

Briefcase

a utility for multiple file launch

by Subrata Sircar ssircar@canon.com

So what does this mean, you ask?

Basically, it means that you can launch files from different applications, residing anywhere on your system, with one mouse double-click, or one short command-line string.

This utility is designed for those of you who routinely work with a certain Mail document, the associated Improv spreadsheet, and the overall WriteNow document incorporating a Diagram picture. Now, you have to launch all four separately - and some them you can't auto-launch. They may reside all over your disk, or over the network. This utility allows you to launch them from one small application.

Basic Operation

Launch Briefcase as you have already done (I presume). You will be presented with one blank window, and a menu bar. The application's icon will be somewhere at the bottom of

the screen.

If you launched Briefcase from the command line, it will check for files specified there to open as well.

You can specify files to be launched at once in three ways: manually, by typing the full pathname of the file into the window and ending with a <Return> keystroke; through the Add Files... menu command, where you can select the file(s) you wish to open and they will be added to the document; or you can drag and drop selected files onto the application's icon, and when you return to the document they will be added.

To create the mini-application which will launch your documents, select Save from the document menu. This will cause Briefcase to create a small C program which launches your files, save it to disk and compile it. You will be left with a <file> and a <file>.bc (where <file> is whatever you named your document). The <file> is the launchable executable; double-clicking on it will launch the files you specified. The .bc file is Briefcase's reference point; if you delete it, Briefcase will be unable to open your document for editing. (If you open it yourself, you'll see it is a very simple C program which uses system() to execute an open() call.)

Other Features

Try playing with the Delay setting in the Preferences panel.

Known Bugs

Briefcase has trouble overwriting its own documents; this has to do with writing out the .bc files without adequate checking (i.e. I'm not sure, but that's where it crashes). If you have trouble overwriting old files, open the files from Briefcase, edit them and before saving them out again, move both the .bc file and the file out of the directory to save to (throwing them away might be best). Then save your files.

The document architecture should have built-in support for multiple document types. Future work...