

Spriter Free Beta Version

Welcome to Spriter's open beta!

This is a guide to help you get started with the beta version of Spriter.

Spriter is still in development. **The beta version referred to in this document, and available for download now at Brashmonkey.com should not be taken as an indication of the final quality of the product, nor a final representation of the interface or feature set.** We still have a lot to do!

We present this public beta for testing purposes, and to give a transparent view of the current state of development to anyone interested in our Kickstarter project.

Please save frequently, and understand that as with all beta software, you may experience bugs, including crashes. Please report bugs and feature suggestions to Brashmonkey.com/forum. Following each step, there may be a frequently asked question about that feature in *italics*. If you just want to get started quickly, you can skip the italics text without missing any information about using the current beta version.

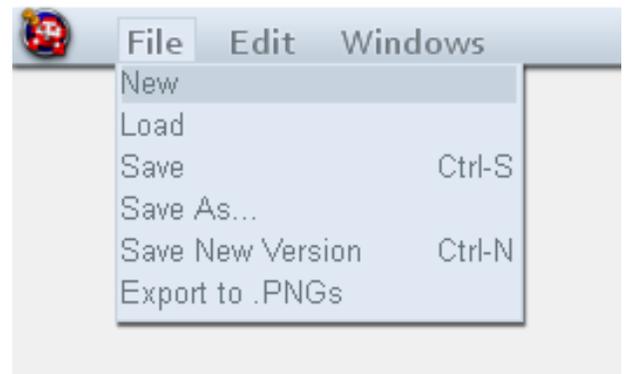
Lastly, you are now the proud owner of the free version of Spriter. Though we reiterate that the current version is in beta, and not an indication of the quality of the finished product, you are free to use your creations made with Spriter Beta : Free Edition in your projects, including commercial projects. All features from this beta will be present in Spriter 1.0, and your files will still be useable.

Thank you for participating in our public beta. We look forward to working with you to make Spriter the best animation tool possible.

Getting Started

Spriter is a tool to animate art assets created in other software. Create your images in whatever software you wish. We recommend exporting to PNG, but spriter works with most common image formats. For this beta, save your images to one or more folders located in the same folder. There is already a folder arranged this way if you just want to try out Spriter.

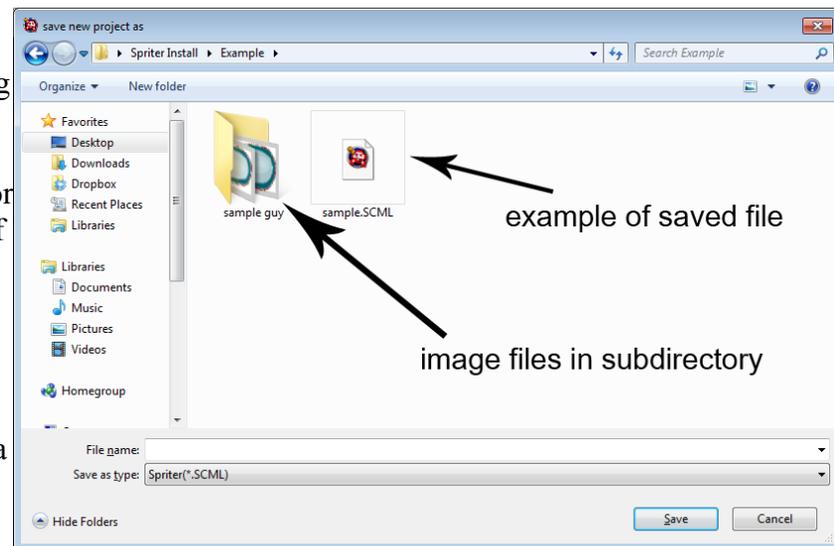
To Begin, Choose New from the File menu to begin a new project.



Name and save your new project to a folder which contains one or more subfolders containing images you want to use to build a character.

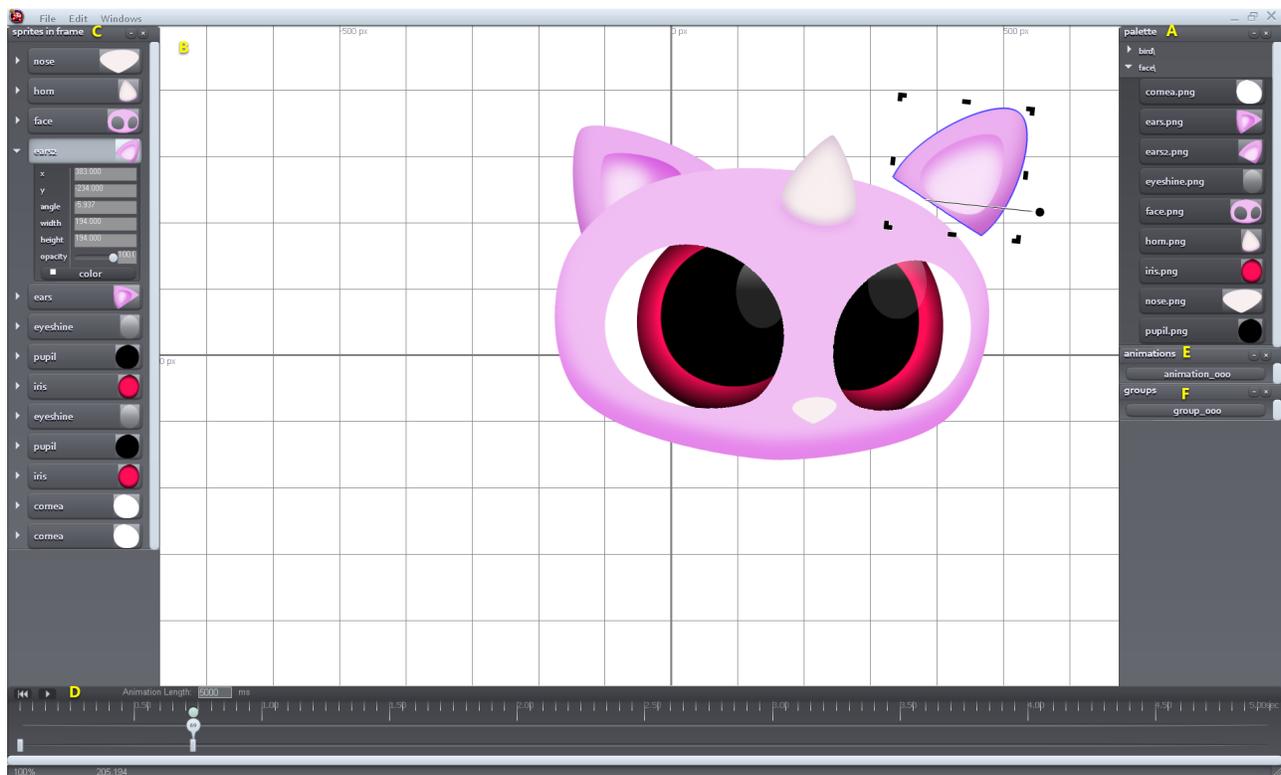
In this beta, Spriter only checks one level deep for images, meaning, it won't check the subfolders of your subfolders.

If you have not prepared a folder, there are some sample images provided for you with your Spriter installation. You may use these by saving your file to the Example folder in your Spriter installation directory. You should avoid picking a folder like the My Pictures folder which may contain thousands of images, The current beta will attempt to load them all into VRAM.



Can you please make it so you can manage the files and folders from within Spriter?

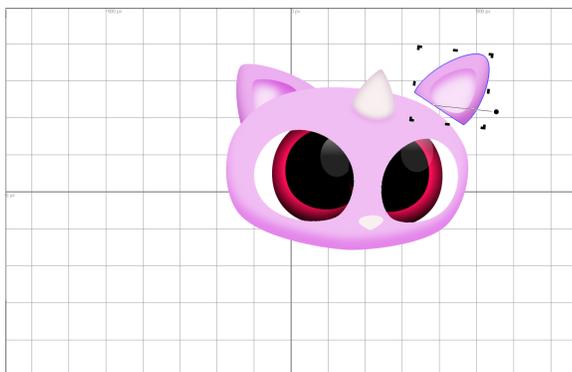
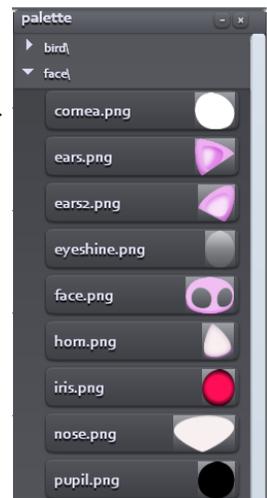
Yes! We plan to allow drag and drop folder management from within the 'palette window' which you will learn about below.



Above is an overview of the Spriter interface. We'll cover each area in the order indicated.

A. The Palette Window.

The palette window contains all the images in the subfolders where you saved your project. You can expand a folder by clicking the arrow next to the folder name. Drag images from here onto the canvas (the large white grid area in the image above). If you release your mouse button before leaving the palette window, the image won't be added.



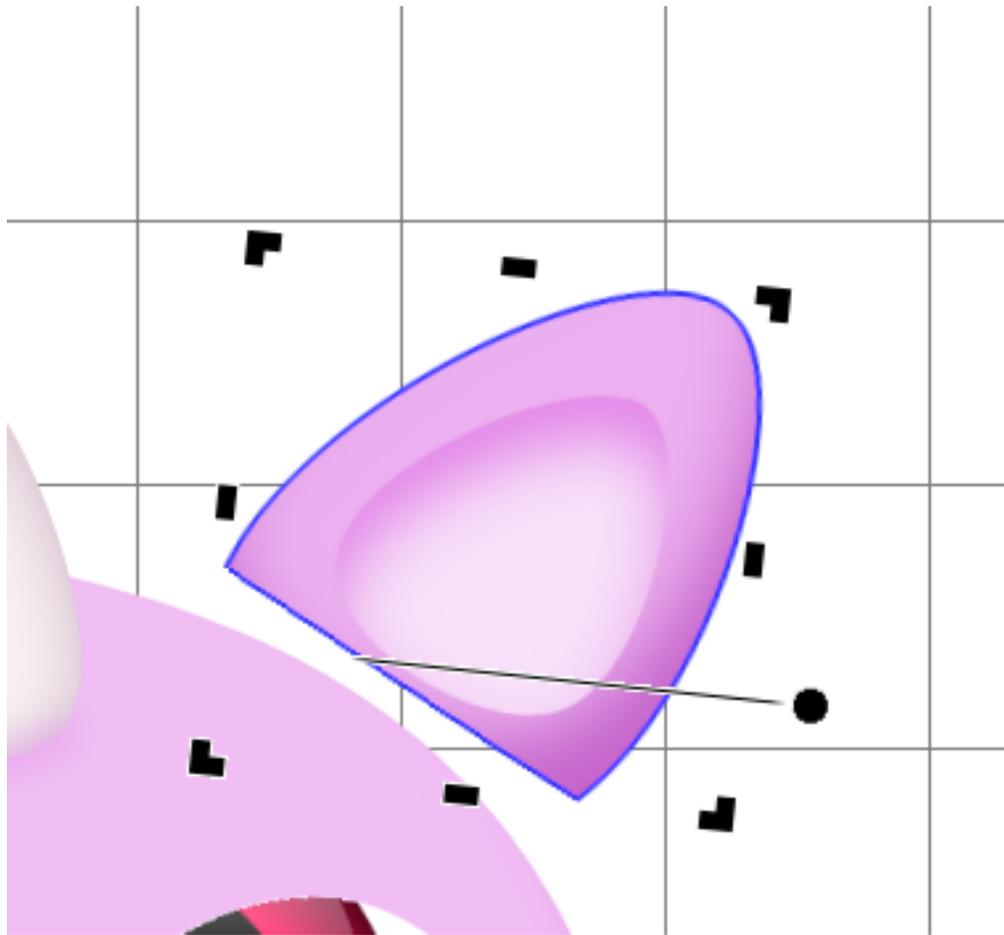
B. The Canvas Window.

The canvas is the main working area for building your character. Once a piece is on the canvas, you can select it by left clicking. When a piece is selected, transform controls appear that you can use to resize and rotate the image. Hold Shift to constrain proportions while resizing.

Press 'H' to change the 'hotspot', or 'pivot point'. This will be the center of rotation and resizing for a given part. Hotspots are shared by all instances of a given image.

You can also select and manipulate several images at a time, by holding shift to add to a selection, or alt, to subtract from it.

When multiple objects are selected, all position, rotation, and resizing affects all selected sprites as a single entity. A temporary pivot point and bounding box is assigned to your entire multiple selection, and you can change the pivot point by pressing 'h'. This pivot point only lasts until the end of the selection. Also, it is possible to save a selection, to easily reselect the same set of images again, and this will be covered in section F, The Groups Window.



Other useful keyboard shortcuts for the canvas window and sprites:

- b.....toggles the background color
- w.....one step up in z-order(which object is 'on top' of which)
- s.....one step down in z-order
- a.....send to top of z-order
- d.....send to bottom of z-order
- x.....flip on the x-axis
- y.....flip on the y-axis
- arrow keys.....nudge object 1 pixel in a direction
- mouse wheel.....zooms
- hold middle mouse or spacebar.....pan in canvas
- hold alt while resizing
- a multiple selection..... only resize the selection spatially without resizing the sprites

Will there be equivalent visual interface elements for all of these shortcuts?

Yes.

Will there be customizable keyboard shortcuts?

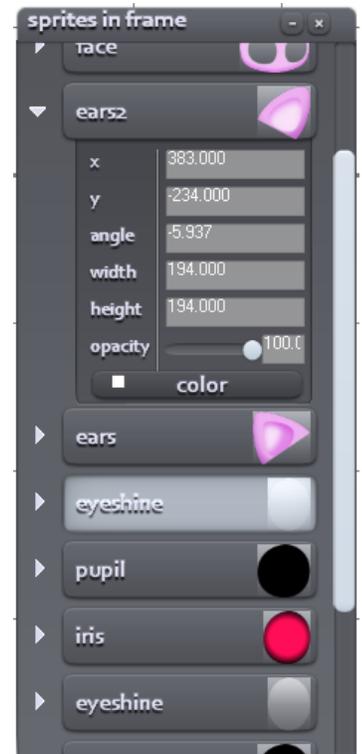
Most likely, but it's not high on the priority list at this time.

C. The Sprites in Frame Window.

The Sprites in Frame window shows you all the sprites currently in use on the canvas. If a sprite is selected it will be highlighted in this window. You can also select a sprite by clicking on it in the list.

Items in this window are listed in z-order. If a sprite is above another in this window, then it is on top in the canvas when overlapping. You can change z-order in this window by dragging and dropping a sprite to a new position.

Clicking the arrow next to a Sprite in this window will expand details that you can manually edit.



D. The Timeline.

The timeline is used to create keyframes at different points in an animation. Simply drag the timeline handle to a new position and make a change. This will create a keyframe. Keyframes, can be copied, deleted, cloned, and pasted by right-clicking, and selecting from the options.

Zoom into the timeline using the mouse wheel. Playback and rewind controls are located on the top left of the timeline, and users can type in a new total time for the animation in the box labeled 'Animation Length'.

Access onion skinning controls by dragging the green and red dots docked above the timeline handle out to the amount of time you want onion skinned. Onion skinning allows you to easily see how an animation progresses over time, by displaying ghost images of frames that occur before or after the current frame.



So I can only use autokey?

This is only a limitation of the beta version. We plan to add a more flexible keyframing system.

Will you be able to change the onion skinning from the red and green colors.

Definitely possible in the future. Again, not high on the list of priorities, as of now.

Why in the video, when you dragged the timeline handle or played your animation, your character would go from keyframe to keyframe in a smooth gradual motion, but mine just jump instantly from one keyframe image to the next.

This smooth interpolation of motion is known as motion tweening, or sometimes just tweening. This feature will be in Spriter 1.0. The free version will be able to view animations like this, but as of now, saving the tweening data will be a pro-only feature.

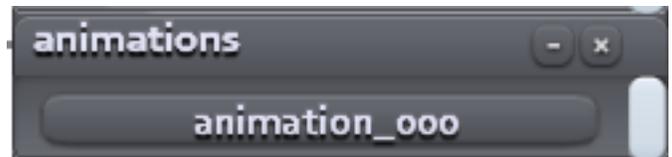
If you'd like to test out this feature, you may, under the following disclaimer. This feature is in pre-alpha state, and only exists as a proof of concept, and for testing performance. If you try to edit your animation before turning it off, strange things will happen, and if you don't have the same set of images on each frame and in the same z-order, very strange things will happen. If you've read and understand this paragraph, press ctrl-alt-t to toggle this rudimentary tweening. This is a purely visual test that does not save tweening data to file..

It would be nice if you could snap the timeline to frame/interval/etc.

These functions are important for useability, and we will most likely be adding them as they are requested in the near future, given proper funding.

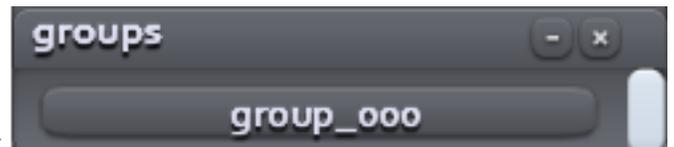
E. The Animations Window.

The animations window lists all animations for the character. Right-click to rename, delete, or clone an animation.



F. The Groups Window.

The groups window lists selection groups in Spriter. To create a selection group, select multiple sprites, and right-click on the one's who's pivot point should be used for the entire group. Click on a selection group to select the members. In this beta version, all group members must be available in the frame. The beta does not allow partial selection of groups. Right-click to rename or delete a group.



I didn't see bones anywhere in there OR selection groups should be more like....

Selection groups were added to this beta to deliver at least a bare minimum grouping function to be able to pick large group of parts, or frequently obstructed parts, like the back arm, for instance. This was added quickly to make the beta much more useful, within a small frame of time. However, it's a limited version of a much more powerful concept, Skeletal Hierarchy. This will be the "group" of Spriter 1.0. This concept deserves a more detailed explanation than is appropriate here. Interested parties can receive updates by following us on any social media listed on our homepage, Brashmonkey.com. And of course on Brashmonkey.com itself.

Miscellaneous

Any window, except the timeline window and the canvas window, can be floated or docked by dragging and dropping into or out of the dock zones on the sides of the screen. All docks are resizable. The timeline can be resized to either overlap or make room for docks by dragging it's sides



One last important shortcut, Control-N saves your project to a new incremental filename, so your animation called “guy.SCML” would be saved as “guy_000.SCML”, then “guy_001.SCML”, etc.

Thank you very much for testing the beta of the free version of Spriter. Please direct any questions, feedback(positive or negative), as well as bug reports, and feature suggestions to our forums at www.brashmonkey.com/forum. If you would like to reach us personally for interviews, questions, or any other matters, our emails are below

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