# Getting the most of MMF for Power Users!

by Andy H

The first Multimedia Fusion *Getting the most of* described how to configure the working environment for an 800 by 600 display. This article targets the power users who want to get more out of MMF at a higher resolution, typically 1280x1024 or bigger. However many topics covered here are applicable to other configurations.

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☑ **Screen Orientation**
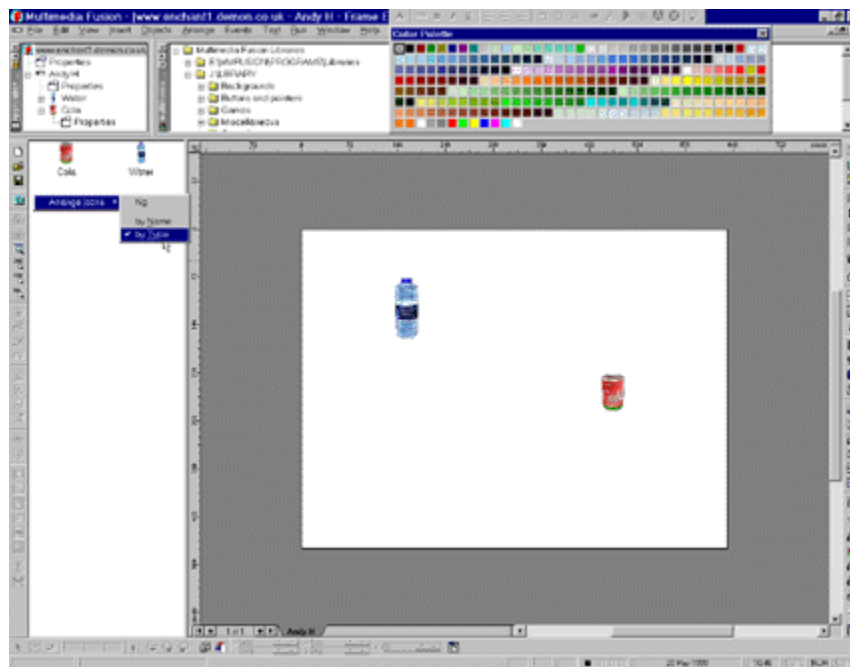
click this image to see it full size (1280 x 1024)

▶ The first thing you may notice is every window is maximised or docked. This helps keep the environment less cluttered. A dozen windows can quickly fill the MMF workspace.

▶ The toolbars are completely rearranged, some buttons are gone, some new buttons have been added. The shape of a 1280x1024 screen provides over 200 pixels extra in width than height, so to take advantage of this, most of the toolbars are down either side of the screen.

▶ The application properties and library windows are always docked at the top of the screen. I rarely use the Library window, so this could be removed completely. When I'm working on more that one application, I will place the application windows side by side along the top, which helps conserve space.

▶ In the above screen, you can see the Frame window is open. Here is where more horizontal space is a benefit. The objects pane of the frame window has a default width of 1 object, but for improved productivity, resize this to show 2 or 3 columns of objects. Right click anywhere in this area and you can choose how to arrange the icons...a very useful undocumented feature!

▶ The Colour Palette window normally appears along the bottom of the screen when you open a picture editor. Due to the Corel styling you'll only see one line of colours. To reach more, you can click the left and right buttons or the pop-up button for a temporary full view of the palette. For faster access to the colours you need, undock the window by dragging it off the bottom, and rest it carefully in a spare space over the Library window. Be careful not to dock it at the top while you do this! At present MMF will not remember its position, so next time you start MMF you will need to reposition it.

☑ Customising the Toolbars

Toolbars can be customised in a number of ways. You can ALT+drag a toolbar button to move it somewhere else or remove it. You can also CTRL+drag to duplicate the toolbar button. This is extremely useful for buttons and controls that do not exist in the Toolbar - Customize windows.

To open the Toolbar - Customize window, select **Edit - Toolbars**... and click the **Customize** button or right click on any toolbar.
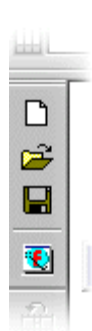
The layout of the toolbars are really a personal preference, however here is one productive layout with the toolbars down the side of the screen:

▶ **Main Toolbar** - This normally contains several file and edit commands such as load, save and undo. I only need New, Open, Save and Create Application on this toolbar. I always access Undo with *CTRL+Z* on the keyboard and Redo with *CTRL+Y*. I can access other less used commands from the menu's.

ℹ Tip: To insert dividing lines between toolbar buttons, while the Customize window is displayed, drag the button a couple of pixels away from its neighbour. To remove a dividing line, drag it back towards its neighbouring button.

Navigation Toolbar - Next down is the Navigation toolbar. Normally containing the next, previous frame and editor buttons. I have only kept hold of the Previous and Next Frame buttons. The Frame Editor and Event Editor are the most common editors I use, but I have opted to remove these too as the shortcut keys are much quicker. Use *CTRL+M* for the Frame Editor and *CTRL+E* for the Event Editor.

I have also added Zoom buttons. These are probably one of the most useful Frame Editor functions that have been added to MMF. They allow you to zoom out to get a bigger picture of what you are editing and zoom in up close when you need to position an object accurately.

Vertical Settings Toolbar - It's best not to mess with this toolbar as it changes for each window you have focus on. It also has all the commands you need.

I have opted for this toolbar to be positioned at the bottom. This is because most of the picture editing commands are located at the bottom of the screen, a trend you'll notice in the next set of toolbars. For example, the frame controls for the Frame Editor and Picture Editors are always located in the bottom left of their respective windows.

Custom Toolbar - For editing graphics in the Picture Editor I need quick access to my favourite functions. I have created a new toolbar (use **View-Toolbars**...) to house these functions.

Crop - The first button I've added is Crop, which is normally located under the Object menu. This button allows you to reduce the canvas size by cutting off the empty space around a graphic.

Enlarge Canvas - to enlarge or reduce the drawing area, referred to as the canvas.

Erase - to clear the image (fills with transparent ink).

Three Colour Inks - You will normally find these on the Status Bar, across the bottom of the screen. However, the order that they appear is back to front for right handed mouse users so I have copied them onto this toolbar. To copy these, CTRL+drag each colour box onto your new toolbar. Remove the dividing lines by dragging them closer to each other. You can also resize them if you wish by dragging their right edge inwards.

Flip and Rotate - The next four buttons will flip and rotate the

current image.

▶ Import - The last two buttons allow me to import a bitmap and animation. These are normally found under the File menu, but are easier to access here.

▶ **Horizontal Settings Toolbar** - As with the Vertical Settings toolbar, leave this one alone. It is normally found near the top of the screen, here I have positioned it at the bottom close to the other picture editing functions.

▶ **Run Toolbar** - Over the other side of the screen, I have docked the Run toolbar at the top right. I like to keep the Play button on here because sometimes I'll need to see what is going on in the grey holding area outside of the frame.

▶ Positioning the Run functions here makes them easy to get to. I more commonly use the shortcut keys F7, F8 and F9 to run Frames, Applications and Projects respectively, but its useful to have the icons here as well.

▶ **Objects Toolbar** - This toolbar will also be found at the top of the screen by default. Again, I opt to position it down the right edge of the screen to give me quick access to them.

▶ There is already a good selection of objects on this toolbar.

▶ I use dividing lines to group together related objects, such as graphics, text & strings, controls, data storage and so on.

▶ I have also added an Insert Object toolbar button at the top. With this I can choose what object to add if it is not on the toolbar.

▶ **Text Toolbar** - This is another custom toolbar. Very useful for formatting text objects, it has the most commonly used text formatting functions. To use space more efficiently, this toolbar is positioned over the top of the title bar. Care must

be taken not to dock the toolbar while positioning it here.

☐ **Preferences**

Much of what is discussed here has been covered in **Getting the most of MMF on a 800x600 display**, so this section will be brief.
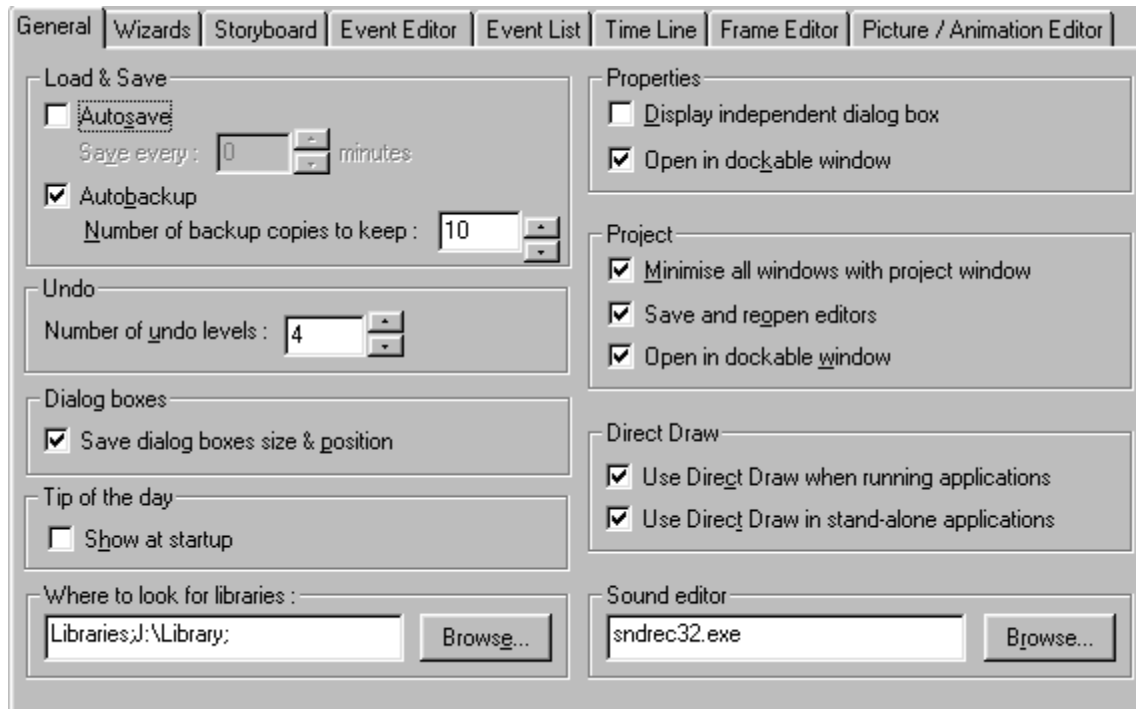
▶ The main point to keep in mind about the preferences is to ensure that the settings work best for MMF with maximised windows. As shown above, make sure all windows are docked when they are opened.

▶ MMF seems to work better with less undo levels. I happily use 4 levels of undo.

▶ It is important to make sure Autosave is off and Autobackup is on. I like MMF to keep 10 backups of my current file, just incase anything goes wrong! However, don't take this feature as your only protection. I will change the name of my working file (using Save As from the File menu) when ever I make a major change by adding a number to the filename. Think of this as the build number.
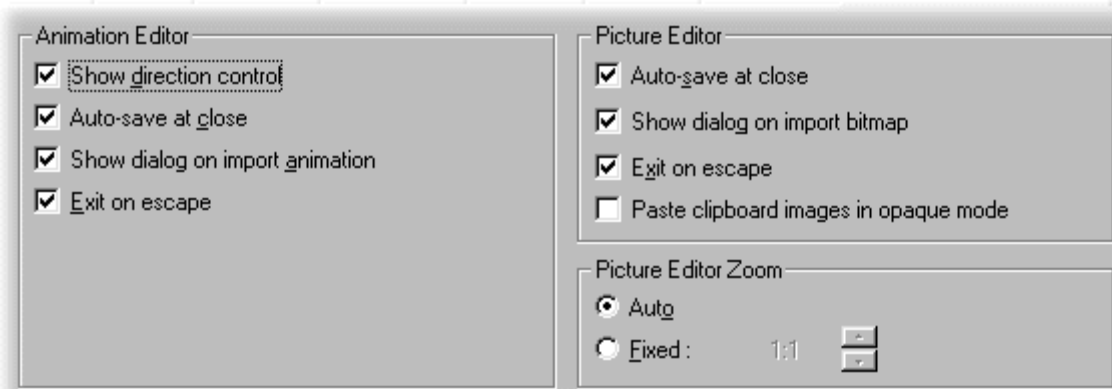
▶ Likewise, the picture editor and animation editor will be opened full screen. Turn on the options to Exit on Escape and Auto-save at close. When you have finished working in these editors, just hit the Escape key. If you don't want to keep any changes you made, press *CTRL+Z* to undo the operation.

▶ There are a number of other tweaks that you may want to make in the preferences. For example, I reduce the default zoom scale for the event editor to show more events and action columns. I also turn on the options to show object names in the event editors. This is a purely personal preference and you will undoubtedly have your own preferred settings.

☑ Working with windows maximised

The original Click and Create had very few windows and they were usually maximised. The main windows were Storyboard, Frame Editor and Event Editor. The Picture and Animation editors were modal dialog boxes which the user had to close when they had finished working in them. This way of working was adopted and loved by the majority of users.

Multimedia Fusion changed all this in the most chaotic way a CnC'er could image! Instead of three main windows and a few dialogs, everything was in a window. Experienced CnC users suddenly had to learn a new way of working. Upon closer inspection however, things do make sense! The trick is learning to work with MMF instead of against it. This section is probably the most valuable part of the article.

▶ Starting a new application

When you create a new application, or load in an existing one, open one Frame Editor window and maximise it. This is how we will work from this point on.

▶ Moving between Frame Editors and Event Editors

To open the Frame Editor, always press *CTRL+M*. Train yourself to get into the habit of using the short cut keys where they are available. In the long term this will save you time.

To open the Event Editor, always press *CTRL+E*. **Never** open a Frame or Event Editor while you are editing in any other type of window, such as the Picture/Animation Editors, Behaviour windows and Edit the Actions windows (see below). Doing so will leave these windows open!

▶ Changing the frame you are editing

You will notice that there are navigation controls at the bottom of the Frame and Event Editors. Use these to go to the next and previous frames in your application. If you open one of these editors from the Application window, you will begin to have duplicate editor windows left open in the background.

▶ Closing the Picture and Animation Editor windows

Remember we set the Picture / Animation preferences to save and close when the Escape key is pressed? Do this to close the window when you have finished editing in them. Never leave these open if you need to move elsewhere!

▶ Closing Behaviour, Edit the Actions and other windows

When you open a Behaviour window, you'll see a conventional event editor. If you leave behaviour windows open, they will accumulate in the background. Likewise, when you choose the Edit the Actions command in the event editor, it will remain open until you close it which can cause problems later on.

To close these windows, simply press *CTRL+F4*. Do not confuse this with *ALT+F4* as this will close Multimedia Fusion! Always close these windows when you have finished using them.

☑ Essential Short-cut keys

There are a lot of buttons, menus and options in Multimedia Fusion. Like most software, MMF has accelerators, or short-cut keys for some of the most popular commands. Short-cuts can also be defined for the majority of menu options and buttons, so MMF can be tailored to your needs.

To work faster in MMF, train yourself to use these short-cut keys where ever possible. Keys marked with an * are custom key commands I have added to the cncdef.acl file. Copy it to your MMFusion\Programs folder if you want to use them, but back up the original file first if you wish to return to your configuration.

▶ Program Editor Keys

▶ **CTRL + M**	Open Frame editor window
▶ **CTRL + E**	Open Event editor window
▶ **CTRL + T**	Open Time Line editor window
▶ **CTRL + L**	Open Event List window
▶ **CTRL + B**	Open Storyboard window

Program Execution Keys

F9	Run Project
F8	Run Application
F7	Run Frame
F5	Play the Frame

Editing Keys

CTRL + Z	Undo last operation
CTRL + Y	Redo last Undo operation
CTRL + X	Cut the selected object into the paste buffer
CTRL + C	Copy the selected object
CTRL + V	Paste contents of paste buffer
CTRL + A	Select All

File Operation Keys

CTRL + N	New application, project, library or image
CTRL + O	Open file
CTRL + S	Save file

Windows Keys

CTRL + F4	Close open window
Esc	Close Picture/Animation editors
CTRL + F6	Next Window

Frame Editor Keys

F4	Zoom to fit
F2	Zoom in
F3	Zoom out
F6*	Object Properties
CTRL + Shift + PgUp*	Bring to Front
CTRL + Shift + PgDn*	Send to Back
CTRL + Shift + Up*	Forward one
CTRL + Shift + Down*	Backward one
CTRL + .*	Lock selected objects (full stop)
CTRL + ,*	Unlock all (comma)
CTRL + Shift + N*	Insert new object into frame
CTRL + G*	Grid and Rulers set-up

Picture Editor Keys

CTRL + H	Toggle Hotspot on/off

▷ **CTRL + Q**	Toggle Action point on/off	
▷ **CTRL + R**	Resize Canvas	

* In CnC, you could press D for Draw tool and F for Fill bucket tool amongst others to select drawing functions. This feature does not yet exist in MMF...

▶ **Text Formatting Keys**

▷ **CTRL + Shift +F***	Choose Typeface
▷ **CTRL + Shift + P***	Plain, no formatting
▷ **CTRL + Shift + B***	Bold style
▷ **CTRL + Shift + I***	Italic style
▷ **CTRL + Shift + U***	Underline style
▷ **CTRL + Shift + L***	Align Left
▷ **CTRL + Shift + C***	Align Center
▷ **CTRL + Shift + R***	Align Right

☑ **Productivity**

Getting the most out of Multimedia Fusion should not end with Fusion itself. To conclude this article, here are some ways of getting more out of your working environment.

▶ **Wheel Mouse**

A wheel mouse can help you work faster in the Event and Frame editors, as they allow you to turn the wheel to scroll the workspace area without moving the mouse to the scroll bars This may sound like a gimmick, but it really does save you time.

The most common wheel mouse is Microsoft's Intellimouse. This has one vertical wheel that also acts as a third button. There are other alternatives that offer two wheels, one for vertical and one for horizontal scroll bars. Having two wheels makes it even easier to navigate the MMF workspace, especially in the Frame editor. A two wheel mouse that I would recommend is the Ami Pro Wheel mouse.

▶ **Pen Tablets**

If you are serious about producing graphics for your MMF applications, you will benefit greatly from a graphics pen tablet. Using a pen shaped stylus does make a difference when drawing, but is not as easy to use for navigation in heavy applications. If possible, have a separate graphics workstation. If not, set up Windows profiles for a mouse and tablet.

▶ **Other Software**

Multimedia Fusion has a collection of advanced editors. For example, its picture editor is especially powerful. However, to seriously get the most out of your

multimedia, you do need to use features available in specialised software.

Some suggested software include (but not limited to):

- **2D Graphics** - Photoshop, Paintshop Pro, Aura, Painter, ...

- **3D Graphics** - 3D Studio / Max, Lightwave, Maya, ...

- **Digital Audio** - Sound Forge, Goldwave, CuBase, ...

- **Music** - MIDI Maker, MOD editors, Rebirth, ...

- **MMF Extensions** - Visual C++ 4 and above.

by [Andy H](#)
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