

Awesome ASCII Arts

A Lightweight Qt-based ASCII Drawing Tool

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Abstract

When is a text editor *not* a text editor?

When it becomes an awesome ASCII art drawing application.

For decades, artists used text characters to create expressive, stylized images long before modern graphics hardware became common. While ASCII art is no longer mainstream, the creative process remains uniquely fun and surprisingly expressive.

Why?

This tool exists for one reason: **fun**. This application provides a simple, enjoyable way to draw ASCII art using the mouse or a tablet, trace images, and export clean text files. It is open-source, lightweight, and requires no special hardware.

Features

- Mouse or tablet drawing
- Save drawings as plain text files
- Transparent window for tracing on-screen images
- On-screen color options for easier tracing
- Selectable character brushes (“palettes”)
- Open-source Python/Qt code—modify freely

Default Key Bindings

T	Brush 1 (“...ooo000000000ooo...”)
Y	Brush 2 (“...,,--",',')
U	Brush 3 (“[[[]]] ///\\”)
I	Brush 4 (“HACKTHEMATRIX”)
E	Eraser
R	Reset canvas
P	Populate entire canvas with text
B	Toggle background/transparency
Ctrl+S	Save ASCII file
H	Open help window
1–9	Change on-screen text color
0	White text color
Mouse	Draw characters

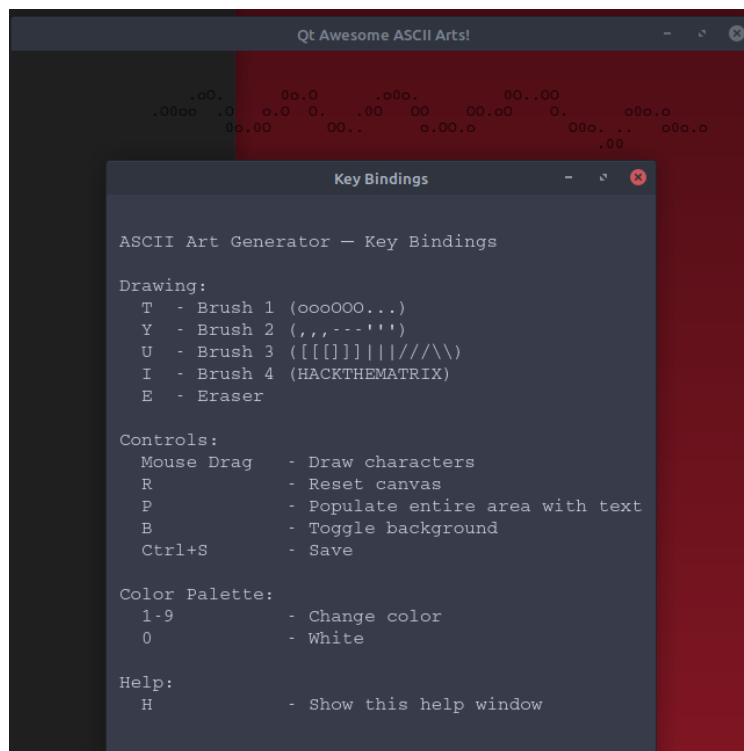


Figure 1: Help window overlay with transparent window in the background

Default Behavior

Launching the application with no arguments opens an 80×80 character transparent window. Drawing begins immediately with the default brush.

Command-Line Arguments

- `python asciiapp.py WIDTH HEIGHT` Opens a window of the specified character dimensions.

Example:

```
python asciiapp.py 120 60
```

Future Development

Planned enhancements:

- WASD and arrow-key movement drawing
- **Ctrl+O** — Open ASCII text files into the editor
- In-place text editing

Compatibility

Although developed and tested on Linux, the application should run on any platform supported by Python 3 and Qt5, including:

- GNU/Linux
- macOS
- Windows
- BSD variants

System Requirements

- Python 3.x
- PyQt5

Have fun creating awesome ASCII art!