IGM Tutorial XVIII: Tips And Tricks - Part 1

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So by now you've noticed a lot of things in IG Maker that we haven't went over or that you've discovered and played around with on your own. Today we'll go over a few of the lesser-known aspects of the program that can be a great help or shortcut to doing certain things in your game. Go ahead and grab this GPD or load up your Action RPG thus far and we'll get started!

So head to the "Action RPG" tab, and the "Canvases" sub-tab. Check out the mini-image of your canvas and you'll see that it's really plain. All you have is grass on there. For now go ahead and use the tiles we've got set up to create a small brick building, or a fence. Add a little style to your canvas and keep checking out that mini-image up there.

When you're done and you have a nifty mini-image, I want you to hit the button right above that image labeled "Adding A Reduced Image As A Material".

So what does this mysterious button do? Exactly what you'd expect actually. It takes that mini-image of your map and turns it into a graphic, then automatically dumps it into your graphic materials. If you head to your "Materials" tab and the "Graphics" sub-tab, you'll see that there is now a new image called "Canvas 001" (or whatever else you might have named your canvas).

When you look at it, it's a small and basic view of the canvas without any gadgets on it. This can be very handy for a number of things. Adding in-game maps of areas for instance, showing off promo shots of your game before it is released, you can use them for level-select previews in games like the Shooter we've worked on in other tutorials… There are a ton of uses. What all can you come up with?
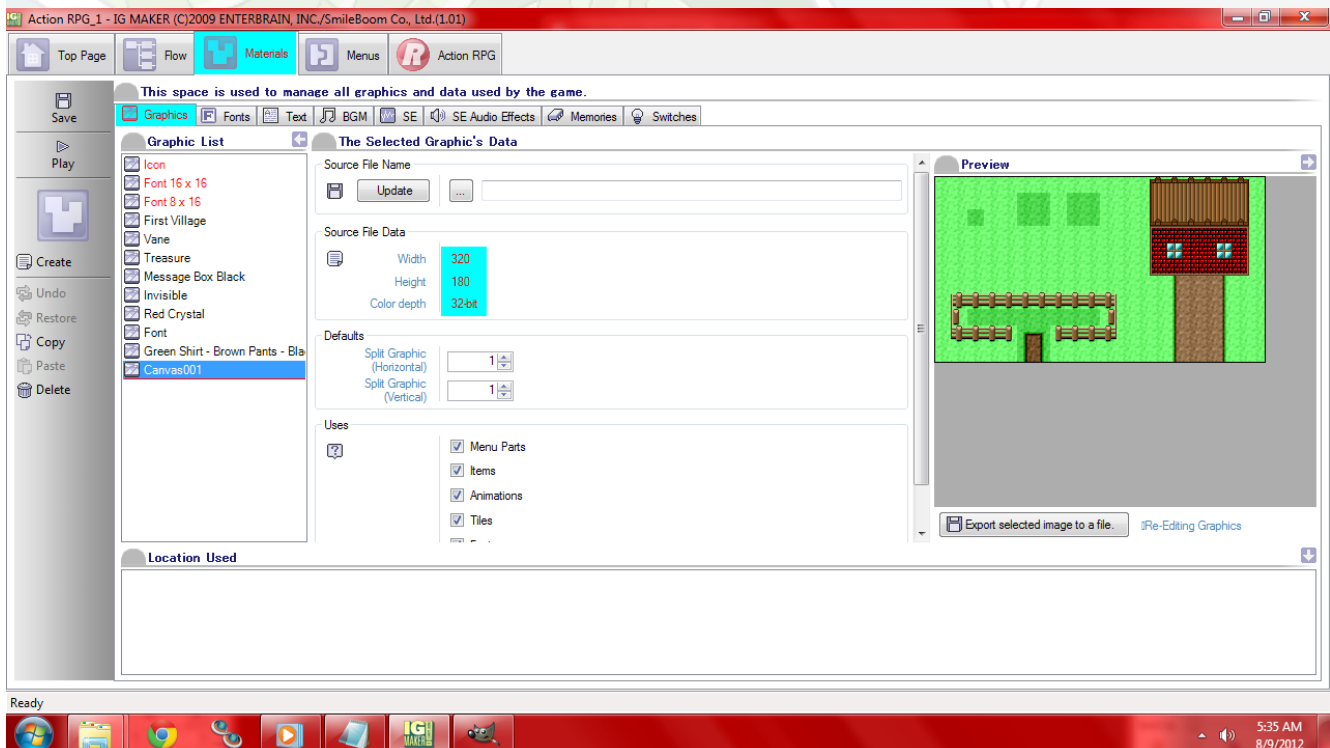

While you're here, I want you to take a look at the very top item in your "Graphic List". I've mentioned this before but I thought I would explain it with a bit more detail. The graphic in question is named "Icon" and you'll notice that the text for it is in red. It's a 64×64 32-bit .png file. Here's why it is important: this is the game icon you'll see when you export to .exe AND if you decide to put your game on the Xbox 360 Indie Market (or just test play it on the console) this is the icon that will be displayed next to the title of your game.

So what's the tip/trick to it? You can change it. Just like you can change any graphic on the "Graphic List". If you take a look under "The Selected Graphic's Data" you'll see a section called "Source File Name". There is a button labeled "Update" which will essentially refresh the file you've got selected, but to the right of that is a button labeled "…" which you can click to change the source file to another of your choosing.

This gives you the ability to use custom icons and switch them as you like for every game you make. For best results I highly recommend keeping the 64×64/32-bit resolution for any icons you decide to use.
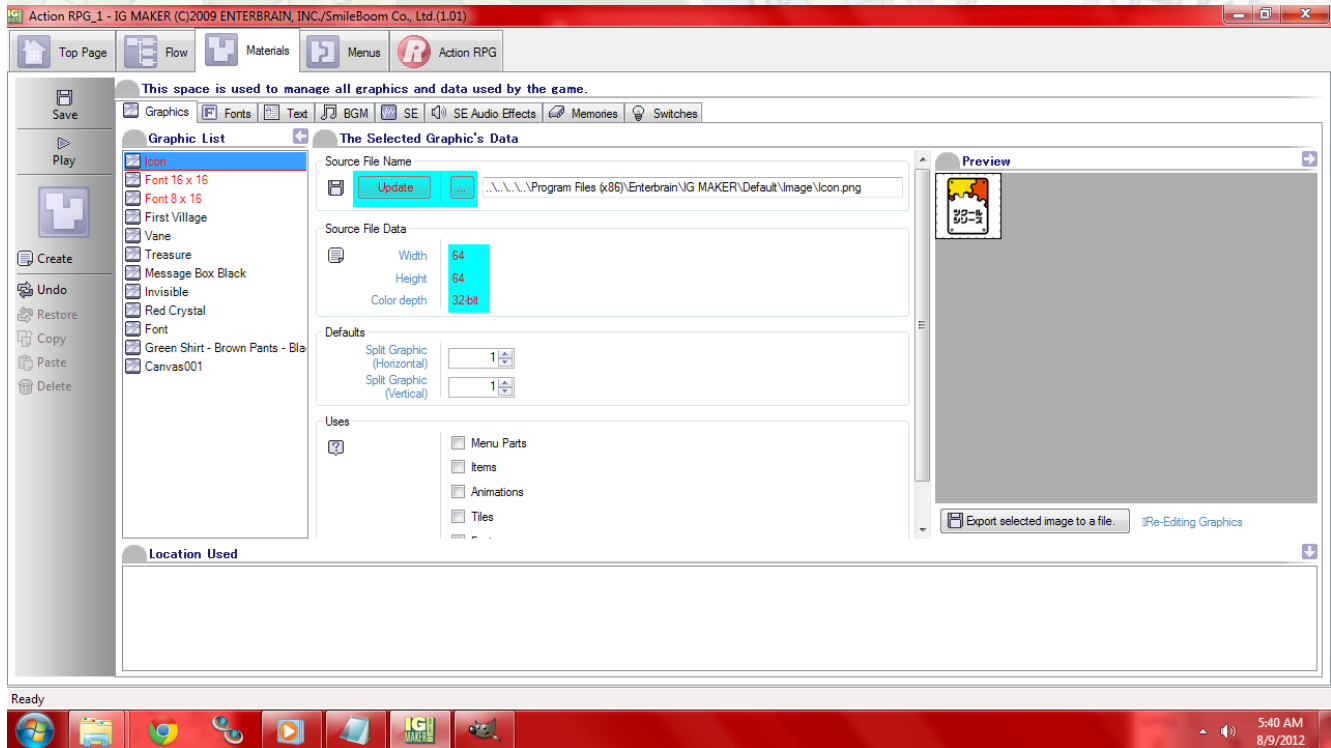

Let's go over one more thing on this tab real quick. Go ahead and select that "Canvas 001" image you created earlier. Off to the right you'll see the image preview for it, and beneath that you'll find a button labeled "Export Selected Image To A File". This is another button that does what you'd expect, but being off to the side it's easy to overlook and also very handy to have. For instance, say you wanted to edit that capture you took of the canvas. Well, you'd need to get it out of IGM so that you can modify it in your image editing software. This button lets you do that. It has even more uses though.

You may have noticed that when you pick up GPDs from these tutorials that all you need is the GPD file. All of the resources are included with each GPD. It's kind of like an IGM-Editable zip file really. So what does this have to do with the button in question? When you share your GPDs with other people they can grab your resources using this button.

This can be a double-edged sword though as you may not want other people just taking things from your project, in which case it may be better to just send an executable. The plus side is that this button makes it a lot easier to work on projects with multiple people. Instead of having to send a pack of resources you can send the GPD and everything comes in a single file.
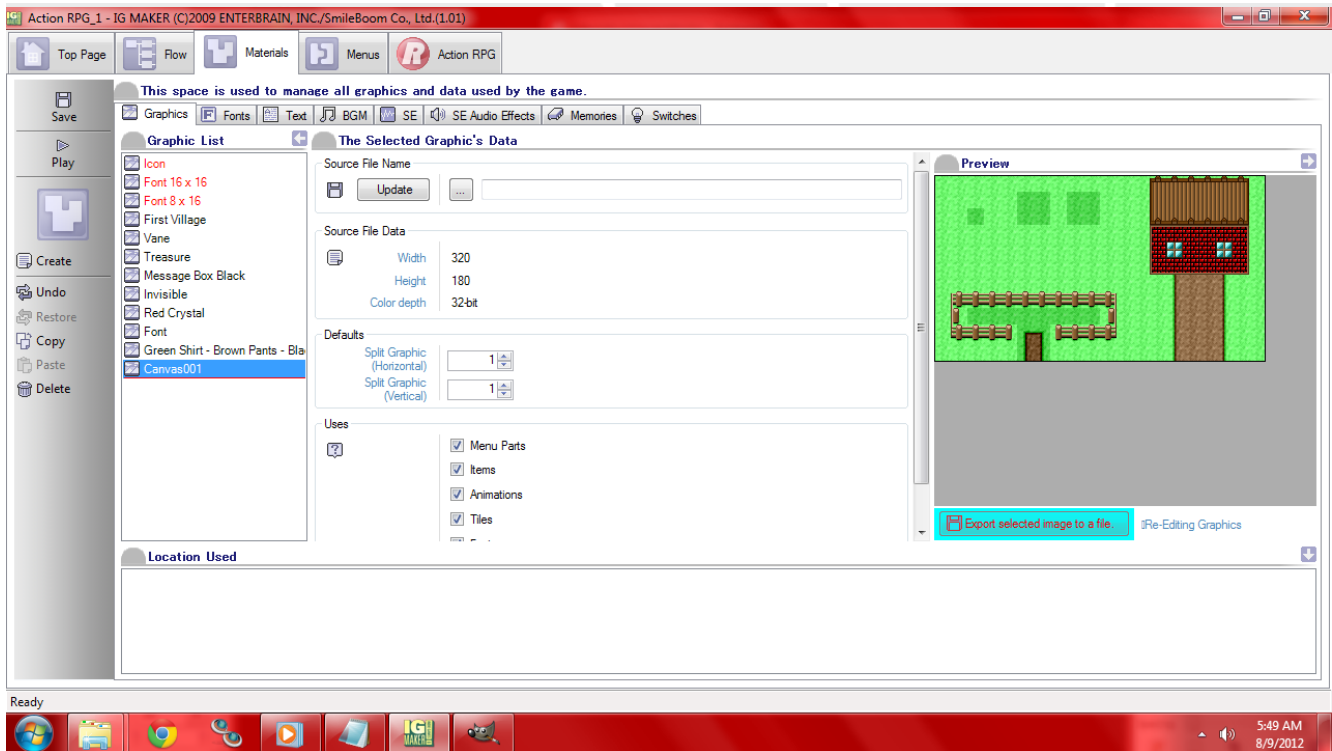
That's it for this time folks. Look for more tips and tricks in the next installment!

Ready to start your own game in IGM? Purchase IGM at a 10% discount using the coupon code "**igmakerohyeah**". Any questions, comments? Ask them in the forums.