

ImproTron User Guide for Release 0.0.3-alpha

Introduction

Welcome to the Alpha release of ImproTron, a Windows Desktop application designed to support theaters in presenting ComedySportz® shows and based on the design of the Janis Software. The motivation to create this application was to bring the Janis experience to a supported technical platform and introduce ideas that could further assist theaters in elevating their show quality and experience.

Installation

- Download the latest release from the [ImproTron Github Repository](#).
- Unzip into an appropriate directory such as **C:\Program Files\ImproTron**. However, any directory will do. The zip file contains two files: *improtron.exe* and *ImproTronControlPanel.ui* and this User Guide

Note on Virus Scanners

Modern virus scanners often give a false positive and tag the executable as a file containing a virus. Mark the directory for exclusion. The file will unpack into the Windows TEMP directory which again may trigger flagging by a virus scanner. Until a solution is found, exclude the Windows TEMP directory as well.

Locations of Files

ImproTron will look for and store files in default locations within Windows. Some of these locations can be changed but should ideally be left to their defaults. <USER> refers to the user under which the application is installed and run.

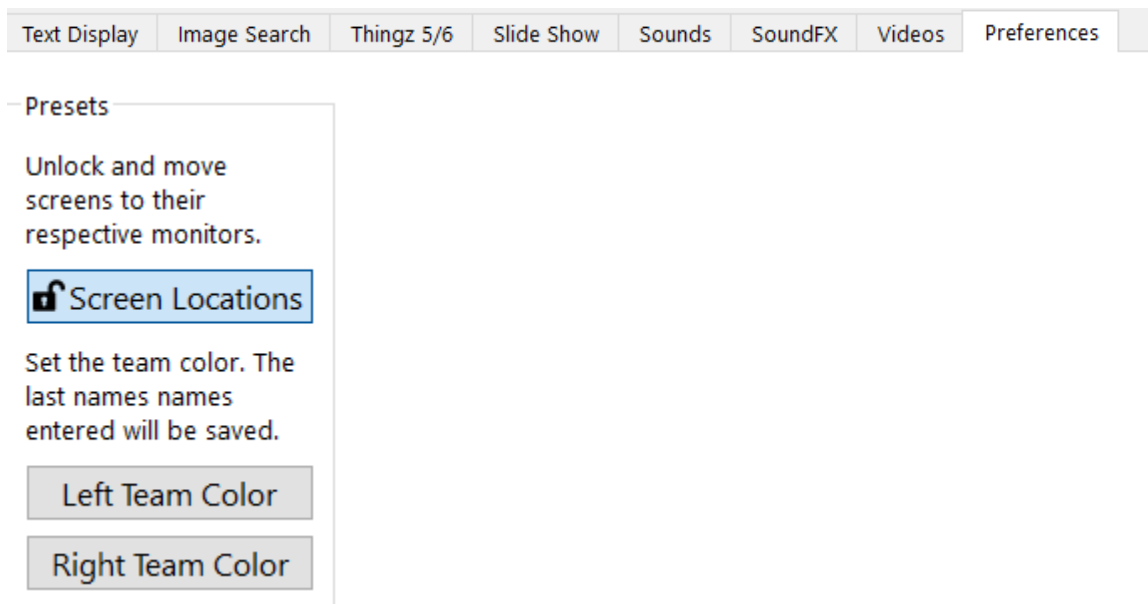
Configuration and List Files	C:/Users/<USER>/AppData/Local/ImproTron
Images and GIFs	C:/Users/<USER>/Pictures
Sounds	C:/Users/<USER>/Music
Videos	C:/Users/<USER>/Videos

Running ImproTron for the First Time - Preferences Tab

ImproTron will first open a Text Window in which error messages will appear. Do not close this window. When reporting errors, please either screenshot this window or copy the text from it.

ImproTron will always start with a delay due to its indexing of pictures and sound files. After that process, the control panel and two monitor windows will appear, showing the words “Main” and “Auxiliary” respectively. Minimize but don’t close the Auxiliary if only one monitor is available.

- Go to the Preferences tab and unlock the screens by pressing on the Screen Locations button which will show an unlocked icon.

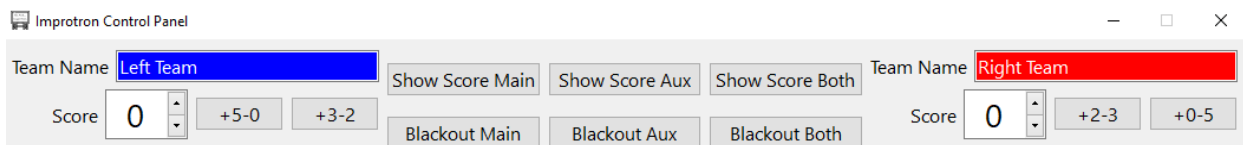


- Move the screens to the monitor they will need to appear on.
- Lock the screens and the monitor windows will snap to the size of their containing screen. The location will be stored and used when the application is next run.

- Select the left and right team colors. The names can be set on the main control panel. Both colors and names will be stored.
- Set up the ten hot buttons by selecting image files and giving the names of the buttons. Store the buttons in the file “default.hbt”. These will be reloaded when the application next starts.
- On the Slide Show Feature tab set the number of seconds to default to when showing slide shows.
- Set the default start-up image to be shown on both monitors.
- Exit ImproTron to make sure the configuration file is saved.

Later on, when slide shows have been created, the preferences screen can be used again to start a slide show when the application is started. To clear either the Startup Image or Startup Slide Show, return to the Preferences tab, hit the appropriate button then cancel.

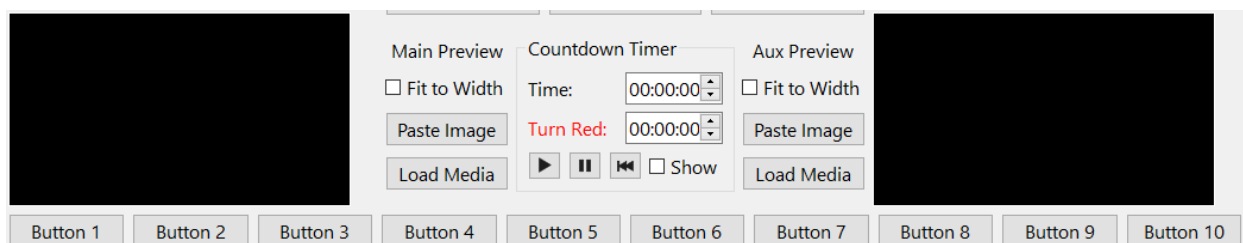
Main Control Panel



The Main Control Panel houses the controls for managing the team image display and the timer. Scores can be shown on the Main, Auxiliary, or both monitors. Team names are entered on the main Control Panel and are stored for future sessions. Scores can be changed by entering numbers, incrementing with the spin box controls, or using the Quick Add buttons (+5-0, etc). The Quick Add buttons will add to the scores and immediately show on both monitors for quick scoring updates.

Monitors can be blacked out individually or both at once.

Images or GIFs can be quickly loaded in the Control Panel. The location defaults to the same location as the Image Search Library (See Image Search Tab). Images can be “copied/pasted” from other applications, specifically browsers. Find images in the browser. Right-click and copy the image. Hit the paste button of the target monitor to have it display.



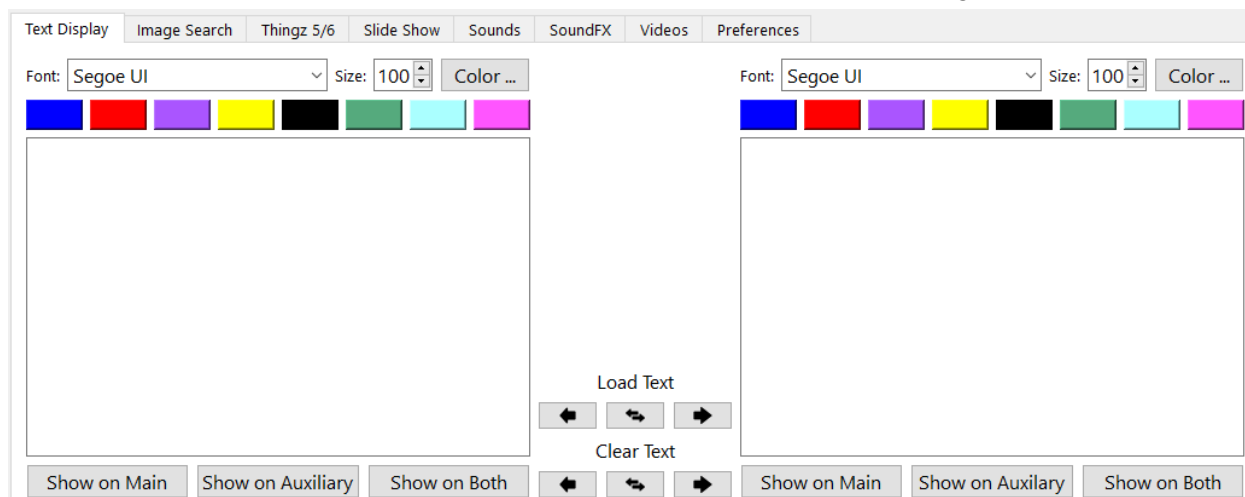
The “Fit to Width” check box will expand or contract the image so it fits the width of the Monitor.

The countdown timer overlays an LCD-style countdown timer on the main monitor. The start time and the time at which the monitor turns red can be set independently. If the Turn Red time is left at zero then the timer will still turn red as it times out. The timer will continue to run if it is hidden. The Play button will always start the time from the beginning. The Pause button when toggled will pause the timer. When clicked again it will continue counting from where it was paused. The Rewind will reset to the start time but continue to countdown.

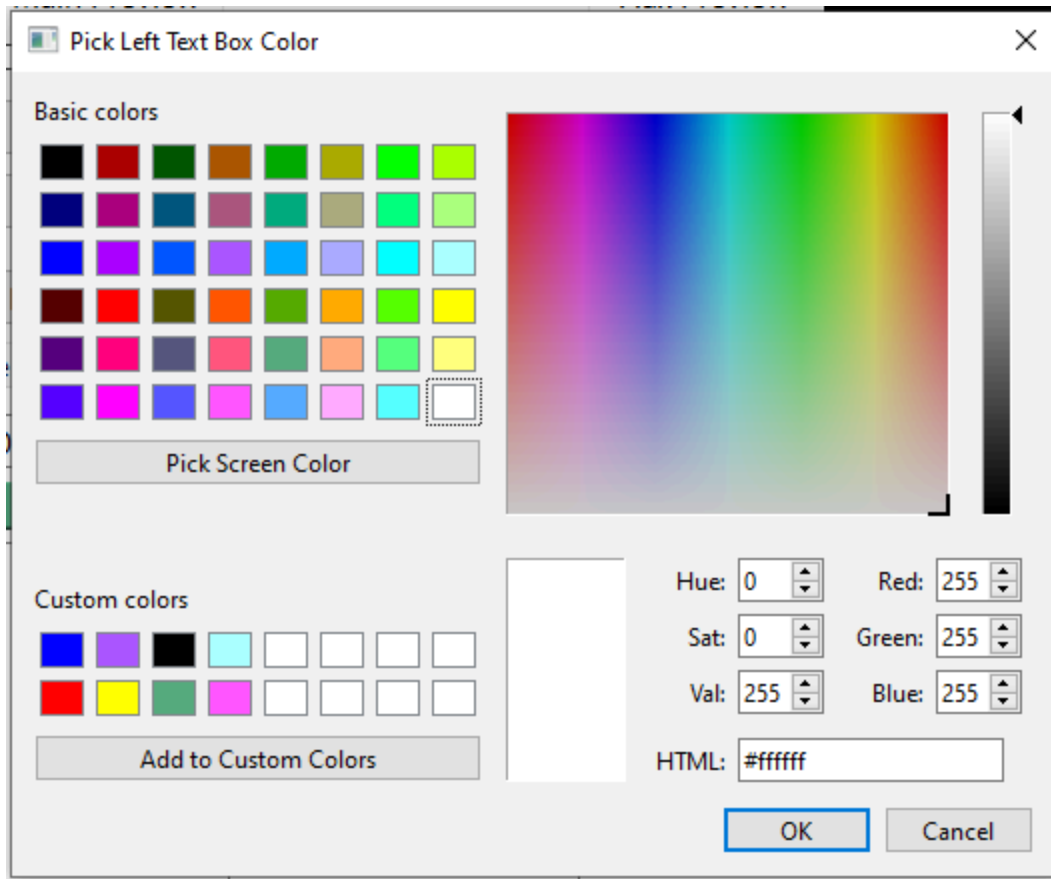
Feature Tabs

Text Display

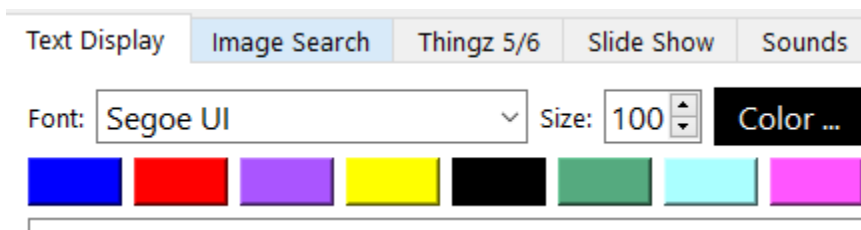
The Text Display offers two independent windows of text that can be directed to either monitor. The text background color and font can be set independently. For accessibility reasons, the text is displayed in black and white on the control panel. It is centered in the font and color selected when pushed to the monitor of choice. Text can also be loaded from storage.



The preset colors are the first eight colors shown on the Color Picker. These are stored as part of the Windows system color picker. Use the color picker to set branded colors using numeric values for RGB, HSV, or Hex (HTML).



By adding to the custom colors, the same colors are pulled onto the text display. Note that this is the same color picker used to set Team colors on the preference page.



The font foreground color is automatically calculated as either black or white based on the background color.

Image Search Tab

How Image and Sound File Search Works

It is important to understand how image searching has been implemented to set your image library up to be correctly indexed. The same approach has been used for sound files. ImproTron breaks up the file name using these separators: `_+-.\\s+`. It treats each fragment of file name text as a keyword much like a social media hashtag. It builds an internal database of tags along with

the file extensions. It is this database that can be searched. By changing the file name to describe the contents with a few keywords, you will make it easier to know what the file contains and to therefore search for it.

For example, imagine a file containing a GIF of a cat shaking its head with the word “nope”. Name the file “cat_nope.gif” or “cat nope.gif” for example. Imagine then you also had a JPEG image of a cat wearing a hat called “cat+hat.jpg”. Search for “cat” would return both files because “cat” is one of the keywords. Searching for “jpg gif” would return both files because they each have a file extension that matches the list of tags. A search for “cat gif” with the “All Tags” checkbox check would just return “cat nope.gif” (if that’s how it was named) because all the tags have to apply to the file for it to match.

Finding Images

Common file formats such as BMP, JPG, and PNG are supported. The examples below show the impact of forcing all tags to be present. Note that “cat” and “cats” will be treated as separate tags.

Any tag search:

The screenshot shows the 'Image Search' tab of a software interface. At the top, there are tabs: 'Text Display', 'Image Search' (selected), 'Thingz 5/6', 'Slide Show', 'Sounds', 'SoundFX', 'Videos', and 'Preferences'. Below the tabs, there is a search bar with the text 'bye gif'. To the right of the search bar is a 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there is a checkbox labeled 'All Tags' which is currently unchecked. To the right of the checkbox is the text 'Media Files: 635'. Further right is a 'Set Library' button. Below the search bar and checkbox, there is a list of search results: '9 second countdown.gif', 'Bar meter.gif', 'bye bye bye.gif', 'parent sloth.gif', 'sloth mom.gif', 'sloth pair.gif', and 'VU-meter.gif'. To the right of the search results is a large empty box labeled 'Image:'. To the right of the 'Image:' box are three buttons: 'Show Main', 'Show Auxiliary', and 'Add to Slideshow'.

The same search with All Tags required:

The screenshot shows the same 'Image Search' tab interface as the previous one. The search bar still contains 'bye gif'. However, the 'All Tags' checkbox is now checked. The search results list now only contains 'bye bye bye.gif'. The 'Image:' box and the buttons on the right remain the same.

Once a short list of images has been returned, each can be previewed on the tab. The currently previewed file can be pushed to either monitor or added to the slide show list on the Slide Show tab to assist in building slide shows. The location of the file appears above the preview.

The location of the image library used on both this tab and the Slide Show tab is set using the “Set Library” button. Once the directory is selected, there will be a short delay while ImproTron

builds a new internal database of keywords. This same sequence can be used to index new images saved after ImproTron was started.

Thingz ⁵/₆ Tab

This tab is used to facilitate capture and display during the Thingz round. This feature has not yet been tested for usability under various game conditions and is subject to change after feedback.

The flow works best if the activities are entered first followed by the substitutions.

The screenshot shows the 'Thingz 5/6' tab in a software application. At the top is a menu bar with tabs: Text Display, Image Search, Thingz 5/6 (selected), Slide Show, Sounds, SoundFX, Videos, and Preferences. Below the menu bar, on the left, is a 'Font' dropdown set to 'Segoe UI' and a 'Size' spinner set to '100'. Below these is a text input field labeled 'Name of Thing to Add:'. To the right of this field is an 'Add' button. Further right is a 'Next Thing is for the' section with two radio buttons: 'Left Team' (selected, blue background) and 'Right Team' (red background). Below this is a 'Toggle Team' button. The main area is divided into two large empty rectangular boxes. Between these boxes are four buttons: an up arrow, a down arrow, an 'X' (delete), and a trash can icon. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'List Main', 'List Auxiliary', and 'List Both' on the left, and 'Show Main', 'Show Auxiliary', and 'Show Both' on the right.

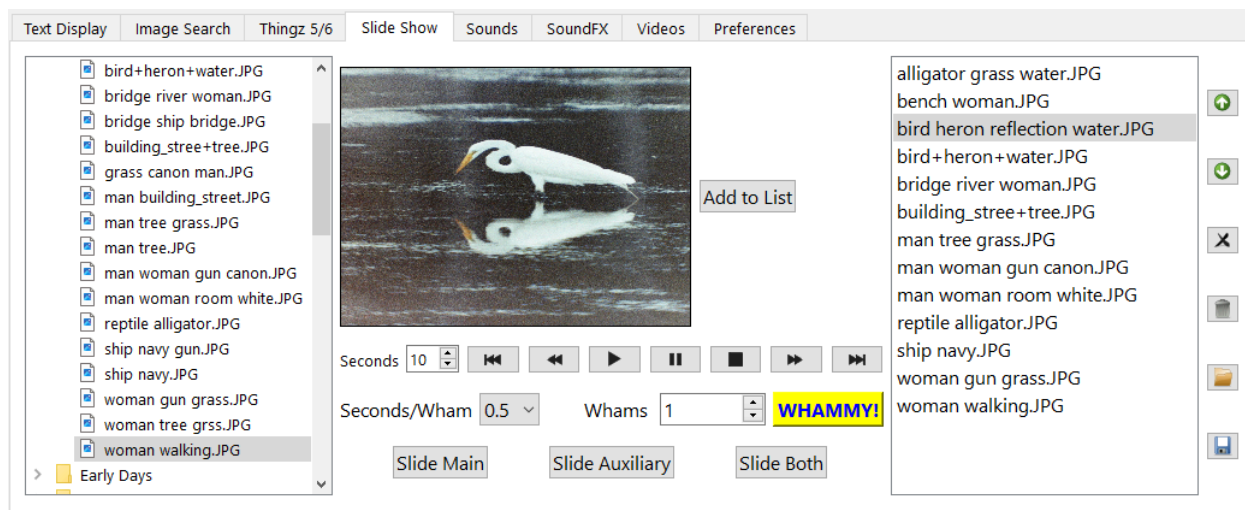
Use the Thing Color Toggle Buttons to set the color of the next team to receive an activity. Enter the activity in the “Name of Thing to Add” text box and hit enter or the Add button. The Team Toggle will toggle the team assigned to the thing. Once all the thingz have been added, spelling corrections can be made to the thingz list by double-clicking and editing the list entry. Thingz can be moved up and down the list. Individual thingz can be removed from the list with the “X” icon. The entire list can be cleared using the garbage can icon.

Select each thing to enter the substitutions as text. The thing and substitutions can be pushed to either or both monitors. If needed, the list can be displayed on either or both monitors. The font and size for displaying either the Thingz list or a Thing can be set at any time. The text will be scaled automatically to fix the monitor.

Slide Show Tab

The Slide Show tab is where you can build a list of images to be shown before the show or intermission. The tab consists of a few areas. To the left is a hierarchical view of folders within the image library. The location of the image library is set on the Image Search tab. To the right is where a list of images can be viewed and managed. There are buttons to move an image up and down the list, delete images from the list, and clear the list. Lists can be loaded or saved.

In the center section of the tab is a preview area. Files that are found via the folder structure will be previewed as well as any item selected from the list of images. Any image from a list can be pushed to one or both monitors.



Typical controls for running the slide show are provided below the preview. The main buttons are the Play, Pause, and Stop buttons. The delay between slides can be set via the Second spin box. This setting will be remembered between sessions.

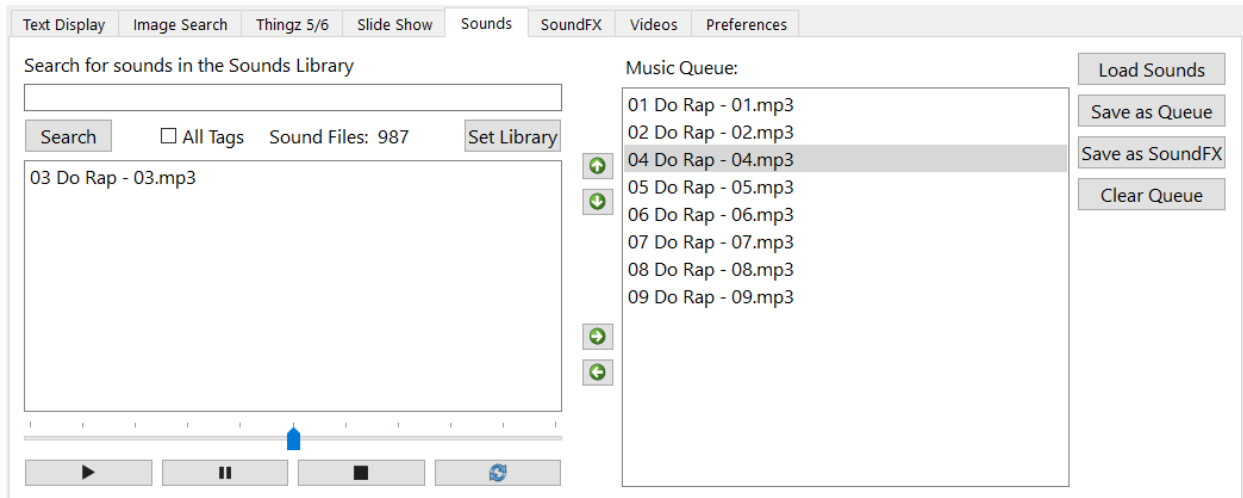
This tab also supports a random selection feature. The Whammy button will cause the random selection of slides from the list for as many “Whams” as has been set. The delay between slides can be set to 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, or 2.0 seconds.

Sounds Tab

The Sounds tab is an experimental feature for playing MP3 and WAV files. Controls and layout will change between versions as this feature matures. The goal is to allow for typical sets of music to be grouped for quick recall. This feature is intended to be used for roadshows. The search mechanism works identically to image search except the supported file formats are WAV and MP3.

If you build a list containing only WAV files they can be stored as a Sound Effects Palette that can be retrieved on the Sound FX Tab.

Currently, the only sounds that can be played are those listed in the search results box. No play controls are provided for elements in a list of sounds. There is also a sound slider that determines the volume for playing back on sound files, and videos played via the Video Tab.

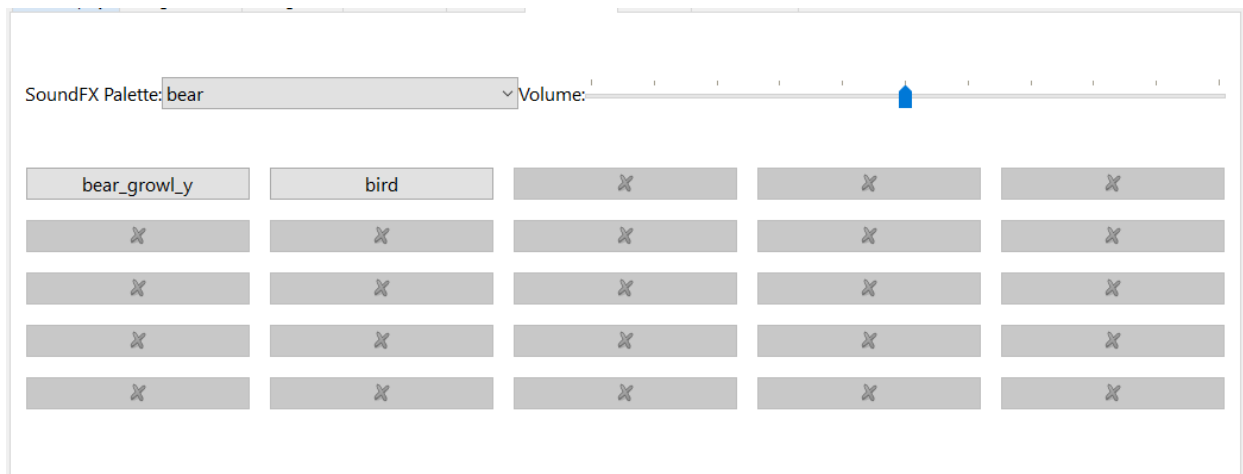


The sound library defaults to where Music files are typically stored but can be changed via the “Set Library” button. To play a sound from a list, move it back to the search results window.

Sound FX Tab

The Sound FX tab is intended to be used to enhance a show by using prebuilt lists, or palettes of sounds. Only WAV files are currently supported.

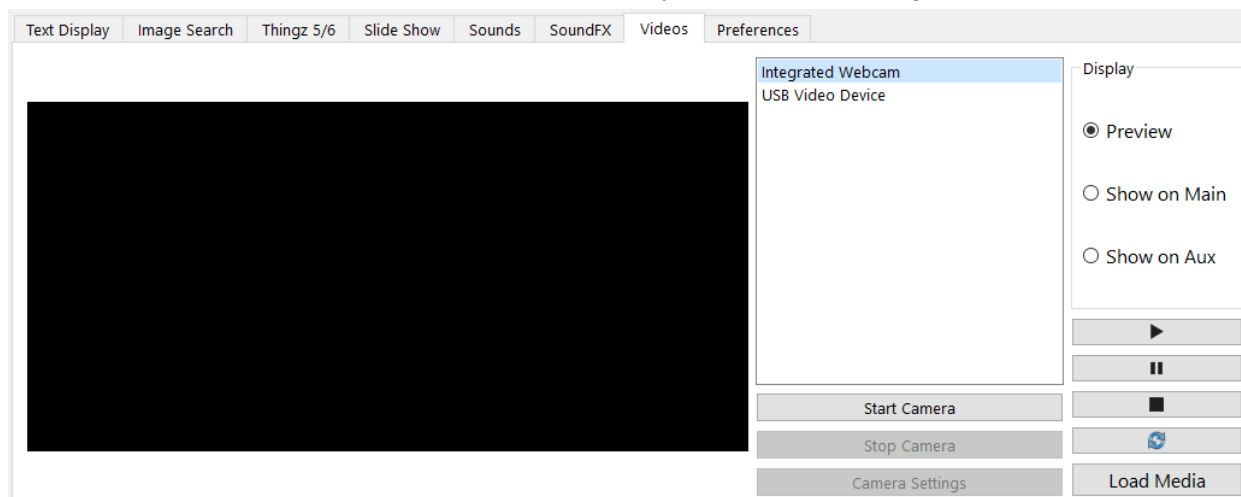
Any list saved as a Sound FX palette will be made available on the Sound FX Palette drop-down. When a palette is selected, the sounds are assigned to buttons from left to right, top to bottom. If any file type besides WAV files is included in the list, they will be skipped. Playback can be started and then stopped by clicking on the associated button. Multiple sound effects can be played at once. Volume can be controlled from this tab as well.



Videos Tab

The Videos tab is an experimental feature set. It combines the ability to display MP4s and webcams on monitors. The webcam feature could be used for showing Voice and the booth

team during the introductory ref spiel. Currently, the webcam or video can only be shown on one monitor or preview at a time. The camera settings button has yet to be implemented. This tab should be used with caution until tested on a variety of hardware configurations.



Select where you want to view the media from the three options provided in the Display radio buttons. Load an MP4 then hit play to see the video. If the computer is connected to the sound system, the sound will play. The loop button can be pressed to make the video continuously replay.

To use a webcam, select which device you want to use then “Start Camera”. To halt the webcam, click the “Stop Camera” button.

Known Issues

- Slide shows including GIFs leak memory. That is the memory used by the application slowly creeps up and may require a restart after several hours of playing the slide show.
- The Sound tab needs controls for playing sounds in the list.

Send feedback and other issues to guy.winterbotham@gmail.com. Please give the context of the issues, the steps to reproduce and what you expected would happen.