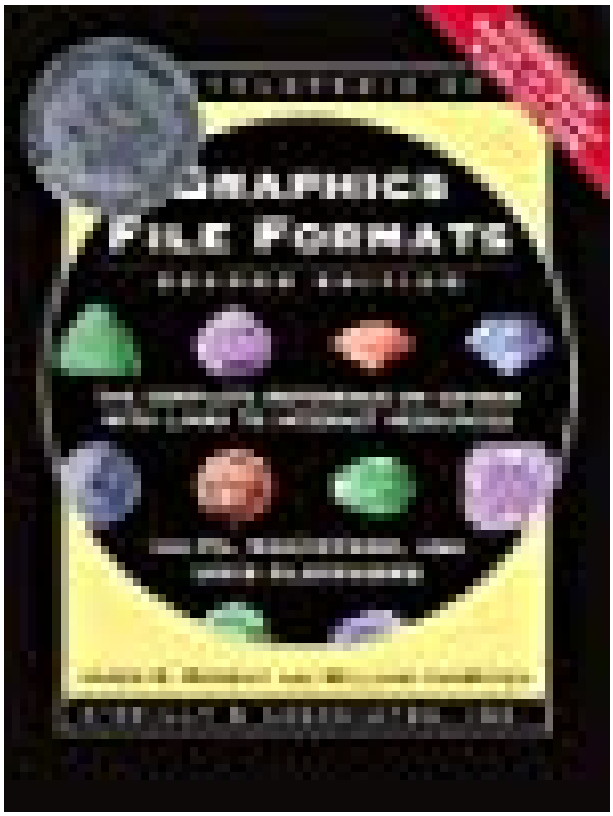
Encyclopedia of Graphics File Formats



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O'Reilly's new edition of the Encyclopedia of Graphics File Formats is a wonderfully diverse kind of product--it's a book, a CD-ROM, and a World Wide Web product, all in one. You'll find printed information in convenient book form. You'll be able to access text files, images, and code locally on the CD-ROM provided with the book. What's in this product--and why does its book/CD-ROM/online format work so well as a means of presenting information? It's all about graphics file formats. As any graphics programmer or illustrator knows, there are many different file formats used for storing graphics data -- data such as vector graphics, ray tracing, black-and-white photographs, truecolor images, animation data, motion video, and multimedia data. The Encyclopedia of Graphics File Formats is the definitive reference to all of these formats--from major, standardized formats, like GIF, TIFF, TGA, and BMP, to newer or specialized formats, like PNG, SPIFF, SGI YAODL, and Facesaver. The first edition of the book has already become a classic for programmers on all platforms--Windows, MS-DOS, OS/2, the Macintosh, UNIX, and others. What type of information is available in the book and through its online links? Whether you are a graphics programmer who needs to know the precise contents of every bit in a file, a graphics illustrator who needs to know how to convert a file from one format to another, or anyone else who needs to deal with the low-level technical details of graphics files, this product is for you. For each of more than 100 formats, the product provides quick summary information--How many colors are supported by the format? What type of compression does it use? What's the maximum image size? What's the platform, the numerical format, and the supporting applications? It also provides extensive text detailing how graphics files are constructed in a particular format. In addition to describing the details of the file formats, the Encyclopedia of Graphics File Formats contains a good deal of

general graphics information, including: A detailed discussion of graphics concepts and programming, covering such topics as palettes, color (its perception, conversion, and quantization), and the various types of graphics file formats (e.g., vector, bitmap, metafile, scene description, animation, multimedia, 3D, font, audio, virtual reality modeling language [VRML], and page description language [PDL]). Detailed descriptions of different methods of compressing graphics data (e.g., run-length encoding, LZW, CCITT, JPEG, JBIG, ART, fractal). Discussions of ways of converting from one type of file format to another. Information on emerging graphics initiatives, including JPEG (an image data compression standard of particular interest in multimedia technology) and MPEG (a set of digital and audio compression standards for sound and motion picture data). The second edition of the book contains hundreds of pages of new content. For example, you'll find: Articles on additional graphics file formats not covered in the first edition, like PNG (Portable Network Graphics), SPIFF (Still Picture Interchange File Format), DPX (SMTPE Digital Picture Exchange), SAF (Standard Archive Format), and 3DS (3D Studio). Descriptions of new data compression methods -- extensions to JPEG compression, and the new JBIG, ART, and fractal compression methods. New sections on encrypting graphics files, detecting viruses in graphics files, dealing with corrupt graphics files, and writing your own file formats and file format specs. A discussion of the Unisys patent claim on the LZW compression method -- and its impact on your use of GIF files and software. A new appendix on dealing with graphics files on the Internet and the World Wide Web--how to download and convert files, how to post information, how to handle the mechanics of FTP, Web servers, news groups, and more. What will you find on the multiplatform CD-ROM included with the book? First, you'll find file format specifications, a wonderful collection of resources that are often hard to locate and obtain -- in many cases, they have never before been available outside the organizations that developed them. We've assembled original file format specification documents from such vendors as Adobe, Aldus, Apple, IBM, Microsoft, and Silicon Graphics. Second, we've chosen the best of the free software and shareware--for Windows, MS-DOS, OS/2, Macintosh, and UNIX platforms--that will let you convert, view, compress, and manipulate graphics files and images. Third, we've included a variety of test graphics images to help you test software, convert formats, compare color depth and file size, and figure out what format is right for your application.

Fourth, on the CD-ROM we've retrofitted the entire contents of the book for display on the Internet's World Wide Web. Finally, we've provided tools and links that allow you to access the material efficiently and to keep up to date. Using the Enhanced Mosaic browser (also included), you can browse the book's contents online, look up the details of a file format, access graphics manipulation, and display software quickly. Of course, you'll still get the printed book -- after all, a book is still the most portable resource around -- to take on the train, carry to class, or keep in your library at home or at work.

Who needs this book? The first edition of the book was aimed mainly at graphics programmers. With this second edition, we've provided content and tools that will make this product an invaluable resource for graphics illustrators and designers as well.

Unlike graphics programmers, these users don't need to know the details of how GIF, TIFF, and PNG files are constructed. However, they do need to make the right choices about which formats can be converted to the formats they or their customers need, which support the color depth they want, and which compress fastest. Whatever your graphics needs, you'll find the new Encyclopedia of Graphics File Formats an invaluable aid -- packed with information, constantly up-to-date, and fun to use. We're excited about the information and the tools we've been able to collect, and we look forward to sharing the fruits of our labors with you. Technical requirements for the product: a CD-ROM drive; a PC running Microsoft Windows 3.

1, 95, or NT; and a Macintosh workstation, or a UNIX workstation supported by Spyglass Enhanced Mosaic. A 256-color monitor is highly recommended.