QuickTime: Its Best Uses

Article Created: 13 December 1991
Article Last Reviewed:
Article Last Updated:

TOPIC ---

This article describes some of the best uses for QuickTime software, and what makes it unique among software commonly used today.

DISCUSSION ---

General Uses

QuickTime extends the existing Macintosh architecture, adding time and movement to the Macintosh environment and making documents dynamic. With the new "movie" data type, QuickTime will make time-based data -- like video clips, animated charts and presentations, and data sequences from lab instruments -- as commonplace as graphics are today.

QuickTime is a piece of Macintosh system software. QuickTime 1.0 will work on all 68020-based and higher Macintosh color-capable computers. It needs at least 2MB of memory and prefers System 6.0.7 or 7.0.

QuickTime offers dynamic documents that users can annotate with video, animation, sound, and high-quality still images. Here are some examples of how QuickTime can enhance new products:

- Add QuickTime movies to business/scientific/engineering programs for dynamic visual display of data.

- Through supplied XCMDs, add movies and compressed still images to HyperCard stacks with just a few lines of script.

- Create QuickTime-related products (for example, still-image and movie digitizers), that won't become obsolete because of future changes in QuickTime or associated hardware or software.

- Use PICTs containing QuickTime-compressed pixmaps (still images) in programs, knowing that your programs or any others running with QuickTime present can read them as normal PICTs. This works even with a program that knows nothing of QuickTime; when the program asks for a

PICT, QuickTime automatically decompresses the pixmap and hands it back.

- Display four-dimensional graphs and charts, the fourth dimension being the passage of time.

- Use QuickTime as a "pencil sketch" for higher-quality video manipulation and then produce high-quality output (which usually takes a lot of time) once the design is final.

- Store-and-forward video message systems.

- Use it in games and educational programs that use large amounts of animation and video.

Why QuickTime Is Different

QuickTime offers several tools for adding video, animation, sound, and other time-based data to applications. QuickTime also ensures that developers can create code and data for it now, and not have to scrap the work when QuickTime takes advantage of new technology later.

Apple engineers designed QuickTime to meet the Macintosh computer future needs. In particular, the Component Manager enables your program to choose needed services in an implementation-independent way. For example, you can write a QuickTime program to use the best image compression to which it has access. Today it can get the job done with one of Apple's software-only compression components. Later, you can to put in a third-party hardware-compression card, and the program will be able to make use of it, even though the program was written before the compression card was designed.

Apple made the specification of the QuickTime movie file format public. Apple is publishing the format and working closely with developers in the hope that the QuickTime movie format will become an industrywide standard for time-based data for the Macintosh and other computer platforms.

With QuickTime, you can achieve impressive results with very little work. It takes (according to one of the sample programs on AppleLink) less than two pages of code to give a program's documents the ability to play QuickTime movie files. Several developers report adding movie playback to their programs in less than three days. Apple strongly recommends that you implement this capability. Here's a good rule of thumb: If your program uses PICTs, it should support QuickTime movies to the same degree.

Media Integration

Expect to see QuickTime everywhere -- in word processors, accounting software, games, and CAD software. QuickTime is not multimedia that users will see only in corporate presentations (although they will see it there as well). QuickTime is everyday media integration.

QuickTime allows many (and, in the future, most) Macintosh users to watch and edit existing QuickTime movies without buying extra equipment. (With the right software, you will be able to create movies from spreadsheets,

animation applications, and other programs. However, you will need extra hardware to create new video footage.) The most important thing to remember is this: Even though the average Macintosh may not be able to create new video footage, it will always be able to play it.

Keywords: <None>

==========

19960215 11:05:19.00
Tech Info Library Article Number: 9416