Black Hole

Version 1.0

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Introduction

Black Hole is a file deletion program which will erase any files or directories you drag to it, including those that are marked "read-only." The program itself does not store the deleted files in a "hold" directory anywhere but are immediately erased from your hard disk. However, if you are running a Windows desktop which automatically "traps" file deletes and saves the files someplace, Black Hole will not override that function.

Why a black hole? I think we have all had those days in which we would like to take a file and dump it down a black hole or do otherwise unthinkable things to it. Dropping files on a trash can just doesn't cut it. Thus Black Hole, which provides a way to be destructive and entertained at the same time.

Questions or comments are welcome. You may contact me via E-mail at 73747,3361 on CompuServe or at ROBBINM on America Online.

ICON NOTE: Anyone out there interested in drawing icon images which will appear to rotate when displayed in sequence, let me hear from you. I'd welcome a better looking set of icons for the program. I will give you credit in the ABOUT box that is displayed when the program starts. All icons are, of course, subject to my approval.

Use of Black Hole

Black Hole is "freeware" and may be used without paying any registration fees. It may be distributed freely provided it is done so using the original, unmodified archive. For private use only. Re-selling or any commercial use of the program without my approval is forbidden.

The author is not responsible for any files deleted or data lost as a result of using this program.

Installation

To install Black Hole, copy the BLACKHOL.EXE and BLACKHOL.WRI (optional) into your Windows directory. Add Black Hole to your STARTUP Menu in Program Manager by dragging BLACKHOL.EXE from File Manager over to the STARTUP Menu. You can also use the FILE, then NEW option within Program Manager and manually fill in the parameters. Adding Black Hole to your STARTUP Menu will cause the program to automatically run each time you start Windows (recommended).

Start Black Hole the first time by either clicking on the BLACKHOL.EXE from file manager, the icon from the STARTUP menu of program manager, or by re-starting windows (assuming you added Black Hole to the STARTUP menu).

Use the cursor to position the icon where you wish it to remain (it will "remember"). You must move the icon at least once to establish a permanent position.

Finally, double click on the icon to open the Black Hole window. Set the CONFIRMATION options to suit your preference. The default is to ask for confirmation <u>ONLY</u> on deleting a directory.

Un-installation

To "un-install" this program, you need to do the steps below. I provide this section because many people don't like the fact that install programs will add "trash" to their hard drive and configuration files, with no way to know what to clean up.

1. Delete the Black Hole icon from your STARTUP menu in Program Manager.
2. Delete BLACKHOL.EXE from your WINDOWS subdirectory.
3. Delete the following lines from your WIN.INI (in the Windows subdirectory).

     [BlackHole]
     SingleFile=0
     MultipleFile=1   ***(the actual values may vary)***
     Exit=0
     XStart=25
     YStart=708
     Directory=1
     Rotate=1
   Interval=510

How to use Black Hole

To delete a file or directory, simply drag the entry from the File Manager window to the top of the Black Hole icon. If you have delete CONFIRMATION turned on, the pop-up will display the file(s) you dropped. Press OK to delete the files. If you are deleting a directory (and have the directory delete confirmation turn on), you can choose from YES, YES TO ALL, or CANCEL when the directory confirmation pop-up is displayed. YES will proceed with deleting that directory tree. YES TO ALL will delete the current directory and any others you dropped without displaying the confirmation box again. CANCEL will cancel the delete (although some files "in front" of the directory may have already been deleted). If a file which you attempted to delete is READ-ONLY, Black Hole will ask you to confirm that you wish to delete the file.

To restore the icon to a window in order to change the options, double-click on the icon. To position the Icon in a different location, simply "grab" the Black Hole icon with your mouse and drag it to where you wish to put it. Black Hole will appear in that same place everytime you re-start windows.

For more information on the functions, see "features" below.

Features

- File confirmation options: When the program window is displayed, you can select confirmation
    options. If ALL FILES is checked, then a confirmation window will be displayed anytime you
    drag a file(s) to the Black Hole icon. If MULTIPLE FILES is checked (and ALL FILES is <u>not</u>
    checked), then a confirmation window will be displayed <u>only </u>if you drag multiple files to Black
    Hole Icon. A single file operation will be deleted without confirmation. If neither is checked,

then all delete operations will occur without a confirmation pop-up. The default is for both these options to be turned off.

- Directory confirmation option: When the DIRECTORY option is checked, Black Hole will ask you to verify that you wish to delete a directory and the subdirectories below it. Selecting YES TO ALL (when prompted) will turn off this message for any other directories in the current delete function. This message is only displayed for the top most level directory of a tree. The default is for this option to be turned on.

- Read only confirmation: Black Hole will automatically ask you to confirm the deletion of any read only file. This feature can not be turned off.

- Exit confirmation: If the EXIT option is checked under the confirmation options menu, then Black Hole will ask if you are sure when you attempt to close the program. If you are closing Windows itself, then Black Hole will automatically close regardless of how this switch is set. The default is for exit confirmation to be turned off.

- Motion: By checking NONE on the Motion menu, you can stop the icon from rotating. This is for people who don't like things moving on your desktop (although I got use to it, much to my surprise). The default is ROTATE.

- Speed: Selecting this option will display a scroll bar from which you can change the amount of time in-between each movement of the icon. You can select from .005 to 2 seconds. The default is .5 second.

- Automatic position memory: Anytime you reposition the Black Hole icon on your screen, it will remember where it was positioned and stay there everytime you open the program. Note however, that you <u>must</u> move the icon manually. If you let it use the Windows default position, if may not be in the same place everytime.

- Automatic delete: Black Hole does not store files in a "deleted file" directory or the like. However, if your desk top (such as Norton Desktop for Windows 2.0) automatically "traps" deletes and stored the files somewhere, it will continue to do so.

<u>Answers to common questions</u>

Why am I getting a "can't delete *file* " message?
Some Windows file management tools (for example, Norton Desktop for Windows) don't automatically update the file window when another program deletes a file like WINFILE does. So it is possible that the file in question has already been deleted but the window hasn't been refreshed.. Refresh your file window and it will probably disappear.

I have dragged a file to Black Hole but it still shows up on my file list.
Some file managers (besides the one that comes with Windows) don't automatically update the file window. If you refresh the window, then the file will probably disappear.

Why isn't Black Hole automatically starting when I load Windows?
The Black Hole icon must be in the STARTUP menu of Program Manager in order for it to start everytime you run Windows.

Why does Black Hole starts everytime I run Windows and I don't want it to.
Remove the Black Hole icon from the STARTUP menu of Program Manager. Also, check the RUN= line of the WIN.INI file in the Windows subdirectory.

How come the icon doesn't always appear in the same place?
In order for Black Hole to "remember" it's position, you have to grab the icon with your cursor and move it at least once. Otherwise, it will default to where ever Windows chooses to place it.

How come File Manager won't let me grab directories and drag them to Black Hole?
In order to delete a directory from File Manager, you <u>must</u> drag the directory "folder" from the files window, not the directories window.

Why does Black Hole stop rotating when I copy something to/from a floppy diskette?
Windows "stops the show" during lengthy disk operations such as coping to the relatively slow floppy drive. If this is a problem for you, consider getting Windows NT.

How come Black Hole appears to stop rotating when my screen saver activates?
Most screen savers grab a picture of your desktop when they activate and use it rather than your actual desktop. On a static picture, obviously nothing can move. Black Hole is still moving. You just can't see it when the screen saver is active.

I just deleted a file that I need. What can I do?
If you are using DOS 5.0 or above, you can use the UNERASE command to restore the file. See your DOS manual for details. You can also type HELP UNERASE from the command prompt. Some Windows utility packages also have an UNERASE function or may actually store deleted files in a hold directory somewhere. Check the application manual for more information on that. If you don't have any of these things, Norton Utilities or PC Tools can recover the file. If you don't have those products, you are out of luck. This would be a good time to consider upgrading your DOS to 5.0 or above so that this won't happen again.

Are my other programs being slowed down because Black Hole is rotating all of time?
The resources used by Black Hole to rotate are very small. You shouldn't notice any difference.