AquaSoft ® SlideShow-Manager

User Manual

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Contents

1 Introduction 1

1 Welcome ... 1

2 How To 1

1 Creating a simple menu ... 2
2 Creating a menu with chapters ... 2
3 Assigning templates ... 3
4 Burning a menu for PC ... 4
5 Exporting a menu to a folder ... 6
6 Archiving a menu ... 8
7 Creating a CD-image for PC ... 10
8 Burning a menu to a DVD ... 12
9 Creating VOB-files ... 14
10 Creating MPEG-files ... 16
11 Playing a menu in SlideShow-Manager ... 18
12 Creating and editing a template ... 18
13 Download Center ... 19
14 Customization ... 22

3 Template Editor 23

1 Designing guide lines ... 24
2 Types of templates ... 25
3 Designing templates ... 26
4 Variables ... 27

4 AquaSoft ® Bitmap Effects 29

1 A simple shadow effect ... 31
2 A "self-border" using duplication and transformation ... 33

Index 0

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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome

With **AquaSoft ® SlideShow-Manager** creating sophisticated interactive DVD and PC menus from your slide shows by using templates is a child's play.
You can use the templates that are included with the the application, load new ones from the Download Center or design own templates for your menus using the integrated Editor.
The new AquaSoft Effect System is available for designing your templates.
Provide your templates with a title page and an end page, and add background music of your choice.

SlideShow-Manager takes into consideration the structure of your slide shows and also allows to create a structure of chapters.

Watch your menus directly on your PC, or burn them to CD or DVD and replay them on a different PC.
Create DVDs in 4:3 or 16:9 format which you then can replay in every DVD player or on PC.

We hope you will enjoy working with **AquaSoft ® SlideShow-Manager**.

2 How To

Here you can find a collection of guides that should make working with SlideShow-Manager easy.

Please read how to

- create a simple menu
- create a menu with chapters
- assign templates to the project and sub-chapters

After you've designed the menu you can burn it:

- burn a menu for replaying it on PC
- burn a menu for replaying it on DVD player

Additionally you can also use one of the other export options:

- exporting a menu to a folder
- archiving a menu as ZIP-file
- creating a CD-image
- creating MPEG-files from the slide shows and templates
- creating VOB-files

[****]

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2.1 Creating a simple menu

The following steps explain how to create a simple menu with SlideShow-Manager.

1. Start SlideShow-Manager in your AquaSoft ® SlideShow application via the menu "Wizards".

   SlideShow-Manager starts with an empty project.

2. Add existing slide shows to your project by clicking the button.

   In the following dialog you select the slide shows of your choice and click OK.
   Your shows will be added to the project.

3. Now select a template for your project from the template catalog in the lower part of the SlideShow-Manager window.

   When you select the template you will see a preview of your menu in the upper part of the window.

Now the finished menu can be saved and burned to be watched on any PC or to be replayed from a DVD on a DVD-player.

2.2 Creating a menu with chapters

With SlideShow-Manager you can structure your menu using chapters. From AquaSoft ® SlideShow you already know that you can structure your slide shows with "Chapter" objects. SlideShow-Manager takes these "Chapter" objects into consideration and displays them in the project tree on the left side of SlideShow-Manager underneath the respective slide show. "Chapter" objects appear in the finished menu and can be utilized to directly jump from the menu to a certain position in the show.
In addition to "Chapter" objects you can also define more chapters inside of SlideShow-Manager. These chapters can contain slide shows and sub-chapters.

The following steps explain how to add chapters to your project.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.

2. Add a new chapter to your project by clicking the button.
   A new chapter will appear in your project tree.

Now you can fill the new chapter with contents by selecting one or more slide shows or chapters in the project tree and dragging them to the chapter.

Alternatively, you can select the new chapter and then click the button to add slide shows.

Click on to add sub-chapters to the new chapter.

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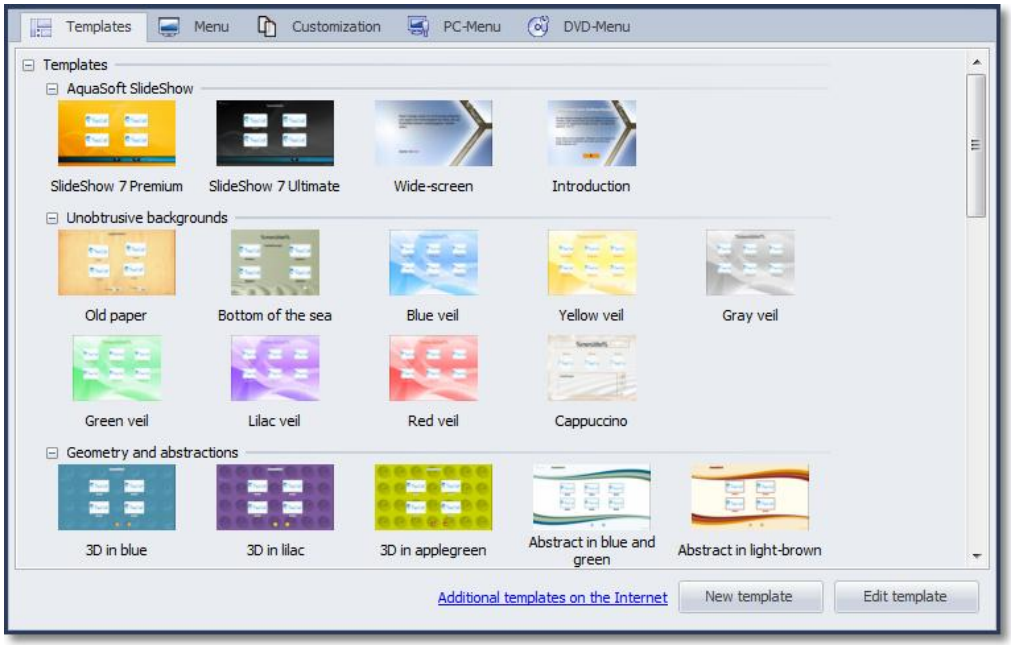
2.3 Assigning templates

With SlideShow-Manager you design your menus using templates. You can find the template catalog in the bottom part of the SlideShow-Manager window on the tab named "Templates".



You can assign one template to the whole project or a different one to each slideshow, each chapter or each sub-chapter. However, the assigned template will become visible only if the selected element itself contains child elements. An element without child elements is merely represented by a thumbnail on its parent page.
Wenn you create a new project the first available template gets assigned to it by default. All new sub-chapters and slide shows will - as long as you don't assign a specific template to them - always use the same template as their parent item in the menu.

- To assign a template to your project click on the entry "Project" in the project tree, then click on the template of your choice in the catalog. In the top part of the SlideShow-Manager window a preview of your project will be displayed now.
- If you want to assign a template to a chapter click on the respective chapter in the project tree, then click on the template of your choice in the catalog. If you prefer this chapter to assume the template of the parent item in the menu select "Use template of parent item" in the catalog.
- If you want to assign a template to a slide show that contains "Chapter" objects click on the slide show in the project tree, then select the template of your choice from the catalog.

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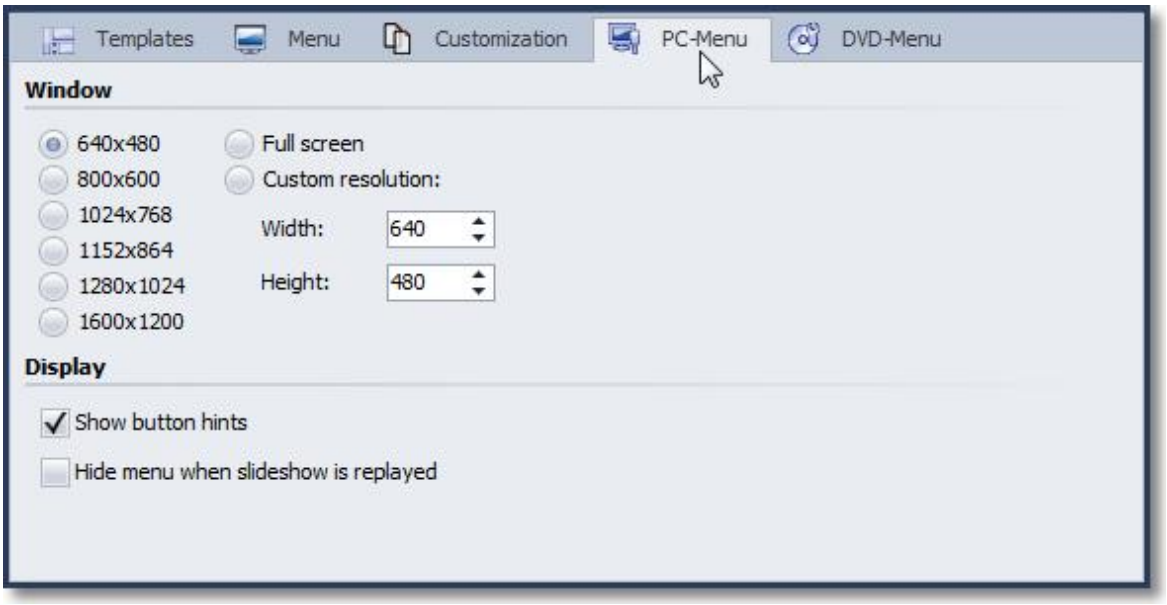
2.4 Burning a menu for PC

After you created a menu you can export it and burn it to a CD or DVD, together with all slide shows used.
These CDs or DVDs can be replayed on any PC.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "PC menu". Here you define the settings for the PC export.



3. In the area "Window" select one of the pre-defines resolutions or type in the width and height of your choice.
   The finished menu will later be replayed in the resolution you defined here.
   Activate "Show button hints" if you wish to see hints about the functionality of a button later when moving over it with the mouse.

4. Click the button.

5. Select the output format "PC menu" and click the "Next" button.

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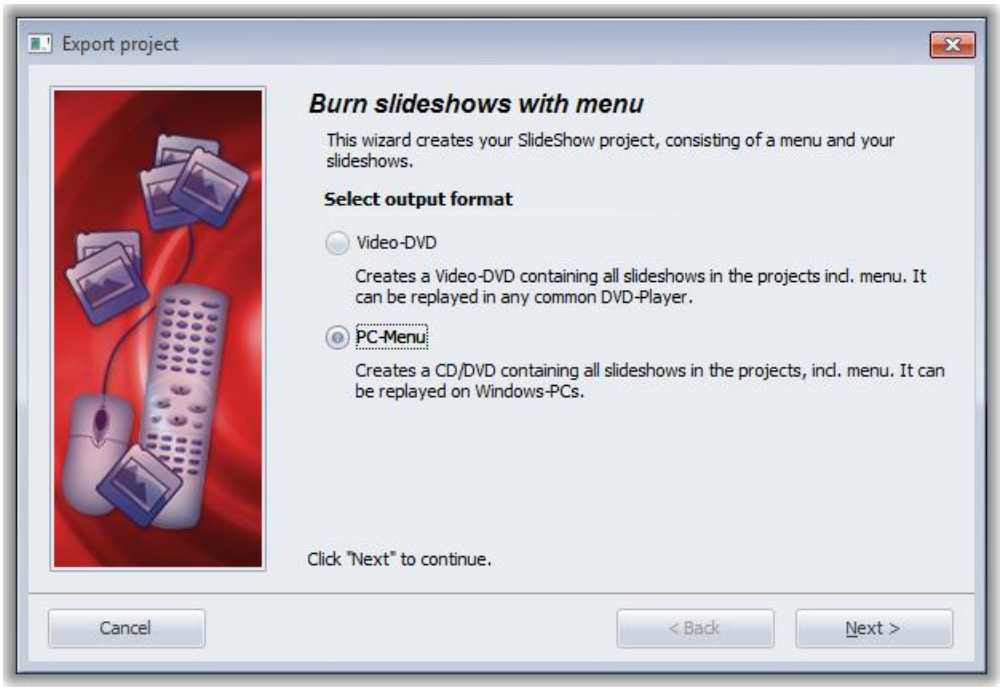
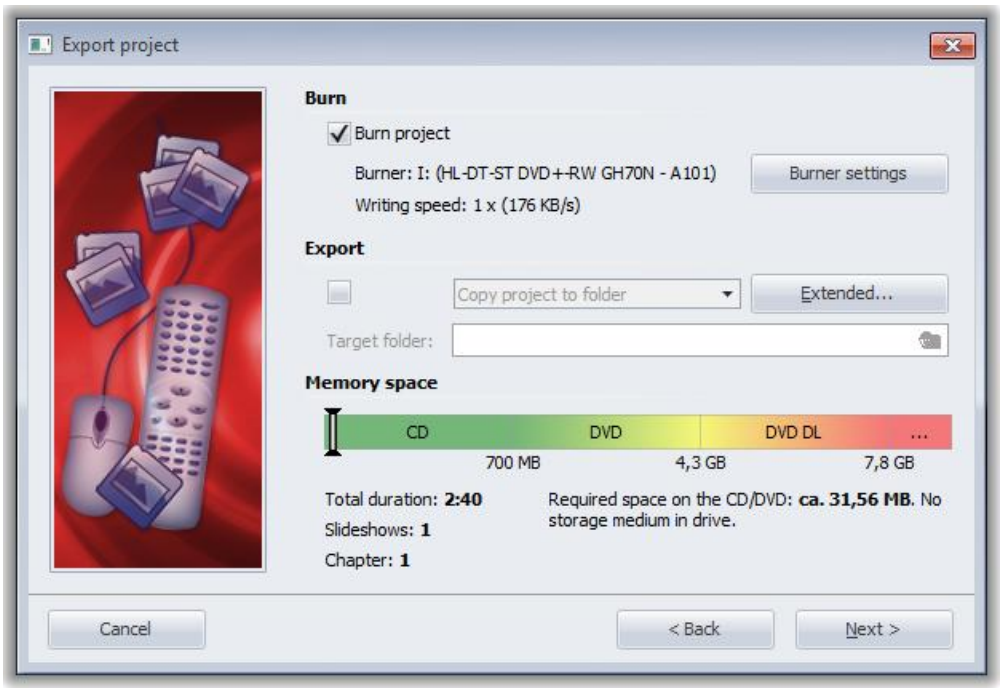


6. Activate the check box "Burn project" and click the button "Burner settings" to select a burner, and adjust the burning speed, if necessary.
   Insert a writable CD or DVD into your burner.

   Deactivate the check box left of the drop-down list and click the "Next" button.



7. In case you inserted an already written CD-RW, DVD-RW, DVD+RW or DVD-RAM, please answer SlideShow-Manager's question regarding the erasure of the medium with "Yes".
   Click "Cancel" if you wish to cancel the export now. If you want to use a different medium insert it now and click "No".
   After a click on "Yes" SlideShow-Manager will erase your CD or DVD.
   Click "OK" after the erasure has been completed.

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8. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.

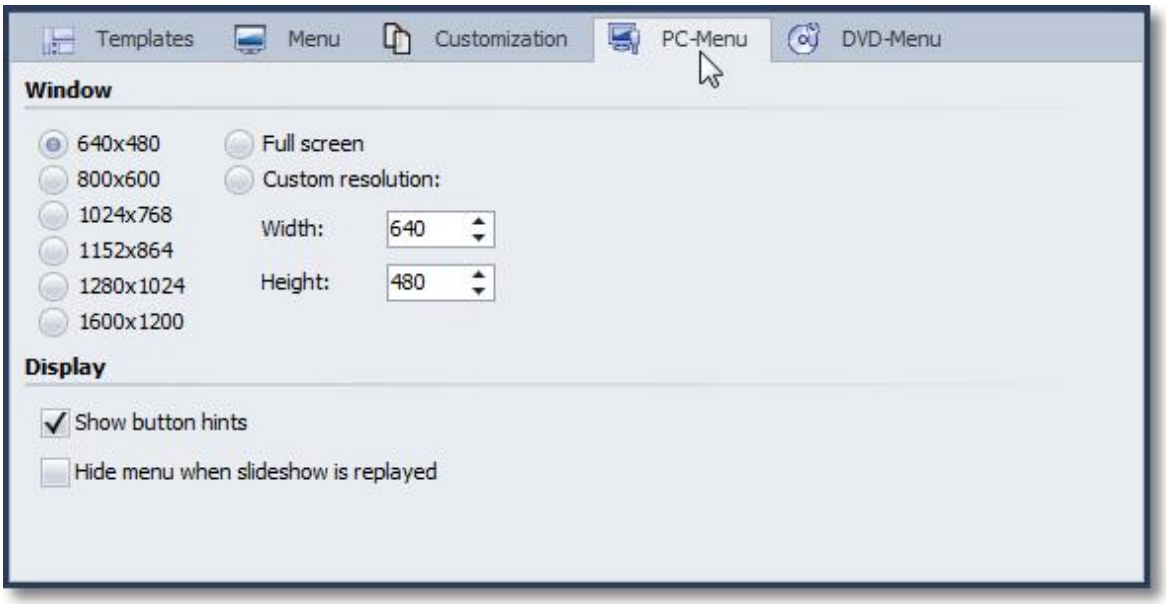
9. Click "OK" after the export has been completed.

2.5 Exporting a menu to a folder

After you created a menu you can export it to a folder - together with all slide shows used - and later burn, archive or watch it.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "PC menu". Here you define the settings for the export.



3. In the area "Window" select one of the pre-defines resolutions or type in the width and height of your choice.
   The finished menu will later be replayed in the resolution you defined here.
   Activate "Show button hints" if you wish to see hints about the functionality of a button later when moving over it with the mouse.

4. Click the button.

5. Select the output format "PC menu" and click the "Next" button.

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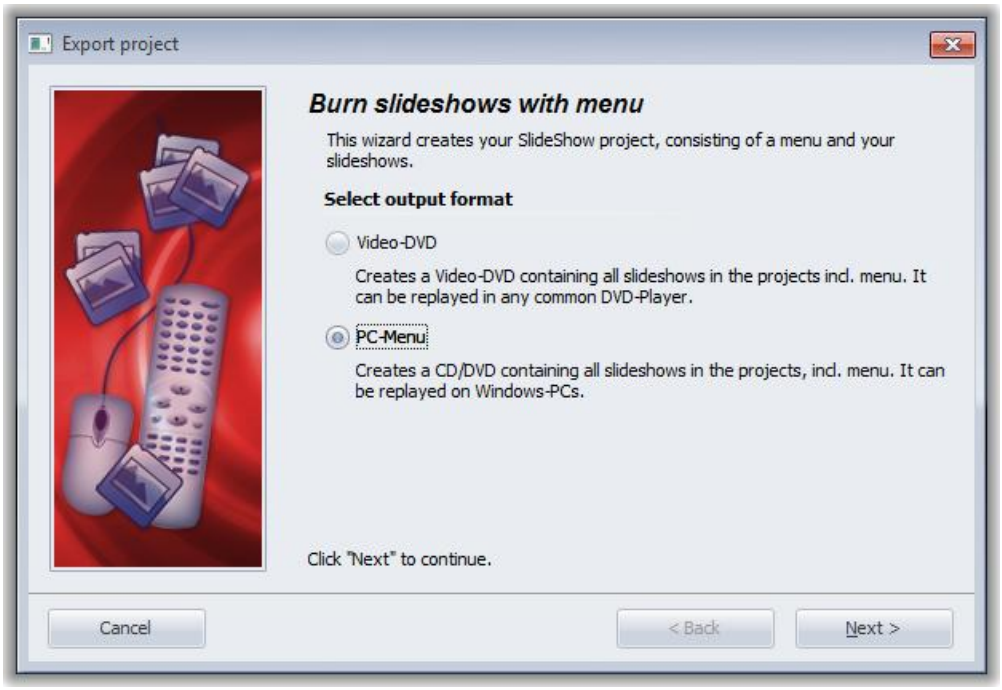
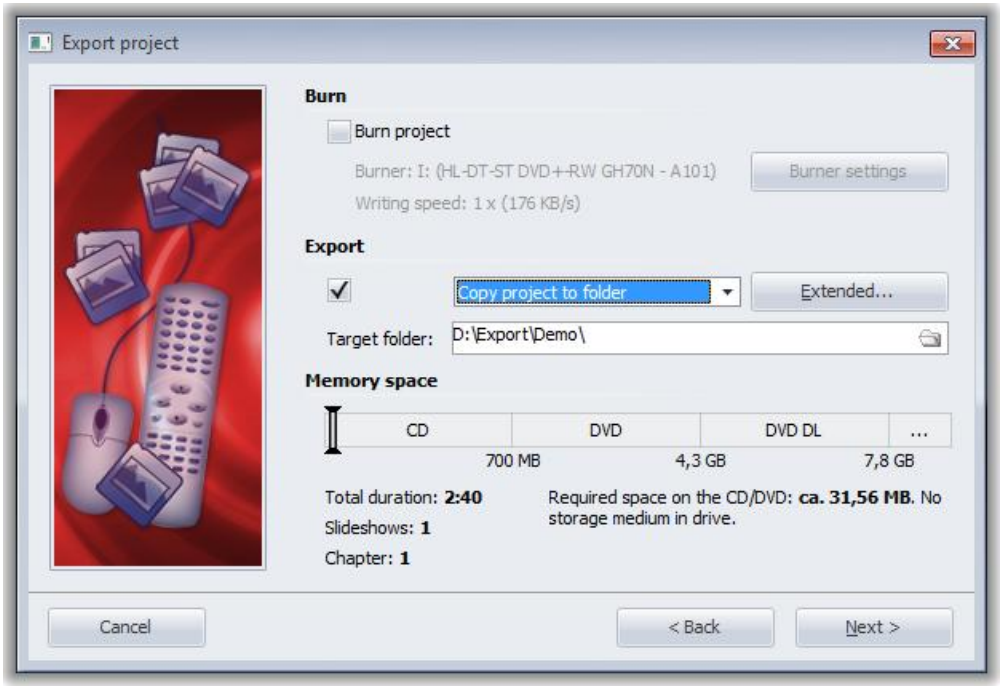


6. Deactivate the check box "Burn project" and activate the check box left of the drop-down list.

   Select the entry "Copy project to folder" from the drop-down list.

   Activate the check box "with Player" if you want to export the player for your menu in addition to your project.
   Activate the check box "with fonts" if you also want to copy the fonts that your templates are using.

   Select a target folder for the export and click "Next".



7. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.

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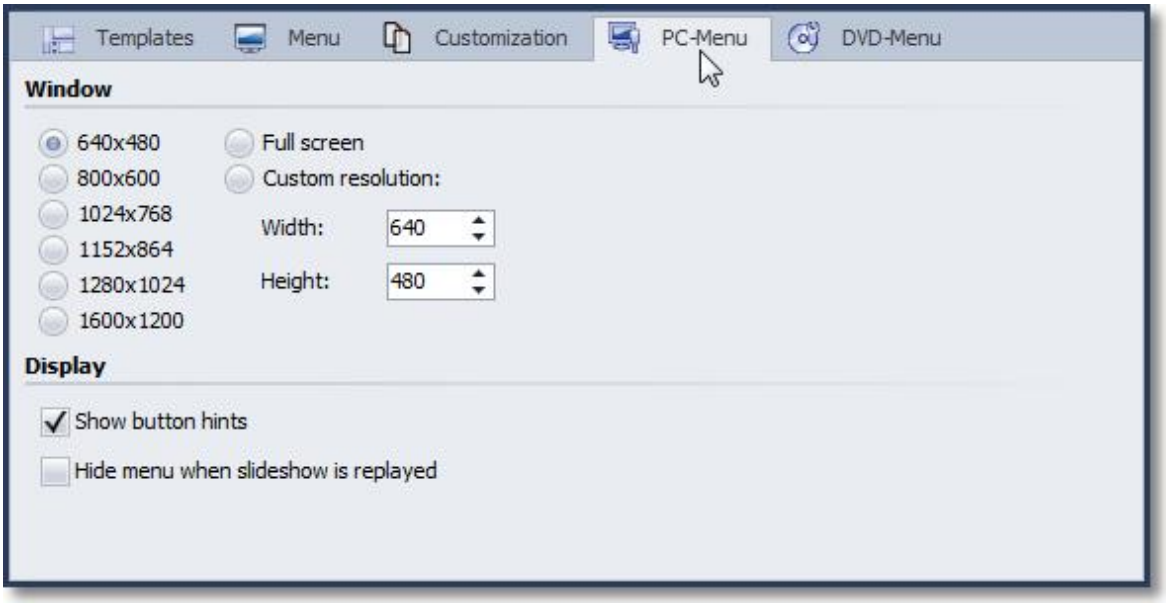
8. Click "OK" after the export has been completed.

2.6 Archiving a menu

After you created a menu you can archive it. To do this you create - with the help of the Export Wizard - a ZIP file with all slide shows and images used.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "PC menu". Here you define the settings for the export.



3. In the area "Window" select one of the pre-defines resolutions or type in the width and height of your choice.
   The finished menu will later be replayed in the resolution you defined here.
   Activate "Show button hints" if you wish to see hints about the functionality of a button later when moving over it with the mouse.

4. Click the button.

5. Select the output format "PC menu" and click the "Next" button.

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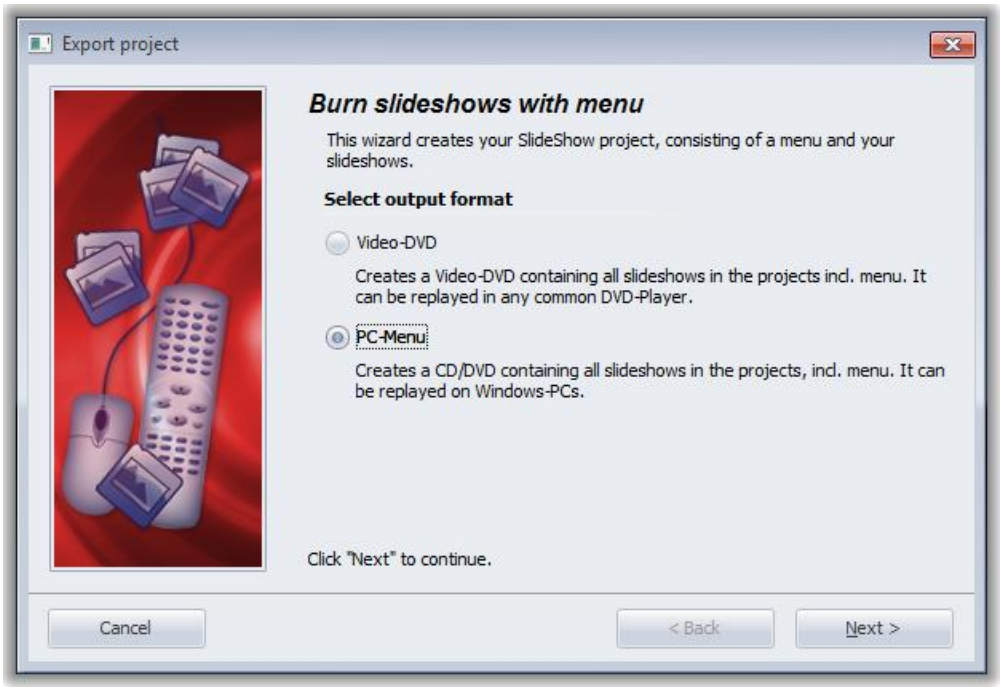
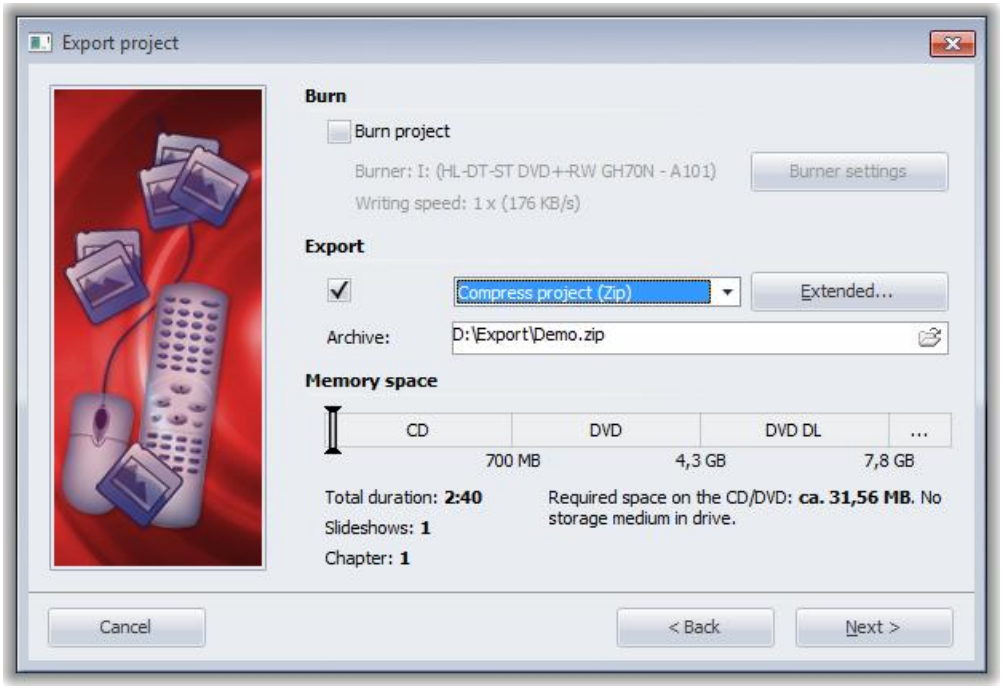


6. Deactivate the check box "Burn project" and activate the check box left of the drop-down list.

   Select the entry "Compress project (Zip)" from the drop-down list.

   Activate the check box "with Player" if you want to copy the player for your menu in addition to your project to the ZIP file.
   Activate the check box "with fonts" if you also want to copy the fonts that your templates are using to the ZIP file.

   Specify a target file and click "Next".



7. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.

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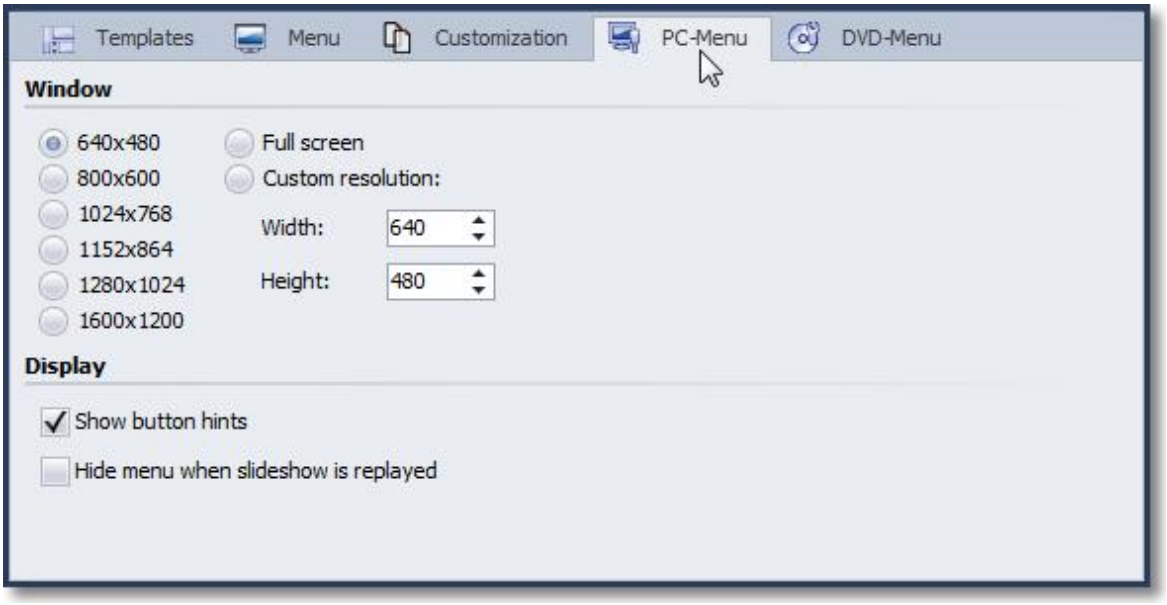
8. Click "OK" after the export has been completed.

2.7 Creating a CD-image for PC

After you created a menu you can create a CD image that you can burn to CDs later.
CDs created with this image can then be replayed on any PC.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "PC menu". Here you define the settings for the export.



3. In the area "Window" select one of the pre-defines resolutions or type in the width and height of your choice.
   The finished menu will later be replayed in the resolution you defined here.
   Activate "Show button hints" if you wish to see hints about the functionality of a button later when moving over it with the mouse.

4. Click the button.

5. Select the output format "PC menu" and click the "Next" button.

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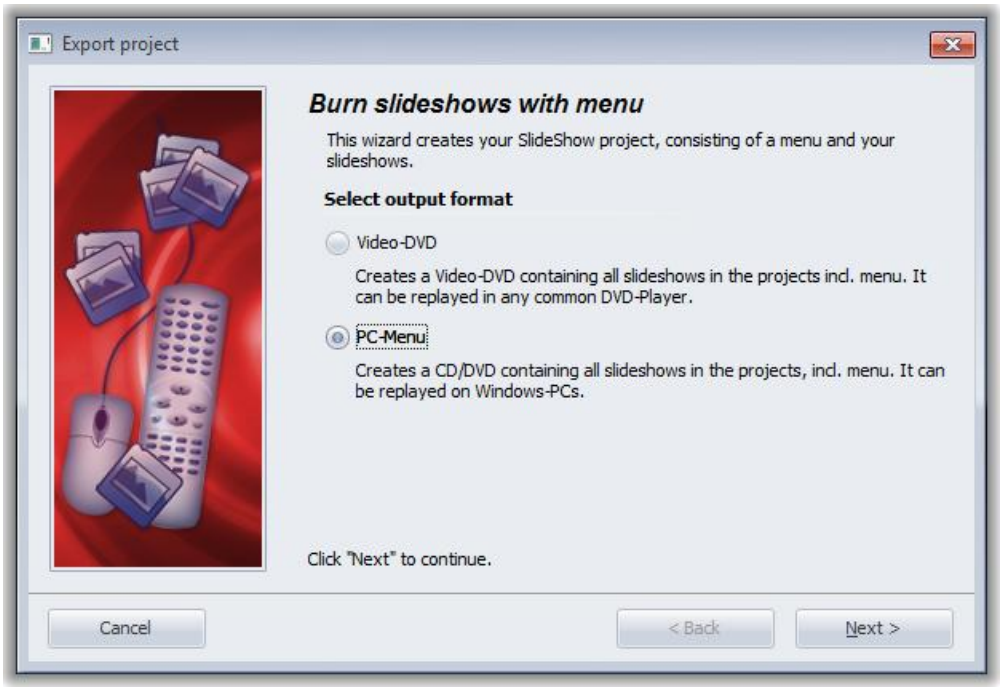
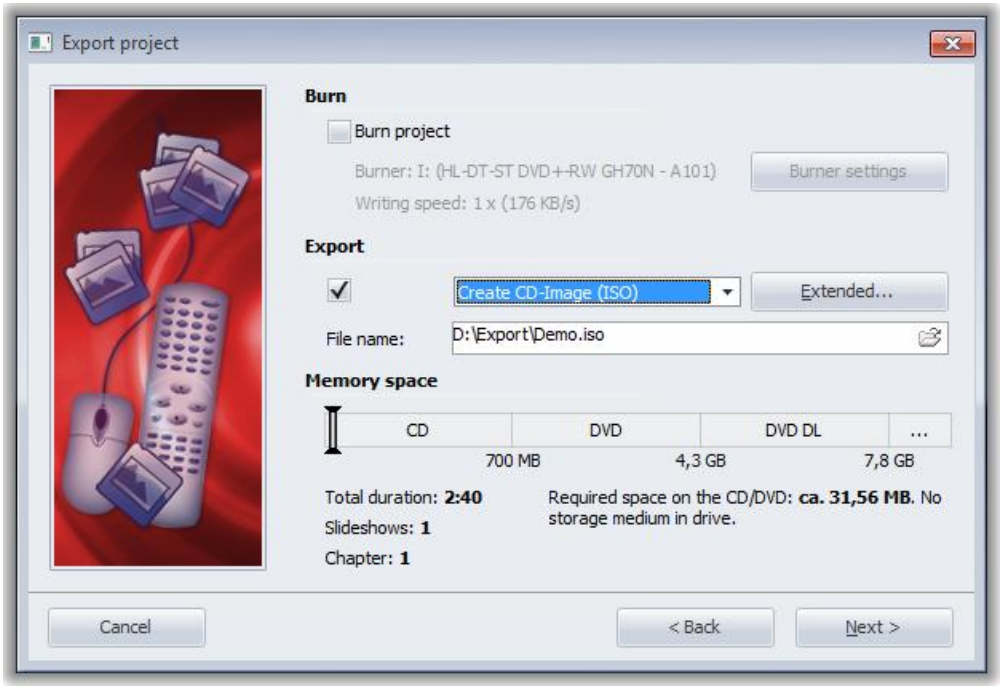


6. Deactivate the check box "Burn project" and activate the check box left of the drop-down list.

   Select the entry "Create CD image (ISO)" from the drop-down list.

   Specify a target file and click "Next".
   SlideShow-Manager will warn you if the ISO file you specified already exists.



7. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.

8. Click "OK" after the export has been completed.

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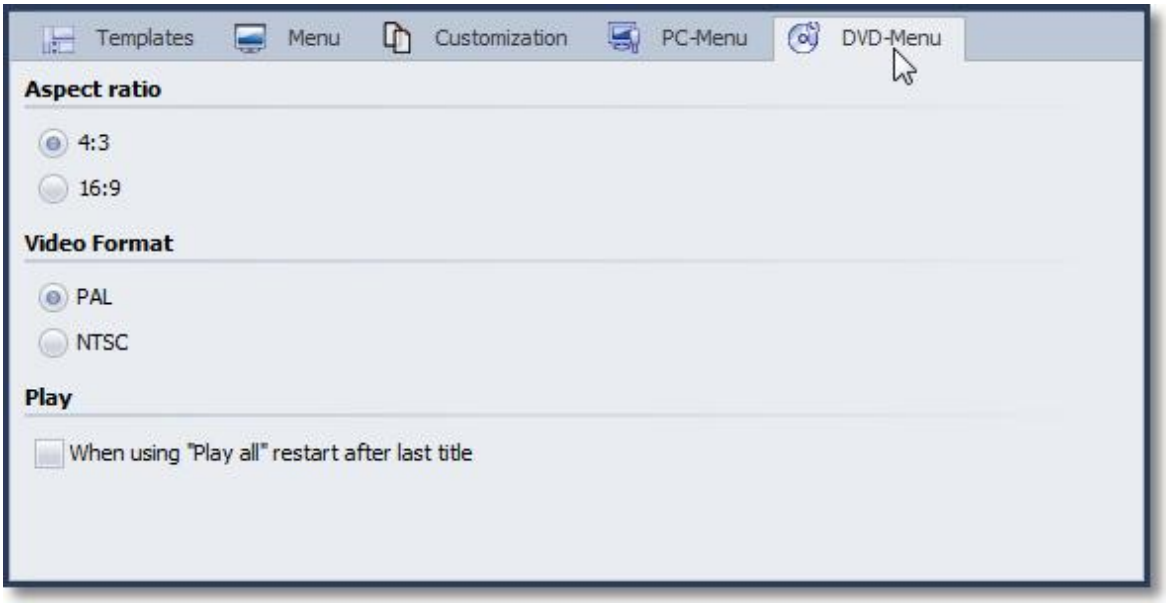
2.8 Burning a menu to a DVD

After you created a menu you can export it and burn it to a DVD.
This DVD can then be replayed on a DVD player.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "DVD menu". Here you define the settings for the DVD export.



3. Select the ratio 4:3 if you want to create a DVD for 4:3 - TV.
   For widescreen DVDs select the ration 16:9.

   Select the video format PAL if the DVD is to be replayed on a TV in Europe.
   For replaying it on TVs in the United States select NTSC.

4. Activate the check box 'When using "Play all" restart after last title' if you want the replay of all slide shows to be running in an endless loop after clicking the "Play all" button. If you deactivate this option the DVD player will return to the calling menu after the replay of the last show.

5. Click the button.

6. Select the output format "Video-DVD" and click "Next".

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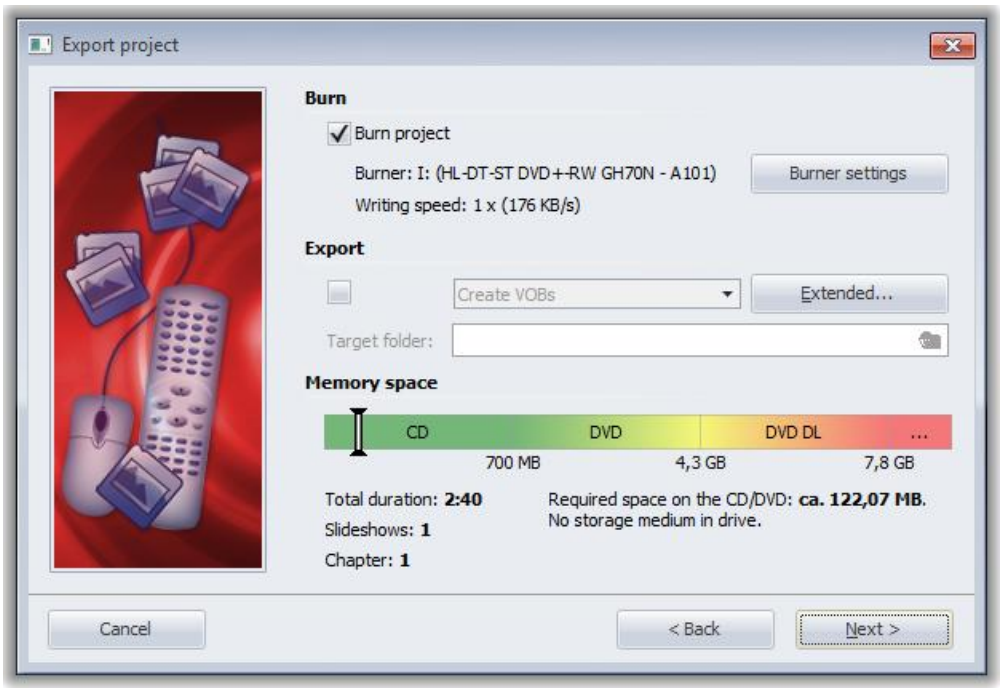
7. Activate the check box "Burn project" and click the button "Burner settings" to select a burner, and adjust the burning speed, if necessary.
   Insert a writable DVD into your DVD burner.

   Deactivate the check box left of the drop-down list and click the "Next" button.



8. In case you inserted an already written DVD-RW, DVD+RW or DVD-RAM, please answer SlideShow-Manager's question regarding the erasure of the medium with "Yes".
   Click "Cancel" if you wish to cancel the export now. If you want to use a different medium insert it now and click "No".
   After a click on "Yes" SlideShow-Manager will erase your DVD.
   Click "OK" after the erasure has been completed.

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9. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.
   The exporting process can take some time depending on the number and size of the slide shows.

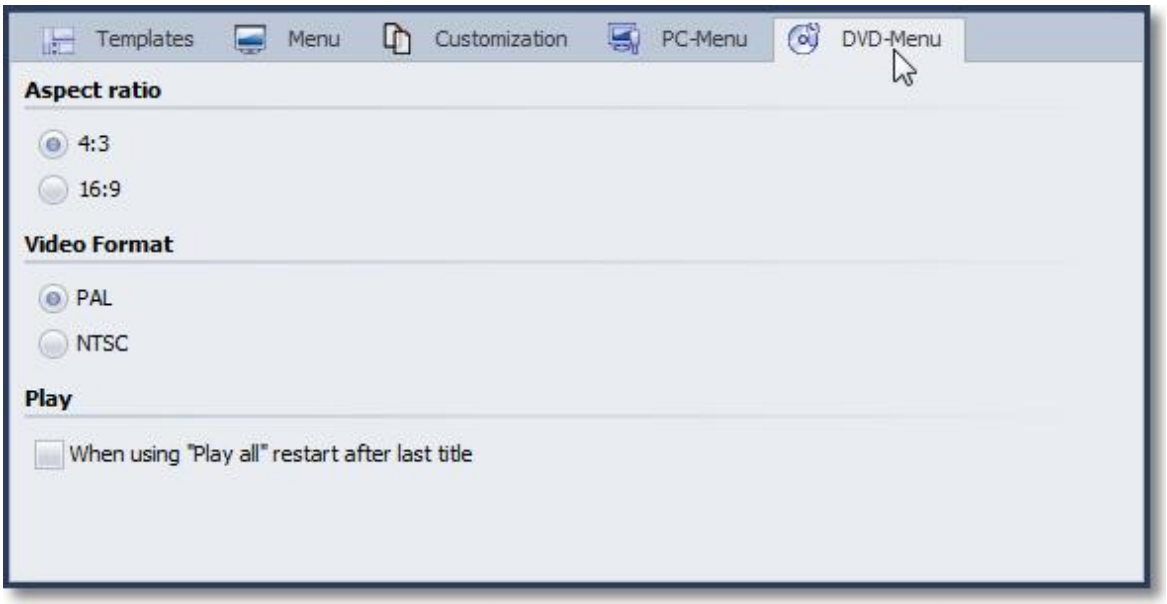
10. Click "OK" after the export has been completed.

2.9 Creating VOB-files

After you created a menu you can export it and create VOB files in a DVD folder structure that can be reused in DVD authoring programs.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "DVD menu". Here you define the settings for the DVD export.



3. Select the ratio 4:3 if you want to create VOB files for 4:3 DVDs.
   For widescreen DVDs select the ratio 16:9.

   Select the video format PAL if you want to crete VOB files for the TV standard common to Europe.
   For the TV standard common to the United States select NTSC.

4. Activate the check box 'When using "Play all" restart after last title' if you want the replay of all slide shows to be running in an endless loop after clicking the "Play all" button. If you deactivate this option the DVD player will return to the calling menu after the replay of the last show.

5. Click the button.

6. Select the output format "Video-DVD" and click "Next".

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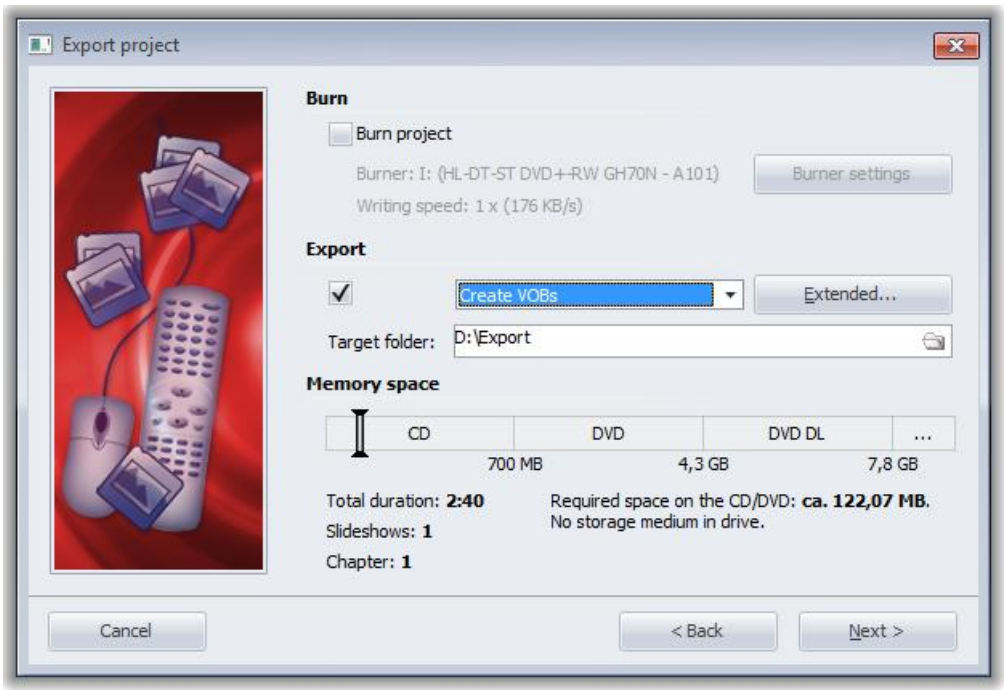
7. Deactivate the check box "Burn project" and activate the check box left of the drop-down list.

   Select "Create VOBs" from the drop-down list.

   Select a target folder for the export and click "Next".



8. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.
   The exporting process can take some time depending on the number and size of the slide shows.

9. Click "OK" after the export has been completed. The VOB files are now stored in a sub-folder named "VIDEO_TS" of the folder that you specified as target folder.

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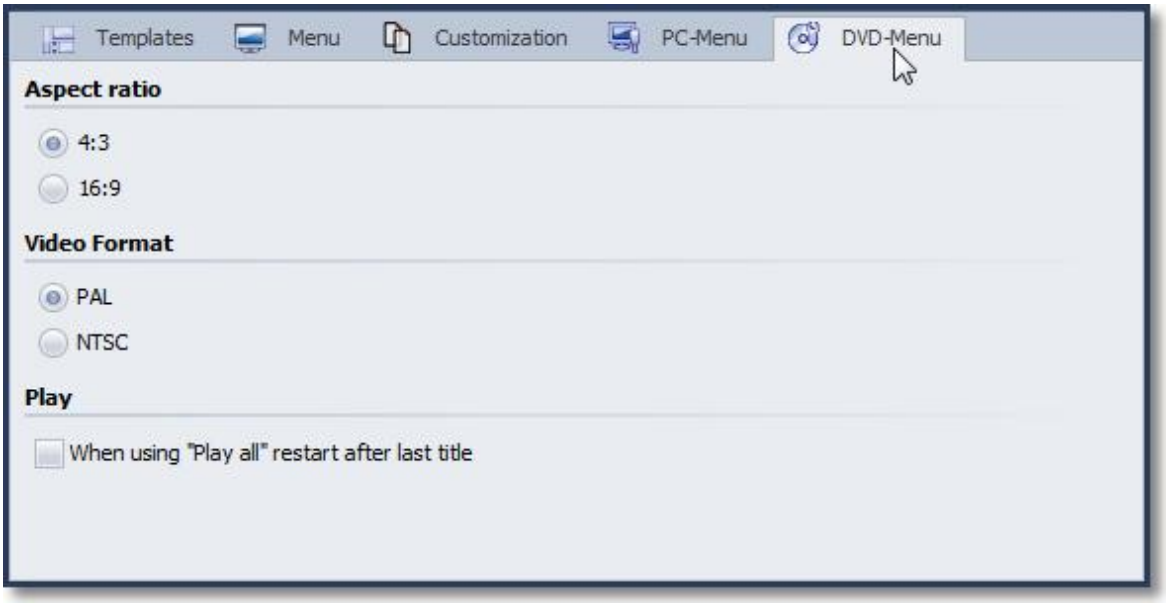
2.10 Creating MPEG-files

After you created a menu you can export it and create MPEG files from all slide shows and menu pages used.

1. Load or create a new SlideShow-Manager menu.
   Click on the entry "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.

2. Click on the tab "DVD menu". Here you define the settings for the DVD export.



3. Select the ratio 4:3 if you want to create MPEG files for 4:3 DVDs.
   For widescreen DVDs select the ratio 16:9.

   Select the video format PAL if you want to crete MPEG files for the TV standard common to Europe.
   For the TV standard common to the United States select NTSC.

4. Activate the check box 'When using "Play all" restart after last title' if you want the replay of all slide shows to be running in an endless loop after clicking the "Play all" button. If you deactivate this option the DVD player will return to the calling menu after the replay of the last show.

5. Click the button.

6. Select the output format "Video-DVD" and click "Next".

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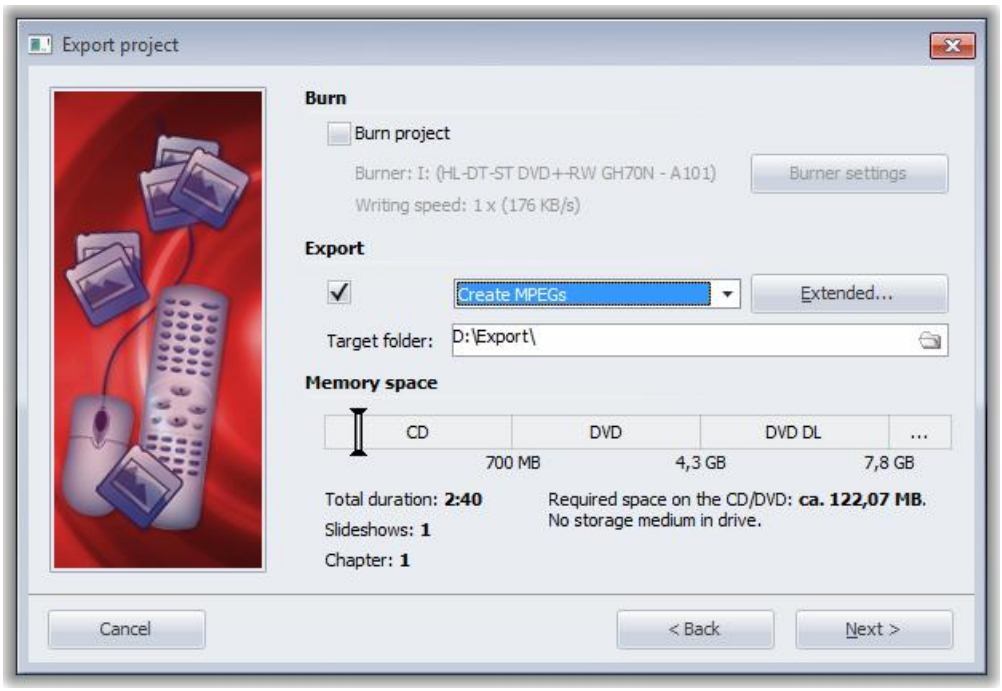
7. Deactivate the check box "Burn project" and activate the check box left of the drop-down list.

   Select "Create MPEGs" from the drop-down list.

   Select a target folder for the export and click "Next".



8. SlideShow-Manager is now ready for the export. Click the "Export project" button.
   The exporting process can take some time depending on the number and size of the slide shows.

9. Click "OK" after the export has been completed.
   SlideShow-Manager creates one MPEG file for each slide show and each menu page.
   MPEG files that have been created from slide shows are named SlideshowXXXX.mpg, menu pages

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PageXXXX.mpg,
where XXXX is a consecutive number.

2.11 Playing a menu in SlideShow-Manager

While you're designing your menu you might want to see from time to time how your menu will later look like.

To do that click the button.

Provided you have at least one show or chapter in your project the menu will now be replayed. Use the mouse to navigate in the menu via buttons and slide show objects.

To stop the menu press the "ESC" key or click the little x in the upper right corner of the menu window.

2.12 Creating and editing a template

SlideShow-Manager allows you to become creative yourself and design own templates for your menus. To do this use the integrated Template Editor.

1. To create a new template click on the "New template" button in the template catalog.
   To edit an existing template select the template you want to edit and click the "Edit template" button.

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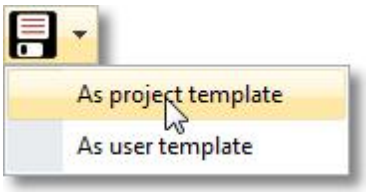
2. Design the template with the help of the editor.

3. Save the template by clicking the button. You will be asked to specify a file name if you've created a new template or have edited one of the templates that came with the product.
   Type a name and click "OK". Your template will then be saved as project template.

   You can also save your template directly as project or user template by clicking on the arrow right of the button and selecting the saving option of your choice:



2.13 Download Center

In the Template Download Center you can provide your templates to other SlideShow-Manager users and download templates that other users have created.

To get to the Download Center click here.

If you would like to download templates, please follow these steps:

1. On the start page of the Download Center login with your user name and password, or register first if you do not have access yet.

2. Now you can search the Download Center for templates for SlideShow-Manager.

If you want to provide your own templates you need to export these templates first, using SlideShow-Manager.
You can do this as follows:

1. In the template catalog select the template you want to export and click it with the right mouse button.
   Then click the item "Export".

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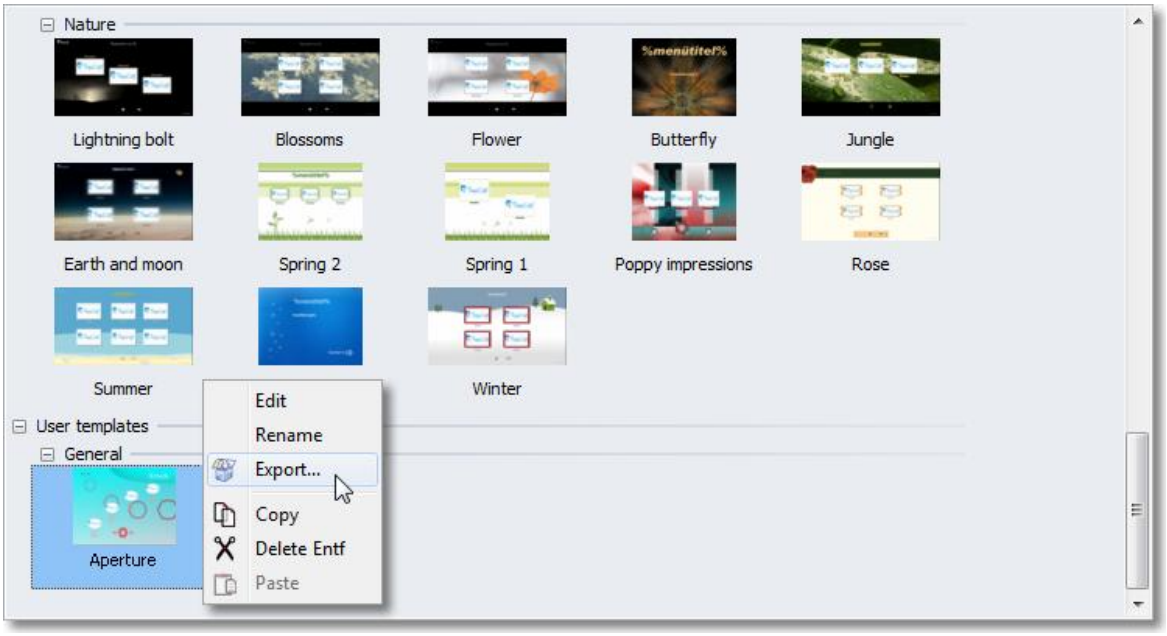
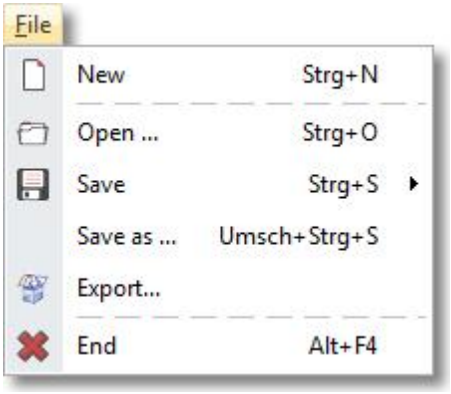


Alternatively you can open the template in the Template Editor and click "File" -> "Export" in the menu.



2. In the following dialog type the name for your template and one for the category that the template shall appear under on other users' computers.
   Also, specify a file name for the exported template.
   Then click "OK".
   SlideShow-Manager now assembles a template package which you can upload to the Download Center.

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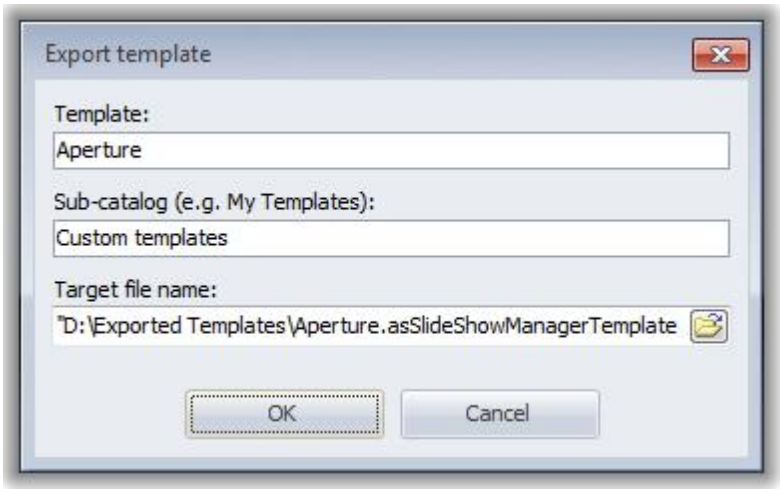
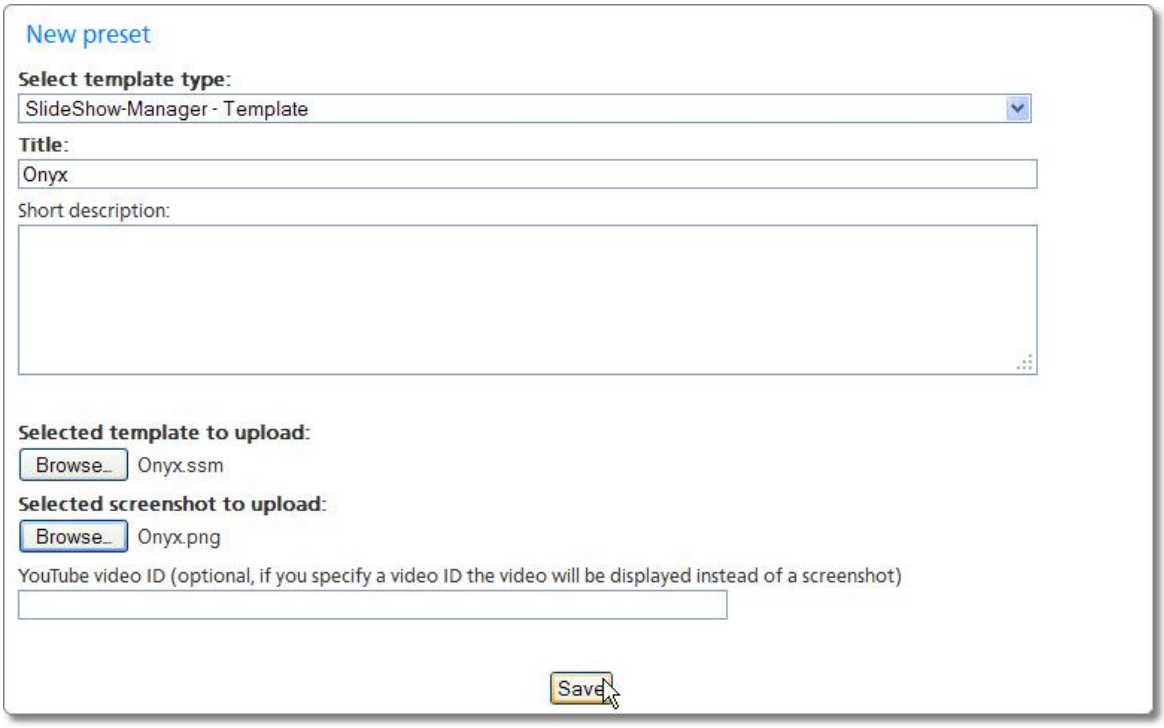


3. Prepare a screenshot of your template that you can upload as a preview. Its size shouldn't be larger then 800x600 pixels.

4. Now login to the Download Center and click "Meine Vorlagen". In the navigation area then click "Neue Vorlage".



From the drop-down list select "Typ der Vorlage wählen" "DiaShow-Manager - Vorlage".
Then type the title of your template and, optionally, a description.
Also, select the template file you want to export and the prepared screenshot. It will later be displayed in the Download Center.

5. Click "Vorlage speichern". Now your template and screenshot will be transferred to the Download Center.

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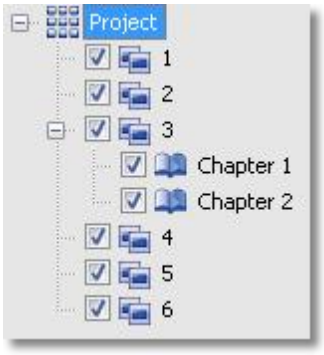
2.14 Customization

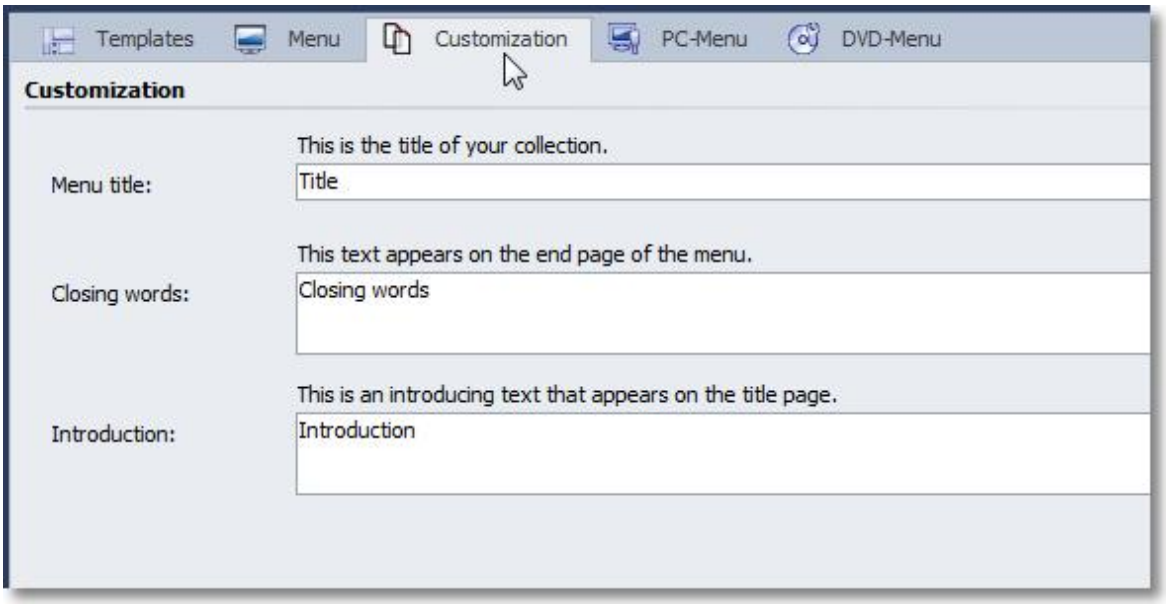
Many templates that you can download from the Download Center allow to be customized to your liking with only little effort.
SlideShow-Manager templates can contain variables that you can replace with your own contents in the Customization.

1. To customize your project click on "Project" in the project tree on the left side of the SlideShow-Manager window.



2. Click on the tab "Customization".

Now you can see a list of variables that can be used in your project.
SlideShow-Manager assembles this list from all variables of the template that are used in the project.



The variables of most templates already have default values. Edit these values according to your needs.

If you want to add variables to a template yourself please read the paragraph about the use of variables in the Template Editor.

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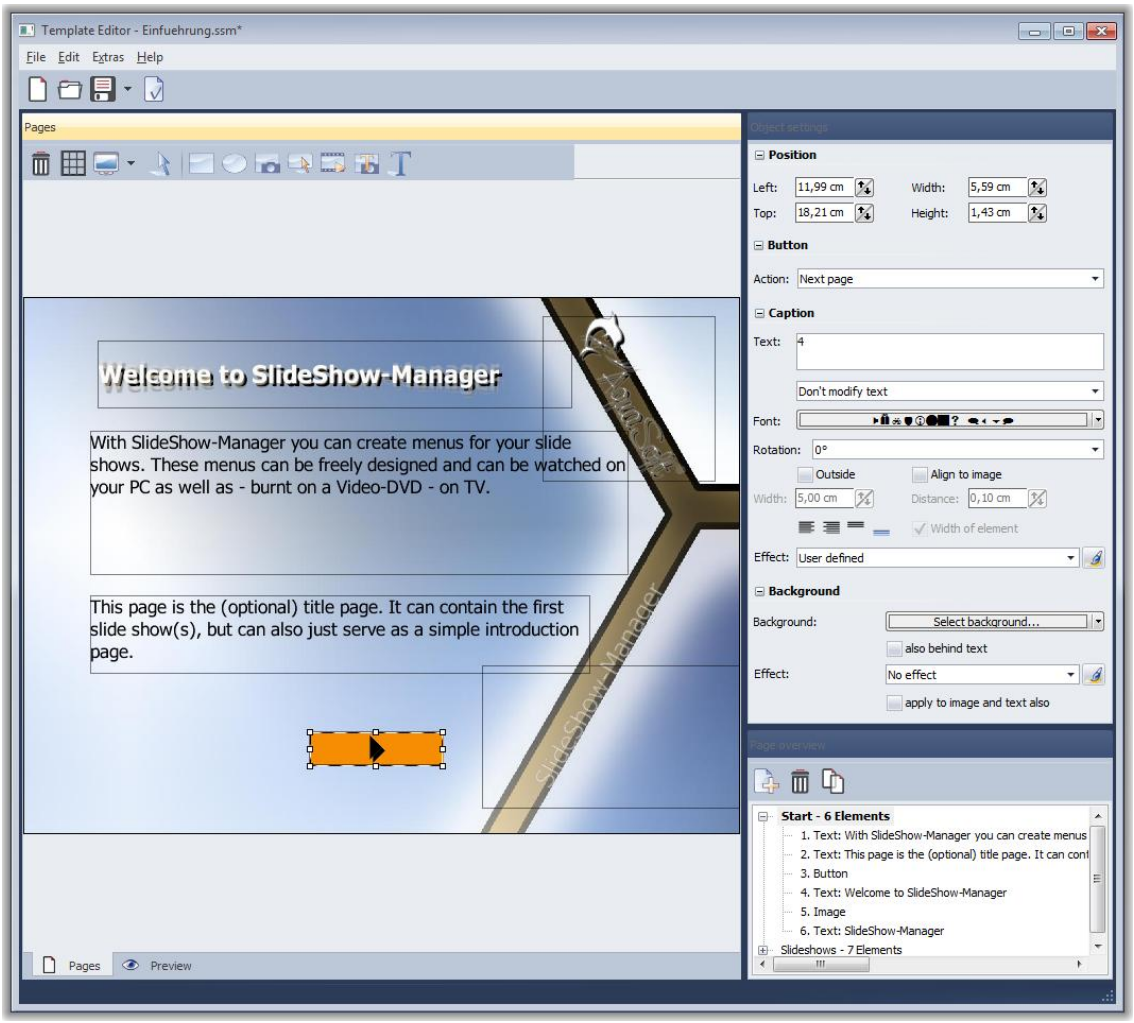
3 Template Editor

In order to edit or create templates the ***Developer mode*** has to be activated. You can do this in **SlideShow** via ***Extras -> Developer mode***.

The Template Editor allows you to create templates yourself or edit existing ones.

Here you'll find a set of tools that help you design your template. Add images, buttons and slide show placeholders.
On the right side of the editor window you can edit the settings for the selected object.



Please also note the designing guide lines for templates and the hints to the template types of SlideShow-Manager.

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3.1 Designing guide lines

The goal is to make your templates always look great, on PC as well as on TV. The following guide lines for designing templates will help you to achieve this goal:

1. A templates should always consist of at least one repeating page. Title and end pages are optional.
   Also note the hints under Designing templates.

2. At least one page of your template should contain a slide show object. Slide show objects will be replaced by true slide shows and chapters during export.

3. Don't forget to add buttons to the pages of your template to allow navigation. Note that a "Back" button jumps back to the parent level if a Back action isn't possible.
   This way you can design templates that don't need "Level up" buttons.

4. Design your template in a way so that it will be easy to navigate on 4:3 TVs as well as 16:9 TVs. To achieve that you need to decide how the template ratio should be adjusted if it was not designed in the export ratio.

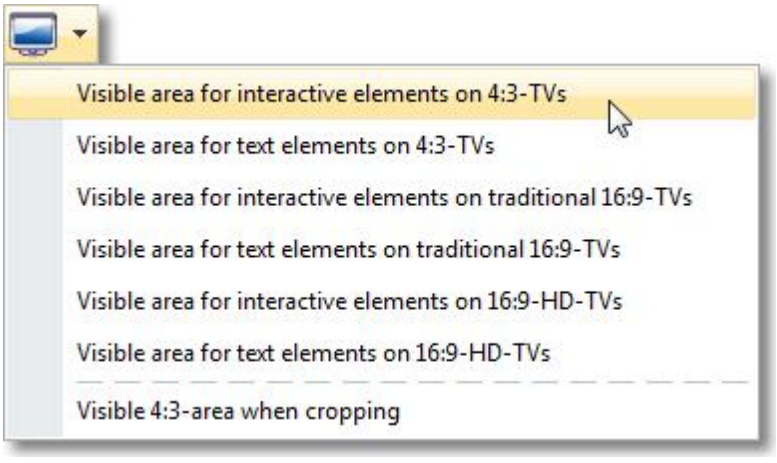
   - If you keep the ratio of a page this page will be displayed completely and in its designed ratio. Although, it is possible that you will see black strips on the top and bottom (left and right respectively).

   - If you allow the page to be cropped SlideShow-Manager will crop it to the selected export ratio during export. This way you prevent the black strips but possibly parts of your template are not visible on the top and bottom (left and right respectively).

5. TVs, and traditional CRT-TVs in particular, have an area at the edges of the monitor called overscan in which a correct display cannot be guaranteed. The film technology distinguishes between the following areas:

   - **action safe**: this area guarantees that all actions stay visible
   - **title safe**: this area guarantees the visibility of text and caption overlay

   You can show or hide these areas using the menu.



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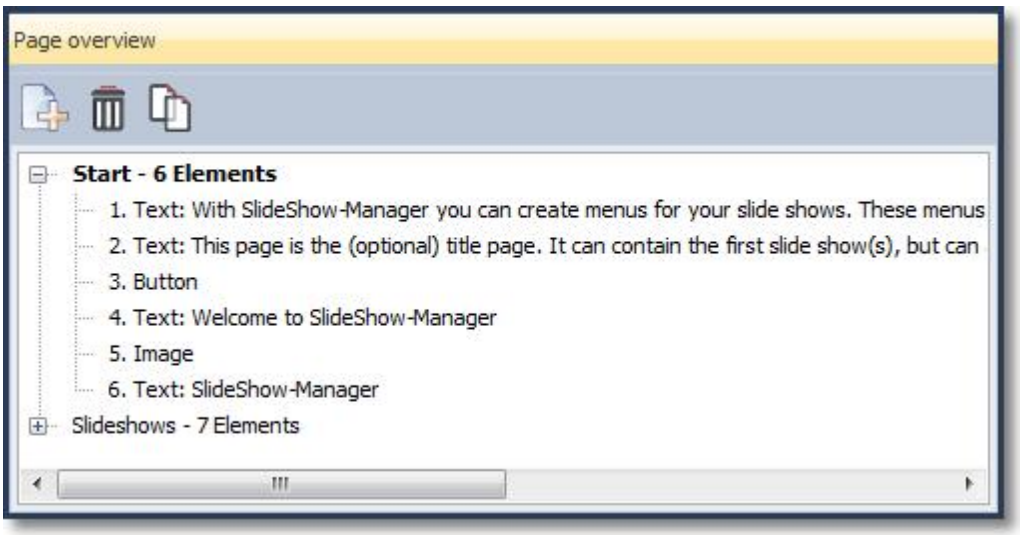
6. Additionally you can show the area which encloses that part of the template that would remain if it were cropped to 4:3 format.

7. Try to avoid placing interactive elements like buttons and slide show objects too close to each other, or even so that they overlap. This can lead to problems when navigating on DVD players. Also, note that SlideShow-Manager places a border around selected buttons and slide show objects when designing DVD menus. For a DVD player the area covered by this border also belongs to the button and shouldn't intersect with another one.

8. Please take good care that buttons and slide show objects are placed on top of all other non-interactive elements and that they are not covered by any other element. This way you avoid problems navigating in PC menus.
   You can place an element on top of all other elements by moving it with the mouse underneath the last element of a the edited page in page structure view.



3.2 Types of templates

SlideShow-Manager distinguishes between three types of templates:

- Provided **templates** are part of SlideShow-Manager. You can find these templates in the template catalog under the category "Templates". If you edit one of them SlideShow-Manager creates a copy at first. You can then save this template as user or project template.

- **User templates** are templates that you designed. They are available for all your projects. You can edit these templates when ever you want and save them as user or project templates.

- **Project templates** are only available in the boundaries of a certain project. These templates are always stored in a folder with the name of your project. This folder is a sub-folder of your project folder. By default all new templates and those that are edited versions of provided templates will be saved as project templates.

You can edit a template by selecting it in the template catalog and clicking the "Edit template" button, by double-clicking it or by clicking the item "Edit" in the context menu of the template.

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3.3 Designing templates

SlideShow-Manager uses your slide shows and templates to create a menu.
You insert placeholders into the templates that will be replaced by real slide shows by SlideShow-Manager during the creation of the menu.

In general a template consists of up to 3 pages, one title, one repeating and one end page. Title and end page are optional.
You specify the type of the respective page in its property settings.
The different page types can be used as follows:

Title page
This page type will only be displayed at the beginning of that menu level that the template is assigned to.
On this page you can e.g. display a few introducing words and help your presentation to a successful start.

For a template to function properly a title page is not a necessity.

Repeating page
Repeating pages are the most important page type in a template. When SlideShow-Manager replaces the placeholders in your template by real slide shows the repeating page will be repeated (at max.) as often as there are slide shows available.

You can design a template completely without title and end page. A repeating page, on the other hand, is always required.

End page
You can use an end page to display some closing words, credits or a final image for your menu.
Pages of this type will always be displayed at the end of a menu level.

In principle you can define more than one page of each type for your template. However, for title and end pages SlideShow-Manager always uses the first page of the respective type it can find.
For repeating pages you can specify in the menu settings which repeating page SlideShow-Manager will use if your template contains more than one page of this type.

If you don't assign a template to a chapter or to a slide show that contains chapters SlideShow-Manager automatically uses the template of the parent level. However, since the template can contain a title and an end page SlideShow-Manager creates the sub-menu with title and end page, as well. Often this behaviour is not desired since usually the title page is meant to be the one and only page of this type in the entire menu. The same applies to the end page.

You can change the behaviour regarding the use of title and end pages and selection of repeating pages by selecting the respective chapter first and then clicking the "Menu settings" tab.

You prevent the use of a title and/or end page by deactivating the check box "Use title page" and/or "Use end page".

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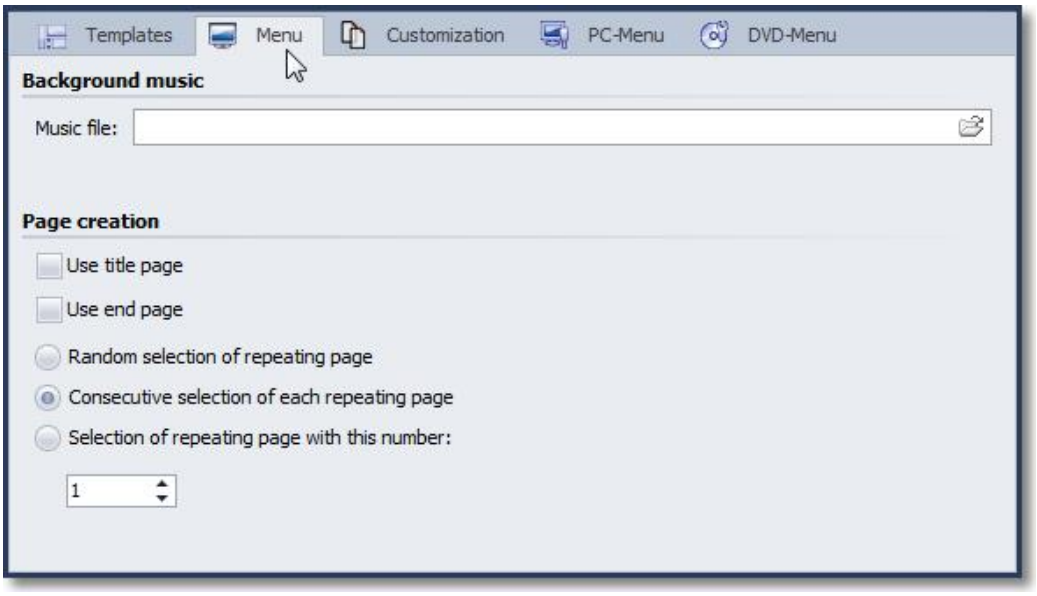

3.4 Variables

When you design templates you can define variables that will be replaced with contents later in the finished menu.
This way you can reuse the same template in different menus by defining a variable instead of a fixed text when designing the template.
To do this you work with the Template Editor.

1. Open the Template Editor with the template selected that you want to add variables to.
   Then click the menu "Extras" -> "Settings".

2. Click on "Variables" on the left side of the dialog.

   Now add variables to the template by clicking the button.

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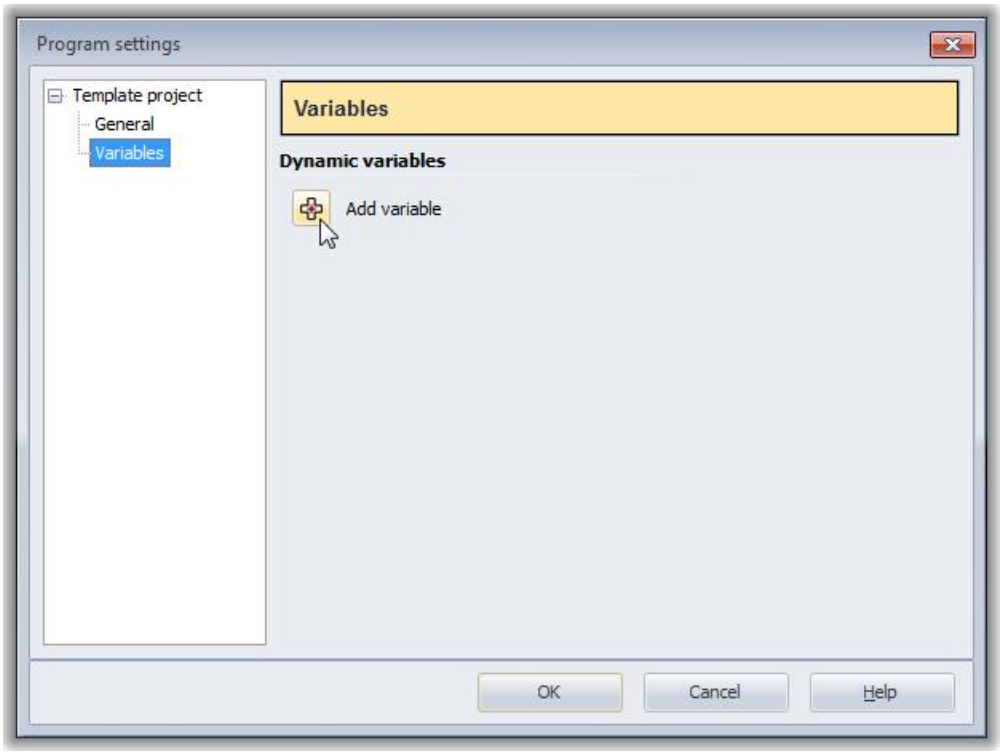
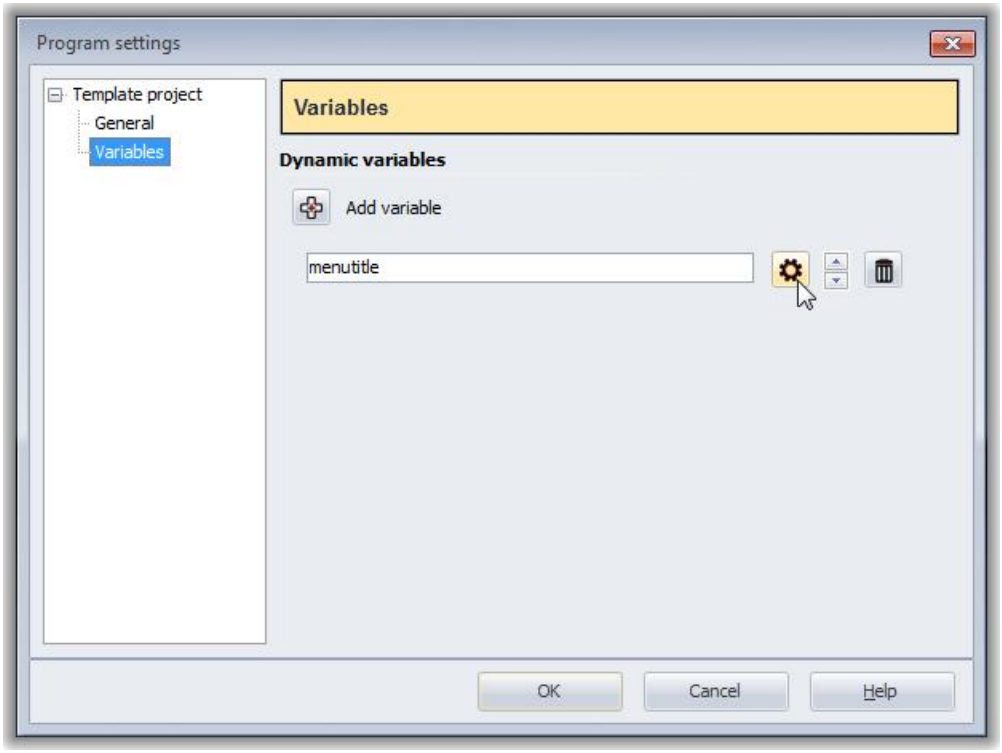


3. Then type a name for the variable:



4. Click the button to adjust other settings for the new variable.
In the dialog you specify of which type your new variable is.

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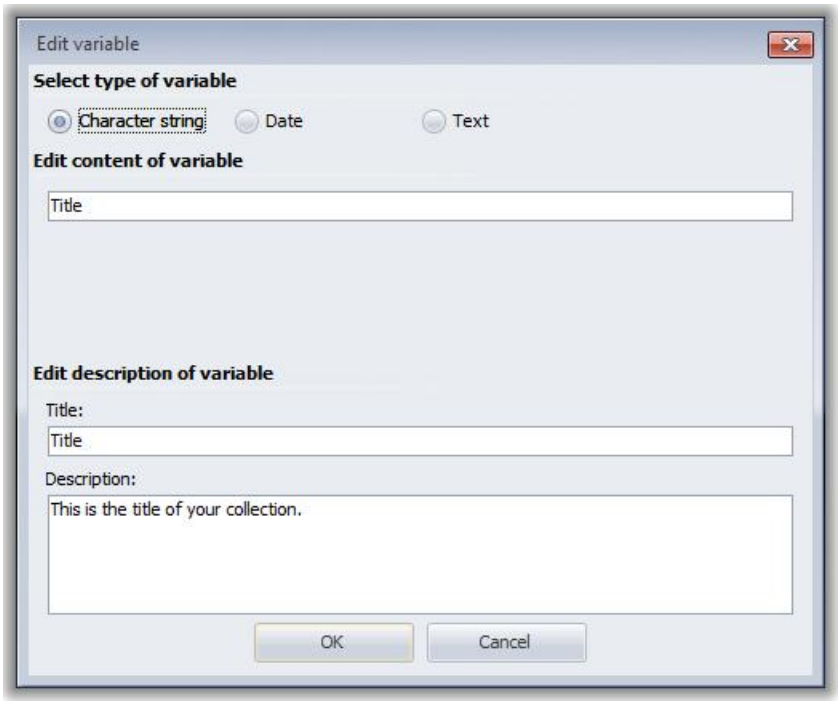

The following types are available:

- **String**
  This is a single-line text. Use this type for short text like titles, captions, etc.

- **Date**
  This can be any date.

- **Text**
  This is a multi-line text for any purpose.

  Specify the name for the variable that shall later be displayed in SlideShow-Manager's customization menu. If you don't specify anything the name that you chose when creating the variable will be displayed.
  Additionally, you can type a description for the variable that will be displayed in the customization menu, as well.

4 AquaSoft ® Bitmap Effects

With Bitmap Effects graphics can be optimized or spiced up. From a simple shadow over pleasing frames and collages to branched effect chains (Multiplicating) many things are possible. Complex effects are combined from different basic modules and allow non-destructive image editing (the original image always stays untouched).

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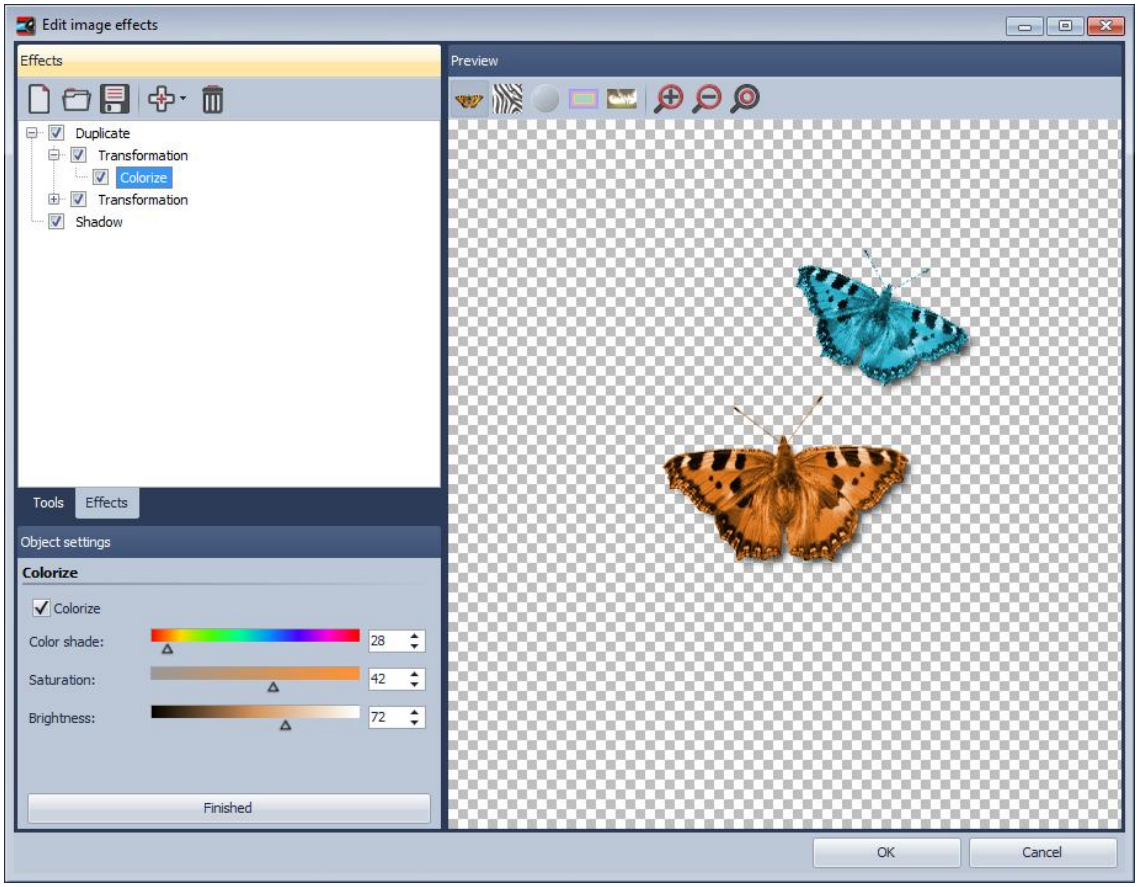

With the help of the Bitmap Effects Editor those effects can be assembled and saved to be reused later. Let's just start with a shadow effect and improve our skills to create a "self-border" afterwards.

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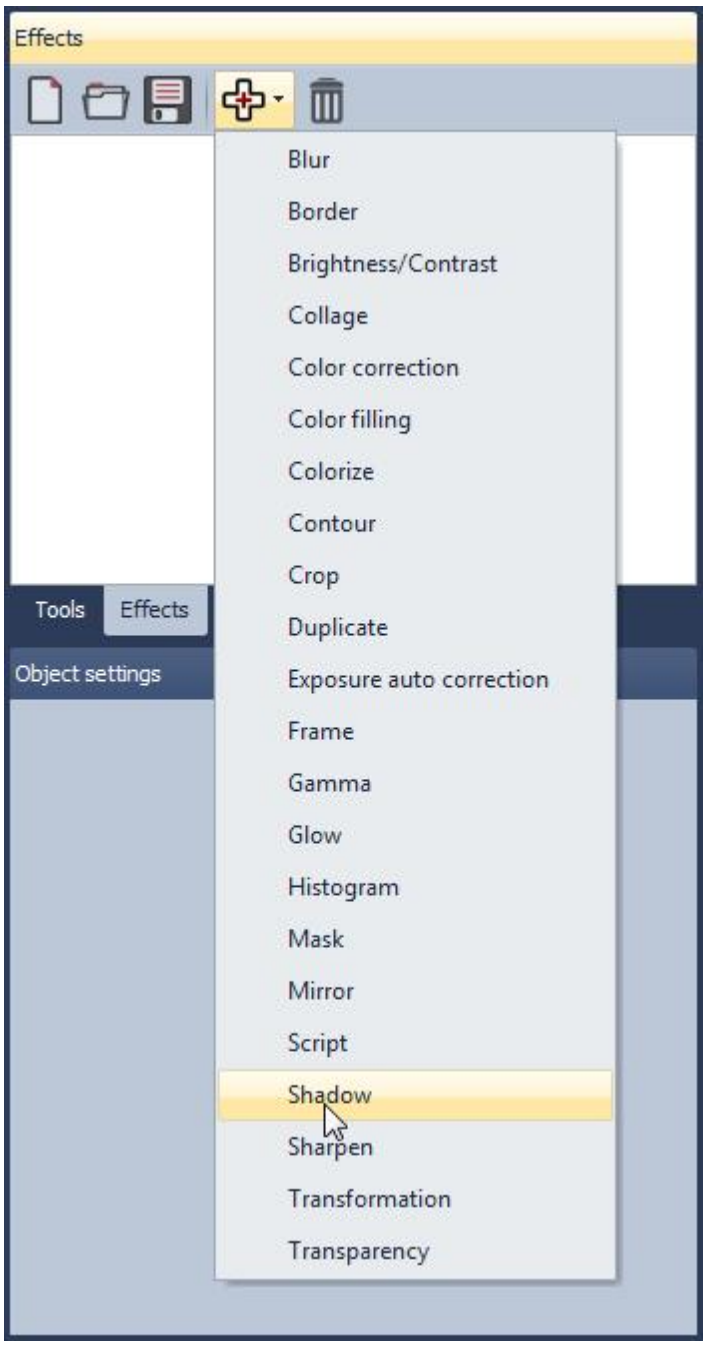
4.1 A simple shadow effect

You need only a few clicks to assign an unobtrusive drop shadow to an image.



Sub-effects are simply added via the menu. Thus add the sub-effect ***"Shadow"***.

Note: The number of available sub-effects in your version of the application can differ from that in the image above.

Now you can see that the shadow has been added to the previously empty ***"effect list"***. On the right side of the dialog appear controls that let you adjust the settings of the shadow to your liking.

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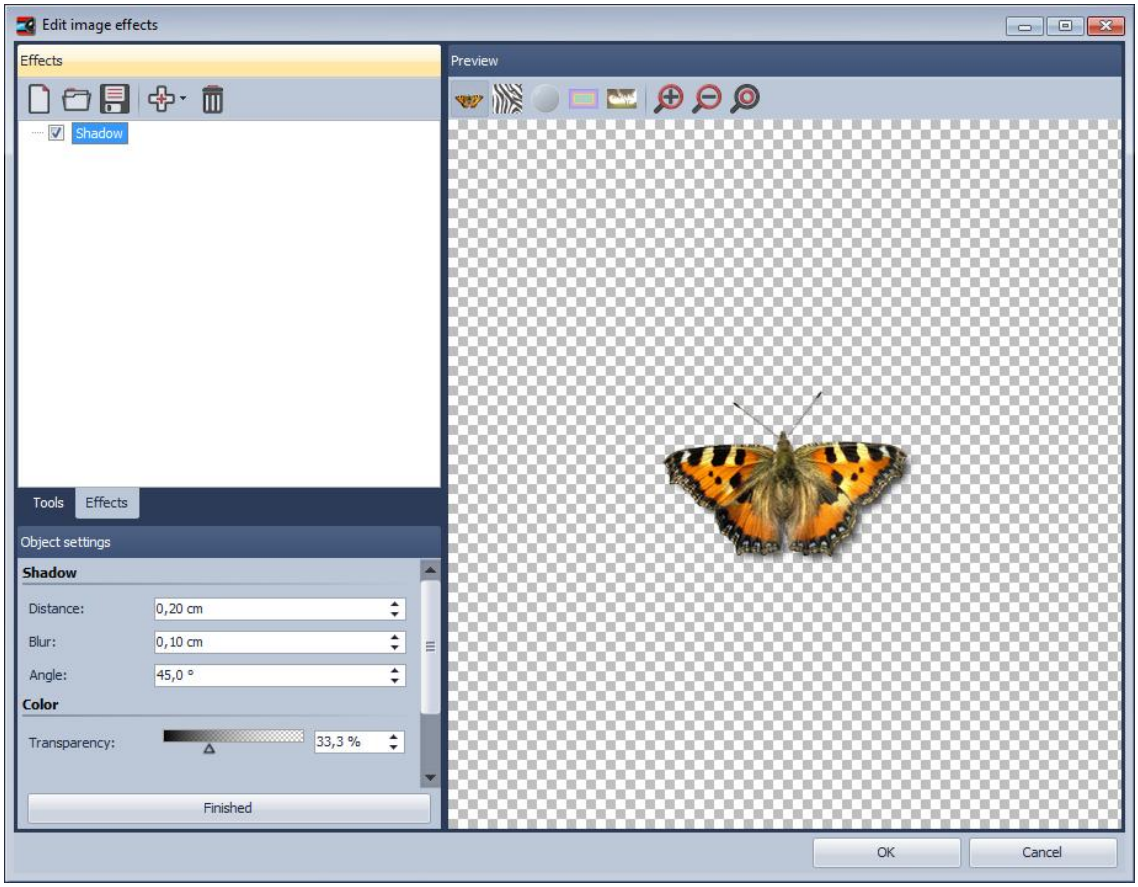

At the bottom-left the shadow effect is showcased on the butterfly graphic.

Each sub-effect can have very different settings. How each of them affects the result you can find out best by trial and error. In our specific example the offset of the shadow from the original image, the angle of the incidence of light, the strength of the blur and the transparence of the shadow can be specified.

That's all there is to it. Clicking ***„OK“*** applies the shadow to your image. Of course, all the settings can still be edited later. The original graphic is never changed.

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4.2 A "self-border" using duplication and transformation

We want to achieve an effect that used the image itself to create a semi-transparent border. The result will look similar to the picture below:

The basic idea of the solution looks like the following:

1. Enlarge the image and assign semi-transparency to it

2. Overlay the semi-transparent image with the original image

Here an important functionality is utilized that is also crucial for the creation of many other complex effects: Multiplication.

To achieve 2. at all a copy of the original image needs to be stored to be able to overlay the image that might already be changed by previously assigned sub-effects. The multiplication effect allows exactly this. By using it the normally flat list of effects will become a tree, because the multiplication effect can have child elements. The sub-effects can be moved around via drag&drop.

All effects that are children of the multiplication effect are "served" with that state of the image data source that has been current at the branching point, no matter in which way and how much a different child element has changed the image.

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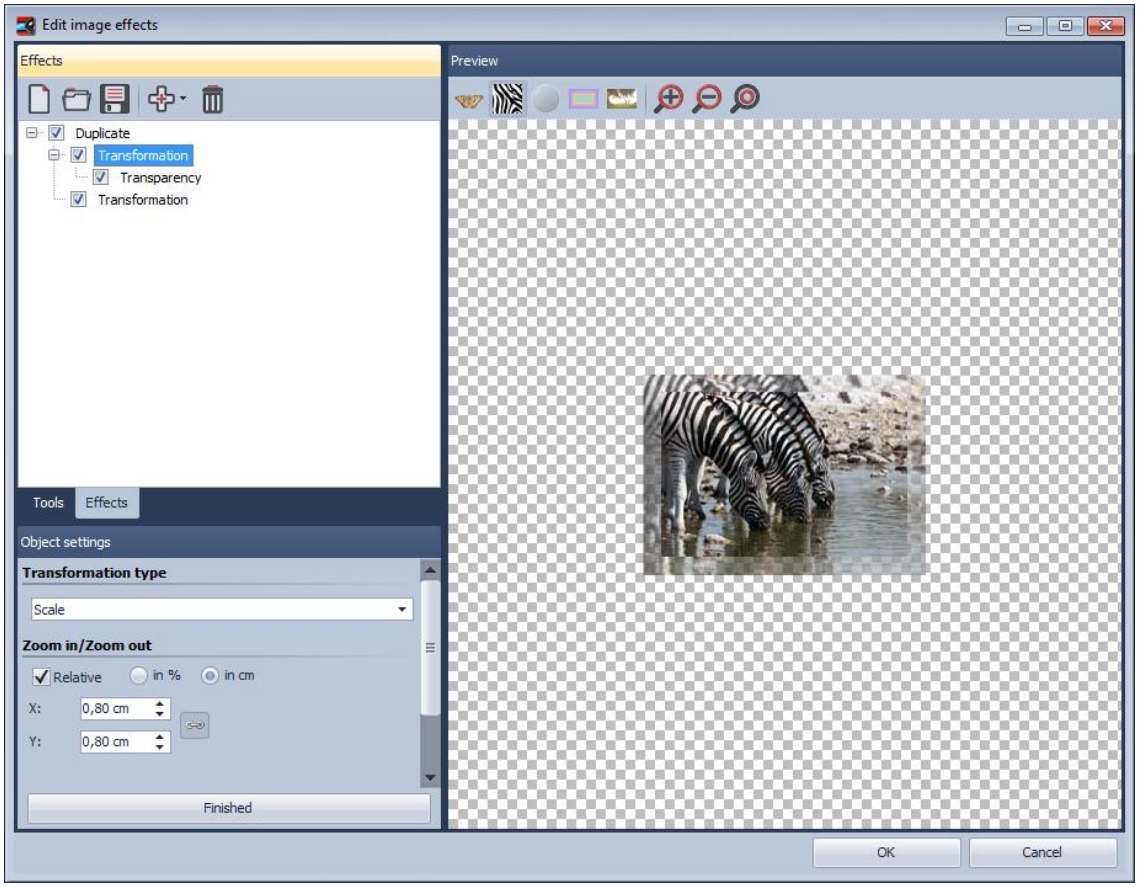

Here you see the completed effect: The multiplication effect got a transformation assigned as sub-effect that enlarges the image by a few millimeters. To that the transparency effect is assigned to make the image semi-transparent.

Now we need to use a little trick: To display the original image again we simply add a second transformation to the multiplication. Only this time no offset, rotation, etc. is set. So the image stays the same.

Note: Child elements of multiplication effects can have child elements themselves.

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AquaSoft SlideShow-Manager - Help

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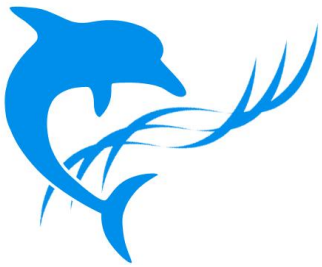
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