

# XGameStation Micro Edition

## Plasma Effect

By Michael Ollanketo

In this lesson you will learn how to create an animated plasma effect on the XGameStation Micro Edition (XGSME). Differences between NTSC and PAL will be pointed out in this document.



Figure 1: NTSC version



Figure 2: PAL version

These images were grabbed through a TV-card, and the noise you see is because of the card and will not be present on an actual TV. The reason why the NTSC and PAL versions have different colors is that color is handled differently on NTSC and PAL devices, so getting the same results regardless of the format would require some extra work.

What this demo does is the following: a colorful animated plasma is drawn at the center of the screen, according to an algorithm which will be explained later. A text scroller is drawn on both sides of the plasma. The text scrolls vertically, and in opposite directions on either side of the screen. An XGS logo is drawn at the bottom of the screen, in the overscan area. The NTSC version of the demo also slowly fades the hue to give a wider range of colors. All of this will be explained throughout this tutorial.

Ok, so we're ready to start writing some SX52 assembly. First we start off with some common directives that you will see in all programs. We tell the IDE that we are using an SX52, that we want an HS3 oscillator, crystal drive and crystal feedback enabled, and the reset vector should be the label "Start".

### Legend

<code>; n</code>	Instruction takes n cycles
<code>; m (n)</code>	Instruction takes m cycles, and the entire group it belongs to takes n cycles
<code>foobar</code>	NTSC-specific code
<code>foobaz</code>	PAL-specific code

```
; MIC_PLASMA_04.SRC
```

```
    TITLE "Plasma demo v04"  
; Plasma effect for the XGS ME
```

```

; Works only at 80 MHz

; This file needs 7 include files:
;   astaroth.mus           Music data
;   font5x7.src           Font data
;   general_define.src     Defines constants (EQU) and some system variables
;   general_macro.src      Useful general purpose macro definitions and
;                           system functions
;   sine.src              Sine table
;   xgslogo.src           XGS overscan logo
;   xgsmp.src             Music player
DEVICE      SX52, OSCHS3, XTLBUFD, IFBD   ; Set everything for the XGS ME
RESET Start
FREQ 80_000_000 ; this is a directive to the ide only
; if you want to put the XGS ME into RUN mode
; you must make sure you go into the
; device settings and make sure that
; HS3 is enabled, and crystal drive and
; feedback are disabled and then re-program
; the chip in PGM mode and then switch it to RUN

IRC_CAL IRC_FAST ; Prevent a warning
ID      "micplsma" ; ID string

;#####

```

Next, we include some common definitions and variables and declare some variables of our own for use in this program. The include file `general_define.src` contains some common variables, mainly counters, a `burst_phase` variable which is used to store the current color reference burst and a `phase_alt` variable for controlling the phase alternation in PAL mode. We place these variables in bank \$20 and put our own variables in banks \$30 and \$40. The music player will use banks \$A0, \$B0 and \$C0 for its variables. More on how to use the music player later.

```

; Global variables, starting at bank #2
org $20

; I'm using Remz' code here, I only modified it to use a black overscan
; instead of the blue.
include "general_define.src"
org $30
pixel ds 1
horzPtr1 ds 1 ; Sine table "pointer"
horzPtr2 ds 1 ; Dito
temp ds 1 ; Temporary
temp2 ds 1 ; ...
vertPtr1 ds 1 ; ...
vertPtr2 ds 1
cnt1 ds 1 ; Loop counter and temporary
cnt2 ds 1 ; ...
scroller1 ds 1 ; Scroller 1 position
scroller2 ds 1 ; Scroller 2 position
scroller1_2 ds 1 ; Backup
scroller2_2 ds 1 ; ...
xCnt ds 1 ; Loop counter
yCnt ds 1

org $40
chroma_cnt ds 1 ; Controls the frequency of burst phase changes
chroma_delta ds 1 ; Controls the amplitude of burst phase changes

```

The music player contains two public functions; `XgsMpInit` which is called to initialize the player, and `XgsMpUpdate` which is called every frame to update the track positions and output any changes. The song was composed in *MML* (Music Macro Language) and converted to a suitable format with *XGSMC* (XGSME Music Compiler).

```
include    "general_macro.src"
include    "astaroth.mus"      ; Include song data
include    "xgsmp.src"        ; Include music player
;#####

        org    $0      ; Set the start of the program code

        org    $+2     ; leave 2 free word here for the debugger
```

Since functions have to reside on the lower half of a page, we create a jump table here that we can use later on. The @ sign causes the assembler to insert a `PAGE` instruction to cope with jumps to other pages.

```
; Jump table
InitMusic  jmp @XgsMpInit
UpdateMusic jmp @XgsMpUpdate

Start      ; Our real code starts here

        ; Initialize variables
        bank $40
        mov chroma_cnt,#0
        mov chroma_delta,#1

        bank $30
        mov vertPtr1,#0
        mov vertPtr2,#0
        mov yCnt,#0
```

Registers 10 and 11 in bank 0 are used to pass the address of the song to `XgsMpInit`. They form a 16-bit address together, with 10 containing the lower 8 bits and 11 the upper 8 bits. Registers 10-15 can be used at all time as extra variables no matter what bank is selected. The `XgsMpInit` function will set bit 7 of `FSR` (the File Select Register) as it uses banks \$A0-\$C0, so we need to clear that bit ourselves after the call since the `BANK` instruction only modifies bits 4..6 of `FSR`. I've written a macro called `_bank` to enforce updating of `FSR` bit 7.

```
mov 10,#$00
mov 11,#$08
call InitMusic          ; Initialize the music player
_bank $20               ; Set bank $20, and ensure bit 7 of FSR is
                       ; cleared
```

The `INITIALIZE_VIDEO` macro in `general_macro.src` sets up the video port (`RE`) for output and initializes the `burst_phase` variable. We then proceed to render our active scanlines. I've chosen to have 192 active scanlines in both versions of the demo, since they are guaranteed to be visible both on NTSC and PAL displays even though you could use a higher resolution in the PAL version.



```

; Convert the scroller position (0..255) to a string
; position (0..31) and character offset (0..7) and
; read a character from the string.
bank $30          ; 1
mov M,#TEXT_PAGE ; 1. Set page to read from
mov W,scroller1   ; 1. Scroller position
mov temp,W        ; 1
and W,#7          ; 1
mov temp2,W       ; 1. Save character row (0..7)
clc               ; 1. Divide by 8 (char height)
rr temp           ; 1 ...
clc               ; 1 ...
rr temp           ; 1 ...
clc               ; 1 ...
rr temp           ; 1 ...
mov W,temp        ; 1. String position (0..31)
iread             ; 4 (17)

; Multiply by 8 (height of char)
mov temp,W        ; 1. temp=x
add W,temp        ; 1. W=x*2
mov temp,W        ; 1. temp=x*2
add W,temp        ; 1. W=x*4
mov temp,W        ; 1. temp=x*4
add W,temp        ; 1. W=x*8

; Now read one row of character data
mov M,#FONT_PAGE ; 1. Set page to read from
add W,temp2       ; 1. Offset = char*8 + (scroller&7)
iread             ; 4. Read one byte (=row)
mov pixel,W       ; 1. Save it
mov temp,#8       ; 2 (9). Number of pixels to draw

```

We have now read the correct byte, or row, from the character to draw. We now loop eight times, shifting out one bit each iteration, and draw either the desired color or black depending on whether the bit was set or not. The character rows are stored backwards, with the leftmost pixel in bit 0 which means that we rotate right every iteration to the the current pixel. This figure shows the process of drawing one row of the letter 'S':

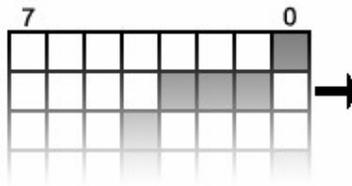


Figure 4: Representation of 1-bpp characters

```

; Draw the row
:Draw_char_line_1
mov W,#(COLOR14+8) ; 1
rr pixel           ; 1. Place lsb in C
sc                 ; 2 / 1. Skip if bit is set
mov W,#BLACK      ; 1. Bit was clear, should be black
mov RE,W          ; 1. Output color
DELAY(7)
djnz temp,:Draw_char_line_1 ; 4 / 2

```

```

mov RE,#BLACK      ; 2. Output black
bank $20           ; 1
DELAY(40)

```

The plasma effect is achieved by sampling three sine curves. See the below figure.

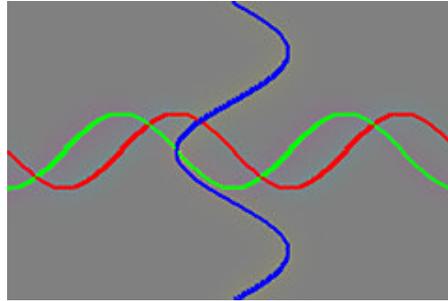


Figure 5: Sine curves

The "red" and "green" curves move in the opposite direction for every pixel, while the "blue" curve moves every scanline. This creates the impression of a number of expanding and shrinking blobs. All three curves are also moved for each frame to scroll the entire plasma across the screen.

In the scanline loop we sample each of these curves by reading bytes from the table contained in `sine.src` with three different offsets. These samples are added, and then we `OR` in some additional bits to ensure that we never get zero luma (which would send out an incorrect sync signal and disrupt our video output). Here `cnt1` and `cnt2` controls the "red" and "green" curves, while `vertPtr1` controls the "blue" curve.

Each element in the sine table has the page number stored in the upper 4 bits. That way we don't have to reload `M` for every `iread`.

```

; Set up the plasma rasterizer
bank $30           ; 1. Set active register bank
nop               ; 1. Delay for a few cycles..
nop               ; 1
nop               ; 1 (4)

; Draw one line of the plasma
draw_scanline
add cnt2,#$FE     ; 2. Subtract 2 ($FE == -2)
inc cnt1         ; 1 (3)

; Read from sine table
mov M,#SINE_PAGE ; 1
mov W,cnt1       ; 1
iread            ; 4
mov pixel,W      ; 1 (7)

; Read another byte
mov W,cnt2       ; 1
iread            ; 4
add pixel,W      ; 1 (6)

; ..and another
mov W,vertPtr1   ; 1
iread            ; 4
add W,pixel      ; 1 (6)

; OR in some additional bits

```

```

or W,#$8A          ; 1

; Output the pixel data
mov RE,W           ; 1

djnz xCnt,draw_scanline ;4 / 2
; Total: 3+7+6+6+1+1+4 = 28 clocks

```

This line of the plasma is done. We output black for a while and then draw the second scroller, which moves in the opposite direction of the first one. The code is very similar to that of the first scroller. We also change the vertical sine table offset (which moves the blue curve in figure 5).

```

mov RE, #BLACK     ; 2. Output black
dec vertPtr1      ; 1. Decrease vertical pointer

bank $20          ; 1
DELAY(39)

; Draw the second scroller. Same procedure as for
; the first one.
bank $30          ; 1
mov M,#TEXT_PAGE  ; 1
mov W,scroller2   ; 1
mov temp,W        ; 1
and W,#7          ; 1
mov temp2,W       ; 1
clc               ; 1
rr temp          ; 1
clc              ; 1
rr temp          ; 1
clc              ; 1
rr temp          ; 1
mov W,temp       ; 1
iread            ; 4 (17)

; Multiply by 8
mov temp,W       ; 1
add W,temp       ; 1
mov temp,W       ; 1
add W,temp       ; 1
mov temp,W       ; 1
add W,temp       ; 1 (6)

mov M,#FONT_PAGE ; 1
add W,temp2      ; 1
iread            ; 4
mov pixel,W      ; 1
mov temp,#8      ; 2 (9)

:Draw_char_line_2
mov W,#(COLOR2+8) ; 1
rr pixel         ; 1. Place lsb in C
sc               ; 2 / 1. Skip if bit is set
mov W,#BLACK     ; 1. Bit was clear, should be black
mov RE,W         ; 1. Output color
DELAY(7)
djnz temp,:Draw_char_line_2 ; 4 / 2
mov RE,#BLACK    ; 2

inc scroller1    ; 1

```

```

inc scroller2      ; 1
bank $20          ; 1
cjb RTCC,#131,$   ; Delay for the remainder of the scanline
cjb RTCC,#130,$   ; Delay for the remainder of the scanline

djnz scanline, Raster_Loop1 ; Loop for the next scanline

; page_200 trick: this clunky trick is to prevent involuntary jumps
; between a page boundary.
jmp @page_200
ENDIF
IF $ > $200
ERROR "Page Spillage!"
ENDIF

;#####

; Let's start a new page to avoid overflow..

org $200
page_200
page $              ; Set the new page

```

Here we draw the bottom overscan. This consists of eighteen black lines and a sixteen pixels high “XGS” logo, for a total of thirty four lines. The PAL version has another 23 lines of bottom overscan, which will be black.

The logo is contained in xgslogo.src and is 24\*8 pixels with one bit per pixel. Each line of the logo is drawn twice to make it look taller, and a gradient is applied at runtime for better looking results. This figure shows the effect of applying the gradient and scaling the logo:



Figure 6: Overscan logo

The code for drawing the overscan logo is very similar to that for drawing the text scrollers earlier. The difference is that each row is twenty four bits instead of eight, so we have three times as much code.

Each NTSC frame is made up of 525 lines, while a PAL frame has 625 lines. This gives 262 and 312 lines per field, respectively, if we ignore the fractional part. I chose to spend the extra 50 lines in the PAL version on the top and bottom overscans. These are areas of the frame that may or may not be visible, depending on the device. If you look at the code you will notice that I have added a total of 23+28 lines of extra overscan for the PAL version, which doesn't add up to 50. This is because we have a longer vertical sync period in the NTSC version (20224 cycles compared to 15360).

```

bank $30
mov cnt2,#34          ; Number of scanlines
mov cnt2,#(34+23)    ; Number of scanlines
:Vblank_Loop1
bank $20
PREPARE_VIDEO_HORIZ burst_phase
PREPARE_VIDEO_HORIZ_PAL burst_phase
clr RTCC              ; Reset realtime cycle counter
bank $30

```

```

cjae cnt2,#30, :Black_line1
cjb cnt2,#14, :Black_line2

; Draw XGS overscan logo

mov RE,#BLACK ; 2. Output black
mov cnt1,#8 ; 2. Number of pixels
mov M,#LOGO_PAGE ; 1
mov W,yCnt ; 1
iread ; 4. Read first byte
mov pixel,W ; 1

; Calculate the logo gradient
mov temp,cnt2 ; 2
sub temp,#22 ; 2. 22 = first_line-char_height = 30-8
sb temp.7 ; 1. Skip if the result is negative
not temp ; 1. Invert bits
mov W,#7 ; 1. Keep lower 3 bits
and temp,W ; 1
add temp,#(COLOR11+2) ; 2. Add base color

bank $20 ; 1
DELAY(1614 - 2 - 14 - 8 - 1 - 10)
bank $30 ; 1

:Draw_bits_0_7
mov W,temp ;#(COLOR14+5) ; 1
rr pixel ; 1. Place lsb in C
sc ; 2 / 1. Skip if bit is set
mov W,#BLACK ; 1. Bit was clear, should be black
mov RE,W ; 1. Output color
DELAY(31)
djnz cnt1,:Draw_bits_0_7 ; 4 / 2
mov RE,#BLACK ; 2

; Read the next byte
mov cnt1,#8 ; 2
mov M,#LOGO_PAGE ; 1
inc yCnt
mov W,yCnt ; 1
iread ; 4
mov pixel,W ; 1 (10)

:Draw_bits_8_15
mov W,temp ;#(COLOR14+5) ; 1
rr pixel ; 1
sc ; 2 / 1
mov W,#BLACK ; 1
mov RE,W ; 1
DELAY(31)
djnz cnt1,:Draw_bits_8_15 ; 4 / 2
mov RE,#BLACK ; 2

; ..and finally the last one
mov RE,#BLACK ; 2
mov cnt1,#8 ; 2
mov M,#LOGO_PAGE ; 1
inc yCnt
mov W,yCnt ; 1
iread ; 4
mov pixel,W ; 1 (12)

:Draw_bits_16_23
mov W,temp ;#(COLOR14+5) ; 1
rr pixel ; 1
sc ; 2 / 1

```

```

mov W,#BLACK      ; 1
mov RE,W          ; 1
DELAY(31)
djnz cnt1,:Draw_bits_16_23 ; 4 / 2
nop              ; 1
nop              ; 1

mov RE,#BLACK     ; 2
sub yCnt,#2       ; 2. Set yCnt back to its prior value

```

To make the logo look twice as high we only increase the row counter every other scanline.

```

; yCnt is increased by 3 on even scanlines
; (logo is 24 pixels wide = 3 bytes/row)
mov W,cnt2        ; 1
not W
and W,#1         ; 1
add yCnt,W        ; 1
add yCnt,W        ; 1
add yCnt,W        ; 1

jmp :Next_line   ; 3
; This line should apparently be black.
:Black_line1
mov RE, #BLACK   ; ( 2 cycles ) sync
jmp :Next_line
:Black_line2
mov RE, #BLACK   ; ( 2 cycles ) sync
jmp :Next_line

```

We use the RTCC to control the length of each scanline. In PAL mode we have 32 cycles less because the line setup is slightly longer.

```

:Next_line
bank $30
cjb RTCC,#131,$ ; Wait for this scanline to end
cjb RTCC,#130,$
djnz cnt2, :Vblank_Loop1
; END BOTTOM SCREEN OVERSCAN

```

We are done with the bottom overscan. Now we send out the sync signal to the video port and reset the realtime cycle counter.

```

; VERTICAL SYNC PULSE
:Begin_Blank
mov RE, #SYNC   ; Send sync signal
mov !OPTION, #%11000111 ; Turns off interrupts, sets prescaler
; to 1:256
mov RTCC, #0    ; Start RTCC counter

```

Here we have about 20000 cycles (about 15000 in PAL mode) to do anything we want. Typical things to do here could be collision detection, enemy A.I, music player updates etc. In the NTSC version I am changing the color reference burst every 128<sup>th</sup> frame so that the hue of the plasma will change slowly with time. This is not done in the PAL version, since color works different for PAL.

```

;#####

; The idea here is to change the color burst phase every
; 128th frame (when chroma_cnt hits zero). The burst phase
; is either incremented or decremented depending on the value
; in chroma_delta. The delta is inverted (negated) when the
; color burst is 0 or 13.
bank $40
mov W,chroma_delta
dec chroma_cnt
decsz chroma_cnt
jmp no_chroma_change
bank $20
swap burst_phase      ; Swap nibbles
add burst_phase,W      ; Add delta
and burst_phase,#15    ; Only four bits of chroma
cje burst_phase,#13,invert_delta
cje burst_phase,#0,invert_delta
jmp dont_invert
invert_delta
bank $40
not chroma_delta
inc chroma_delta      ; not+inc == neg
bank $20
dont_invert
swap burst_phase      ; Swap nibbles back to original order
or burst_phase,#BLACK_LEVEL ; OR in some base luma
no_chroma_change
bank $30
; Update sine table pointers
add horzPtr1,$FE
inc horzPtr2
add vertPtr2,#2
mov vertPtr1,vertPtr2

mov yCnt,#0           ; Reset yCnt

; Update text scroller positions
inc scroller1_2
dec scroller2_2
mov scroller1,scroller1_2
mov scroller2,scroller2_2
bank $20

```

Another frame has been drawn so it is time to update the music track position, and output any new sounds. Again, we pass the address of the song as a 16-bit value in the global registers 10 and 11.

```

mov 10,$00
mov 11,$08
call @UpdateMusic      ; Update music each frame
_bank $20

```

Now we wait for the vertical sync period to end. The realtime cycle counter will increment every 256<sup>th</sup> cycle, according to the setting in the OPTION register. The \$ sign simply states that we want to jump to the instruction itself, which saves us from creating a label for each such loop. When the vertical sync period is over we draw the top overscan and start all over again with the next frame.

```

; We are done, now wait for the remaining time to finish this video
; frame and prepare overscan (bottom and top) for the next!

```

```

cjb RTCC, #79, $ ; Wait for remaining vsync (79*256 cycles = 20224,
; close enough)
cjb RTCC, #60, $ ; Wait for remaining vsync (60*256 cycles = 192us)
; END VERTICAL SYNC PULSE

; TOP SCREEN OVERSCAN
mov !OPTION, #%11000100 ; Sets prescaler to 1:32
mov scanline, #32
mov scanline, #(32+28)
:Vblank_Loop3
PREPARE_VIDEO_HORIZ burst_phase ; Prepare video signal
PREPARE_VIDEO_HORIZ_PAL burst_phase ; Prepare video signal
clr RTCC
mov RE, #BLACK ; Output black
cjb RTCC, #131, $
cjb RTCC, #130, $
djnz scanline, :Vblank_Loop3 ; Repeat..

jmp @Begin_Raster ; Loop back for the next frame

```

The code for the demo is done. Hopefully, at this point you have grasped the theory behind the effect and also picked up a few things about the SX52 and the rest of the XGSME's hardware. The realtime cycle counter is a very handy feature which can be used in a lot of cases, and is much more elegant than nested loops or other cycle counting constructions. The music player and the sound chip will be explained in more detail in another tutorial, so don't worry about them for now. If you feel uncertain about something, try reading the tutorial again and look at the code. And remember that the best way to get better at something is to practice.

```

; Code ends here. Data follows below

#####

; Sine table
; Calculated using the following formulae:
;
; floor(cos(i*PI/64)*15.7 + 15.7)
;
; SINE_PAGE*$100 is added to each entry to avoid having to
; set the M register for each read since (M:W)->M:W
;
SINE_PAGE EQU $0A
org SINE_PAGE*$100
include "sine.src"

#####

; XGS overscan logo
LOGO_PAGE EQU $0B
org LOGO_PAGE*$100
include "xgslogo.src"

#####

; 5x7 font
; Each character is packed into 8 bytes (1 bit per pixel)
; First char is space, capital letters A..Z follow.
FONT_PAGE EQU $0C
org FONT_PAGE*$100
include "font5x7.src"

```

```
#####
```

```
; Scroller text. 32 chars
```

```
TEXT_PAGE EQU $0D
```

```
org TEXT_PAGE*$100
```

```
dw $0E  
dw $14  
dw $13  
dw $03  
dw $00  
dw $10  
dw $0C  
dw $01  
dw $13  
dw $0D  
dw $01  
dw $00  
dw $06  
dw $0F  
dw $12  
dw $00  
dw $14  
dw $08  
dw $05  
dw $00  
dw $18  
dw $07  
dw $13  
dw $1B  
dw $0D  
dw $05  
dw $00  
dw $00  
dw $1C  
dw $00  
dw $00  
dw $00
```