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dcapp Installation and User Guide

version 1.0

NASA Johnson Space Center

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# 1.0 Introduction

"dcapp" (pronounced “dee see app”) is a displays and controls software package designed for UNIX platforms, specifically MacOS and Linux. It is built upon standard UNIX technologies like OpenGL for graphics, libxml2 for input file parsing, and FreeType2 for font handling. For window management and event handling, it uses Cocoa on MacOS machines and X11 for Linux-based machines. It has built-in communication libraries to communicate with external Trick-based simulations (via trick\_comm) and EDGE graphics (via EDGE’s remote commanding server (RCS)).

For more information, please contact:

Michael McFarlane

[michael.r.mcfarlane@nasa.gov](mailto:michael.r.mcfarlane@nasa.gov)

ER7/Simulation and Graphics Branch

NASA Johnson Space Center

# 2.0 Installation

## 2.1 Mandatory Prerequisites

dcapp is designed to run on MacOS and Linux-based machines. For all of the packages described hereafter, be sure to get “development” versions that include header files. These packages must be installed before building or running dcapp:

* OpenGL
* libxml2
* FreeType2

OpenGL is a standard environment for developing portable, interactive 2D and 3D graphics applications. It is a standard package on most MacOS and Linux installations, but it can be accessed at <http://www.opengl.org> if needed.

libxml2 is an XML file parser that is a standard package on most MacOS and Linux installations, but it can be accessed at <http://xmlsoft.org> if needed.

FreeType2 is a freely available software library for rendering fonts. It is capable of producing high-quality output (glyph images) of most vector- and bitmap- font formats. It is a standard package on most MacOS and Linux installations, but it can be accessed at <http://www.freetype.org> if needed.

## 2.2 Optional Prerequisites

If dcapp is to be run in conjunction with a Trick simulation, then the trick-gte command (or the gte command for Trick version 15 and earlier) must be accessible via the command line for dcapp to build correctly. Also, a stand-alone version of trick\_comm must be successfully built prior to building dcapp. trick\_comm is a Trick library that provides an interface to a Trick simulation via the Trick variable server. Note that Trick does not automatically build the stand-alone version of trick\_comm. To build the stand-alone version of trick\_comm, install Trick, cd to ${TRICK\_HOME}, and type “make stand\_alone”. Note that dcapp should work well with any Trick release numbered 10.2 or higher.

dcapp can be configured to monitor hardware inputs (dials, switches, etc.) via a controller area network (CAN) bus. CAN is a serial bus protocol used to connect individual systems and sensors over a single- or dual-wire networked data bus. Be sure that the CAN bus software is appropriately built and that the CANBUS\_HOME environment variable is set to the directory containing the necessary header and library files.

## 2.3 dcapp

Extract the dcapp package if necessary, cd to the top level of the package, and type “make”. This should build the dcapp executable within the dcapp.app/Contents/${OSSPEC} subdirectory, where OSSPEC corresponds to “MacOS” on MacOS systems or to ${OSTYPE}\_${MACHTYPE} otherwise (note that if OSTYPE and/or MACHTYPE aren’t set, they are set to `uname –s` (converted to lower case) and to `uname –m` respectively). You should then add the dcapp.app/Contents/${OSSPEC} subdirectory to your $PATH environment variable if you intend to launch dcapp from the command line.

# 3.0 Activation

After following the instructions in section 2, simply type the following on the command line to activate dcapp:

dcapp file.xml [const=value...]

where file.xml is a full or partial path to a valid dcapp specfile (see section 4 for more information on dcapp specfiles). Note that the optional “const=value” constructs may be used as many times as needed to override the value of any constants defined within the specfile.

For instance, if a user wants to run dcapp with a specfile called myspec.xml but overriding the constants “WinWidth” and “WinHeight” with “480” and “640” respectively, the user would type the following command:

dcapp myspec.xml WinWidth=480 WinHeight=640

Note that on MacOS, an alternative to launching dcapp via the command line is to use dcapp.app, which is automatically built during the “make” step described in section 2.3. dcapp.app can be launched like any MacOS application (double clicking it, launching it from the Dock, etc.). It brings up a simple user interface that requests the information described above from the user, then proceeds to launch dcapp accordingly.

# 4.0 Specfile

The dcapp specfile is a standard XML file used to customize the features and capabilities of dcapp. See <http://www.w3.org/XML/> for more information about XML files, including valid file specifications, definition and usage of character entities, use of comments, etc. The elements contained within the dcapp specfile are detailed in this section.

## 4.1 Root Element

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | DCAPP |
| Parent | (none) |
| Children | (any) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | All dcapp specfiles must contain this root element. All of the other elements, described in the following sections, must be enclosed within this root element. |

## 4.2 Universal Elements

These elements may appear anywhere within the dcapp specfile, and they may be embedded within any element that allows children.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Dummy |
| Parent | (any) |
| Children | (any) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This element does nothing besides allowing the user to group sub-elements. This is potentially useful when using XML’s <xi:include> element, which requires included files to be “well-formed”, which means, among other things, that the file must contain only one element at its root level. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | If |
| Parent | (any) |
| Children | True, False, (any) |
| Attributes | Operator, Value, Value1, Value2 |
| Description | This element applies the *Operator* (one of “eq”, “ne”, “gt”, “lt”, “ge”, or “le”) to *Value1* and *Value2* to evaluate a true or false condition. If no *Operator* is defined, then it simply tests *Value* to determine true or false. If the logic evaluates to true, then the sub-elements within the “True” element are processed, otherwise, the sub-elements within the “False” element are processed. If there is no “True” or “False” sub-element defined, the contents of this element are assumed to be contained within a virtual “True” element. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | True |
| Parent | If |
| Children | (any) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This element simply encloses sub-elements that are to be processed if the logic of the encompassing “If” element resolves to “true”. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | False |
| Parent | If |
| Children | (any) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This element simply encloses sub-elements that are to be processed if the logic of the encompassing “If” element resolves to “false”. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Set |
| Parent | (any) |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | Variable, Operator, MinimumValue, MaximumValue |
| Description | This sets the value of *Variable* to a new value defined by the content of the element. The *Operator* is “=” by default, but may also be “+=” or “-=” if this element is to be used to increment or decrement *Variable* (usable only if *Variable* is a numeric type). *MinimumValue* and *MaximumValue* may optionally be set to bound the new numeric value. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Animation |
| Parent | (any) |
| Children | Set, If |
| Attributes | Duration |
| Description | For each embedded “Set” element, this takes a snapshot of the current value and gradually sets it to the specified value over the course of the specified *Duration*. This is done linearly over each execution of dcapp until *Duration* is reached, at which point this element goes dormant until it is invoked again. |

## 4.3 Initialization Elements

These elements typically appear near the top of the dcapp specfile. They define the behavior of subsequent elements within the specfile.

### 4.3.1 Settings Elements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Constant |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | Name |
| Description | This allows a user to create a constant that can be accessed subsequently within the specfile. This is handy for setting values that are used frequently throughout the display. For instance, the user may set:  <Constant Name=”FontSize”>24</Constant>  The pre-processor will then replace all instances of “#FontSize” in the rest of the specfile with “24”. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Variable |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | Type, InitialValue |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This allows a user to create a variable that can be accessed subsequently within the specfile. The *Type* must be either “Float”, “Integer”, or “String”. For instance, the user may set:  <Variable Type=”Integer”>MyVar</Variable>  Any subsequent elements may then use the associated value by specifying a value of “@MyVar”. Note that if *InitialValue* is not specified, the default value is 0 for float and integer parameters and an empty string (“”) for string parameters. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Style |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | (any) |
| Attributes | Name |
| Description | This allows a user to define a style, which defines attributes for any element that is used subsequently within the specfile. For instance, the user may set:  <Style Name=”mystyle”>  <String Size=”28” Color=”0 0 1”/>  </Style>  Then, a subsequent “String” element that uses “mystyle” (<String style=”mystyle”…) will be blue and use a font size of 28 by default. Note that multiple elements may be defined within a single “Style” element. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Defaults |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | (any) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This allows a user to define default attributes for any element that is used subsequently within the specfile. For instance, the user may set:  <Defaults>  <Rectangle LineWidth=”2” LineColor=”1 0 0”/>  </Defaults>  Then, all subsequent “Rectangle” elements will be rendered with a red line that is 2 pixels thick by default. Note that multiple elements may be defined within a single “Defaults” element. |

### 4.3.2 Input/Output Elements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | TrickIo |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | FromTrick, ToTrick |
| Attributes | Host, Port, DataRate, DisconnectAction |
| Description | This construct specifies communication between dcapp and the Trick variable server. Host specifies the hostname upon which the Trick simulation is executing. If not specified, the default value is the hostname of the machine upon which dcapp is executing. *Port* specifies the port over which communication with the Trick variable server takes place. If not specified, the default value is 7000. DataRate specifies the data rate (in seconds) at which Trick will attempt to communicate with dcapp. If not specified, the default value is 1 second. *DisconnectAction* defines the action that dcapp takes if it loses connection with Trick. Options are “Terminate” or “Reconnect”, with “Terminate” being the default action if none is specified. Note that the values for *Host* and *Port* may be overridden by the command-line arguments outlined in section 3. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | FromTrick |
| Parent | TrickIo |
| Children | TrickVariable |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This contains a list of the “TrickVariable” elements that are used to over-write dcapp data with data from the attached Trick simulation. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | ToTrick |
| Parent | TrickIo |
| Children | TrickVariable |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This contains a list of the “TrickVariable” elements that are used to over-write Trick simulation data with data from dcapp. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | TrickVariable |
| Parent | FromTrick, ToTrick |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | Name, Units |
| Description | This element attaches a dcapp “Variable” to the variable in the attached Trick simulation defined by *Name*. The user may optionally define the *Units* of the data within dcapp, which the Trick variable server will use to convert the data, if necessary. The *Units* must be a unit string recognizable by Trick. For instance:  <TrickVariable Name="trickobj.var">MyVar</TrickVariable> |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | EdgeIo |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | FromEdge, ToEdge |
| Attributes | Host, Port, DataRate |
| Description | This construct specifies communication between dcapp and EDGE via EDGE’s remote commanding server server. Host specifies the hostname upon which EDGE is executing. If not specified, the default value is the hostname of the machine upon which dcapp is executing. *Port* specifies the port over which communication with EDGE takes place. If not specified, the default value is 5451. DataRate specifies the data rate (in seconds) at which EDGE will be polled by dcapp. If not specified, the default value is 1 second. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | FromEdge |
| Parent | EdgeIo |
| Children | EdgeVariable |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This contains a list of the “EdgeVariable” elements that are used to over-write dcapp data with data from the attached EDGE instance. For instance:  <EdgeVariable RcsCommand="doug.node Light set –  lit\_int">LightCmd</EdgeVariable> |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | ToEdge |
| Parent | EdgeIo |
| Children | EdgeVariable |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | This contains a list of the “EdgeVariable” elements that are used to over-write EDGE data with data from dcapp. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | EdgeVariable |
| Parent | FromEdge, ToEdge |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | RcsCommand |
| Description | This element attaches a dcapp “Variable” to the variable in the attached EDGE instance defined by *RcsCommand*. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | CAN |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | Network, ButtonID, ControlID |
| Description | This element assigns bezel keys to data associated with a CAN bus based upon *Network*, *ButtonID*, and *ControlID* of the unit associated with this instance of dcapp. The bezel keys are processed via the “Button” and/or “BezelEvent” elements. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | UEI |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | Host, Port, BezelID |
| Description | This element assigns bezel keys to data associated with a UEI controller based upon the *Host* and *Port* of the UEI and the *BezelID* of the unit associated with this instance of dcapp. The bezel keys are processed via the “Button” and/or “BezelEvent” elements. |

### 4.3.3 Logic Element

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | DisplayLogic |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description | The content of this element specifies a shared object file to be linked into dcapp at execution time. See section 5.3 for more information about the format and content of this file. |

## 4.4 Display Setup

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Window |
| Parent | DCAPP |
| Children | Panels |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, FullScreen, XDisplay, ForceUpdate |
| Description | This defines the position (*X* and *Y*) and size (*Width* and *Height*) of the window containing the dcapp displays. If *FullScreen* is set to “true”, “yes”, or “on”, the window will be rendered full screen regardless of *X*, *Y*, *Width*, and *Height* settings. If dcapp is being executed in an X11 windowing system, the user can specify *XDisplay* to run dcapp on an alternate display. By default, dcapp only updates when it senses an event (a mouse event, input data change, etc.), but the user may set *ForceUpdate* to specify an interval, in seconds, after which dcapp will automatically update. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Panels |
| Parent | Window |
| Children | Panel |
| Attributes | ActiveDisplay |
| Description | This serves as a container for the individual display panels within a dcapp instance. The *ActiveDisplay* attribute allows the user to assign a variable to determine which display is active at any given time. If the value of this variable corresponds to the *DisplayIndex* of a given panel (see below), then that panel becomes the active display. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Panel |
| Parent | Panels |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | DisplayIndex, BackgroundColor, VirtualWidth, VirtualHeight |
| Description | This contains all of the display primitives for a given display panel. The *DisplayIndex* attribute is used to define when this display is the active display. BackgroundColor specifies the background color for the panel. See section 5.1 for information on specifying color. If not specified, the default color is black (“0 0 0”). *VirtualWidth* and *VirtualHeight* define the user-specified geometry of the display panel, which is used to render the position and size of the display primitives. If not specified, the default geometry is 100x100 units. |

## 4.5 Display Primitives

The display primitives are the building blocks that define how the individual display panels look, feel, and react to user input. They are grouped into two primary classifications: visual primitives, which are primitives that render data to the screen, and event primitives, which are primitives that handle user input.

### 4.5.1 Visual Primitives

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Container |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, VirtualWidth, VirtualHeight, Rotate |
| Description | This redefines the coordinate frame for subsequent primitives by allowing the user to define a box of size *Width* by *Height* at position *X*, *Y*, and aligned by *HorizontalAlign* and *VerticalAlign*, within the current coordinate frame. The new coordinate frame can also be rotated by *Rotate* degrees from the current coordinate frame, and the new coordinate frame uses *VirtualWidth* and *VirtualHeight* to define the width and height of subsequent elements within the new frame. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Line |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | Vertex |
| Attributes | LineWidth, Color |
| Description | This attaches the enclosed “Vertex” primitives to form a single, continuous line with the specified *LineWidth* and *Color*. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Polygon |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | Vertex |
| Attributes | FillColor, LineColor, LineWidth |
| Description | This attaches the enclosed “Vertex” primitives to form a polygon. The polygon is filled with *FillColor* and outlined with a line of color *LineColor* and a width of *LineWidth*. If *FillColor* is not set, then the polygon is not filled. Likewise, if *LineColor* and *LineWidth* are not set, then the polygon is not outlined. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Vertex |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y |
| Description | This defines the *X* and *Y* coordinates of a vertex within a “Line” or “Polygon” primitive. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Rectangle |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, Rotate, FillColor, LineColor, LineWidth |
| Description | This renders a rectangle based upon the location, size, alignment, and orientation specified by the user. The rectangle is filled with *FillColor* and outlined with a line of color *LineColor* and a width of *LineWidth*. If *FillColor* is not set, then the rectangle is not filled. Likewise, if *LineColor* and *LineWidth* are not set, then the rectangle is not outlined. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Circle |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, Radius, Segments, FillColor, LineColor, LineWidth |
| Description | This renders a circle based upon the location, radius, and alignment specified by the user. The user may also specify the number of straight-line segments used to render the circle via *Segments* (default is 80). The circle is filled with *FillColor* and outlined with a line of color *LineColor* and a width of *LineWidth*. If *FillColor* is not set, then the circle is not filled. Likewise, if *LineColor* and *LineWidth* are not set, then the circle is not outlined. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | String |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Rotate, Size, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, Color, BackgroundColor, ShadowOffset, Font, Face, ForceMono |
| Description | This renders a character string based on the location, size, alignment, and rotation specified by the user. The user may also specify the *Font* and *Face*. Note that *Font* must point to a valid FreeType-accessible font file (most modern font files are FreeType-accessible) via an absolute path or a path relative to the specfile. Different font files offer different options for *Face*, but typical options include “Bold”, “Italic”, etc., and if *Face* is not specified, the default face for the font is used. The *ForceMono* optional flag accommodates three possible values: “Numeric”, “Alphanumeric”, or “All”. This allows the user to render some or all of the characters in a variable-width font as fixed width. The user may specify font *Color* with an optional *BackgroundColor*, and *ShadowOffset* allows the user to specify the offset of a shadow to be rendered behind the font (no shadow is rendered if *ShadowOffset* is not set). The content of this element is the string to be rendered, and it may contain static text, variable text, or both. dcapp variables may be accessed using the ampersand: “@MyVar”, as well as an optional C-format specifier contained within parentheses: “@MyVar(%.2f)”. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Image |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, Rotate |
| Description | This renders an image based on the location, size, alignment, and rotation specified by the user. The content of this element must point to a graphical file in a format usable by dcapp (see section 5.3) via an absolute path or a path relative to the specfile. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | PixelStream |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, Rotate, SharedMemoryKey |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | ADI |
| Parent | Panel, Container, Button, Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off |
| Children | (none) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, OuterRadius, BallRadius, ChevronWidth, ChevronHeight, BallFile, CoverFile, Roll, Pitch, Yaw, RollError, PitchError, YawError |
| Description |  |

### 4.5.2 Event Primitives

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Button |
| Parent | Panel, Container |
| Children | Active, Inactive, On, Transition, Off, OnPress, OnRelease, (display primitives) |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign, Rotate, Type, Key, KeyASCII, BezelKey, Variable, On, Off, SwitchVariable, SwitchOn, SwitchOff, IndicatorVariable, IndicatorOn, ActiveVariable, ActiveOn |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Active |
| Parent | Button |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Inactive |
| Parent | Button |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | On |
| Parent | Button |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Transition |
| Parent | Button |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Off |
| Parent | Button |
| Children | (display primitives) |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | MouseEvent |
| Parent | Panel, Container |
| Children | OnPress, OnRelease, Set |
| Attributes | X, Y, Width, Height, HorizontalAlign, VerticalAlign |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | KeyboardEvent |
| Parent | Panel, Container |
| Children | OnPress, OnRelease, Set |
| Attributes | Key, KeyASCII |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | BezelEvent |
| Parent | Panel, Container |
| Children | OnPress, OnRelease, Set |
| Attributes | Key |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | OnPress |
| Parent | Button, MouseEvent, KeyboardEvent, BezelEvent |
| Children | Set |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | OnRelease |
| Parent | Button, MouseEvent, KeyboardEvent, BezelEvent |
| Children | Set |
| Attributes | (none) |
| Description |  |

# 5.0 Technical Details

## 5.1 Color Format Specification

When specifying color formats for any dcapp display elements, the following format must be used:

red\_level green\_level blue\_level alpha\_level

where each level is expressed as a number between 0 (full off) and 1 (full on). Note that if alpha\_level isn’t specified, dcapp assumes a value of 1 (fully opaque). Examples may include: black specified as “0 0 0”, white specified as “1 1 1”, blue specified as “0 0 1”, grey specified as “0.5 0.5 0.5”, etc.

## 5.2 Alignment Specification

Options for *HorizontalAlign* attributes are “AlignLeft”, “AlignCenter”, and “AlignRight”. Options for *VerticalAlign* attributes are “AlignBottom”, “AlignMiddle”, and “AlignTop”. If a user doesn’t specify alignment, “AlignLeft” and “AlignBottom” are used as default values.

## 5.3 Graphic File Formats

dcapp can currently handle graphic files in two formats: TARGA (.tga) and bitmap (.bmp). TARGA files should be saved uncompressed with a “bottom left” origin. Bitmap files should be saved in 24-bit format, although files saved in other valid bitmap formats may work.

## 5.4 Display Logic File

## 5.5 Element Values

### 5.5.1 Constants

### 5.5.2 Variables

### 5.5.3 Environment Variables