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Specifying stimulus paths in E-Prime

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Abstract
This brief report describes how to add stimulus paths on the fly using E-Prime InLine scripts, and how to do it using startup attributes. Either allows you to put image or sound files in a subfolder of your experiment folder without having to specify the complete path in the stimulus list.

Please direct questions and comments to Jim Magnuson.

Specifying a stimulus path with an InLine script

You can specify an image or sound stimulus from a triallist by inserting a reference to the triallist attribute in the file field of the properties for the stimulus object. For example, if you are displaying an image in a slide subobject called *image*, and the name of the image is listed in the *IM* triallist attribute, you can specify [*IM*] in the file field for image. If you like, you can simplify your *IM* list by leaving off the file extension (e.g., *.bmp*) and adding that to the attribute reference:

[IM].bmp

However, while you might expect that you could specify path information in a similar fashion (e.g., if your images are in the subfolder *IMG*, specifying ***IMG/[IM].bmp***), **this does not work**. PST recommends either keeping all your stimuli in the same folder as your script (a solution that quickly becomes unwieldy if you have more than a few stimuli) or specifying the full path in your triallist (a bit of a pain, especially if you ever want to move the stimuli to a different folder).

There are much more flexible solutions possible, the importance of which become clear when you're working with a large number of images (e.g., 600, as I am), making it hard to work with your script and data files and all those pictures in the same folder. Here are two methods.

Method 1: use startup attributes

I came up with Method 2, and when I told Brandon Cernicky at PST tech support about it, he sent me this simpler method (among its other advantages: the process is not as hidden from the user):

1. Put your images in a subfolder, e.g., IMG.
2. Go ahead and specify your image names without path info in your TrialList.
3. Set the following in all of your image object Filename properties [ImagePath][ImageFilename].bmp
4. Set the [ImageFilename] attribute in the TrialList objects accordingly.
5. Set the [ImagePath] value at the beginning of the experiment before any Image object loads. This can be done in one of two ways
   i. In the experiment object, create a "startup info" parameter named "ImagePath", **set it to not prompt**, and then **set the default value to the path** of all of the images. Startup Info parameters are set in the context automatically by the script that E-Studio generates. So long as the parameter is enabled, it will get set up. You could optionally prompt for the path, but this is probably an unlikely option. This option requires no scripting and uses the interface to prepare the value.
   ii. Drop an InLine as the first item in SessionProc and use c.SetAttrib "ImagePath", "images/myimages/" or whatever the path value is.

Method 2: use an InLine script

There still might be cases where this method would work better for you, e.g., in the unlikely and complicated case that you have two versions of all your stimuli, in two separate folders, and you want to dynamically choose one of them depending on subject responses. I've included it in case there might be other uses I've not thought of, and because it illustrates the power of c.SetAttrib and c.GetAttrib.

1. Put your images in a subfolder, e.g., IMG.
2. Go ahead and specify your image names without path info in your TrialList.
3. Add an inline right before the slide that calls them.
4. Add variables for pre- and postfixes for your images and initialize them according to the path you've created:
   Dim imgPre As String
   Dim imgPost As String
   imgPre = "IMG/"
   imgPost = ".bmp"
5. Suppose the list item that specifies the image name is "IM"; your slide subobject (the image) should refer to that attribute: [IM]
6. Add one more line to your inline:
   c.SetAttrib "IM", imgPre & c.GetAttrib("IM") & imgPost

This way, if you change your file path, you have one change to make -- just to the string imgPre.