

## DeskPictRotator Pro

### Introduction

Thank you for trying DeskPictRotator Pro! This product is an evolution of our AppleScript called DeskPictRotater (we corrected the spelling!), which has had thousands of downloads (you know who you are, and thanks!). Many users asked for features, such as a more friendly interface (customizing DeskPictRotater meant editing the script), and the ability to choose screen positioning on a picture basis. We listened, and here it is!

### What Is It?

DeskPictRotator Pro is a Macintosh application which allows the user to define a set of pictures that will be used to periodically set the desktop picture. Working with the MacOS Appearance control panel, it offers these features:

- A sortable list of pictures, including thumbnail representations, file name, and screen positioning (such as centered or tiled).
- Screen positioning set on a picture basis.
- Drag-and-drop support for adding pictures (files or folders) to the list.
- Simple picture list management.
- Selectable change interval, in seconds, minutes, hours, or days.
- Scheduling features, where you can choose the time during which pictures will be changed, with the option to treat weekends differently from weekdays.
- Change the pictures randomly or in order (based on sort order in the main window).
- Ability to change the picture immediately, or to set a specific picture.
- Each picture can be located on any disk or in any folder.
- Flexible picture preview generation, either automatic or manual.
- Ability to stop changing pictures without quitting the program.

- Internet link to find desktop pictures.
- Multiple-monitor support (limited).
- Balloon Help.

Features are discussed in more detail below.

## What Do I Need?

MacOS 8.5 or higher.

Approximately 2.5 MB free RAM.

Approximately 2 MB free disk space, plus space for the pictures you want to use.

A color monitor displaying at least thousands (16-bit) of colors is recommended.

## Registration

DeskPictRotator Pro is distributed as shareware.

Shareware is a method of distributing software so that users can "try before buying." When you buy software at a store, there's typically no recourse if it doesn't meet your needs. With shareware, you can try the software out for a period, often 30 days, and then decide whether to register and pay for the product, or stop using it. During the trial period, the software may be fully functional, or have some features restricted in a "demonstration mode." This depends on how the author sets it up.

DeskPictRotator Pro has a reminder mechanism. The program remains fully functional, but after a trial period, you will be reminded to register each time you launch the program, or once per day, if the program remains running.

Shareware is often developed by an individual or a small team, so you can usually get in touch directly with the author(s) for questions and comments. This can be a tremendous advantage. Shareware is generally distributed over the Internet or through user groups, with online manuals.

## Sounds Good, But Why Should I Register?

Because you like the software! We love the Mac, and want to develop more software to make Mac use more productive and fun. To do this, though, we need to make money (Sorry, but it's true! Those banks and utility companies are so picky about being paid! <grin>). We try to keep prices very reasonable, and hope you find our products a good value.

If you decide you don't want to register, please let us know why. If there's something you'd like to see, or some feature you need, please let us know.

Whether you decide to register or not, please consider letting a friend know about the software. Word of mouth can be the best advertising. Thanks!

## What's So Great About Sleeping Cat Software?

Well, maybe we're not great, but we're trying!

We are focused on Macintosh development. There won't be any cross-platform compromises here, and this is not intended as a springboard for development on other platforms. Development is done on Macs, for Macs.

## Installation

DeskPictRotator Pro is an application, so you may store its folder wherever is convenient for you. You may wish to make an alias to the application and place it in the Startup Items folder so DeskPictRotator Pro runs at each startup. To do this, click once on DeskPictRotator Pro's icon to select it, and choose Make Alias from the Finder's File menu. You will see a second icon appear with its name in italics; this is an alias. Select this alias icon and drag it to the Startup Items folder:



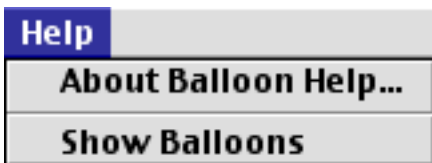
The Startup Items folder has the icon to the left, and is located in your Mac's System Folder. Items in this folder are opened by the Finder when the Mac starts up.

## Upgrading from DeskPictRotater

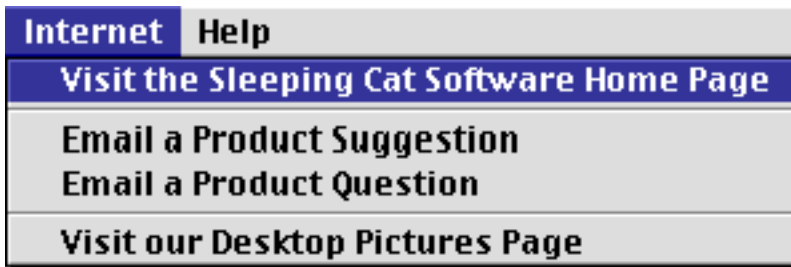
If you have been using DeskPictRotater, upgrading to DeskPictRotator Pro is easy. You probably have a folder of pictures you have been using with DeskPictRotater, so once you have gotten DeskPictRotator Pro running and configured its preferences, you should be able to simply drag the picture folder to DeskPictRotator Pro's window and begin enjoying the new interface.

## Getting Started

Start DeskPictRotator Pro by double-clicking its icon. You may wish to explore the menus, then turn on Balloon Help and explore the main window as well as the Preferences dialog to get a feel for the program's features.

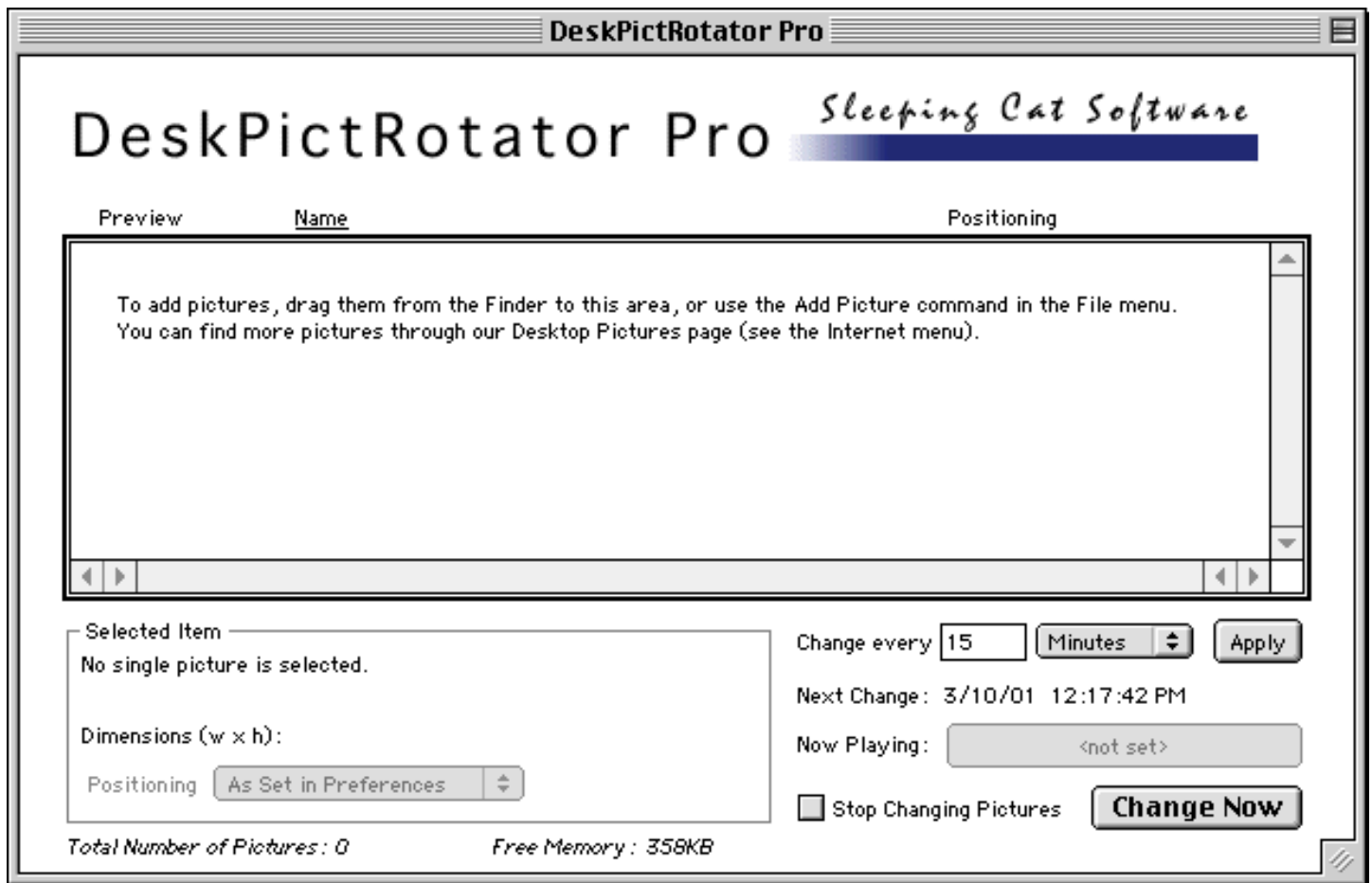



Then, you need some pictures that you'd like to display on your desktop. Apple supplies some pictures on the MacOS CD, located in a folder called Sample Desktop Pictures. If you would like to use some of those, you should copy the pictures to your hard disk, so they'll remain available even when the CD is put away. There are also many sites on the Internet which have pictures available for download. DeskPictRotator Pro has a link to a page at Sleeping Cat Software that catalogs some sites for desktop pictures (see the Internet menu, pictured below). You can probably find others using the Sherlock search engine included with MacOS.



Once you have collected some pictures you'd like to use, you must add these to DeskPictRotator Pro's picture list. You can do this in one of three ways:

- Use the traditional Open command in DeskPictRotator Pro's File menu.
- Select a group of pictures in the Finder, and drag the selection to the picture list in DeskPictRotator Pro's main window. The list control should highlight. If it does not highlight, there is at least one unusable picture in the group. Try dragging a few pictures at a time until you locate the inappropriate file.



-  Select a group of pictures in the Finder, and drag the selection to DeskPictRotator Pro's program icon. The icon should highlight. If it does not highlight, there is at least one unusable picture in the group. Try dragging a few pictures at a time until you locate the inappropriate file.

A word on picture formats: DeskPictRotator Pro provides a friendly, flexible front end for the desktop picture feature of the Appearance control panel. In fact, DeskPictRotator Pro will start the Appearance control panel, because it "talks" to it (using Apple Events) to set and position the desktop picture. DeskPictRotator Pro is limited in the file formats it can use by what Appearance accepts. The supported formats are GIF, JPEG, TIFF, and PICT. If you have downloaded such files from the Internet, they would typically have file name extensions such as .jpg, .jpeg, .gif, .tif, .tiff, or .pict.

Once you've added pictures, you can set each picture's positioning on the desktop. The default positioning for each newly added picture is set in DeskPictRotator Pro's Preferences. To change a picture's positioning, select it in the list, and use the popup menu in the lower left of the main window. Each picture's positioning is shown in the rightmost column of the picture list. When you select a picture, you can see its dimensions in pixels (see the picture below for an example). Using this dimension information along with knowledge of your monitor's settings, you can determine the optimal positioning for each picture. You can find your Mac monitor's pixel dimensions by checking the Monitors control panel (located in the Control Panels folder). For example, if you have a picture that is 640 pixels wide by 480 pixels high, and your monitor is set to 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels high, you might want to choose "Centered" as opposed to "Filling Screen" for the positioning because filling the screen might distort the picture, or make it too grainy. You can experiment; DeskPictRotator Pro makes it easy!

Balloon Help is implemented in the program's main window and preferences dialog, so you can use it to learn about features. To use it, turn on Show Balloons from the Help menu (see below), and position the mouse cursor over something you'd like to learn about.



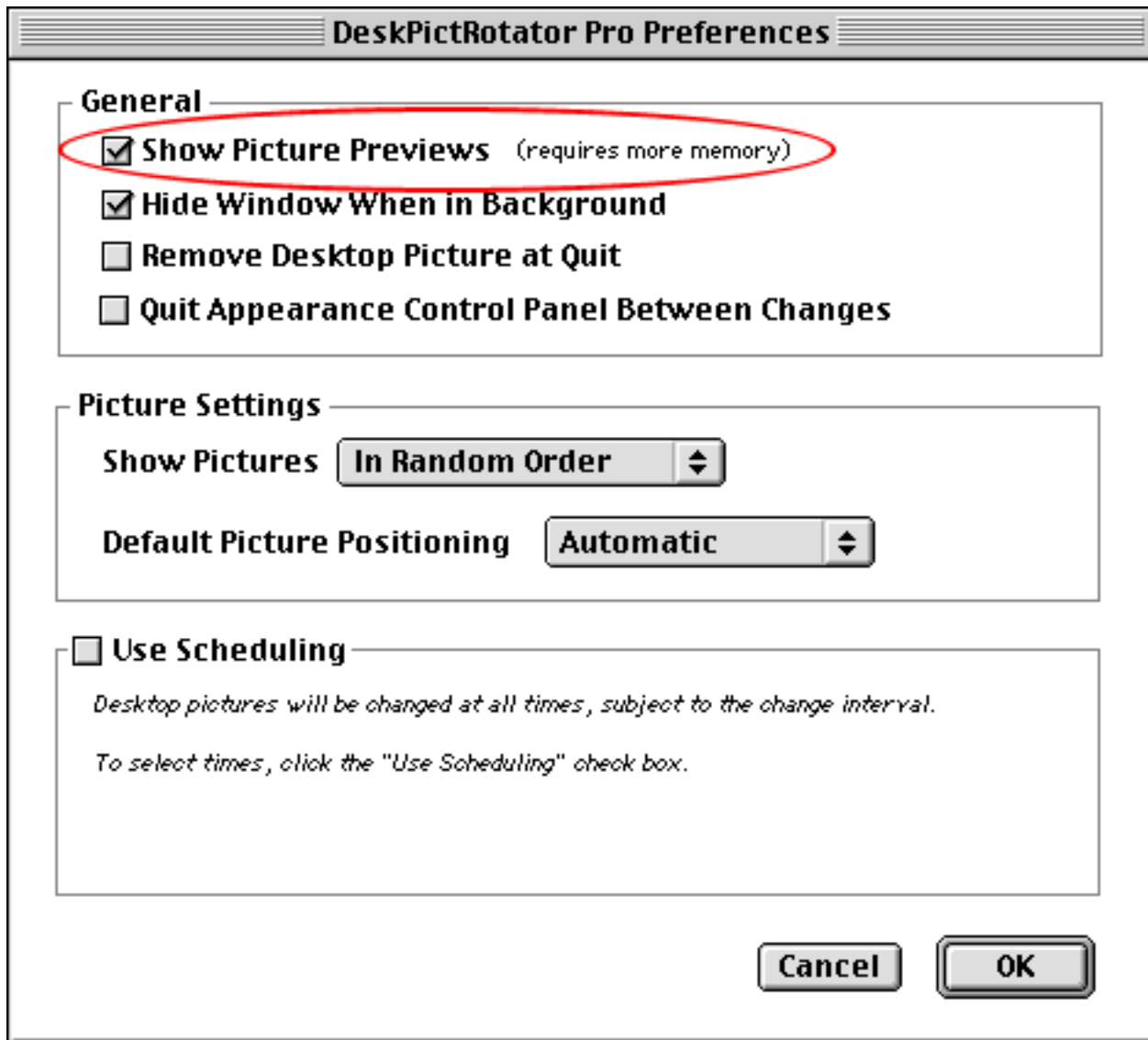
### ***A Word on Multiple Monitors***

DeskPictRotator Pro has rudimentary support for multiple monitor configurations. Only one monitor will be used to show desktop pictures, but it will be the monitor which contains the program's main window. So, if you have a secondary monitor on which you'd like to display pictures while using your main monitor, simply move DeskPictRotator Pro's main window to that secondary monitor. We hope to improve this support in a future version.

## Running in a Memory-Constrained Environment

So you have a system with a small amount of memory, but you'd still like to run DeskPictRotator Pro?

DeskPictRotator Pro can run in as little as 900K of memory (of course, you still must allow RAM for the Appearance control panel, which is used to set pictures). The primary consumer of memory in DeskPictRotator Pro is the thumbnail picture previews. To save memory, you should turn off automatic generation of previews. This is done in the Preferences dialog:



Then, you can add and manage your picture list as usual. If you'd like to see previews for individual pictures, you can select them in the list, and choose **Generate Preview** from the **File** menu. You can clear a generated preview using **Clear Preview**, also in the **File** menu.

## Menu Reference

### *File*

#### Add Picture

Use this command to add pictures to DeskPictRotator Pro's list. Navigation Services is supported.

#### Save Settings

This command will save current settings to the preferences file. Settings will also be saved when the program quits, or when the Preferences dialog is accepted. If this item is grayed out, the preferences have already been saved.

#### Reveal in Finder

This command will reveal a single selected picture in the Finder. The Finder will be brought frontmost.

#### Generate Preview

DeskPictRotator Pro has a global picture preview setting in the Preferences dialog. When it is turned on, the program will attempt to generate a thumbnail preview for all pictures, including newly added ones. However, in a low memory situation, previews may not be generated for all pictures. Using the Generate Preview command in tandem with the Clear Preview command, you can selectively enable and disable previews on a picture basis, giving more control in low-memory conditions. NOTE: individually generated previews are not remembered across program invocations.

Note that if you decide to manage previews in this way, you should turn off the global picture preview setting.

#### Clear Preview

Clears the thumbnail preview for the currently selected picture(s).

#### Quit

Quits the program, saving preferences.

### *Edit*

Undo, Cut, Copy, Paste, Clear, Select All

The standard editing commands.

Select None

Especially useful when the picture list is active, this command clears any selection.

Preferences

Brings up the Preferences dialog.

### ***Special***

Remove Desktop Picture

This will remove the currently set desktop picture.

### ***Internet***

Visit the Sleeping Cat Software Home Page

This will launch your Web browser and go to the Sleeping Cat Software site.

Visit our Desktop Pictures Page

This will launch your Web browser and go to our list of sites to download desktop pictures.

Email a Product Suggestion

This will launch your mail program and pre-address a message to our suggestion address.

Email a Product Question

This will launch your mail program and pre-address a message to our support address.

How to Register

This will launch your Web browser and go to our registration page.



## **Help**

### Show Balloons

Use this command to show popup help for DeskPictRotator Pro's user interface.

## **What Can I Use It For?**

The expected use for DeskPictRotator Pro is in a personal environment, where you can use it to change your desktop at an interval that's right for you. However, DeskPictRotator Pro can also be used in a presentation mode; for example, in a kiosk. In the preferences, there is a setting for picture display order, either In Random Order or In Sorted Order. When set to Sorted, pictures are shown in the order in which they are sorted in the main window (this depends on which criteria you are sorting by). So, for example, if you had a series of pictures to be shown in order, simply name them in sort order (such as Picture 001, Picture 002, etc.), sort the main window by name, change the picture display order to Sorted, set an appropriate interval, and you have an instant presentation! Of course, any desktop icons and the menu bar will remain visible.

You can also use DeskPictRotator Pro as a sort of "digital picture frame." Perhaps you could set up a list of family photos, and rotate through them for a cheerful family room display! Just the thing to complement a colorful iMac!

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to...

J.L., for patience, support, and occasional nagging.

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Tabitha, for showing how to relax.

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James W. Walker for his ABalloon class, which is what makes DeskPictRotator Pro's balloon help possible, and for his PrintToPDF print driver.

Quinn and Peter for Internet Config, which makes DeskPictRotator Pro's Internet menu possible.

The extremely talented folks behind Metrowerks' PowerPlant application framework and CodeWarrior.

Apple Computer, for the Macintosh.

## Future

We have some ideas for the next version, but we'd love to hear yours! You can send feedback via the Internet menu in DeskPictRotator Pro.

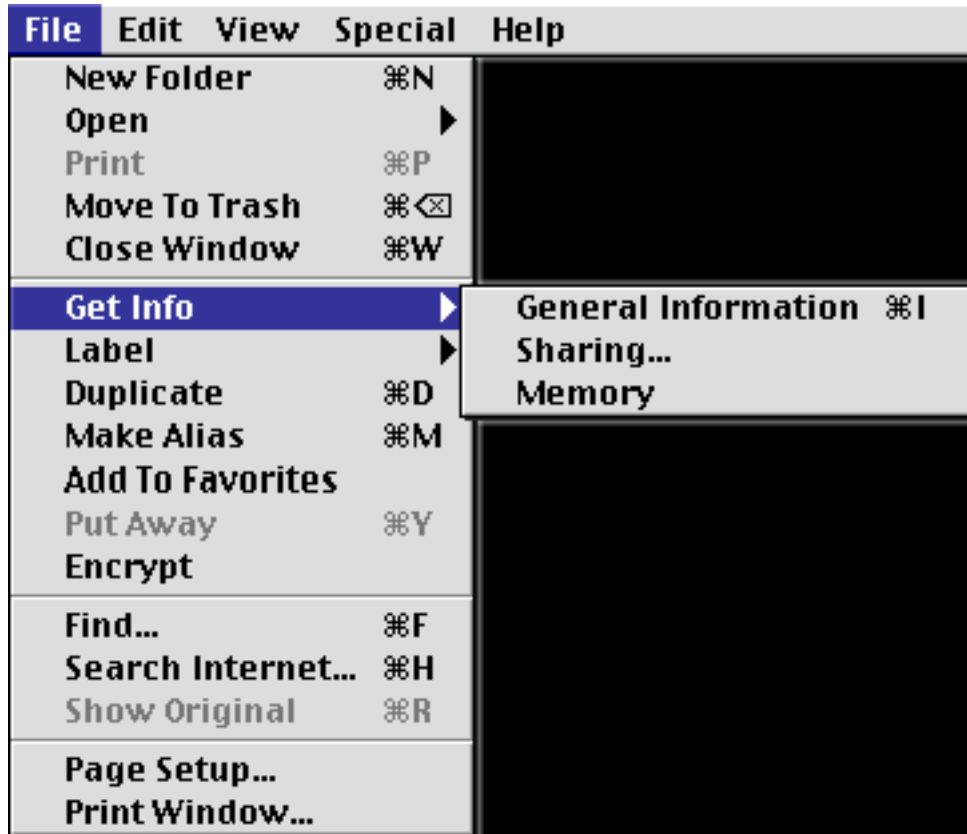
## Troubleshooting

The most common thing you're likely to run into is a low-memory condition. DeskPictRotator Pro tries to adapt to low memory conditions by not generating picture previews and by disabling some functions. To find out how much memory DeskPictRotator Pro has available, you can check the free memory display along the lower edge of the main window, or you can choose "About DeskPictRotator Pro" from the Apple menu. In that case, you will see a window like this:

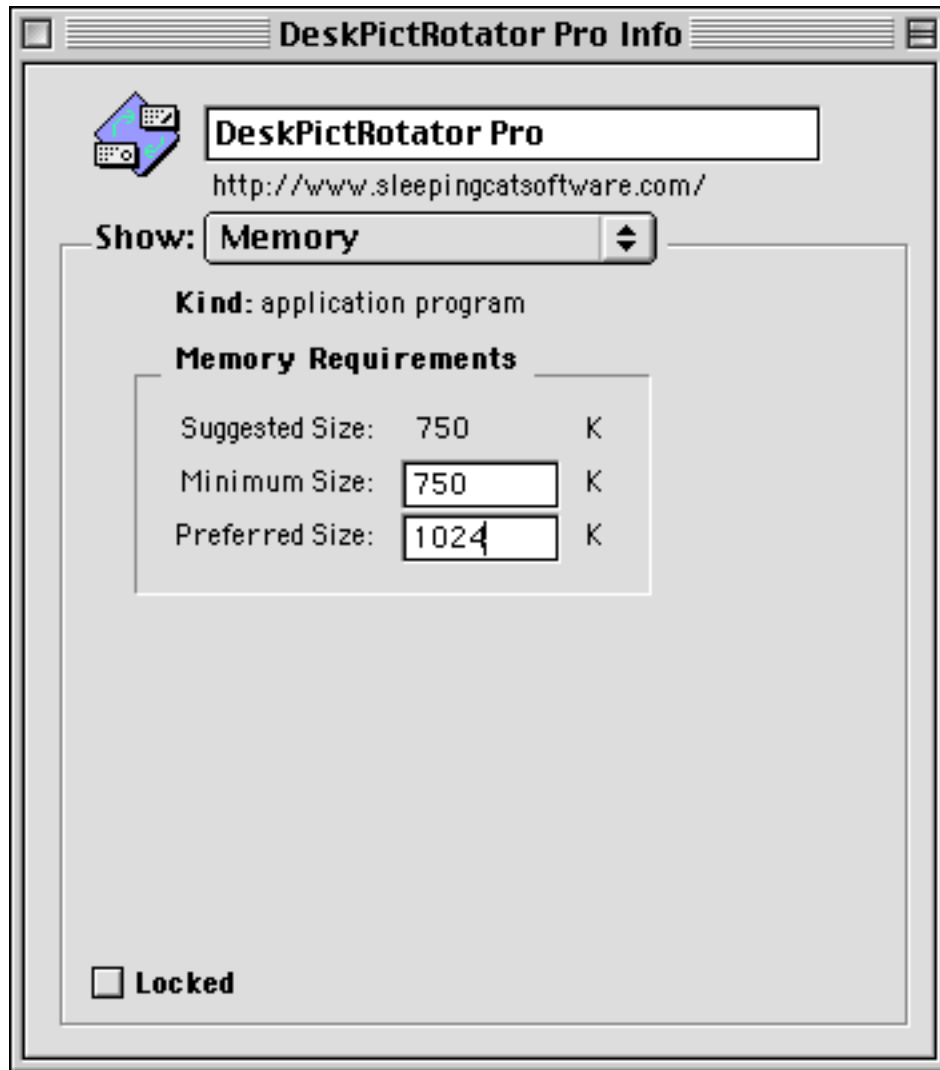


In the upper right, you'll see a field labeled "Free Memory", followed by a number. The number is the number of kilobytes (1024 bytes) free, along with possibly the text "low!" The text "low!" indicates that DeskPictRotator Pro has used its reserve, and in this case, certain commands will be disabled. The reserve is simply a block of memory that DeskPictRotator Pro sets aside at startup, and releases when memory runs low. When the reserve is released, memory is critically low, and you should do one or more of: remove some pictures from the list; turn off picture previews (see the Preferences dialog); or increase the program's memory allocation

To increase the memory allocation for the program, ensure DeskPictRotator Pro is not running, select DeskPictRotator Pro's icon in the Finder, and choose Get Info from the Finder's File menu.



You should see a window like this:



To increase the program's memory allocation, type a larger number in the "Preferred Size" field; you can experiment to find the best setting, but increasing by 100K at a time is probably a reasonable starting point. As a rule of thumb, at millions of colors, a preview adds about 14KB to a picture's memory usage; at thousands of colors, a preview adds about 9KB.

For example, if you have 100 pictures in DeskPictRotator Pro's list, and want to show previews for all of them at thousands of colors, you should allocate approximately 1600KB.

If you do not see the Memory Requirements fields, be sure to select the Memory item from the "Show" popup menu near the top of the window (in this picture, it's right below the Sleeping Cat Software URL).

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