

Ways to Create Icons

Icons play a very important role in a product - both in software and in websites. Looking at them, the user gets an idea not only about the application, but also about the company that develops it. High-quality icons allow you to have an advantage over your competitors on the software market.

Each software developer tries to make its software clearer for the user. Various means are used for that: tooltips, graphical elements, sound effects and other things that can explain the user what this or that feature in the application is for. In this article we will dwell upon icons - small graphical items as some of the most important elements in software and site development.

It is worth taking a look at the software evolution because it is easy to notice at once that it is not the last place that the interface occupies in software. Any company engaged in the development of applications and sites tries to win users' appreciation not only by the functionality, but also by the beauty of their products. To create an attractive image, they employ designers or use the services of third-party companies specializing particularly in graphics. One of these companies is [Aha-Soft](#), which has taken its place on the market of creating graphical elements. Let us take a look at software products and graphical elements developed by this company.

There are several ways to create icons that can help the user to learn and use a software product:

Creating icons in [ArtIcons Pro](#)

Automatically creating icons out of images in [Any to Icon](#)

Using professional graphics tools: Corel Draw, PhotoShop, Adobe Illustrator, 3dMax

Searching the Internet for free icons

Searching Windows for icons with [ArtIcons Pro](#) as well

Ordering icons from designers

Buying ready-made icons at www.777icons.com

The first variant is convenient for those companies who have a designer on their payroll who can create icons specifically for their application. Usually, a professional in this field has a narrow specialization and makes items for advertising purposes, site templates, etc. But he may be completely unable to create icons.

Creating images in [Any to Icon](#) implies that you already have future icons, but they are in some other format (jpg, bmp, gif, png, etc.). This variant is bad only because it is not always that you have images at hand that could be converted.

Using professional graphics tools is a good way out only if you know them perfectly. After you create an image, you have to convert it into the *.ico format. To do it, you should use special software. [Any to Icon](#) is one of such programs. Nevertheless, you will have to edit the image because a large image loses its definition and, therefore, its beauty when it gets reduced.

Of course, you can use a wide choice of free icons easy to find on the Internet, but this way has several considerable disadvantages.

These icons are publicly available and, therefore, you lose the uniqueness of your application if you use them. And your project will look not quite the way you thought of it. Besides, publicly available icons should not be used in a commercial product since it should have its exclusive uniqueness and style, which is achieved by both its functionality and its design.

Despite the fact that there are a lot of free icons on the Internet, it is rather difficult to find images in one style that suit the purpose of the product. Most icons available on the Internet are in the style of Windows 98 and earlier versions of this operating system. Taking into account that most users nowadays use Windows XP and some of them already use Windows Vista, such a product will look out-to-date, which may result in losing potential users.

Searching Windows for icons with [ArtIcons Pro](#) will give you virtually the same results as a search on the Internet, except for the quantity - the choice on the Internet is much wider.

It is a good decision to order graphics for your product from professional designers. In this case, the product will have its uniqueness, which users like so much. You can discuss all aspects and peculiarities with the designer, which will result in high-quality and absolutely individual icons that are 100% not used in other products. However, this way always has one considerable minus: the terms often get dragged out since it is extremely difficult to take

into account all wishes of a customer.

Buying ready-made icons differs from ordering them from a designer in several aspects:

You can choose those icons that suit your application best and, if you would like to make any changes, you will have to hire a designer and thus spend more.

Besides, different developers can buy ready-made icons and you lose the uniqueness of your project.

You save a lot of material means because you contact a designer whom you have to explain what exactly you need.

This article shows you various ways of getting a nice software design pleasant for the user and helping to understand what this or that feature is for. Icons can be used not only in the application itself, but also as an icon for files whose extension is associated with this application.

About the Author

Since Aha-Soft's founding in 2000 and as of 2007, Victor Ivlichev develops image processing software for Windows. He works for quality products, which will help to other computer users.

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