

DeZkTop 1.8

As of 1/2/95 this is the most up to date release of DeZkTop. This archive should contain the files:

README.WRI (this file)
DEZKTOP.EXE
DEZKLIB.DLL
DEZKTOP.HLP
CONVERT.EXE
CONVERT.WRI

What is DeZkTop

DeZkTop is a program launcher for Windows 3.1, Windows NT and Windows 95, and you can also use it as the Windows shell. So what does all this mean? Well a program launcher is a program that you use to run other programs. The best known program launcher is Program Manager which comes with every copy of Windows. Program launchers don't actually have to do much, they should allow you to run the programs you want quickly and easily, and they should keep out of the way until they are needed. DeZkTop is designed to do just this.

To start DeZkTop just run dezktop.exe. It will appear that nothing happens, but if you now right click on the desktop (ie the Windows background) then the DeZkTop menu window will pop up. You will also find that you can drag a file out of File Manager and drop it on the desktop where it will appear as a floating icon. You can click on the icon to run the program or data file. You can change the menu windows by dragging files in and out of them, and you can define hot-keys and set apps to auto-size on startup. For further details see the help file dezktop.hlp, or choose "About" from a menu window system menu and then click the "Help" button.

Installation

To install DeZkTop just copy the two files dezktop.exe and dezklib.dll to any suitable directory. If you intend to use DeZkTop as the Windows shell then the directory **must** be on the path. If you want an icon for DeZkTop in Program Manager add it using the New command from the Program Manager File menu. If you want to make DeZkTop your shell, which is the best way to use it, then follow the instructions in the help file.

If you are using DeZkTop for the first time then you will probably want to import your Program Manager groups. To do this click on the Windows background to pop up the top menu window and then select "New folder" from the system menu. When the dialog box appears click the "Import" button, choose the groups you want to import and then click "OK".

If you are upgrading from a previous copy of DeZkTop then you will need to convert the old data files for use with version 1.8. A program, CONVERT.EXE, is provided which does this automatically. For details read the file CONVERT.WRI.

Some people have reported a bug that when upgrading from a previous version of DeZkTop the Sizing and HotKey windows can appear with their title bars off screen. I don't know why this should happen, but if it does then alt-tab to that window and press alt-space, to open the system menu, then M. You can then use the cursor keys to move the window back onto the screen. Alternatively close DeZkTop and edit the file dezktop.ini, which is normally in the Windows directory, and change the lines:

```
[DeZkSize]
WindowLeft=strange number
WindowTop=strange number
```

to

```
[DeZkSize]
WindowLeft=0
WindowTop=0
```

and

```
[DeZkHotKey]
WindowLeft=strange number
WindowTop=strange number
```

to

```
[DeZkHotKey]
WindowLeft=0
WindowTop=0
```

When you restart DeZkTop the Sizing and HotKey windows should be at the top left of the screen.

DeZkTop and Resources

You have no doubt heard about problems related to "resources" in Windows 3.1 (any reference to 3.1 here includes Windows for Workgroups 3.1 and 3.11). These problems arise because Windows 3.1 uses a block of memory of a limited size to store certain vital bits of information used by Windows programs. The size of this block of memory cannot be increased because it is built into Windows itself, and when the memory is full you cannot run any more programs no matter how much free memory is available. At the time of writing Microsoft Office 4 was receiving a bad press for using so many resources that it could barely run on Windows 3.1.

You will be pleased to hear that DeZkTop is not a big user of resources. In fact it only uses significant amounts of one type of resource, an "overlappedwindow". Each menu window you create uses one "overlappedwindow". This isn't normally a problem, but Windows 3.1 only has enough resource space to create about 200 "overlapped windows", and these have to be shared out amongst all the programs running. If you managed to create 200 menu windows then you might start having problems, but this would be an awfully complicated setup and in practise isn't very likely to be necessary. If you use Windows NT or Windows 95 the problem doesn't exist.

DeZkTop can use substantial amounts of memory, especially if your setup is complicated. Without any floaters or menus DeZkTop will use about 120k of memory. On top of this, each floater and menu window icon uses 0.7k in Windows 3.1 or 1.3k in Windows 95 or NT. In addition each floater and menu window icon uses a little picture to indicate what it is. The amount of memory used by each picture depends on your graphics setup, for a standard 16 colour setup each picture takes 0.8k, for a 256 colour setup this rises to 1.6k and for full 24 bit colour 4.8k. I'm afraid there is nothing I can do about the amount of memory needed for these pictures because that is built in to Windows. Overall, a setup equivalent to the default Program Manager setup uses just less than 200k.

Shareware

DeZkTop is a shareware program. If you like it enough to use it do the decent thing and send ten pounds sterling to:

John Rennie.
18 Shaftesbury Avenue,
Vicars Cross,
Chester.
CH3 5LQ
United Kingdom.

If you're registering from outside the UK then please send sterling if you can, or failing that send US dollars. I can cash cheques drawn against a US bank, but the UK banks charge around \$8 or half the registration fee to convert them into sterling, so I'm not too keen on this!!

You can contact me as jrennie@cix.compulink.co.uk or as 100270,2376 on CompuServe, but please use the Internet address in preference to the CompuServe one because CompuServe is rather expensive in the UK.

Changes:

v1.8

Internally v1.8 differs a lot from v1.7 but, especially for Windows 3.x users, the changes won't seem too dramatic. Mainly you should find it faster, more stable and more economical on memory. Windows NT users get a bit more (upgrade now!). The changes are:

- DeZkTop now optionally caches the icons it uses which makes it much faster to load on NT
 - An extra option allows you supply a programs argument when the program starts
 - Under NT DeZkTop now keeps up with changes in environment variables if they are - changed from Control Panel
 - Desktop names are now up to 8 letters long under W3.x or 31 letters long in NT
 - When you create a new desktop you can make it a copy of the current desktop
 - In NT the Separate Address Space box is enabled and disabled for Win16 and Win32 apps respectively
 - Titles and arguments for icons can now contain commas or indeed any character without causing havoc with the data file
 - The argument for an application can be prompted for when the application is run; this applies to floaters, menus and hot-keys
 - The rearrangement of icons in menu windows by dragging them around has been made more logical
 - In NT the "Separate address space" option is automatically enabled and disabled depending on whether the application is a 16 or 32 bit binary.
 - The "Exit Windows" command no longer causes DeZkTop to exit even if Windows is not exited.
 - The floater arranging has been made more intelligent so it tries to use the way you've positioned floaters as a guide to how they should be arranged
- There's probably more but that's all I can remember!

v1.7f

This added a facility to make floaters link to menu windows so that when you click on a floater it opens the menu window. To do this simply put >Title in the Program field of the floater, where "Title" is the title of a menu window. The end effect is that the floater acts as a minimised menu window which can be moved and arranged just like the other floaters. This link is actually quite general, and you can use it with the icons in menu windows to make several links to a single menu window from other menu windows. You can also make a hot-key open a menu window in the same way.

v1.7e

This fixed a bug that the environment variable DEZKDIR was ignored when switching desktops. It also added a facility to make menu windows stay permanently on top, and made the menu window backgrounds match the current system setting instead of being permanently white.

v1.7d

This is the first official build for Windows NT3.5. It also adds a utility to import Program Manager information to create menus. A less major change is the use of two environment variables DEZKDIR and DEZKPREFIX to specify the location and name of ini files. The other small change is that better checking has been added to ensure that floaters and icons in menus point to valid files.

v1.7c

This release fixed a bug with full window dragging on NT3.5.

v1.7b

This release adds extra features for NT users to allow the priority for an app to be set, and for NT3.5 users to run Win16 apps in separate address spaces. For both W3.1 and NT users permanent menus now revert to an icon when minimised instead of disappearing. These means folders can be left on the desktop in an iconised state.

I have worked around the bug in NT that caused problems if the Sizing facility was turned on. Sizing now does not seem to cause any problems, but it is less transparent than before since windows will appear momentarily before being resized.

v1.7a

There was a minor bug in v1.7 that meant the first floater in the list could not have no title. v1.7a fixes this bug.

v1.7

You can now have different desktops with different menus/hot-keys/floaters etc. To change the desktop hold the shift key down and click on the desktop. Either choose a desktop from the list or create a new desktop by typing the id then optionally a space and a short description.

eg

john John's desktop

The id must be 1 to 4 characters long. The new desktop is described by the files <id>top.ini, <id>menu.ini, <id>ft.ini, <id>hkey.ini and <id>size.ini (hence the 4 character limit).

I have fixed some bugs, but nothing major. I have changed the way DeZkTop works internally (again). For the techies amongst you, the Windows 3.1 version has gone back to subclassing the desktop and the NT version still uses a transparent overlay. Neither of these versions will work satisfactorily with Windows 4 aka Chicago, but MS have promised there will be a feature in Windows 4 to enable apps like DeZkTop to work by the time Windows 4 is launched.