

The Desktop Helper

Version 1.1
June 1, 1991

A Microsoft ® Windows™ Based
Desktop Accessory

Copyright © 1991, Robert E. Alleger
All rights reserved.

The Desktop Helper

Written by Robert E. Alleger
317 Monroe Avenue
Edgewater Park, NJ 08010

Electronic mail:
CompuServe 70240,264

Program and Documentation copyright © 1991, Robert E. Alleger. All rights reserved. Portions Copyright 1984 - 1990 Microsoft Corporation.

MS-DOS and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Any other products mentioned are trademarks of their respective developer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Desktop Helper was written with the aid of the following tools and publications (in alphabetical order):

Tools:

Brief text editor
Microsoft C 6.00A compiler
Microsoft Windows 3.0 SDK

Publications:

"Microsoft Systems Journal"
"Programming Windows, version 3" by Charles Petzold
"Windows 3.0 Power Programming Techniques"
by Peter Norton & Paul Yao
"Windows 3.0 Programming Primer" by Alan Southerton

Services:

CompuServe's Windows forums

DISCLAIMER

The accuracy of the information contained herein and the fitness of **The Desktop Helper** program for any purpose may change without notice, and should not be construed as a commitment of any kind. No guarantee is made, expressed or implied pertaining to the use, misuse, or problems caused by this program.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Licensing Policies

The Desktop Helper is a copyrighted program protected by both U.S. and international copyright law. You are authorized to use and evaluate it for a limited time without charge.

The Desktop Helper is distributed as shareware. This allows you to decide whether the application satisfies your needs before you have to pay for it. **The Desktop Helper** may be freely copied and distributed for evaluation as long as these four rules are followed:

- 1) The program and this documentation are not modified in any way, shape, or form.
- 2) A copy of the files: READ.ME, DH.WRI, ORDER.TXT, DH.INI, DH.EXE, and DHHOOK.DLL are provided with each copy of the program.
- 3) No charge, other than a media and handling charge (not to exceed \$5.00), is made.
- 4) A user may use the program for 30 days before paying the registration fee. If the program is used after the 30 day evaluation period, an obligation to register and pay the registration fee is incurred.

If after this trial period you do not feel that this program is worth the registration fee then you are obligated to discontinue the usage of **The Desktop Helper**.

The registration fee for **The Desktop Helper** is \$15 (U.S. Dollars). Payment of this fee entitles you to technical support via electronic or U.S. mail and a registration number. Proper registration will disable the occasional beg for money.

Site licenses are available. Please use electronic or U.S. mail to find out more information.

Registration Instructions

Registering (purchasing a license) a copy of **The Desktop Helper** may only be done via mail. If you wish to become a registered user of **The Desktop Helper**, enclose the following items in an envelope and mail to the address below:

- 1) The version number of the copy of **The Desktop Helper** you currently have. You can find the version number in the About... item in the pop-up menu.
- 2) CompuServe account number (if applicable).
- 3) Where did you obtain your copy of **The Desktop Helper**?
- 4) Name and address. Please include both a first and last name.
- 5) A check for \$15.00 (U.S. Dollars) made out to Robert E. Alleger.

A registration form is provided at the end of this document. It is recommended that you use this form or the ASCII text file ORDER.TXT.

Send to:

Robert E. Alleger
317 Monroe Avenue
Edgewater Park, NJ 08010

GETTING STARTED

Introduction

The Desktop Helper is a Desktop utility that provides capabilities missing from Microsoft's Program Manager while also providing the more important capabilities of the Task Manager. The capabilities include:

- convenient pop-up menu at the click of a button
- configurable launch list- no need to use an editor
- switch to or terminate a task, even if it is not currently visible
- arrange Desktop windows and ICONs
- browse a pop-up file selector to choose a file to run
- no useless ICON to clutter up the Desktop
- small memory usage

Installation

If you are upgrading to a newer version of **The Desktop Helper** then exit the older version before installing the newer one.

Copy DH.EXE, DHHOOK.DLL, and DH.INI to a convenient directory. Next, use Microsoft's SysEdit, NotePad or any other ASCII text editor to add the DH.EXE program to the "load=" line in your WIN.INI file. The line might look something like this:

```
load=d:\win_apps\DH.EXE
```

If you install DH.EXE in a directory located on your environment path then you do not have to specify the directory where it is. If you have additional programs on the "load=" line then separate them by at least one space character.

When **The Desktop Helper** starts up it will look for DH.INI in the same directory that DH.EXE is located. If it does not find it there then it will default to your Windows directory.

The next time you start up Windows **The Desktop Helper** will be automatically loaded. For now, use the Program Manager's Run command to execute DH.EXE.

The first thing that you will notice is that **The Desktop Helper** remains invisible until you call upon it. There is no ICON or window associated with it when running. It will not show in its own or the Task Manager's task list.

Activation

There are two ways to activate **The Desktop Helper**.

The first way is to move your mouse cursor to a vacant spot on the Desktop. The Desktop is the bottom-most screen, where no windows are displayed. It is also the place that displays your wallpaper, if you have any.

Now, press and hold the left mouse button. A floating pop-up menu will appear next to your mouse cursor. You can move your cursor up and down the list. If, when you release the mouse button, your cursor is outside the menu then the menu will disappear. If it is on top of a menu item then that item will be selected and the requested action will be performed.

The second way, more convenient way is to hold down the <Control> key while pressing the left mouse button on top of any non-client area of any window. The non-client areas of a window are such areas as the title bar, blank portion of the menu bar, scroll bars, ICONs, etc.

Later, you will find out how to change which mouse button activates **The Desktop Helper**.

We will now look at each resident menu item. These items are found within the "Desktop Helper" menu item.

ABOUT

This menu item simply displays a dialog box that contains the name of the program, version number, copyright information, and registration information.

If you have registered the product you should have received a personal registration number. This number will be used to gain access to new features that are unavailable to non-registered users.

To register, activate the "Register" button. Enter your name and registration number in the appropriate spaces.

If you do not wish to register at this time then activate the "Ignore" button.

If you have registered then activate the "Thank You" button.

The Desktop Helper will respond by removing the dialog box from the screen.

CLOSE

This menu item will terminate **The Desktop Helper** and remove it from memory. If other desktop accessory-type programs were loaded *after* **The Desktop Helper** then this command may not succeed.

EXIT WINDOWS

This menu item will terminate Windows without asking whether you want to save your Desktop changes. It will warn you if a task refuses to terminate.

PREFERENCES

This menu item allow you to choose left, right, or middle mouse button activation. If you choose the right or middle buttons then it is not necessary to hold down the Control key when clicking in the non-client area of a window. The other benefit is that you do not have to hold the button down- the menu won't dissapear like it does when the left button is used.

Changing the Mouse Button

Click on the appropriate radio button- "Left mouse button", "Right mouse button", or "Middle mouse button" to change the selection.

Please note that if you select the middle button your Windows mouse driver is not capable of supporting this button then you will not be able to activate DH. You will have to go in and manually edit DH.INI, change the "Button=3" (middle button) entry in the "[Preferences]" section back to "Button=1" (left button) or "Button=2" (right button), and restart Windows.

Saving Your Preferences

Click on the "OK" button to save your changes and terminate this dialog box.

Cancel

Click on the "Cancel" button to terminate this dialog box and not save your changes.

TASKS

This menu item will display a dialog box that lists all the *visible* tasks currently running. You may take one of three actions:

- cancel the dialog box
- switch to a task (eg. make it the current task)
- terminate a task

Cancel

Click on the "Cancel" button to terminate this dialog box. This is the only button that is active (eg. not grayed) when a task has not been selected.

The Desktop Helper will respond by removing the dialog box from the screen.

Switch To

Select a task from the task list and click on the "Switch to" button or hit the "Enter" key. You may also double click the left mouse button on the task.

The Desktop Helper responds by removing the dialog box from the screen and bringing the selected task to the foreground, opening a window if it was minimized to an ICON, and making it the active task.

Terminate

Select a task from the task list and click on the "Terminate" button.

The Desktop Helper responds by removing the dialog box from the screen, bringing the selected task to the foreground, and requesting the task to do a normal shut down. If the task cooperates then it will terminate normally. Any properly written program will not refuse to cooperate.

RUN

This menu item will display a dialog box that lists all the *visible* ".EXE" files located in the current disk directory. You may take one of several actions:

- cancel the dialog box
- select another directory or drive
- enter a new file name
- select default file name
- enter command line parameters
- specify that the program should start up as an ICON
- execute a file

Cancel

Click on the "Cancel" button to terminate this dialog box.

The Desktop Helper will respond by removing the dialog box from the screen.

Select Another Directory or Drive

Select a directory or drive by double clicking on the directory or drive from the list box located on the right-hand side of the dialog box underneath the "Directories" caption.

The Desktop Helper responds by making the selected drive or directory active and placing a list of files in the files list box that satisfy the file name appearing in the edit control to the right of the "Open File Name" caption at the top of the dialog box.

Unless the file name in the edit box has been changed to something other than the default of ".EXE", you will see a list of files with an extension of ".EXE" in the list box.

Enter a New File Name

Position the cursor inside the edit control next to "Open File Name", click the left mouse button, and type a new file name, such as "*.PIF", and press the "Enter" key.

The Desktop Helper responds by filling the files list box with a list of files that match the new name.

Select Default File Name

Position the cursor over one of the five file name radio buttons (".EXE", ".COM", ".BAT", ".PIF", and " *.*") and click the left mouse button.

The Desktop Helper responds by filling the files list box with a list of files that match the new name.

Execute a File

Select a file from the left-hand list box and click on the "OK" button or double click the left mouse button on a file.

Before running the file you might want to enter some command line parameters or check the "Run Minimized" box.

LAUNCH

This menu item will display a dialog box that lists all the *visible* ".EXE" files located in the current disk directory. You may take one of several actions:

- cancel the dialog box
- add an entry
- add a separator
- edit an entry
- delete an entry
- move an entry up or down in position
- save your changes

Cancel

Click on the "Cancel" button to terminate this dialog box.

The Desktop Helper will respond by forgetting your changes and re-reading the DH.INI file to rebuild the list. It will then remove the dialog box from the screen.

Add an Entry to the List

Select the "Add" button to add a new task to the list. If an entry wasn't already selected then the new entry will be added to the end of the list. Otherwise it will be added before the one that is selected.

Up to 48 programs may be included in the list, though you probably will be limited by the resolution of your screen. For example, about 31 programs will fit comfortably on an 800 x 600 super VGA screen. The lower your resolution the fewer programs that will fit in the menu. Don't worry, no matter how many programs you add to the list **The Desktop Helper** will only display those that fit on the screen.

Each program entry in the list has two parts- the program description and the command line information. The description may be up to 32 characters terminated by an equal sign. The command line consists of an optional path, file name and extension, and optional program parameters. For example, to execute a program called Space Invaders the description might be:

Space Invaders

The command line might look something like this:

```
d:\games\spaceinv.exe /lives=5/dif=easy
```

If you want **The Desktop Helper** to prompt you for command line parameters before running the file place a question mark immediately before the path/file name on the command line. For example, to have the Write accessory prompt for a file name:

```
?write.exe
```

Add a Separator to the List

Select the "Separator" button to add a horizontal separator bar to the list. Separators may be included anywhere in the menu list. Each separator bar occupies one of the possible 48 menu positions available.

Edit an Entry in the List

Select an entry from the list and then select the "Edit" button to change an entry in the list- either the description or its command line.

Delete an Entry from the List

Select an entry from the list and then select the "Delete" button to delete it.

Move an Entry Up or Down in Position

Select an entry from the list and then select either the "Up" or "Down" button to shift the entry up or down in position.

Save Your Changes

Select the "OK" button to save all of your changes to the DH.INI file.

CONFIGURABLE LAUNCH LIST

Purpose

The purpose of this feature is to allow you to select and run a program located in a list of programs that you use frequently. The list of programs is appended to the top of **The Desktop Helper's** pop-up menu.

Maintaining the List

The Desktop Helper is distributed with a list of programs that are packaged with Windows. You may delete some or all of these and/or add your own programs to this list.

The DH.INI file distributed with The Desktop Helper looks like the following:

```
[Tasks]
Calculator=calc.exe
Calendar=calendar.exe
Cardfile=cardfile.exe
Clipboard=clipbrd.exe
Macro Recorder=recorder.exe
Paintbrush=pbrush.exe
Terminal=terminal.exe
Windows HELP=winhelp.exe
(SEPARATOR1)=
Notepad=notepad.exe
PIF Editor=pifedit.exe
Sys Config=syedit.exe
Write=write.exe
(SEPARATOR2)=
DOS Shell=command.com
File Manager=winfile.exe
Program Manager=progman.exe
Task Manager=taskman.exe
```

My own personal menu list for 800x600 SVGA looks like the following:

```
[Tasks]
Calculator=calc.exe
Calendar=calendar.exe
Cardfile=cardfile.exe
Clipboard=clipbrd.exe
Control Panel=control.exe
Notepad=notepad.exe
```

```
Paintbrush=pbrush.exe
PIF Editor=pifedit.exe
Sys Config=sysedit.exe
Write=write.exe
(SEPARATOR1)=
Ami Professional=d:\amipro\amipro.exe
Excel=d:\excel\excel.exe
SuperBase 4=d:\sb4\sb4w.exe
Word=d:\winword\winword.exe
(SEPARATOR2)=
CIM=cim.pif
NOS=e:\nos\nos.exe
Procomm Plus=c:\procomm\pcplus.pif
(SEPARATOR3)=
4DOS Shell=4dos.pif
DOS Shell=dos.pif
File Manager=winfile.exe
Program Manager=progman.exe
Task Manager=taskman.exe
(SEPARATOR4)=
SDK CodeView=cvw.exe
SDK Dialog Editor=dialog.exe
SDK Help=winhelp.exe sdkwin.hlp
SDK Heap Walker=heapwalk.exe
SDK Paint=sdkpaint.exe
SDK Shaker=shaker.exe
SDK Spy=spy.exe
```

Launching a Program in the List

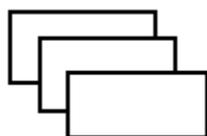
To run, or *launch*, a program located in the list, use the mouse cursor to select a program from the menu, let up on the mouse button, and the program will be launched.

WINDOW

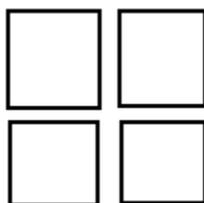
This multi-level menu item will allow you to arrange all the windows and ICONs on your Desktop.

Cascade All Windows

Select the "Cascade" menu item to arrange all windows on the Desktop in a cascading pattern. This pattern looks like the following:

**Tile All Windows**

Select the "Tile" menu item to arrange all windows on the Desktop in a tiled pattern. This pattern looks like the following:

**Arrange ICONs**

Select the "Arrange ICONs" menu item to arrange all Desktop ICONs in a tidy, regular-spaced pattern.

FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Please use Electronic Mail to tell me what future enhancements you would like to see. This could include changes to the currently available commands or new commands that may be added to the pop-up menu.

The current wish list is:

- 1) Include a pop-up ASCII chart with a font selection box and a copy to clipboard function. This would be helpful because Windows doesn't give you a way of viewing the entire character set for a given font.
- 2) Alternative pop-up menu containing a list of current tasks. Selecting one from the list will make that task active. This is a quicker alternative to the current "Task" menu box. This alternative pop-up menu would be presented if the shift key is held down when activating **The Desktop Helper**.
- 3) Ability to view a text file.
- 4) Recognize the WIN.INI associated file extensions table.
- 5) Multi-level menus.
- 6) Option to show "invisible" tasks in the Task list box.
- 7) Switch to a different directory before launching a task.

REGISTRATION FORM
The Desktop Helper

Remit to: Robert E. Alleger
317 Monroe Avenue
Edgewater Park, NJ 08010

Your Name (Last, First): _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

CompuServe Account Number (if applicable): _____

Version number of The Desktop Helper (displayed in About): _____

Where did you obtain this version?: _____

Quantity	Product	Unit Price	Total
_____	Single User registration		\$15
_____	Upgrade from version 0.xx and 1.xx to the latest 1.xx version (circle one) 5 1/4" 360K or 3 1/2" 720K diskette	\$10	_____
	New Jersey residents - sales tax	7%	-----
	Shipping and handling - U.S.A.	\$2	_____
	- Canadian	\$3	_____
	- International	\$\$\$	_____
	Total:		_____

Notes: All prices are in U.S. currency.

Upgrades are only available to registered users living in the U.S.A. or Canada. Residents of other countries will need to remit extra money for the increased postage.

Comments about current release and/or Suggestions for future releases:
