

Max-10 Picture Translator

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The Max-10 word processor has built-in capabilities to integrate pictures into your documents. It can change their size, and put them anywhere on the page. However, all this does you no good unless you can convert your pictures into a format that Max-10 can paste!

The Translator (PIXTRANS) allows you to import files from a multitude of sources, including CoCo Max and CoCo Max III. It allows you to convert colored pictures into shades of grey through "halftoning", and to put pictures side by side for greater width and resolution. You can preset the size that a picture will be in your document, or set the magnification to an exact value.

The Translator has two screens of instructions you can read through before using it, but this manual explains its use in more detail. I will first lead you through the conversion of a CoCo Max and a CoCo Max III picture, then discuss the other options available.

Loading a CoCo Max Picture:

These pictures come in two types: CoCo Max (black and white), and CoCo Max III (colored) pictures. At times, these pictures may be referred to by their screen types: a CoCo Max picture is a PMODE 4 screen, and a color CoCo Max III picture is an HSCREEN 2 picture.

Converting a picture to a /CLP file that you can paste into your document requires several steps. The picture must first be loaded, which automatically converts it into the proper type to be saved. Then, it must be saved as a /CLP file. Each of these steps has several options you can use.

To load a black and white (PMODE 4) picture from CoCo Max, insert the disk containing the picture in the disk drive and select the "Load PMODE 4 (CoCo Max)" entry from the menu by typing in the number that appears to its left and pressing the ENTER key. A list of all files of this type will appear; again, enter the number of the file you want. If you should want to stop and go back to the main menu, press the BREAK key.

The picture will now load. Only the top of double-height screens will be loaded. Press any key once loading is finished to get back to the text screen. A message will ask you if the picture needs inverting (most won't); just press ENTER to skip it. Press ENTER at the offset menu, too.

Max-10 Picture Translator User's Manual

A CoCo Max III picture can be loaded in much the same fashion. However, since the original is in color, we must convert it to black and white before we can use it. This is done by selecting a set of halftones. Most of the time, we want the output to be the same as if it was printed in CoCo Max III, so we select the CoCo Max III Printer Dump option. (The others will be discussed later.)

Now we must set the picture size. You are given the "printed" dimensions of the picture in inches, and asked what type of sizing we want. In this case, we'll use the One Magnification Factor option and specify a size of x1 or x2. x1 gives exact detail, but might look poor on some printers. x2 will look good on all printers, and increases the width of the picture to nearly fill the page.

Now that the picture is loaded and converted, we need to save it. The usual way to produce a small picture is to create a CoCo Max page that is completely white except for the picture itself. The Translator will examine the picture, and find the size and location of such a picture. Since, with some pictures, the top and bottom of the "frame" used for sizing and moving it in Max-10 might be hidden, you can add a top and bottom "margin" to the picture; however, this increases the picture's size in memory.

Now you are given the amount of space your picture will consume in Max-10. If the picture would be larger than 7600 bytes, it will be split into several vertical sections. This may make it hard to size, and makes Picture Perfect give strange results. You also must drag each piece separately to position the picture.

Specify a file name, insert the disk you want to add the file to, and press ENTER. The Translator will now save the /CLP file and return you to the main menu.

Translator Options

That takes care of straightforward picture conversion, but the Translator can do much more! I'll go through each section, and describe each of the options to you.

Max-10 Picture Translator User's Manual

Loading: You can load just about any type of PMODE 4 picture by using the various file types in the PMODE 4 menu. If you can't find your file's type, use the **General** option. (This menu actually only sets the filename extension that is looked for when creating a directory menu.) A picture from a DS-69 video digitizer can be loaded as a 5-level **CoCo Max** picture.

Color pictures can be loaded from /CM3 (**CoCo Max III**) or /MGE files. You can also preload a picture, or draw it from BASIC, and then run the Translator and use **Convert HSCREEN 2**.

You can load /CLP files and re-save them, but the original size data will be lost. Also, if the picture was 200 lines tall and had margins added, the bottom may be cut off.

HSCREEN 3 (640x192) pictures drawn from BASIC may also be loaded and converted, but if the picture is a full screen in size, it can use up to 16,000 bytes of your buffer in **Max-10!**

Overlaying: Once a picture is ready to be converted, you'll be asked if you want to add it to (presumably at the right of) another picture. If you just press **ENTER**, the buffer will be cleared, and the picture placed at the left side of the buffer. But you also can position the new picture on top of, or beside, a picture previously loaded. Options are given to put your second picture beside a PMODE 4 (256 wide) or color (320 wide) picture. Or, you can directly enter a position in pixels.

The main idea in overlaying is to create a wider picture so you can get full detail on a printout. For example, you could make a wide letterhead by drawing it in 2 halves, or add a picture containing text beside another picture to label it. Note that this can be very expensive in terms of memory used! By the way, full resolution can be achieved on an 80 dpi printer by specifying x1 for magnification, and specifying x.67 for a 120 dpi printer, then re-stretching the picture vertically in **Max-10**. The maximum width should be 560 pixels (7 inches) for an 80 dpi printout.

Max-10 Picture Translator User's Manual

Halftoning: Color pictures (CoCo Max III and HSCREEN 2) must be converted to black and white for Max-10. But we can produce shades of grey through halftoning. The only trouble with halftoning is that it doesn't fare very well when the picture's size is changed. So stick with x1 or x2 in the sizing section if you use grey halftones.

The Translator has several halftoning options. You can select CoCo Max III printer dump halftones (white, 3 shades of grey, and black); Color Max (white, grey, and black); or two types of all black and white. You can also dive right in and define which shade you want each of the 16 slots to come out as!

Once the halftones are selected, the picture is converted on the screen. If you like it, press ENTER at the "Halftones OK" query. Otherwise, enter "N" and you get another chance. You can also select Convert HSCREEN 2 from the main menu: the color picture is still in memory and can be reused!

Picture Size: When you begin to save a picture as a /CLP file, the Translator scans the converted screen to find the picture itself. You are then given the size that the picture would be on the printout if you did not change its size. The picture's size in Max-10 can be preset in the Translator, as this allows finer control.

There are two ways to set the size: by magnification, or by final size. The final size method lets you specify the dimensions you want to see on the final printout, but may cause halftones or grey areas to have "bars" in them. The magnification factor method allows you to make the final size an exact multiple of the original size, preserving halftones, also keeping the picture perfectly proportioned.

Once the size is set, you can leave it in Max-10, or touch it up. Note that if the final picture size you set is taller than a page, or wider than the margins, it will be reduced to fit. Presetting the size is the only good way to size a picture that is split into several parts.

Converting and Viewing: Since few people have "photographic" memories, we've anticipated that you might want to look at a picture before saving it, or resetting the halftones. There are several "View" options in the main menu. The View /CLP actually shows you the converted picture, ready to be saved.

Max-10 Picture Translator User's Manual

A picture previously loaded, or loaded before the Translator was run, can also be converted using the Convert entries in the main menu. These include HSCREEN 3 (640x192) black and white pictures, which can't be loaded, but could be drawn in BASIC.

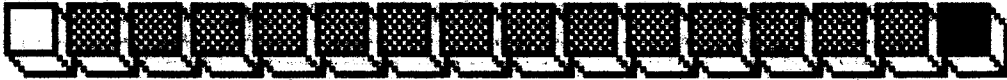
Finally, a menu option is supplied to change the disk drive that pictures will be loaded from or saved to.

The Supplied Halftone Sets

CoCo Max \$\$\$



Color Max (note the reversed slot order!)



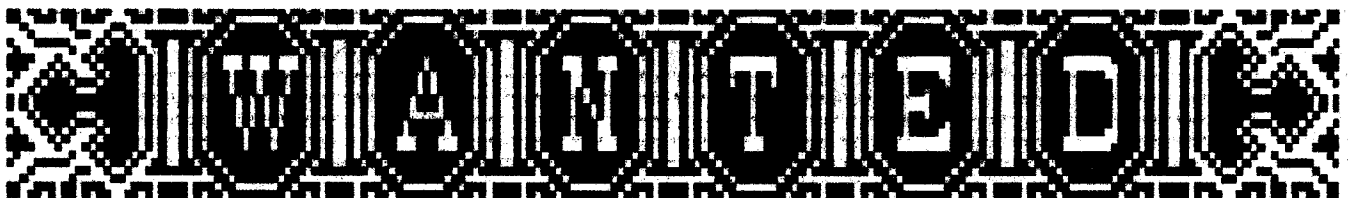
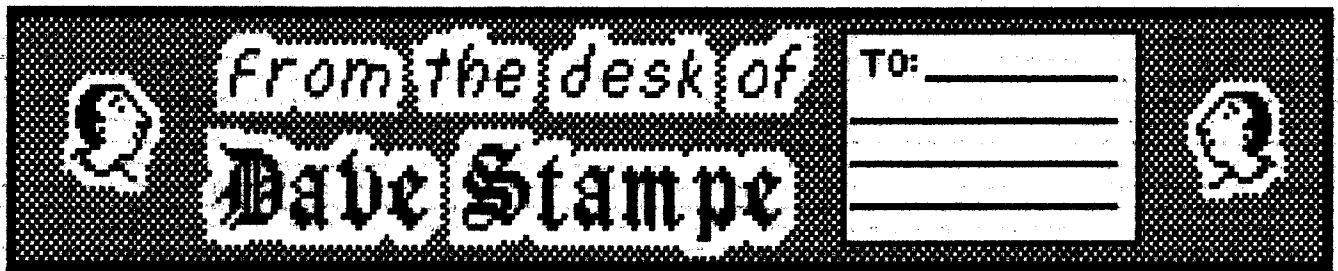
Half-and-Half



White and 15 Black



Some Sample Pictures:



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