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Overview

DLL Master is a tool that lists all the modules currently loaded by Microsoft Windows and allows you a certain degree of control over the loading and unloading of specific DLLs. Here is a brief summary of the features of DLL Master:

- Displays a list of all modules currently loaded in memory.
- DLLs can be loaded or unloaded from memory, or their use count altered.
- Specific versions of DLLs can be loaded from disk.
- Specific DLLs can be pre-loaded at Windows startup.
- The display list can be rebuilt at any time.
- The last several lists built are saved, and can be viewed each in its own window.
- Any two lists can be compared to produce a list of changes.
- Lists can be printed or saved to disk.

These capabilities can be extremely helpful to Windows developers who may be working with multiple versions of programs and DLLs. You might get lucky and find it possible to unload a DLL which was orphaned in memory when an application died in testing. One can certainly raise the use count of a DLL so that it doesn't unload. Network administrators and others also find DLL Master useful in debugging potential DLL conflicts on networked PCs. The common question "Where did this DLL load from, anyway?" is quickly answered by DLL Master.

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Using The Main Window

When you start DLL Master, the main window appears. This window contains the list of current modules in memory and is also where you take any actions to load or unload modules.

The module list can be displayed in full detail or summary mode. Full detail has two lines per module, including module name, source directory from which it was loaded, filesize, date and time of the module file on disk, and use count (the number of times the module has been explicitly or implicitly "loaded" by Windows or another module). Summary mode shows only one line per module--the file statistics are left out. The mode is toggled from the Options Menu.

Buttons at the bottom of the window make it easy to refresh the list, load a DLL, decrement the use count of a DLL, unload a DLL, print the list, or Quit. As you may know, "loading" a DLL that is already in memory merely increases the use count of the loaded copy. You should also be aware that unloading or decrementing the use count of a DLL may--or, in the case of an EXE or other module, almost certainly will--cause Windows to die a sudden and painful death. Do so at your own risk!

There is also space below the list where you can enter a short description, if you will be refreshing the list several times and want to keep track of which list is which. DLL Master accumulates up to ten lists. Previous lists can be viewed, and compared, from the Action Menu. Naturally, each list takes up some memory and system resources, which you can monitor on the About... popup. Unwanted lists can be deleted (see "Using The Prior-List Window").

Using The Prior-List Window

Each time you refresh the list on the main window using the Refresh button or menu item, the one that was there is saved. Up to ten lists can exist including the current one.

NOTE: loading, unloading or decrementing the use count of a DLL does NOT cause the list to be saved, even though the list is rebuilt so as to properly reflect all changes (e.g. unloading one DLL may cause others to be released as well). Only explicit refreshes cause the existing list to be saved first.

When you select lists prior to the current one in the Show Lists dialog, they are displayed in a similar window, but with fewer menu and button options. There are two buttons, "Close" and "Delete this list", on the bottom of the window. The first closes the window, but the list is preserved for subsequent viewing or comparing. The second actually deletes the list.

Using The Compare Window

When you compare lists using the Compare Lists dialog, they are displayed in another similar window with only one command button, "Close". Compare lists are never actually saved. As long as the two base lists are still available, the same compare list can be rebuilt.

Menu Selections

File Menu

Actions Menu

Options Menu

File Menu

The File Menu contains the following items:

- Print List

This allows you to send the contents of the displayed list either to a printer or to a disk file. The list title (date/time and number of modules) and description if any are included at the top of the output. You may also use the Print button to do this.

- Exit

This item exits from DLL Master. You may also use the Quit button or the system menu to do this.

Actions Menu

The Actions Menu contains the following items:

- Refresh List
This will rebuild the list based on a new scan of memory.
- Show Lists
This item opens a dialog box from which one or more of the existing lists can be selected for viewing.
- Compare Lists
This item opens a dialog box from which any two of the existing lists can be compared. The results will be displayed in a separate window.
- Load DLL
This item opens a standard file dialog from which you can select a DLL file to load. Keep in mind that if the DLL is already loaded in memory, its use count will just be increased; it will not be reloaded from disk. This menu selection is only available on the main (current list) window.
- Decrement Usage
When a DLL is selected in the window's list, selecting this item will cause its use count to be reduced by 1. If the count becomes zero Windows will automatically remove the DLL from memory. This menu selection is only available on the main (current list) window.
- Unload DLL
When a DLL is selected in the window's list, selecting this item will cause it to be removed from memory. This menu selection is only available on the main (current list) window.

Options Menu

The Actions Menu contains the following items:

- Show Full Detail
This item acts as a toggle between showing full information in the list about each module (two lines) or summary information (one line).
- Autoloading
This item opens a text window that explains how to use DLL Master to load specific DLLs when Windows is started. See the help topic "Loading DLLs At Windows Startup".

Loading DLLs At Windows Startup

You can instruct DLL Master to automatically load one or more DLLs when Windows starts up. Simply place a DLL Master program item in the Windows Startup group, and pass it a text file as a command line argument. The text file might look like this:

```
C:\CSTUFF\THIS.DLL  
C:\CSTUFF\THAT.DLL  
D:\TEST\THEOTHER.DLL
```

If this file were named LOADLIST.TXT, the command line property of the item in the Startup group would look like this:

```
DLLMSTR.EXE LOADLIST.TXT
```

You may want to do this to be sure a specific version loads, or to raise the use count so a DLL is not unloaded until you want it to be.

Registering DLL Master

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Seven Hills Software can be contacted by fax for support or with questions. The number is (818) 957-7992. We can also be reached on CompuServe (72540,1462).

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