

Pixel Story User Manual

Introduction

Welcome to *Pixel Story*, a program which allows you to easily start creating pixel art and short animations, with a focus on customization and storytelling. This user manual will allow you to quickly get up to speed on how you can make your own art and movies.

Pixel Story is divided up into two major sections, Art Creation and Story Creation, and this user manual will be divided up as such, letting you know what you can do in each of the two parts, as well as how they interact.

Art Creation

The first section of *Pixel Story* is Art Creation, which you can see in this image on the right.

User Interface

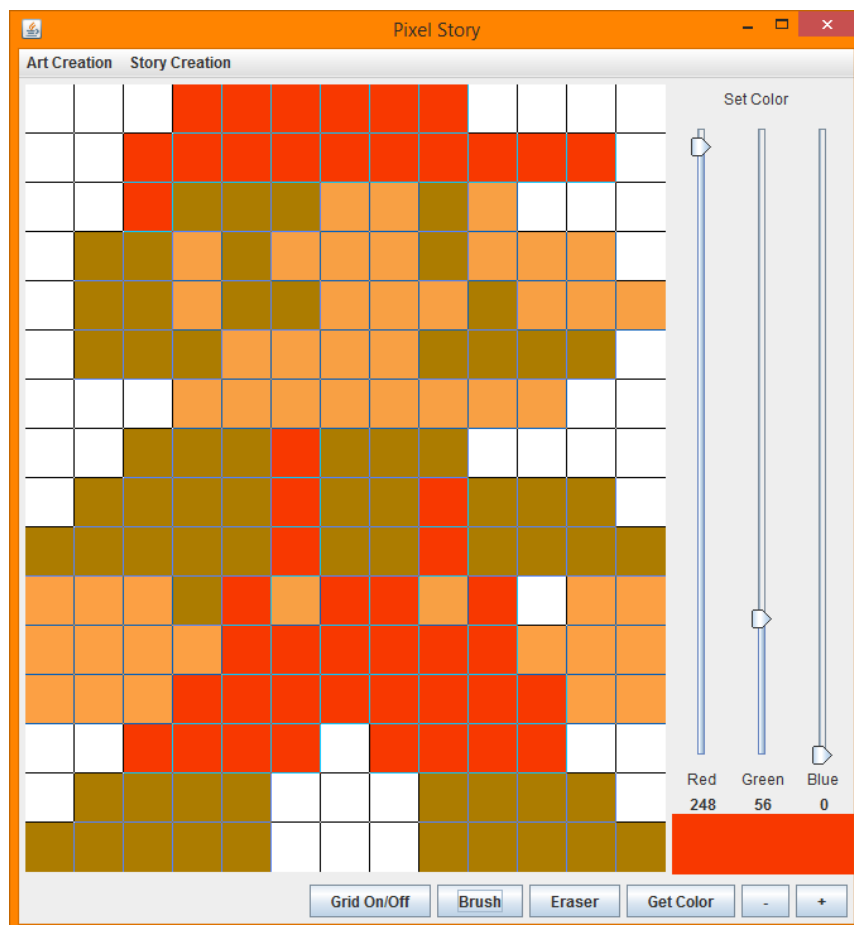
Let's start by going over the User Interface. At the top we have the Art Creation and Story Creation menus, where you can select from a number of different options while in each mode.

In the center we have the canvas, which is divided up into pixels onto which you can draw whatever you'd like with your mouse. Clicking or dragging the mouse will draw, while simply hovering the mouse over the canvas shows what clicking on the given pixel would do.

To the right, we have three sliders for red, green, and blue values. They range from 0 to 255 and allow you to set the color you want to draw with. The current color is shown in the box beneath them.

Finally, at the bottom of the screen, we have a number of buttons for manipulating the image. "Grid On/Off" will turn a grid on or off. This grid is useful for visualizing all of the pixels, especially if they are large. Next, the "Brush" button will set the mouse to draw on the canvas, while "Eraser" will set the mouse to erase on the canvas. "Get Color" is what is often called an eye dropper tool, and allows you to set the current color by clicking on an existing color on the canvas. "-" and "+" will make the canvas smaller and larger, respectively (to be clear, this will not delete anything, and will simply change the size of the canvas and its pixels).

Art Creation Menu



The Art Creation dropdown menu is divided into the following sections:

-*Blank Canvas*: Creates a new, blank canvas. Asks what the size of each pixel should be (with the size being in pixels on your computer screen), and what the width and height ought to be (in these new, large pixels).

-*Import Image*: Imports an existing image into the program and pixelates it. Asks how pixelated an image should become (in terms of pixels on your computer screen), and then asks you to select an image (jpeg or png) you would like to import. Then, you can draw on the image as you would normally.

-*Set Brush/Eraser Size*: By default, the brush and eraser will only draw on a single selected pixel at a time. However, this option can make them change more. You will be prompted for a size, and then you will be able to draw in an area of that size. For example, entering “3” will result in drawing 3x3 squares of pixels at a time.

-*Save Pixel Art*: This will save the current canvas as a .pxsa file. Saving like this will allow you load the file in this program at any time, so you can pick up right where you left off. Please keep in mind that this sort of file cannot be opened anywhere other than *Pixel Story*, so if you would like to do that, you should use the “Save Art as an Image” feature.

-*Load Pixel Art*: Loads a .pxsa file that you have previously created so you can continue working on it.

-*Save Art as an Image*: This saves the current canvas as a png image, so you can use, view, and open it elsewhere. Please keep in mind that you will not be able to continue your work in this program from such a file, so if you would like to do that, you should use the “Save Pixel Art” feature.

Story Creation

The second section of *Pixel Story* is Story Creation, as can be seen in the image below.



User Interface

The top of this mode is the same as Art Mode. There are menus for Art Creation and Story Creation which you can use while in each mode

In the center, we have the current frame. Each frame is made up of three major elements: the background, the text, and the foreground objects. In the example above, the background is the castle. Backgrounds cannot be manipulated once they have been set, but it is possible to change to a different background from the menu. The text is shown at the bottom, and can be changed at any time from the menu. Finally, we have what I think is the coolest and most customizable part of this entire program, foreground objects (in this case, Mario). They are saved .pxsa files (from Art Creation) which have been loaded and placed on top of the background. By simply clicking on one, you can move it around and place it wherever you'd like in the scene. You can import however many foreground object you would like onto a frame, and move each of them around individually.

At the bottom, we have various buttons and information. "Previous Frame" will move you to the previous frame if you aren't already on the first one. "Next Frame" will move you to the next frame if there is one. If you are on the last frame, you will be prompted if you would like to create a new one. If you do choose to, you will be asked if you would like to keep the same background, foreground objects, and text. "Stop" and "Play" will stop and play the current story in the program. Lastly, the number in the center lets you know what frame you are currently on.

Story Creation Menu

The Story Creation dropdown menu is divided into the following sections:

-*New Story*: Creates a new story. You will be prompted for a background image (jpeg or png), as well as how many frames per second you would like the story to go at.

-*Set Background*: Sets the background on the current frame to the image (jpeg or png) you select. (Please note that this will only affect the current frame, not the whole story.)

-*Add Foreground Object*: Prompts you for a pixel story art file (.pxsa), and what you would like the object to be called, and then adds it as a foreground object to the current frame. (Please note that this will only affect the current frame, not the whole story.)

-*Remove Foreground Object*: Provides you with a list of foreground objects on the current frame, and asks you to enter the name of which one you would like to remove. (Please note that this will only affect the current frame, not the whole story.)

-*Mirror Foreground Object*: Provides you with a list of foreground objects on the current frame, and asks you to enter the name of which one you would like to mirror (i.e. flip about the y axis). (Please note that this will only affect the current frame, not the whole story.)

-*Set Text*: Sets the text on the current frame. (Please note that this will only affect the current frame, not the whole story.)

-*Set Frames per Second*: Sets how many frames per second the story should go at while playing (both in the program and when exported as a gif).

-*Save Created Story*: This will save the current story as a .pxss file. Saving like this will allow you load the file in this program at any time, so you can pick up right where you left off. Please keep in mind that this sort of file cannot be opened anywhere other than *Pixel Story*, so if you would like to do that, you should use the “Save Story as a gif” feature to export it as a gif. These files can also become quite large with long stories.

-*Load Created Story*: Loads a .pxss file that you have previously created so you can continue working on your story.

-*Save Current Frame as an Image*: This will save only the current frame as an image, which you can then open, use, and view elsewhere.

-*Save Story as a gif*: This saves the current story as a gif, so you can use, view, and open it elsewhere. The created gif will run at the currently set frames per second and will loop. Please keep in mind that you will not be able to continue your work in this program from such a file, so if you would like to do that, you should use the “Save Pixel Art” feature.

Thank you for using Pixel Story!