

SNOOPSOFT, INC.

SnoopTheme Creator

User Guide

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User's Guide for SnoopTheme Creator

Learn how to use SnoopTheme Creator to create Theme files for SnoopSoft Dashboard v3.0.

To save time and ease the creation of Theme's for your device, SnoopSoft is releasing SnoopTheme Creator for SnoopSoft Dashboard v3. SnoopTheme Creator is a Windows-based application that is used to create Themes and preview them on your desktop PC before copying them over to the device. What you see in SnoopTheme Creator is what the Theme will look like on the device (with the exception of some limited color support on some devices).

SnoopSoft Dashboard v3 introduces a number of new concepts in Dashboard and Theme's. One new feature is the complete integration with the Today page. To accomplish this, SnoopTheme Creator provides settings for controlling almost all aspects of the Today page including some not covered by other theme utilities such as the Inbox and Contacts list background colors.

SnoopTheme Creator and SnoopSoft Dashboard v3 also bring complete Windows Mobile 5 compatibility to the Theme's that are created, including support for the title bar and menu bar gradient coloring. At initial release, SnoopTheme Creator only allows setting the gradient color without the ability to view it on Windows. This should be fixed in a future release.

Theme designers also, for the first time, will be able to alter the appearance of all SnoopSoft Dashboard components including the popular DashToday modules. Everything down to the application's Today page icon is now alterable with SnoopTheme Creator.

With the introduction of these tools and the new version of Dashboard, SnoopSoft is incorporating support for multiple device resolutions, landscape & portrait support as well as compression as part of a theme. Now Theme designers can build one Theme file that contains every supported resolution for multiple devices and distribute it

without worrying about size or compatibility. Individual users can easily create Theme's from photographs just with their own device requirements and trim the size down ever farther. All images and configuration information is compressed into a single file eliminating the problem Dashboard v1 and v2 users had with Theme management.

Getting Started

To start, launch SnoopTheme Creator after installation on your PC. The main window will appear with the last Theme that was being built pre-loaded into the form. If this is the first time the program has been run then it will be completely blank.

At this point the user can Create a new Theme or open an existing Theme that was previously created by the program. **In an effort to protect the intellectual property of the Theme designers, a conscious decision has been made to not allow existing Theme files (.thm) to be opened by the program for editing.** To work with an existing Theme, the original theme files (xml and images) must be used and to do so the user will need to contact the original Theme designer to obtain those files.

Create a new Theme by selecting 'New' from the File menu. SnoopTheme Creator will present a dialog box requesting additional information required to create a Theme, as shown below.



The Theme 'folder' Entry

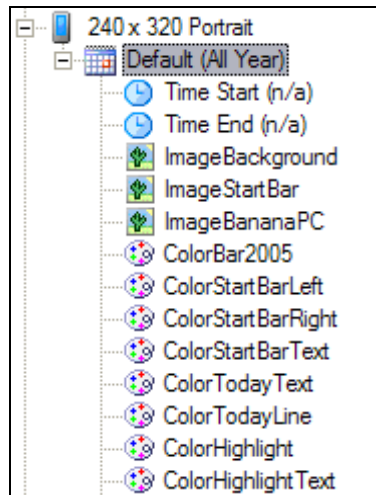
The theme's Folder entry on the "New" dialog is important to note because it is the location where all the Theme files must reside while working with the Theme. All images that you create must be placed into this folder to be incorporated as part of the theme. Also, the intermediate XML Theme definition and the final .THM theme file will be created here automatically by the program.

The theme's Type entry on the "New" dialog box is to specify the type of Theme being created. **Initially, this entry is restricted to one value and cannot be modified.**

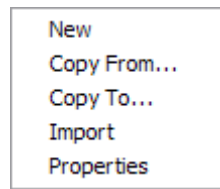
The theme's Name entry is the unique Theme Name that you define for it.

Working with a Theme

Once the new (or existing) Theme is open in the program, the tree control on the left will be populated with all resolutions, dates/times of effect and individual properties of the Theme.



Almost any item in the tree can be right + clicked on to get to the properties that are associated with that specific item or a menu of potential options for the item.



The Pocket PC graphic display on the right will continuously update as properties are changed and will always display an accurate depiction of the Theme on a device.

Configuring the Date/Time Item

Each resolution within a Theme can have multiple date/time periods specified for it. There is no limit and SnoopTheme Creator does not currently verify the date/time periods defined for accuracy or overlaps.

The best description would be an example. One use of the date/time setting would be a Theme that defines different backgrounds and color schemes depending on the time of day. In this scenario, the designer would setup date/time periods corresponding to

their images, for instance, daytime and nighttime (date can be omitted to default to all days of the year).

The screenshot shows a dialog box with the following fields and controls:

- Name:** A text input field containing the word "Default".
- Interval:** A dropdown menu currently showing "DateTime".
- Interval the Theme is active:** A section containing two date-time pickers:
 - From:** A date-time picker showing "01 Jan 12:00 AM".
 - To:** A date-time picker showing "31 Dec 12:00 AM".
- Buttons:** "OK" and "Cancel" buttons at the bottom.

Another example would be a seasonal Theme that changes every Quarter. In this example, date/time periods would be created that covered each Season of the year. Year is never applicable to a Theme so it is ignored. Hours, Days, Dates and Months are valid.

As you can tell, designers have immense flexibility to define Themes for Dashboard.

Note

Setting the 'From' date to 1/1 and the 'To' date to 12/31 indicates it's a time-only entry and the dates will be ignored.

Setting the 'Times' the same indicates it's a date-only entry and will be applicable all day.

The 'Default' Date/Time Item

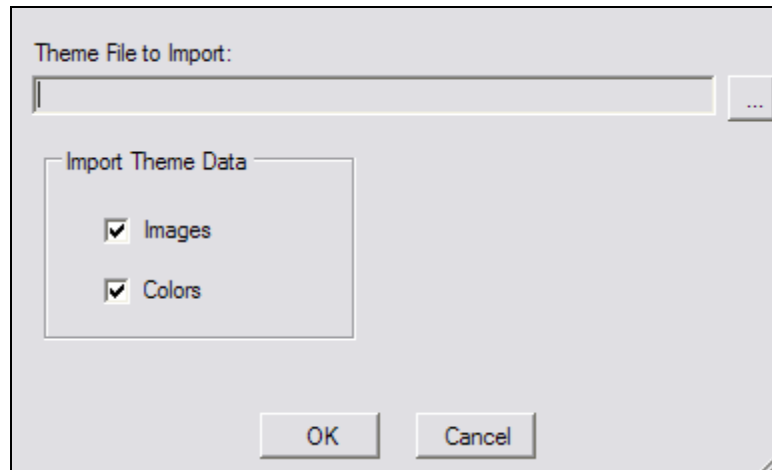
Every resolution in the Theme must have a Default date/time entry. The Default date/time entry cannot have its date or time of effectiveness modified. It is in essence available all day and for all dates and will be used in the event that a specific date/time entry is not available for a resolution.

For instance, suppose a Theme is designed that shifts from Morning, Noon, Evening and Nighttime with appropriate time entries in the Theme for each setting. If the designer forgets to cover a specific time period during the day then the Default entry will be used.

When selecting **New** from the popup menu, the new date/time item will be replicated across all available resolutions within the Theme file.

Importing a Today Theme (TSK)

Today Theme files (.TSK files) can be imported into the program. Simply right + click on the Date / Time Icon within a Theme resolution and select 'Import' from the menu that appears. Then locate the TSK file to load, check off if Colors, Images or both are desired, and import the data. Today Theme files are device and resolution specific which is why they can only be imported at the Theme's date/time level.



Using this technique, a Dashboard Theme could be created that encompasses multiple Today Themes. Dashboard could then automatically activate these from a single Theme file during the course of a day, week or month.

Importing a Dashboard Skin (DSH)

Dashboard Skin files (.DSH files) can not be imported at this time. If a Dashboard skin is needed for a new Dashboard Theme file it is far easier to download the Skin from the Internet, extract all the files to a folder and then setup the Theme from the individual files.

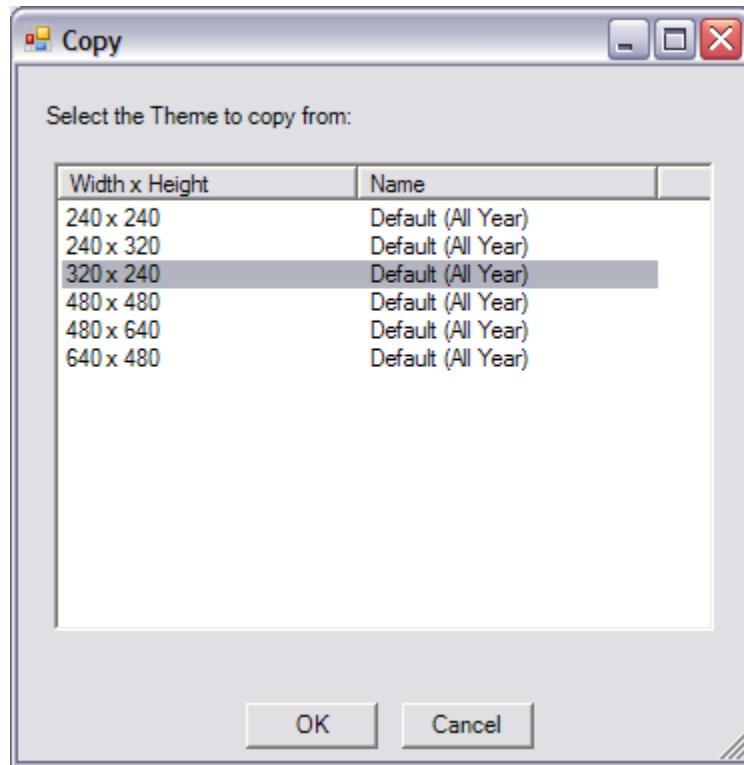
The older skin files were designed long before Microsoft had any plans to allow Today Theme's on the device and were most likely the precursor to this decision. With the move to Dashboard v3, SnoopSoft is standardizing on Microsoft's definitions so a lot of the setting and images are just not applicable to the new Theme format.

This is why you are able to import Today Theme's but not Dashboard Skins to the program.

Copying a Theme's Settings

Once a Theme is all set as desired, it can be easily copied from one device resolution to another via the 'Copy From' menu selection on the date/time level of the tree. This option allows copying a single "destination" resolution from a single "source" resolution.

Navigate to the date/time item with the appropriate resolution that is to be configured (i.e. the destination for the copy command) and right + click on it. Select 'copy from' from the menu that pops up. Another dialog will appear prompting for the resolution and date/time entry to be copied. Select the source and press OK and all color and image data will be overlaid on the target selection.



Another option is the “Copy To” menu selection which allows copying a single “source” resolution to one or more “destination” resolutions. Using this option allows a Theme’s colors to be setup once and then copied to every supported resolution, leaving only the different files to be setup.

Configuring Theme Backgrounds

The start of most Theme’s is their background image. To set the background image for a resolution simply right + click on the ‘Image Background’ item and click Properties. In the dialog, locate the Image file to use for the Theme and click OK.

Note

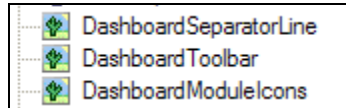
Using the same image in multiple resolutions will help keep the Theme size small since only ONE copy of the image is included in the compressed file even if it appears multiple times within the overall Theme.

Tip

320x240 and 240x320 background images can usually be created as one 320x320 image taking care to position the visuals to look good on either display size. Also, using the same image for both the Background and the Start Menu will keep the size down.

Configuring Theme Colors

Any Color listed can be configured by simply right + clicking on the color name and selecting Properties from the popup. A Color Dialog will appear allowing any color to be selected for the item.



Configuring the Dashboard Toolbar

Dashboard v3 will remove the use of the Toolbars on the display that were required in Dashboard v2. This will gain back most of the screen taken up by the older Dashboard skins and is better aligned with Microsoft's use of the Today page. In its place is a new Tool icon that will reside at a user-specified location on-screen. The Dashboard Toolbar image specifies the available Tool icons for the different Dashboard views.

Dashboard users can select any Tool icon to use for any view so the more icons created, the more choices users will have. There is no maximum setting for this. Dashboard v3 will initially support up to 8 virtual views of the Today page but this limit will increase in the future. Users can enable/disable views as they see fit.

These images are eventually converted to icons so they must be 16x16 and 32x32 (for HiDPI devices only) or they will not be displayed.

For example, below is a sample Toolbar using purple as the background mask (transparent) color. There is one issue with this as there are currently 2 drawing routines implemented for the icons – one will honor the color set here and the other one uses the color from the top left corner pixel of every icon so do not draw in that space and keep that pixel reserved for the transparent color for that icon.



Configuring the Today Separator Line

One shortcoming of customizing the Today page is that the Today module separator line cannot be an image on the Today page, only a colored line. Dashboard v2 added the ability to use a graphical image for this separator line and Dashboard v3 continues by allowing the same.

The graphic for the line must be the proper width for the resolution (or wider) or it won't fill the screen.

The Mask Color can be specified as well. This is the color that will be used to indicate transparency and will not be drawn.

Remember that the separator lines are only meant to separate items on the display so they should not be very tall or they will take up too much space. However, using them adds a very nice visual to a Theme and makes it look more complete.

Configuring the Module Icons

Use this setting to configure the individual icons used by all of Dashboard v3 and the Dashboard Today modules. An attempt has been made to account for every possible icon used across the entire program set and place it into this image.

Normal and Selected images must be provided. Selected Icons may not always make sense, but consider that one-handed operation and keyboarded devices are now becoming a reality so selection will be used to indicate what item on the screen currently has the focus.

The Mask Color can be specified as well. This is the color that will be used to indicate transparency and will not be drawn.

By its nature, this image file is likely to be expanded in the future but it will never be modified nor will the existing icon placement locations be changed so that older Theme's will remain compatible with future theme's.

Here is a sample icon set for non-VGA devices:



The icons are defined for Dashboard (from left to right) as:

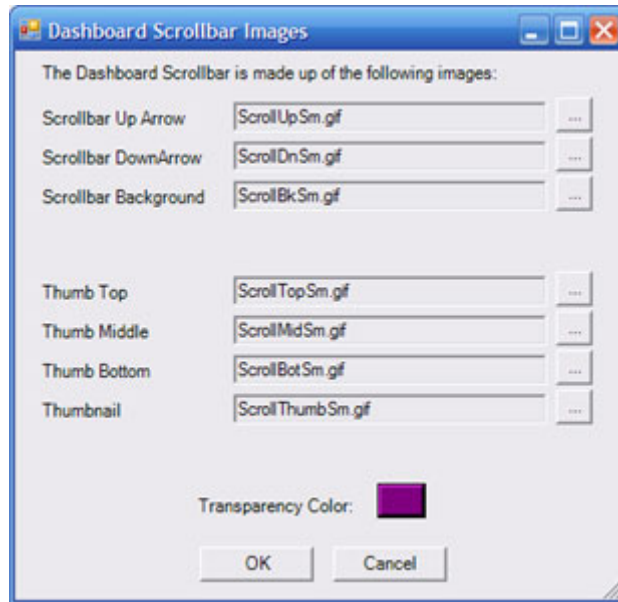
Close Box
Search
Blank Space
High Priority Item
Low Priority Item
Incomplete Task
Complete Task
Recurring Appointment
Appointment Reminder
Appointment Participants
View Arrow Down
Private
View Arrow Side
View Arrow Up
Mail Unread
Mail Unread w/ Attachment
Mail Read
Mail Read w/ Attachment
Up Arrow

SNOOPTHEME CREATOR

Down Arrow
Left Arrow
Right Arrow
Date Icon
Size Icon
Inbox Folder
Outbox Folder
Sending Folder
Deleted Folder
NoSend Folder
Service Folder
Inbox 2 Folder
Sent Items Folder
Email
Mobile Phone
Phone
Work
Open Folder (Browse)
Close Folder (Browse)
Executable File (Browse)
Document File (Browse)
Power Off Device
Lock Device
Reset Device
Owner Plugin Icon
Agenda Plugin Icon
DateTime Plugin Icon
Mail Plugin Icon
Tasks Plugin Icon
Launcher Plugin Icon
Contacts Plugin Icon
Web Plugin Icon
Web Search Icon
Web 'GO' Icon
Options
Sort
Agenda & Tasks Combined Plugin Icon
Reload

Configuring the Scrollbar

The Scrollbar used within Dashboard by its modules is completely customizable. There are seven images which must be supplied for the scrollbar.



The Scrollbar up arrow is draw at the top of the scrollbar area.



The Scrollbar down arrow is drawn at the bottom of the scrollbar area.



The Scrollbar background is drawn between the up and down arrows and is repeatedly drawn until there is no more room.



Because the scroller that will move up and down within the scrollbar is dynamically sized based on the contents of the data to be scrolled, it consists of 4 images.

The Thumb Top is the very top portion of the scroller and it is only drawn once.



The Thumb Middle is the portion between the Thumb Top and Thumb Bottom and is drawn repeatedly to fill the space between them so make sure this image can repeat vertically.



The Thumb Bottom is the very bottom portion of the scroller and it is only drawn once.

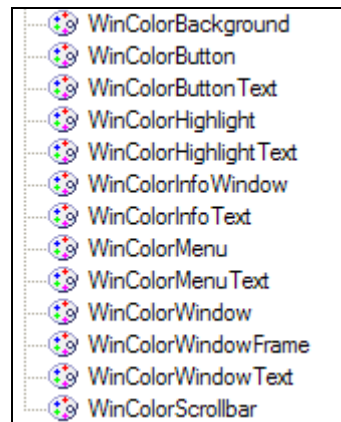


The Thumbnail is drawn in the middle of the scroller.



Windows Colors

Dashboard v3 will support the modification of the Windows system colors as well. These colors cannot be changed without a soft reset of the device, but many people desire to change these so it was felt that the program would be incomplete if it did not allow for more color changes than just the Today colors.



Just be aware that specifying these colors will require a soft-reset of the device for them to take and as of this writing Dashboard will not soft-reset the device but will prompt the user to do so if these colors are configured.

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