

Creating Your Own Toolbars in FrameMaker (All Platforms)

By Shlomo Perets, MicroType (Israel)
mtype@netvision.net.il

In the "Enriching Your Formatting Bar in FrameMaker" article, I demonstrated how to add some useful items to the formatting bar: character format pop-up, font pop-up, as well as buttons for set size, repeat last paragraph or character command and others. The technique used to enhance the formatting toolbar applied only to the various Windows versions of FrameMaker, and there was no control over the icons to be used for buttons (these had to be selected from icons included in the FrameMaker program files, such as those displayed on the quick access bar or graphics tools).

FrameMaker documentation doesn't tell you how, but you can design and implement completely new toolbars with buttons for recurring tasks. The technique described below is platform-independent and applies to versions 4 and 5 of FrameMaker, FrameBuilder and FM+SGML. You have full control over the icons – you actually have to draw them yourself, or use textual buttons.

As examples of such a toolbar you can take a look at the Equation palette (opened after you click the Sigma at the top part of the vertical scrolling bar), or the Page Layout palette in FrameMaker version 4 (Format>Pages>Layout commands).

To create a new toolbar, the following steps are required:

- Identify FrameMaker commands to be included in your toolbar
- Create a new file (adjusting the page size to be the size of your palette)
- Create the icons or textual buttons (this is done using FrameMaker's drawing tools in a regular FrameMaker file and linking each one with your desired command, similar to creating hypertext buttons)
- Save the file as MIF (Maker Interchange Format) and change the relevant view-related statements
- Open the FrameMaker file you have created to work with the resulting toolbar
- Test the functionality of the toolbar

Identifying the Codes for FrameMaker Commands (fcodes)

Locate the FrameMaker commands file (in Windows versions, it can be found as CMDS.CFG in the fminit\configui directory; in unix versions, \$FMHOME/fminit/usenglish/Commands).

All FrameMaker commands are listed in this file, grouped according to function, in the following format:

```
...
<Command GraphicsSendToBack
  <Label Send to Back>
  <KeySequence \!gb>
  <Definition \x381>
  <Mode All>>
<Command GraphicsAlign
  <Label Align...>
  <KeySequence \!ga>
  <Definition \x384>>
...
```

Each FrameMaker command has a unique number, known as an fcode (in the example above, the fcode for the send to back operation is 381 hex, and the fcode for the align operation is 384 hex).

Locate the fcodes for the commands you would like to include in your toolbar.

Creating a New File

Create a new file, using File>New>Custom and specify the page size to be the size of your palette. Even though margins are not necessary, you must specify minimum-size top and bottom margins (0.2") (FrameMaker insists on minimum-size margins for the placement of header/footer, even if you don't intend having one).

For example, a custom page size could be 1" wide, 5" long, with top and bottom margins of 0.2".

Note: It is possible to change the page size for an existing document (Format>Page Layout>Page Size), but you must first change the left and right margins to 0" and the top and bottom margins to 0.2" (Format>Page Layout>Column Layout) – otherwise you'll get a "Resulting columns too narrow" error message.

Create the Buttons

The buttons you intend to include in the toolbar should be prepared the same way buttons for hypertext commands are created. The buttons can be graphic or textual. If you are not familiar with this, see Using FrameMaker and practice the creation of hypertext buttons before you proceed.

There is one important difference: instead of writing a hypertext command in the Marker Text box you have to write the undocumented command "fcodes" followed by the fcode number. Marker Type should still be of the Hypertext type. For example, the Marker Text for the send to back operation should read "fcodes 301" (without the quotation marks, no need for the \x).

Readjust page size if necessary.

Notes:

- If you have several buttons, you can save a lot of time by using the matrix hypertext when you draw the buttons, in conjunction with a corresponding table of the same dimensions.
- For some commands, it is possible to combine several commands with the same button, and specify the fcodes one after the other. For example, the same button could activate the bold + italic + underline properties, and would be coded as "fcodes 260 261 262". However, if a dialog box is opened as a result of one of the fcodes, following fcodes will be ignored.
- The toolbar can be a multi-page document (see the equation file in the fminit directory for example).

Making your Toolbar into a Palette

Once your toolbar is complete, you have to transform it into a palette. Follow these steps:

- a. If the document is locked, unlock it (Esc F | k).
- b. Turn off text symbols, borders (zoom settings are not ignored in the final toolbar).
- c. Save the document as a MIF file (File>Save As, and select Interchange - MIF in the file type pop-up).
- d. Open the document using a text editor.

Note: You can use FrameMaker as a text editor. To open the MIF file as text (rather than interpreted as FrameMaker file), hold down the Shift key while you click Open. You cannot use Shift in conjunction with the five "recently visited files" at the bottom of the File menu. When prompted, select "Treat each line as a paragraph"

- e. Search for the string "DViewOnly". Change the Yes and No in this section as follows:

```
<DViewOnly Yes>  
<DViewOnlyXRef GotoBehavior>  
<DViewOnlySelect UserOnly>  
<DViewOnlyWinBorders No>  
<DViewOnlyWinMenubar No>  
<DViewOnlyWinPopup Yes>  
<DViewOnlyWinPalette Yes>
```

- f. Save the document.

IMPORTANT! If you use FrameMaker as a text editor, you must save the document as Text Only, or otherwise you will end up with a FrameMaker file (containing your MIF statements as text) and not a MIF file.

- g. Open the toolbar document in FrameMaker. It should be a palette.

Possible Applications

Some possible applications include:

- Special characters toolbar (registered, plus/minus, etc.), eliminating the need to memorize Ctrl-q sequences.
- Graphics commands toolbar, similar to the Unix/Macintosh, for use with Windows versions (which have just the graphics tools).
- Page Layout palette, which groups several pagination commands
- Hypertext navigation toolbar, where you could use the Next command (opposite of Previous), which exists but is unavailable otherwise.

Opening the Palette

To open the toolbar for regular use, you have to use File>Open. Upon opening, it will be a palette without a menu bar.

To add a toolbar as a menu entry, you have to use the FrameMaker Developer Kit.

For the daring! You can link your palette to your help contents, or better, add it the equations multi-page palette as separate pages (if you do not use equations frequently, you can set your toolbar to be the first page of the equation palette) – it will then open when you click the Sigma.

About MicroType

MicroType (Israel) was founded by Shlomo Perets in 1989 and provides training, support and consulting services, template development and online documentation services focusing on FrameMaker, FrameMaker+SGML and advanced Acrobat applications.

We offer courses based on the official Adobe Course materials as well as specially-tailored courses to suit your specific needs, and specialize in training for small groups, emphasizing hands-on training.

The **FrameMaker-to-Acrobat Timesavers** software, a set of integrated utilities designed to enhance various aspects of authoring Acrobat documents with FrameMaker, was developed by MicroType and has recently been released for sale.

For a detailed list of courses and services, visit our no-frills web page at <http://www.netvision.net.il/php/mtype>.

e-mail: mtype@netvision.net.il • Fax: +972-3-6739036