

TAG Application Preferences (D6)

The user can tailor some features of the TAG web page applications - such as font sizes, work area sizes, the use of a virtual keyboard, and the colors of some of the buttons and panes. A copy of the color choices is kept in a virtual file named **/colors** and a copy of the other preferences is kept in a virtual file named **/preferences**. An **.html** game page does not provide direct access to the virtual file system.

These are JSON text files and can be directly edited by the author. However it is **STRONGLY** recommended that they only be changed using the **Prefers** option of the **FILE** menu. It is possible to create invalid versions of these files that prevent the TAG applications from running. In that case it will be necessary to run the TAG application with the query **?reset** which will delete the **/preferences** and **/colors** files before running the application.

The first time a TAG application is used on a computer with a touch screen, the application will assume that a virtual keyboard is needed. It will change the preferences to be appropriate for a tablet or cellphone. The user can modify and save the preferences as explained below and thereafter the chosen preferences will be used when the application is started. Also, if the computer has a real keyboard, then both the real keyboard and the virtual keyboard can be used if wanted.

To modify application preferences, choose the **Prefers** option of the **FILE** menu. This provides a preferences window showing the application preferences which can be edited and a menu bar with two buttons: **SAVE** and **COLORS**.

The **SAVE** button applies the changes, commits them to the **/preferences** file, and then exits.

The preferences are explained below. Changes will usually be visible immediately. If the **Preferences** pane is dismissed (without saving those changes), the changes will still remain in effect until the application is restarted (i.e. reloaded).

General Preferences

These preferences are available for designTag, playTag, and any xxx.html page.

Font Size

This affects the font used in menu bars and game windows and in routine editing boxes, etc.

Keyboard

See **Virtual Keyboard**

Key Size

The font size of the keys in the virtual keyboard. The font size of the type-ahead bar is instead controlled by the **Font Size** preference. Otherwise large key sizes (to help use of the keyboard) will limit the number of type-ahead words visible.

DesignTag Preferences

These preferences are only available to the game author in designTag.html

Work On

There is a button with the name of a game design to be automatically loaded whenever the designTag application starts. Click the button to provide a pane showing the files of the virtual file system. Select the desired file and click the **CHOOSE** button.

To cancel a **Work On** selection, choose an empty path name.

Portion

This provides a slider that controls how the web page is divided between the routine editor on the left and a the game playing area on the right.

Sides

On a computer with a small screen, trying to present both the design area and the play area in the same screen will likely make one or both areas too small. By selecting a **Sides** value of **Single**, the screen will switch to only showing one of the two areas. In that mode of operation a **>>** button will appear in the design area menu bar and **<<** button will appear in the play area menu bar. These allow the author to switch the display back and forth between showing the two areas. The **BEGIN** button will automatically switch the display to the play area.

Selecting a **Sides** value of **Both** will return to the usual display showing both design area and play area.

Auto Prime

Setting this option "On" will cause every **DESIGN Load Game** operation to prime the virtual keyboard (if any) with the words in the routines of the newly

loaded game. This will somewhat ease the process of entering lots of game design text from the virtual keyboard.

Virtual Keyboard

A virtual keyboard is available for computers, tablets, and cell phones which lack a real keyboard. This provides acceptable performance for playing a game, but is less adequate for writing a game since that is very text intensive. Tablets and cell phones also provide a builtin virtual keyboard but that tends to occupy too much screen space and provide features really not needed by an author or player. The TAG virtual keyboard is designed to occupy very little space - only three rows of 10 keys per row. Its font size can be adjusted to be some balance between ease of selection and leaving enough room for the application window panes. Using a tablet stylus may allow having the key size smaller.


The **Keyboard** preference (see **TAG Application Preferences (D6)**) allows selection of one of the **Qwerty**, **Workman**, **Colemak**, or **Alpha** keyboard layouts. Choosing --- as the layout disables the virtual keyboard.

NOTE: Selecting a virtual keyboard may move the web page focus away from the game player input - in which case, the user needs to tap/touch that input box so that it gets the focus again and will receive keyboard input. If touching the virtual keys seems to have no effect, that is the reason.

Above the virtual keyboard is a line showing a selection of type-ahead choices which can be tapped on to finish a word being entered. This makes it easier to play a game since the choices are tailored to the scenes recently viewed by the player. As the player types in the keyboard the type-ahead choices are updated to match the word so far typed. It also responds to back spacing input. If the type-ahead only suggests longer versions of the desired word, choose it and backspace over the unwanted characters.

When editing a game routine, don't backspace over mistakes - just keep on entering text. For some browsers, the misspellings will be selected (underlined) and touching them will provide easy spelling correction.

The standard keyboard function keys are located in unusual places:

 is the return/enter key - located at the top in the middle - except the **qwerty** keyboard shows it at the bottom right.

There is no space bar - there is a single space key in the middle of the bottom row. And clicking a type-ahead will automatically space between words.

 is the back space key - located at the bottom on the right.

⇧ is the "shift" key - located at the bottom on the right.

There are **four** shift levels - reached by repeatedly touching the shift key ⇧ . The un-shifted (first) level is the lower case alphabet, blank key, backspace, and enter key. In authoring a typical game **.txt** file this accounts for about 82% of the text.

The next shift level is the action punctuation and accounts for about 11 ½ % of the text.

The next shift level is the capital letters and accounts for only about 1 ½ % of the text.

The last shift level contains the digits, some arithmetic symbols, and the three punctuation marks not used for actions: ` and & and ; .

When a character is selected from the first shift level (the action punctuation) the keyboard automatically returns to the lower case un-shifted level.

The first two shift levels should account for all but about 3% of the text input.