

## Chapter Fifteen: Background Generator





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The XMP-24 Background Generator (BG) helps you create solid color backgrounds, a variety of gradient backgrounds, and semi-transparent backgrounds. You typically use a background generator to generate a background for titles or other graphics. For example, when you create titles for a client, you can use the background generator to match the color scheme of the client business. The BG in Video Toaster [2] lets you fashion the perfect shade.

This chapter explains the four different options you can choose on the Background Generator and how you set them up. The BG relies on the Color Picker, so be sure to read the Chapter Thirteen to get information on creating colors.



**Figure 15.1.** The panel for the Background Generator.

## WORKING WITH THE BACKGROUND GENERATOR

The interface for the Background Generator is straightforward and easy to work with. The OFF switch on the left lets you close the panel, and four options are available for creating background color. The four options on the Background Generator let you choose a **Solid** background, a **Horizontal** gradient, a **Vertical** gradient, and a **4 Corner** gradient. The process for setting a color for each of these backgrounds is basically the same, except that you need to choose colors more than once for the gradients. Remember that you can create a semi-transparent background by changing the alpha value in the Color Picker.


### To create a background color

- 1 Select the button for the mode that you want.
- 2 Click on one or more of the tiles at the right of the panel, depending on the option you choose, which we'll discuss next.
- 3 The Color Picker panel appears, and on this panel, you select the background color or colors that you want. You can choose from presets of custom colors, you can set your color numerically based on the color systems (RGB, HSL, and YUV) and you can choose a color with your cursor from the color spectrum.
- 4 After you choose your color, close the Color Picker by clicking the **Close** button.

### To create a semi-transparent background color

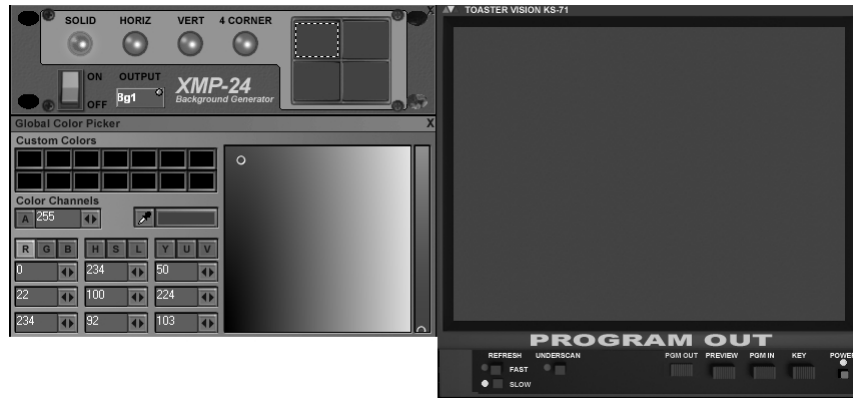
- 1 Follow Steps 1-3 in the procedure above.
- 2 When the Color Picker appears, choose your color swatch or color settings and enter a value between 0-255 in the **Alpha** channel. Values near 0 make your color very transparent, while higher values make the color more opaque.

## SOLID BACKGROUND

To create a solid background, you choose the **SOLID** option. Then you click on a tile to launch the Color Picker and select a color. The Background Generator fills all four tiles with your chosen color. If ToasterVision is open, you can see the entire screen fill with your background color. (If you do not immediately see your background in ToasterVision, right-click on the BG tag  and choose **Put onto Program Out**. Choose the **PGM Out** mode in ToasterVision.)

**NOTE**

Remember that you can use dithering in the Background Generator; you must activate the option on the Preferences panel. You would turn off dithering to make a clean black signal. But you would activate dithering to eliminate banding if you dissolve to and from the background color.



**Figure 15.2.** The Solid option selected; display of Solid background in ToasterVision.

## HORIZONTAL GRADIENT

To choose colors for the horizontal gradient, you first click on the **HORIZ** button, then you click on one of the tiles in the left column. Choose a color, and the Background Generator applies that color to both tiles in the left column. Then click on a tile in the right column, and choose another color. In ToasterVision, you can see a two-color gradient that flows from left to right.



**Figure 15.3.** The Horiz option selected; display of Horiz background in ToasterVision.

## VERTICAL GRADIENT

You choose colors for a vertical gradient nearly the same way you define colors for the Horizontal gradient. Choose the **VERT** option and then choose colors for the top and bottom tiles. The gradient will flow from top to bottom on your output screen.

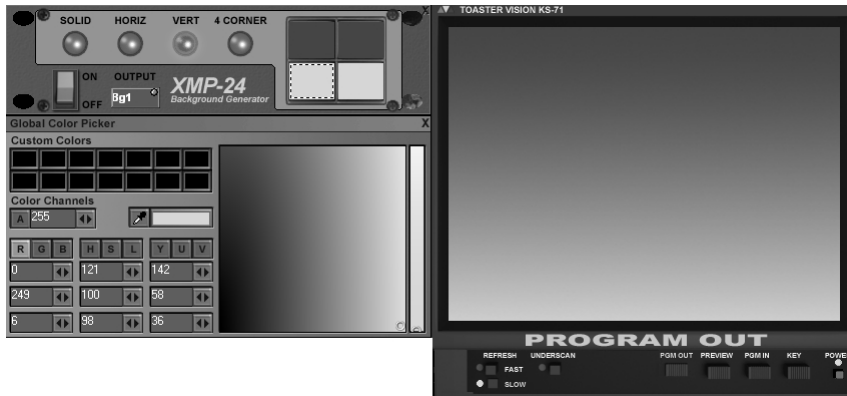


Figure 15.4. The Vert option selected; display of Vert background in ToasterVision.

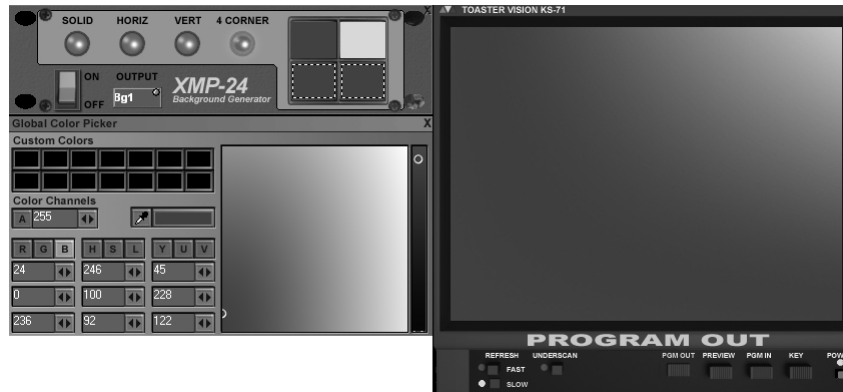
## 4 CORNER GRADIENT

For the **4 CORNER** gradient, you choose a different color for each tile, and the Background Generator creates a gradient that blends these colors from each corner.



Figure 15.5. The 4 Corner option selected; display of 4 Corner background in ToasterVision.

If you want to select some of the tiles and assign the same color to them, you can select tiles by CTRL-clicking. By CTRL-clicking, you can place the same color in diagonal tiles, or in three tiles, like the image below.



**Figure 15.6.** The 4 Corner option with three tiles selected using CTRL-click.

## USING THE BACKGROUND GENERATOR

You can drag and drop your background to the Switcher. Grab the BG tag under **Output**, drag it to the Switcher and drop it on an open channel. The Switcher adds the tag as an input, and you can use it for the Main bus, the Preview bus, or the Key bus. You can also add the Background Generator to the Switcher by using the right-click menu on the Switcher, which gives you several commands to choose from. To use the BG on the DSK, the BG must be open. Then you can choose BG on the DSK menu. For information about these commands, see Chapter Seven: Switcher.

## TINTING THE BG

Like the other panels in Video Toaster, you can tint the Background Generator panel. But because the BG accepts color as an input, you can't simply drag and drop from the Color Picker onto the panel. To tint the BG, you must open the Color Picker, select a color swatch and then hold the CTRL key as you drag and drop the swatch onto the BG panel.

## **TASK: BACKGROUND GENERATOR**

The Background Generator is an ideal tool for quick backgrounds in the Switcher and for your titles and graphics in the Character Generator. These tasks give you some practice with making the backgrounds and using them in Video Toaster.

### **TASK: MAKE A BACKGROUND**

For this task, you will make a semi-transparent background with the 4-corner gradient option and you will use this background in the Switcher on the DSK to add a golden tint to your video. Yes, it's called a background, but here we will use it as an overlay.

- 1** Open the Background Generator (BG).
- 2** Choose the **4 Corner** gradient. Then CTRL-click to select the top-left tile and the bottom-right tile together.
- 3** The Color Picker opens. Enter the following values in the **RGB** fields: 255, 255, 0 to get a yellow hue, then set the value for the A field at 150 to make the yellow semi-transparent.
- 4** Return to the BG and CTRL-click to select the other two tiles. Then in the Color Picker enter the following values: 200, 100, 0 to get an orange hue. Enter 150 for the alpha value
- 5** In ToasterVision you should see your new background displayed. If not, right-click on the BG tag and choose **Put onto Program Out**. Verify that ToasterVision is in the **PGM Out** mode.

### **TASK: BG ON THE SWITCHER**

- 1** Continue from the previous task. Open the Switcher and the Digital Disk Recorder (DDR)
- 2** In the DDR, load the HACIENDA.AVI file. Click on the **Pause** button and click on **Cue**.
- 3** In the Switcher, place the BG on the Main bus and place the DDR on the Preview bus.
- 4** On the switcher, choose the Background Generator from the DSK menu and activate the DSK by selecting DSK on.
- 5** Click on Auto and the BG fades to the Hacienda footage. Because the BG is also on the DSK, the Riverwalk now has a golden hue to it.