

Important Information

About XLR8 Theater

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This file contains information about the XLR8 Theater application.

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XLR8 Theater provides a way to present InterView video on your Mac's screen. It features 4 window sizes including a full screen view. It also has a record option and full sound support. Wide screen video formats are optimized for enhanced performance and a frame rate meter is provided for the curious.

Using XLR8 Theater

Launching XLR8 Theater

Make sure there is a video source attached to your InterView device, and that there are no other digitizing applications open, e.g. Premiere or VideoShop. Launch XLR8 Theater. The first time XLR8 Theater is launched, it will be in "Window" mode. The video from the InterView device will appear in a 320 x 240 window at the top-left hand corner of the screen.

The Theater Menu

Use the "Video Settings..." item to modify various video related options. These options will affect playback and recording in "Window" mode. They will not have any affect in "Full-Screen" mode.

Use the "Sound Settings..." item to modify various sound related options. These options will affect playback and recording in "Window" mode and playback in "Full-Screen" mode. Note that XLR8 Theater will automatically choose the built in "Sound In" source for sound playback. If no sound can be heard, or a different sound source is desired, check the setting in the Source panel of the Sound Settings dialog.

Use the "Quarter Size", "Half Size" and "Full Size" items to view video in windows that are 80 x 60, 160 x 120 or 320 x 240 pixels in width and height respectively.

Use the "Full Screen" item to hide the menu bar and mouse and view the video in a 640 x 480 frame on the main monitor.

Use the "Display Frame Rate" item (command-D), to display a meter showing the current effective playback frame rate in Full-Screen mode. This option is not available while in Window mode. The frame rate meter stretches across the top left of the screen. Two small dots move under the meter showing the effective display frame rate (red), and the frame rate that the InterView device is providing (blue). The frame rate varies from 0 on the left to 30 on the right. Another bar to the right of the frame rate meter shows the "thinking" of XLR8 theater. As the bar grows to the right, XLR8 Theater considers asking the InterView device for more frames. As the bar grows to the left XLR8 Theater considers asking the InterView device for fewer frames. This allows XLR8 Theater to balance the number of frames coming in with the number of frames that can physically be drawn to the screen.

Use the "Wide Screen Mode" item (command-W), to create a letterbox effect on the screen while in Full-Screen mode. This option is not available while in Window mode. This mode is particularly useful for letterbox video sources. It puts a clean black border around the picture and can increase the effective framerate because there are fewer pixels to draw. The position of the letterbox can be fine tuned using the arrow keys. The size of the letter box can be fine tuned using the command key and arrow keys combined. Note, because letterbox movies don't always fall in the same place on the screen, the letterbox position and size is not remembered from one use of XLR8 Theater to the next. Usually only minor adjustments will be needed.

Use the "Record" item to record a movie. This option is only available in Window mode. You will be asked where you would like to save the movie. When you are done recording, click the mouse. A message saying that the movie was successfully recorded will be presented.

Known Problems

XLR8 Theater adjusts the InterView frame rate dynamically, it asks for less frames if it has no chance of drawing them all in the time available: drawing raw pixels to the screen consumes the bulk of the processors time. It will ask for more frames if it finds that they are not being provided fast enough (up to a maximum of 30). Unfortunately, when the InterView frame rate is changed on the fly, the video will occasionally stop streaming until a new key frame arrives from the InterView device. Since key frames only arrive once every 127 frames, the video can pause for quite some time, over 5 seconds in some cases. Be patient -it will start up again. Once the frame rate has settled down, the problem will go away. The problem tends to occur when first entering full screen mode, or when switching to and from wide screen mode.

XLR8 Theater's frame rate can be quite slow on older Macs. A 233 iMac is unlikely to get better than 10 frames a second. XLR8 Theater does not use the available ATI hardware to speed the frame rate up. However a subsequent, free upgrade will. In the meantime, be sure to use letterbox mode where possible, and to reduce the CPU load by quitting all other applications, and turning VM and file-sharing off.