



SnapClip 1.7

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What is SnapClip?

SnapClip is a small [faceless background application](#) to take screenshot easily and quickly. The captured image can be copied to the Clipboard, or saved into various format file including picture clipping, JPEG, TIFF, PICT, etc. It is designed to be more like memo tool rather than screen capture tool. If you save the image to picture clipping file with thumbnail icon, you can easily see what kind of image without using any applications. That's why I uses the words 'memo tool'.

Have you ever thought these thoughts?

- "I wish I could save a captured image into a clipping file so that I can view it easily later."
- "I wish I could see the content of a captured image easily by looking at icons."
- "I wish I could cancel the operation in the middle without creating capture file."
- "I wish I could capture non-rectangular shape images easily without including wasteful space around the image."
- "Shoot! The mouse just moved a little bit when I released the mouse button. I wish I could select the capturing area precisely with ease."
- "I like Mac OS X's standard screen capture, but I wish if I could specify output file format and file name"

These are the things I always think when I am using screen capture tools, and the reasons I developed SnapClip.

You can use SnapClip in many ways. I myself use it frequently to take a picture memo while I am surfing the web. It's easy to capture the web page with images and text with SnapClip. Web site archive/download tools are useful for off line browsing but they're not good for taking only a part of the page as a memo.

Installation

Since it's an application program, you can copy it anywhere (most likely, either /Applications or ~/Application folder). You might want to add SnapClip to login items from System Preferences so that it starts automatically.

How to use? (1) Configuring SnapClip

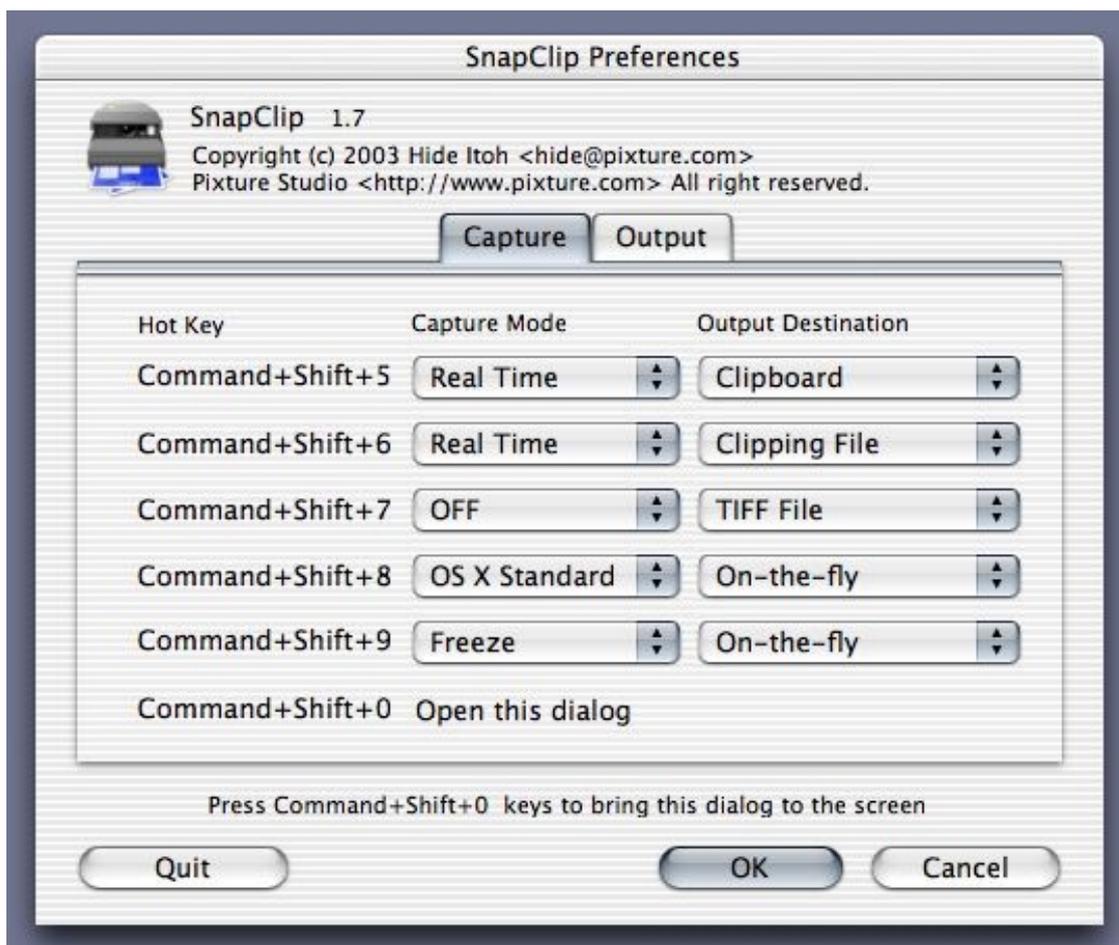
SnapClip is a [faceless background application](#) program. It does not have its own menu bar, and the application icon will not be added to the Dock. It just stays quiet in the background until a certain key combination is pressed by the user.

When you start SnapClip for the first time (or upgrading to a new version), SnapClip displays the Preference dialog and lets you customize the key settings before you start using it. Once you set your favorite key settings, press the OK button. This preference dialog can be opened anytime by pressing **Command+Shift+O** keys unless capturing is going on.

OK – update the preference and go to background (standby) The change will be effective immediately.

Cancel – do not change preference and go to background (standby)

Quit – quit SnapClip application.



As you see in the picture above, you can assign up to five hot key configurations. Each hot key configuration has two elements, capture mode and output destination. When you make any changes and press **OK** button, the new setting will be effective immediately.

Capture Mode

Real Time

This mode let you see the actual screen activities while you are capturing. If the screen has any moving things (like web banner animation, movie, etc) you can see it moving until you finish capturing. However, this mode does not let you capture active controls on the dialog, active window title bar, open menu, contextual menu, etc. All these items are deactivated or closed(menu) when capturing is started. Therefore, this mode is ideal for capturing window's contents.

Freeze

This mode let you capture anything on the screen as they were when the hot key is pressed. It can capture menu and/or anything that you can not capture with Real Time capture mode. However, it displayed the frozen screen while capturing so you can not see any screen activity until capturing is done. This is because SnapClip open a full screen window and display the screen contents when the hot key was pressed, so actual screen is covered by this full size window until the operation is

completed. This mode is ideal for capturing menu and other active GUI elements.

Mac OS X Standard

This mode will internally invoke Mac OS X's standard screen capture (screen capture command, which is invoked by pressing Command+Shift+4 keys). It uses the window selection mode as default mode so that you can capture a window of your selection easily. The difference between using Mac OS X's standard capture and this mode is that you can still specify the output file format and file name using SnapClip's preference dialog, while Mac OS X's screen capture always creates PDF file with no customizable file name.

OFF

If capturing mode is set to OFF, that hot key combination does not do anything.

Output Destination

Currently, there are seven selections are available for the output destination. Generally, the lower menu item you choose, the smaller file size you get. So choose the one which is suitable for your purpose of using the captured image.

Clipboard

Captured image is copied to the Clipboard as a PICT data. No output file is created. You can paste this PICT data into word processor document or graphic application document directly.

Clipping File

Captured image is saved into a picture clipping file on the Desktop with thumbnail icon.

PICT File (lossless)

Captured image is saved into a PICT file on the Desktop with thumbnail icon. The output file name has .pict extension. The image data is not compressed, the file size tend to be big. but it does not lose the original image quality.

TIFF File (lossless)

Captured image is saved into a TIFF file on the Desktop with thumbnail icon. The output file name has .tiff extension. The image data is compressed with packbit encoding which is lossless compression method. The file size is much smaller than PICT file.

Photoshop PSD file (lossless)

Captured image is saved into a Photoshop file (PSD file) on the Desktop with thumbnail icon. The output file name has .psd extension. The image data is restructured to planar RGB format and compressed with RLE (Run Length Encoding) which is lossless. The file size is about 1/3 of the original raw image data, which is mostly smaller than TIFF file.

PNG File (lossless)

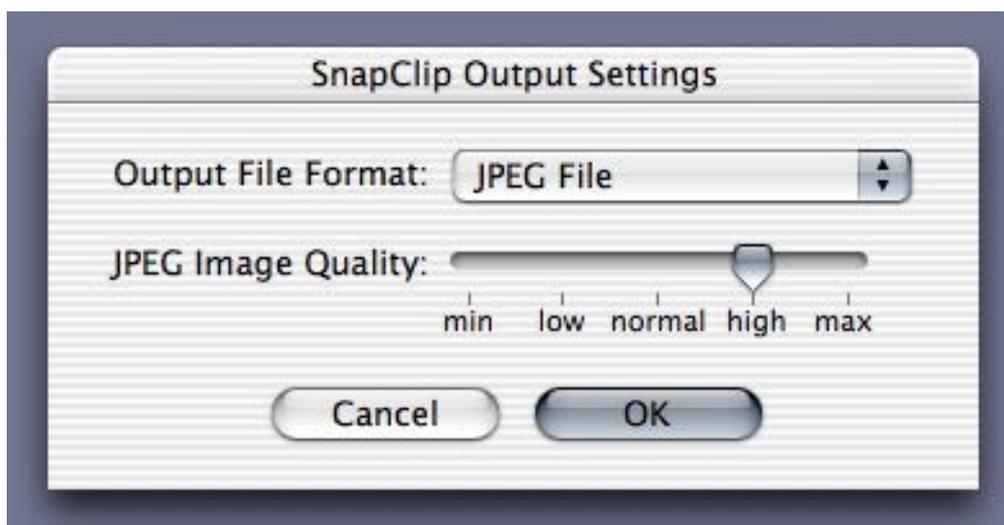
Captured image is saved into a PNG file on the Desktop with thumbnail icon. The output file name has .png extension. The image data is compressed with LZ77 encoding which is lossless compression method. The file size is about 1/5 of the original raw image data.

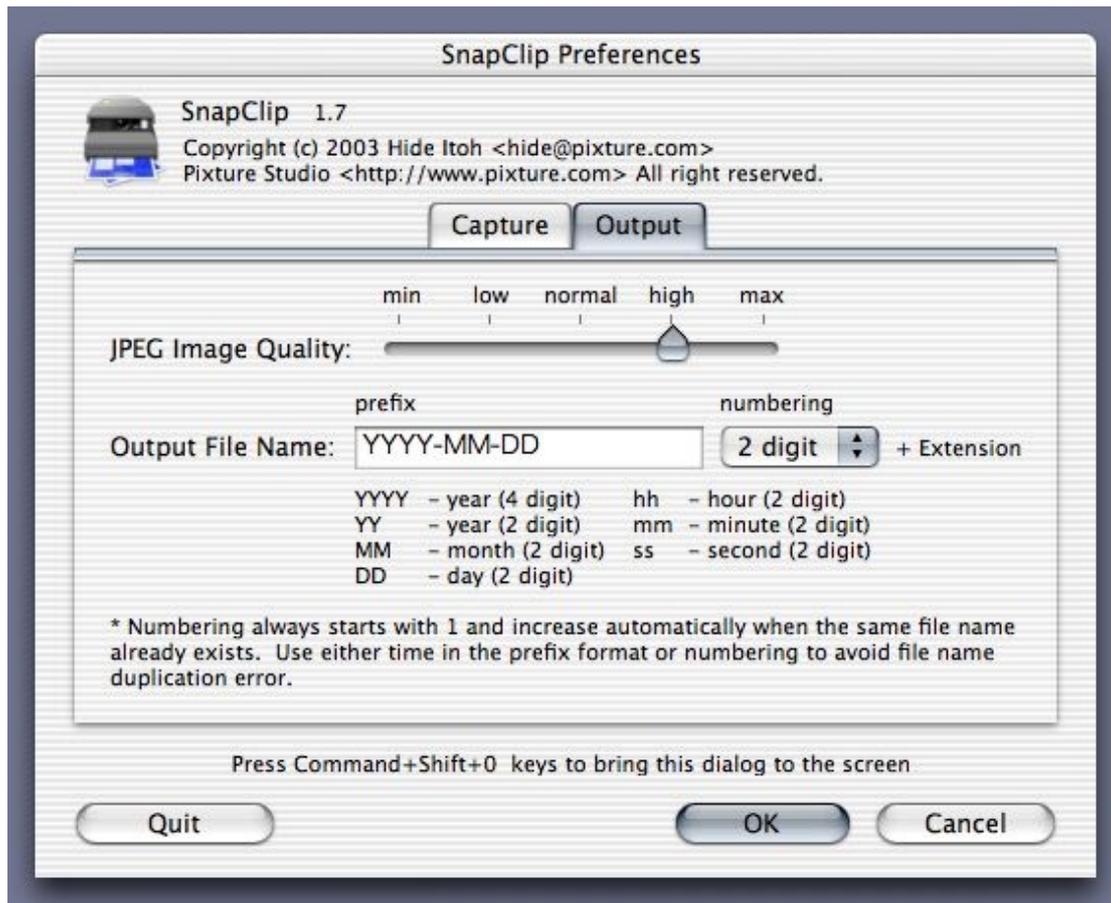
JPEG File (may lose quality)

Captured image is saved into a JPEG file on the Desktop with thumbnail icon. The output file name has .jpg extension. The image data is compressed with JFIF compression which lose original image quality but the file size is significantly smaller. Currently, SnapClip uses normal quality compression level. The file size is about 1/18 of the original raw image data (in Normal Quality mode). If you want to make the output file size as small as possible, JPEG is the best for that purpose. The image quality for JPEG output can be set in the 'Other' tab of the Preferences dialog.

On-the-fly

When capturing operation is done, a small dialog (see below) appears on the screen and let you determine the output setting on-the-fly. If you choose JPEG for output, you can also select the image quality. This image quality setting does not affect the default JPEG image quality in the Preference dialog.





Output Options

With Output pane of the Preference dialog, you can select image quality of JPEG file and output file name format. For output file name, you can use the combination of customizable prefix text and numbering.

Numbering always starts from 1 and automatically increase when the same file name already exists. So if you use numbering, there won't be file name duplication error. If you do not use numbering, please use 'hour/minute/second' for your prefix text to avoid the file name duplication error.

Quitting SnapClip

Since SnapClip is faceless background application, you can not switch it to front and quit from menu like other normal applications. Only the easy way to quit SnapClip is to Quit from Preference dialog. (or kill the process from terminal, if you are familiar with Unix) SnapClip is designed to stay background all the time, so it's not a big issue at least for me.

How to use? (2) Capturing screen image (For Freeze and Real Time capture mode)

When the key combination is pressed, SnapClip displays cross line cursor on the screen and let you start selecting the area you want to capture.

All you need to do is select the start and end positions of the rectangle area you want to capture using the mouse or keyboard. Here's one important thing you need to know: Unlike standard screen capture tools, you do not need to drag the mouse to the end point. Instead, you need to click the mouse button twice, first at the start point, next at the end point. Like the menu operation change with Mac OS 8, I just wanted to make the capturing operation easier by not using the mouse drag. If you do not select points within 1 minute, the operation is automatically canceled.

SnapClip can be fully operated using the keyboard as well as the mouse. Using the keyboard prevents the slight movement of the mouse when you click on the mouse button at the start and end points. I personally prefer to use keyboard to select start and end points than using mouse. Also, using keyboard will let you use some additional features as follows:

Arrow keys

Move the cursor 1 pixel in the key direction. If you use arrow keys with the Shift key, then it will move the cursor 8 pixels.

After you select the starting point, you can move the starting point by pressing Option key + arrow key. This will move the starting point 1 pixel to the key direction. Also, pressing Option + Shift + arrow key move the starting point 8 pixels to the key direction.

Return/Enter key

Selects the start and end point. It works the same as the mouse button.

ESC key

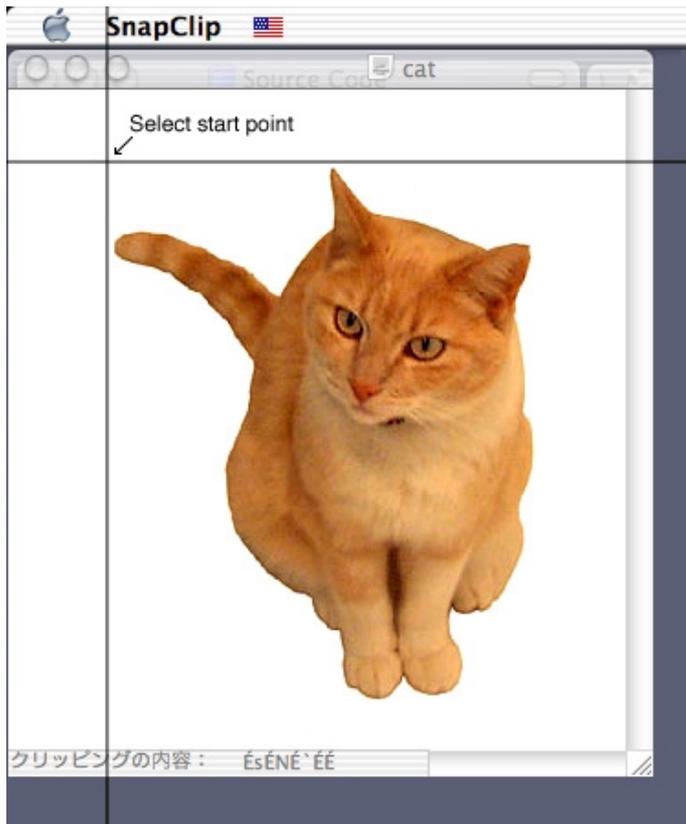
Cancels the current operation (stage) and returns to the previous stage.

If you press ESC before selecting a start point, then the capturing operation will be canceled. If you press ESC key after selecting the start point and before selecting a end point, then it will go back to the 1st stage and let you reselect a start point.

TAB key

Toggles the cross line mode ON and OFF (default is ON). This mode makes it easy to capture the object with a non-rectangular shape (like a image below). Under the cross line mode, horizontal and vertical half transparent grey lines are displayed on the entire screen (of course, the current mouse position is the intersection of these two lines). Now you can easily capture non-rectangular objects without having much space around the object and without clipping the image.

Cross lines are displayed only until you select the start point. Once you select the start point, the cross lines will disappear. Below is a good example where the cross line mode is convenient.

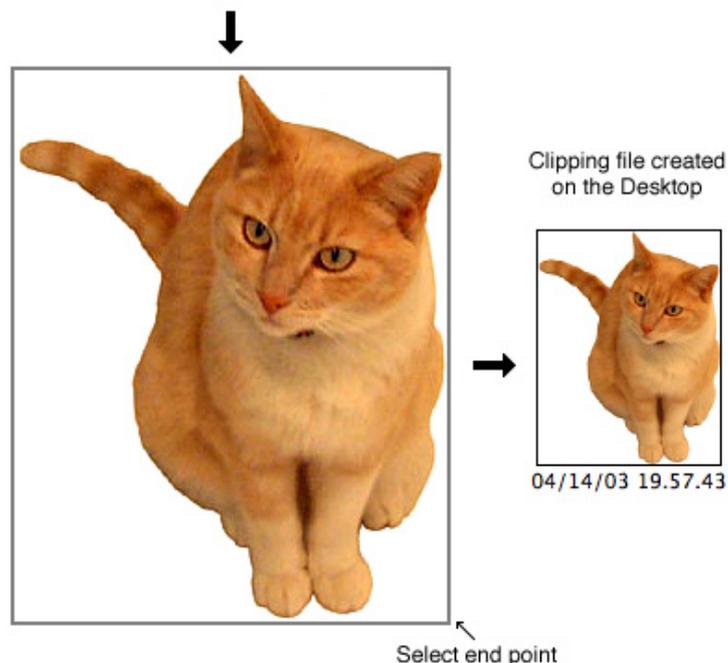


When SnapClip create captured image as a file on the Desktop. It also add thumbnail icon to the file so that you can easily see what kind of image you captured at a glance. It will have the file name determined by the output option preference you choose followed by a file name extension. The following file name extension is used for each file format.

Clipping file	No extension
PICT file	.pict
TIFF file	.tif
Photoshop file	.psd
PNG file	.png
JPEG file	.jpg

Sound a bit difficult to operate? Actually not!. I am sure that you will get used to it quickly when you use it a couple of times.

When the start point and the end point is the same, SnapClip captures entire screen. So if you want to capture entire screen, just press Return key twice.



Version history

- 1.7 (5/11/2004)
 - Added Mac OS X standard screen capture mode.
 - Added preference options for output file name so that users can customized flexibly.
 - Fixed a problem caused by pressing hot-key while capturing is going on (double-capturing issue)
 - Changed JPEG output image quality settings from pop-up menu to slider control.

- 1.6 (6/8/2003)
 - Added On-the-fly capturing destination option which let you choose output format and other settings on-the-fly.
 - Added 'Other' tab to the Preference dialog which let you choose other settings. Currently, JPEG output quality can be selected.
 - Changed the icon of the application.
 - Changed the file name extension for TIFF from .tiff to .tif.

- 1.5 (5/30/2003)
 - Major version-up. Added various image file format (JPEG, TIFF, PNG, PICT, PSD) for output destination option.
 - Improved full-screen mode and now it's called Freeze mode which you can capture menu or anything on screen.
 - Restructure preference settings. Now it supports up to 5 hot key configurations.

- 1.3 (5/12/2003)
 - Now thumbnail icon 'it32' resource uses TIFF-packbits compression to reduce clipping file size
 - After capturing is done, it restore the original front application back to the front
 - Minor improvement and bug fixes

- 1.2 (4/30/2003)
 - Now SnapClip is [Faceless Background Application](#). So you no longer see the SnapClip icon in the dock.

- 1.1 (4/16/2003)
 - Minor improvement – clipping file now appears on desktop with no delay
 - Added feature that moves starting point by pressing Option key + arrow key after you have selected starting point.

- 1.0 (4/14/2003)
 - First release

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