Awesome ASCII Arts

A Lightweight Qt-based ASCII Drawing Tool

Sensored Hacker

Abstract

Q: When is a text editor *not* a text editor?
A:When it becomes an awesome ASCII art drawing application.

Why?

This tool exists for one reason: **fun**. The 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, and requires no special hardware.

Features

- Mouse or tablet drawing

- Save drawings as plain text files

- A customizable panel of brushes

- Transparent window for tracing on-screen images

- On-screen color options for visibility

- Selectable character brushes

- Open-source Python/Qt code—modify freely

Default Key Bindings

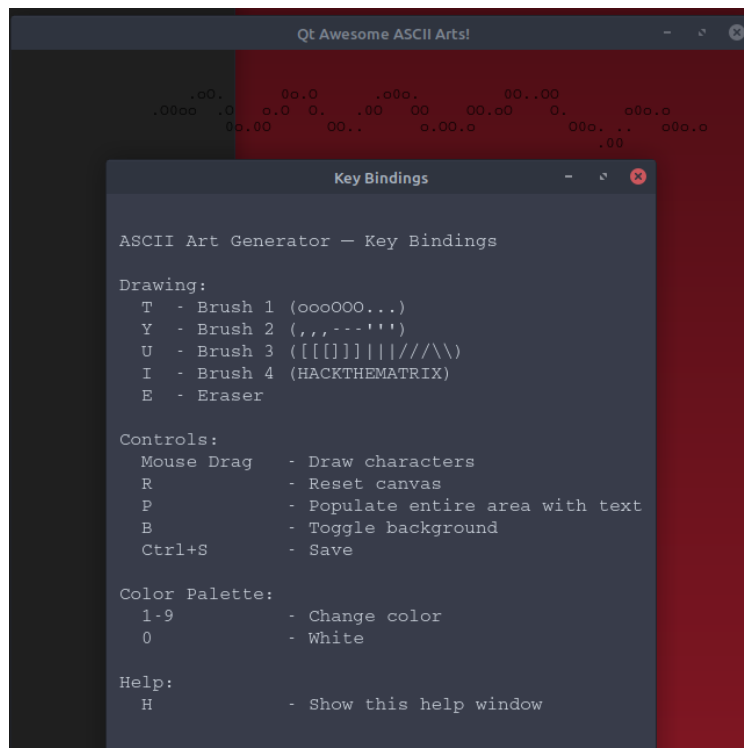|	
T	Brush 0 ("...oooOOOOOOOOOooo...")
Y	Brush 1 ("...„,--"'")
U	Brush 2 ("[[[]]]|||///\\")
I	Brush 3 ("HACKTHEMATRIX")
J	Brush 4 ("]] ")
K	Brush 5 ("boob ")
L	Brush 6 ("?? ")
M	Brush 7 ("-- ")
N	Brush 9 ("... ")
E	Eraser
R	Reset canvas
P	Populate entire canvas with text
B	Toggle background/transparency
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. You may begin drawing with your mouse, tablet, arrow keys, WASD keys or all of the above.

Command-Line Arguments

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

Example:

```
python QAAA.py 120 60
```

Brush Customizer

There are an infinite number of patterns that could exits, and finite set of keyboard keys. QAAA offers 10, (0-9) customizable brushes, where you can insert any character, or string which best suits you. Eraser, is an empty string (Spacebar). The defaults may be edited by changing the source code, or the session brushes may be changed by pressing Ctrl+B. Make the changes, click save, and continue drawing. Closing the Brush Customizer panel is optional.

Myself, I find that sets of 3 characters, allows for a better scribbling infill, while being easier to control, or that it behaves like lower sensitivity.
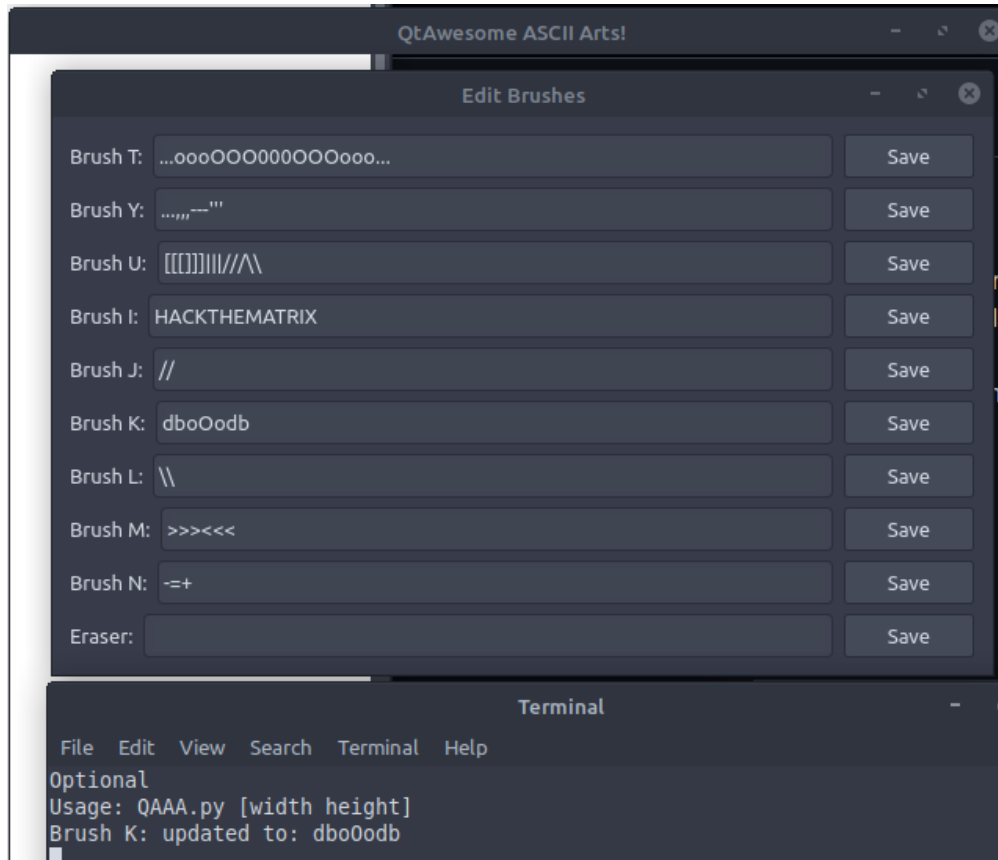
Figure 2: Brush Customizer window

Future Development

Planned enhancements:

- A more comprehensive control panel.
- **stamps:** multi-character matrices.
- 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
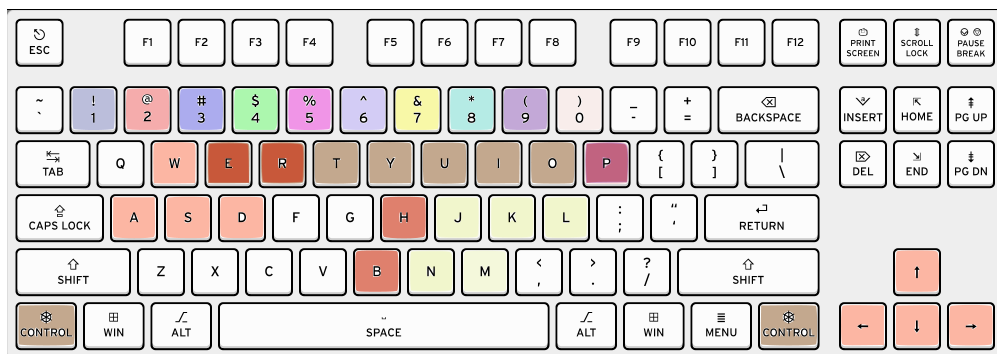
- PyQt5

Active Keys:

Figure 3: Current key bindings

Conclusion:

QAAA: Qt based Ascii Arts app or whatever its called is a text editor that wants to draw. It has a unique take on what priority features are.

Have fun creating awesome ASCII art!