed" in the Input EX causes system to hang or crash.

A. Certain keyboard BIOS do not allow change of "Key Repeat Delay" and/or "Key Repeat Speed". If crash or hang occurs, these options are not available and should not be used again. Try changing these options from your system's CMOS BIOS menu instead.

Q. Who made your demo scripts?

A. Most of our scripts are created internally. Scala has departments at its various offices around the world called "Scala Studios." Studios produces the demo scripts as well as marketing literature for the company. In some of our offices, Studios is available for outside projects.

Editing - Operating System Issues

Q. I'm using Windows95, but I can't use long filenames with Scala.

A. MM100 is a MS-DOS based program, it therefore requires you to use standard 8.3 file names. This is a maximum of 8 characters for the file name, plus 3 characters for the extension.

Editing - Sound Issues

Q. I set the volume for a sound to half way and I can't hear it at all.

A. The sensitivity of most sound cards varies, and most cards don't have a smooth (linear) volume level. You will have to experiment to find where appropriate points are for desired levels.

Q. I used a 44 kHz .WAV file in my script, but the sound quality is poor.

A. Some sound cards are only capable of playing back at 22 kHz stereo but 44.1 kHz mono. MM's Sound EX attempts to "parse" the sound file, in real-time, for playback at 22 kHz. This is not always successful and may result in unusual playback characteristics. If possible, we suggest re-recording the audio clip at a lower sampling rate (i.e. 22.1 kHz). Refer to your sound card's manual for the recording/playback capabilities before re-recording.

Q. I want to play a sound while a page is on the screen. How?

A. You can do this from the Design List menu. It has Sound and other EX columns similar to the Main menu.

Q. When "previewing" a sample in the sound menu, a strange thing happens. If I change the fade in time from some value other than 0 to 0, the "Wait?" button goes away. I want to uncheck it, but what do I do? I can't find the button.

A. This can cause confusion for users since they may not have unchecked the "Wait?" button yet, and when they play the script it will not progress beyond the sound. This a known bug in this menu, which will be fixed in a subsequent maintenance release of MM100.

Q. How do I make sounds and animation synchronize with each other?

A. Scala's design currently doesn't have the strict synchronization of a "time-line" based program. You can start a sound and an animation on the same page, but they may not always sync. We will be working to improve this in the future.

Editing - Graphics Issues

Q. I'm attempting to import a number of clips, sometimes large clips, but it keeps crashing the system.

A. If your running MM under DOS, your system is probably running out of RAM. This problem will be experienced by those who have only 8 MB of RAM installed. The solution is to add more RAM to the system.

Q. I'm using a 24-bit image (i.e. JPG) as a clip and when I attempted to rotate it, a black box surrounding the clip appears.

A. This is a known bug. The workaround is to make an 8-bit version (i.e. BMP, GIF, PNG) of the 24-bit image. Rotated clips should work fine with 8-bit images. This bug will be fixed in a subsequent maintenance upgrade.

Q. Certain graphic files, used as backgrounds, do not load properly in MM.

A. There are a number of variations to the BMP and IFF (ILBM) formats. We suggest loading the file into another graphic or image processing program

and resave the file with the program's BMP or IFF format. (Example: For PC; load and resave BMP in Adobe PhotoShop For Amiga; load and resave in IFF in Electronic Arts Deluxe Paint or ASDG&'s Art Department Professional or Nova Designs Image F/X)

Q. *I'm using an OS/2 BMP file in my script, but it's not appearing properly in MM.*

A. This is a known bug. It will be fixed in a subsequent maintenance release of MM100. We suggest loading and resaving the BMP in another program OS/2 graphic program or use a Windows based program, like Adobe PhotoShop, and resave the image in the Windows BMP format vs the OS/2 BMP format.

Q. *A text/clip won't let me re-order it in Design List.*

A. Check if that element has a wipe or not. If it doesn't have a wipe selected, it means that the element will be on the screen when the background itself wipes in. Therefore, it must be before any element that does have a wipe. If you did intend to move the element, you must first give it a wipe ("cut" is sufficient).

Q. *I've loaded an animation into a script and set its repeat to infinite, then set a pause value (i.e. 10 seconds). It will continue to play the animation over and over, even if the pause value has already expired. It does not go to the next event. Is this a bug and is there a workaround?*

A. This is a known problem and will be fixed in a subsequent maintenance release of MM100. A known workaround is to add as many events of the same animation for the duration needed. For example if the animation you are using only lasts two seconds and you want the animation to loop for 10 seconds, create 5 events with the same animation.

Editing - Script Issues

Q. *My script disappeared. (or, It was replaced by a single page named after my script).*

A. You have discovered one of two features: If the number on the script title bar (right side) doesn't read "1", then you have used the Script Switcher feature which lets you edit more than one script at a time. Click on the left arrow to get back to your original script. If your script was "replaced" by a single page with the name of the script, you have discovered an upper level to scripts designed for advanced users. Just double click on the page to get back to your script. Both of these features are covered in the manual.

Q. *When I turn on the shuffler, it doesn't show any icons.*

A. Check your Options to see if the shuffler is turned off. If it is turned off in Options, it won't display icons even if you turn it on from the Main or File menus.

Q. *The shuffler sometimes shows the wrong images.*

A. Scala saves shuffler icons from the File menu in temporary files (.NFO) so they display more quickly when viewed again. If you change a graphic file, you will have to "visit" that file with the File menu to update the icon.

Q. *Where can I find more information on ScalaScript, the scripting language for MM100?*

A. Abridged documentation of ScalaScript is available on the CD-ROM. Additional documentation will be made available at a later date.

Editing - Wipe Questions

Q. *How do I get rid of out-wipes?*

A. Go to the Design List menu and you will see the out-wipes listed as "OUT: You can cut or delete them from there.

Q. *I can't get the wipe I've chosen to move in a certain direction.*

A. Certain wipes have limited wipe directions. For example, some can only go North/South but not East/West. Some experimentation may be required to find which wipes work best. No table or listing of wipes with possible wipe directions available at this time.

Q. *I've chosen a certain "Out..." wipe in the "Special" wipe category and now the number of available "In..." wipes has changed.*

A. Known bug. Simply exit and re-enter the List menu. All wipes should be made available again. Will be fixed in a subsequent maintenance upgrade.

Editing - Buttons Issues

Q. *The justification buttons don't match the margin buttons in Design Text.*

A. The margin buttons are for each text element, relative to that element's position. There are actually separate "page" margins, set only numerically from the Design Styles menu.

Q. *I don't understand how buttons work.*

A. Here is a brief description (but not a substitute for the manual). Buttons are created from text or clips. Text-based buttons have the advantage of being able to tie the text with a graphic backdrop as one element. Clip-based buttons cannot have any text in them (unless you cheat and put a text element on top).

Text button backdrops are currently limited to normal clips that "show through" behind the text, or special "presets" created by Scala. The Scala presets are stretchable to the size of the text. All buttons have three states of appearance - normal, highlighted, and selected (clicked). Any attribute such as shadow, color, italics, etc. can be changed on each state. To make this easy, the Design menus will indicate when you are editing a button, and what state you are currently looking at. Press F-12 to cycle through the states.

Editing - Text Issues

Q. *How do I type a bullet-point?*

A. The Control (CTRL)key + the Period key (Period on the main keyboard, not the keypad).

Q. *A text/clip won't let me re-order it in Design List.*

A. Check if that element has a wipe or not. If it doesn't have a wipe selected, it means that the element will be on the screen when the background itself wipes in. Therefore, it must be before any element that does have a wipe. If you did intend to move the element, you must first give it a wipe ("cut" is sufficient).

Q. *I put text on an animation, but it gets garbled when I run it.*

A. Place text in areas of the screen that don't change during the animation to solve this problem. We are working to improve this.

Q. *In the file requester, where long paths are involved, text in the path name, apparently is "cut off".*

A. This is a known bug. The problem is that the path entry is left justified instead of right justified. If it were right justified, you could see the last path entry. The workaround is to click in the path entry and "scroll" right, using the right arrow key, to the last entry. This bug will be fixed in a subsequent maintenance release.

Editing - Miscellaneous

Q. *Can Scala interface with other programs or import their data?*

A. Scala currently cannot interface with other programs (i.e. Object Linking and Embedding, otherwise known as OLE). It also doesn't have any data importing capability other than loading ASCII text in the Design Text menu. This is an important feature that we plan to have in the future.

Q. *When I preview pages that display or use variables, they don't always show up and I sometimes get errors.*

A. Place text in areas of the screen that don't change during the animation to solve this problem. We are working to improve this.

Q. *Could you teach me about or send me an example of how works?*

A. If you are seeking expert advice or need "Industry Solution" applications, consider subscribing to our "Premier Service" plan. This plan offers more detailed explanations, advice, examples, tips and solutions than the general FAQ. Also see the question below.

Q. *I've heard you can make your own wipes. How?*

A. This is currently only recommended for advanced users. Instructions will be made available to our "Premier Service" customers.

Performance - Operating System Issues

Q. *Do you recommend using disk compression utilities like Stac Electronics "Stacker" or even "DriveSpace" included with Microsoft Windows '95?*

A. If it all possible, no. Disk compression utilities, even at minimum compression settings, will affect performance of MM100 significantly, especially on "low-powered" systems (i.e. 486DX 100 MHz or slower). Disk compression utilities will have less of an impact on faster systems (i.e. Pentium 100 MHz), but even with these systems, minimum compression settings should be used.

Q. *Do you recommend "optimizing" or "defragmenting" the hard drive for faster performance, especially if the OS is MS-DOS/Windows?*

A. Yes. Depending on how fragmented the files are on your system's hard drive, defragmenting can increase performance significantly. However, before defragmenting the hard drive, be sure to make a complete backup of the data on your hard drive or storage device (i.e. Tape-Backup, SyQuest, Iomega Zip/Jaz) Never, under any circumstances, defragment the hard drive until you have made a complete backup!

Q. *If I'm not using Microsoft's smartdrive (SMARTDRV.EXE or SMARTDRV.SYS), is there a way that MS-DOS can "cache" or speed up file access, to improve performance?*

A. Yes. Set the Buffers setting in CONFIG.SYS to 30 if you have a 500 MB hard drive, 60 if you have a 1 GB hard drive (i.e. BUFFERS=60), etc. Please note that if you do have Smartdrive enabled AND you set BUFFERS=60 for a 1 GB drive, you will actually slow down the performance! With Smartdrive enabled, set the "BUFFERS=" option to 10 (i.e. BUFFERS=10) in the config.sys file.

Remember you can configure this setting and others by setting up an "MS-DOS Boot Menu". Refer to your MS-DOS manual for information on how to set this up.

Q. *I have a system that is using OS/2 and I've seen strange "jumps" of images and/or "flashing" from the last event (i.e. background) in the script, to beginning of the first event in the script.*

A. Check OS/2 DOS settings. OS/2 "8514 Trap" should be disabled.

Q. *If I change audio CD's while Scala is running, it starts playing and I can't control it from Scala anymore.*

A. Windows95 has an Autoplay feature with audio CD's that competes with Scala over control of the CD player. You can cancel it by switching back to Windows (ALT + TAB) and quitting the program "CD Player." You can disable this feature by editing the properties of your CD-ROM drive in the Device Manager section under Control Panel and turn off the "auto insert notification" in the Resource section of your CD-ROM settings.

Performance - Sound Issues

Q. *I have a number of FLC/FLI animations along with playback of WAV sound samples. Sometimes the animation stops and/or the audio cuts out. What can I do to prevent this?*

A. Your system may have the following conditions: Low powered CPU (i.e. 486DX2 66 MHz or slower). Too little memory (i.e. 8 MB). Badly fragmented hard disk or slow access storage device (i.e. CD-ROM).

Inefficient sound card (relies on CPU to process audio effects like reverb). Audio file used has high sample rate (i.e. 16-bit, stereo, 44.1 kHz)

Suggestions to remedy the situation:

Increase the amount of RAM on system. If many of your productions include a number of animations and high-quality sound, then consider adding more RAM (i.e. 16 or 32 MB). Today's memory chip prices make it more affordable than ever.

Try re-recording or using another .WAV file that uses a lower sampling rate (8-bit, stereo, 22.1 kHz, ADPCM compressed). For more information see Chapter 13: How Scala Manages Sound, and Chapter 13: Using Sound Samples.

If the music or sound is available on CD audio, try playing it back directly from the CD-ROM. See Chapter 13: Using Sound for more information.

If using a lot of animations and sampled audio, consider separating the audio and animations on to two different hard drives. This configuration may allow for faster loading and performance.

If at all possible, do not "compress" the hard drive using Stacker, DriveSpace or some other hard drive compression utility. If compression is needed, use minimal compression settings or if possible, store all elements (i.e. backgrounds, sounds, clip art, etc.) on another uncompressed hard drive or storage device.

Backup and defragment your hard drive on a regular basis, especially if user adds and delete files often.

Add faster CPU (i.e. Intel Overdrive CPU upgrade).

Upgrade to faster "A/V Rated" hard drive or storage device.

Q. *If I change audio CD's while Scala is running, it starts playing and I can't control it from Scala anymore.*

A. Windows95 has an Autoplay feature with audio CD's that competes with Scala over control of the CD player. You can cancel it by switching back to Windows (ALT-Tab) and quitting the program "CD Player." You can disable this feature by editing the properties of your CD-ROM drive in the Device Manager section under Control Panel and turn off the "auto insert notification" in the Resource section of your CD-ROM settings.

Q. *I get a lot of "noise" or a strange "whine" from the output of my sound card during playback. What can I do to minimize it?*

A. The audio circuitry on your sound card is amplifying Radio Frequency (RF) interference, which are generated by the computer system or any of the cards next to the sound card itself.

Following are tips on how you can minimize or eliminate the RF interference:

Try setting all of Scala's "Mixer" volume settings, with the exception of the "master" volume, to their minimum gain (volume setting). The MM Mixer defaults with the "Mic" and "Line" inputs at their minimum volume setting.

Only increase gain to those peripherals that you are going to use (i.e. volume setting for playback of an audio CD). Once finished with using the peripheral in the script, be sure to setup an event to return the gain back to the minimum setting(s).

Move the sound card to another slot, away from all the other cards in the system. Keep the VGA display card the furthest from the sound card. VGA display cards are often the "noisiest" peripherals in a system.

The cable from the CD-ROM drive to the sound card is not shielded well and may act as an antenna, attracting RF interference, which you hear as noise from your speakers. If possible, move the cable away from the other cards in the system.

If CD audio playback is still too noisy (at any gain level set in MM100's "Mixer" or CD audio "Volume" level), replace the cable with a new high-quality, well shielded cable.

If all else fails, you may need to buy a sound card that has better RF interference shielding.

Q. *I'm using a Roland SoundCanvas SCD-55 wavetable-synthesis daughterboard for playback of MIDI files. After a period of time, the MIDI file(s) seems to be missing instrumentation (only percussion) or plays strangely. What's going on and how can I correct this?*

A. The SoundCanvas SCD-55 daughterboard is capable of playing General MIDI (GM) and Roland's General Synthesis MIDI (GS) files. Playback of certain MIDI files that do not properly reset MIDI instrumentation can cause problems. Roland has thoughtfully included a "GS_RESET.MID" MIDI file that, as the name implies, resets the GS instrumentation to their default settings. This special MIDI file (plays no sound), is included in one of the distribution diskettes that came with the SoundCanvas daughterboard. If you installed all the software that came with the daughterboard, you should be able to find it in the [drive]:\SCDB (i.e. C:\SCDB) directory or drawer.

We recommend inserting the "GS_RESET.MID" file, as a "Special Event" before *AND* after the playback of a GM or GS MIDI file. Be sure the "Wait" option is enabled. Depending on the system, it shouldn't take more than a second to reset the SoundCanvas, but keep in mind that it will affect scripts that are dependent on synchronized events to the music. Be sure to compensate for the time lag accordingly.

Performance - Display Issues

Q. *I have a system that is using OS/2 and I've seen strange "jumps" of images and/or "flashing" from the last event (i.e. background) in the script, to beginning of the first event in the script.*

A. Check OS/2 DOS settings. OS/2 "8514 Trap" should be disabled.

Q. *I have a Cirrus Logic based video display card installed in my system and I'm using the UniVBE/Lite VESA driver. When I have a script that uses*

low-resolution graphics (320x200), I get "garbled" graphics displayed. What's going on?

A. Make sure you do not have the "CLMODE" app, a Cirrus Logic video mode utility, running. Also, check to make sure that this utility is not in the autoexec.bat file.

Q. *I'm using an FLC animation file in my script, but when Scala tries to play it, it comes up with weird colors or refuses to play at all. What's going on and what can I do to fix this?*

A. The current version of Scala only supports the original Autodesk Animator FLC format, which uses a fixed or locked color palette. This means that only one color palette is used throughout (every frame) the animation. More than likely, the FLC file that you are using, utilizes dynamic color palettes. Meaning that the animation can use a different palette for each frame of the animation. Scala does not support dynamic palettes, thus the incompatibility.

You'll need to use a third-party program that will convert the dynamic palette FLC to a locked palette FLC. One of these programs is a utility called "Video for DOS" or VFD. IMPORTANT: Please note that VFD is "shareware". Meaning that the product is copyrighted and may be freely-distributed, but after a certain amount of time (i.e. 30 days) to evaluate the software (you continue to use it on a regular basis), the author or fulfillment company request that you pay for the use of the software. Please be considerate and respect the wishes of these shareware authors and companies. They count on your honor and honesty to reward them for their efforts. Once you've paid your shareware fee, they may reward you with an updated version of the software and/or send you a version with new, improved features.

Performance - Graphics Issues

Q. *I have a number of FLC/FLI animations along with playback of WAV sound samples. Sometimes the animation stops and/or the audio cuts out. What can I do to prevent this?*

A. See same question under 'Performance - Sound issues'.

Q. *The Monitore script (monitore.sca) reports a "There was not Enough Memory" error on systems with 8 MB of RAM.*

A. The Monitore demo contains large animations and requires at least 16 MB of RAM or more to run the script Under DOS, Windows '95 and OS/2 Warp.

Performance - Script Issues

Q. *Why does my (big) script sometimes play smoothly and sometimes play choppy (taking long times to load things)?*

A. This is a side effect of a Scala feature called "Snapload." It buffers all graphics loaded during script playback in case they might be needed again. When memory gets low, it starts unbuffering files. So depending on how many files you have, and what part of the script you recently played, different files may be buffered at different times, affecting playback speed. This feature works well in most scripts that use the same background or elements over and over again. If you don't like the results, you can turn it off in the Options menu.

Performance - Wipe Questions

Q. *Some wipes are jerky and sometimes things flash as they wipe in.*

A. Scala has special video drivers for specific video chips. However, shortcomings or variations in how those chips are implemented on different video cards can lead to defects in performance. We are always working to improve this.

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