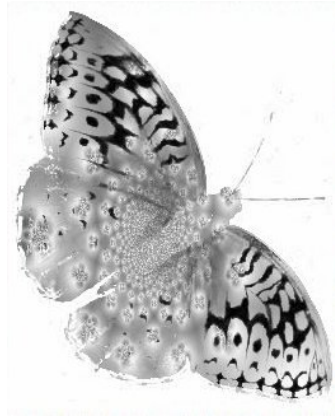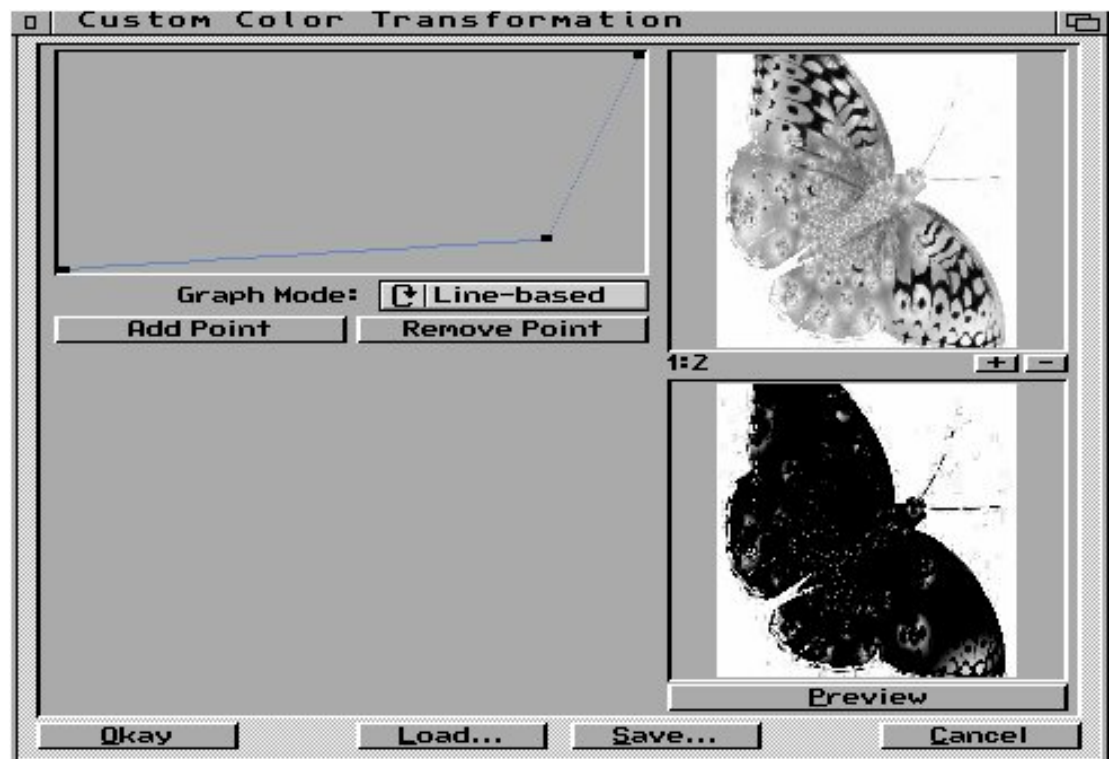# How to make PNG icons using ImageFX 4.5

Load any image and decide which part will be solid, and which part transparent. The part that is transparent is Black and anything White is opaque.

you can use ImageFX's Alpha menu -> Copy To Alpha. And this will make a grey version of your picture. (As you can see from the picture at the right.) Go to the alpha buffer by clicking in the Alpha Menu: Alpha -> Swap. As you can see it's all grey! Unless you want your icon to be semitransparent - something that could work for certain images - you'll have to do a bit more work on the alpha channel.

While still in the alpha buffer, bring up the Color -> Custom window and using line-based curve, Pull down the middle point so the inside of the object is as dark as possible, while keeping the other part as white as possible.

Now, you'll have to go in by hand and picking the freehand fill-in tool with either white or black as your color go in and fix all the parts that are not black or white enough. When done don't forget to apply Color -> Negative so the correct parts are transparent (black).

Now, I'm lazy and instead of using the [Alpha -> Copy to Swap] I use the LumiEssence hook and made the picture you see below this one. You can only use this hook with ImageFX 4.5 and it can be downloaded from the ImageFX mailing list site. Go join at:
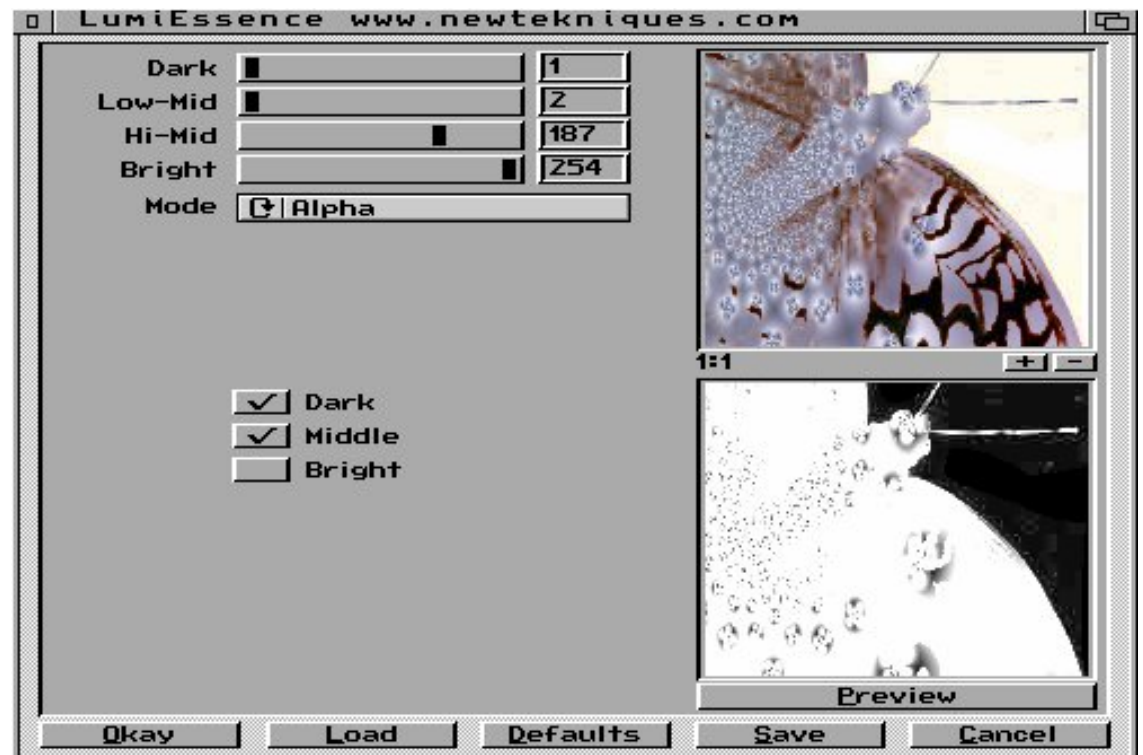http://groups.yahoo.com/group/imagefx/join
Once you've joined go
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/imagefx/files/LumiEssence
in the files area and download the hook. Copy it to the hooks directory. And make sure the protection bits are read, write. Sometimes these things get wonky when they get copied to a from different systems.

Using this hook is very easy. Make sure the mode is "alpha" because that is what you want it to create. "Dark, Middle, Bright" are the values it works on and it's best if no more than two of these are clicked. Then move the sliders around until you get what you want - in this case the butterfly should be as light as possible and the rest should be as dark as possible. Once done and whatever little bits need to be painted by hand, use the Negative effect to make the background black.
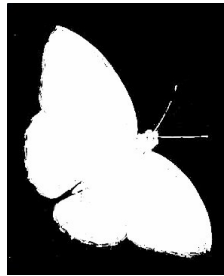
This is an extraordinary hook. Use it well! Check out my article:
http://www.novadesign.com/Newsletters/IFXC/IFX3.1.html
which explains how to use this hook with text and getting fabulous text effects!
It's is fast and clean. I love this hook. It rulz!

Whatever you use, once your alpha channel is what you want, scale the image to a good size. 100 width is a large icon. they usually are half that size, but I have made icons that big. Just can't help myself.
Save as PNG and when the saver comes up click at least Save Alpha Channel. The others are options. Certain programs can read the comments (although I haven't found one yet! Or I'm too lazy to look).

After it's been saved you can now copy it and rename it "xxx.info". I like to keep a PNG copy of the file to mess with if needed later. IFX won't "let" you load a file called "something.info". I mean, you'd probably have to force it. As I'm lazy, I'd rather just have a copy handy. It's easier than renaming the file everytime you need to load it back in ImageFX.