Outside! version 2a

a utility for Microsoft® Windows™ 3.1 and Microsoft® Windows for Workgroups™ 3.1
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Certain DOS-based programs just don't run well in a DOS session under Windows 386 Enhanced Mode. At least that's what my kids and I discovered. Games with high resolution video or support for sound boards sometimes need more system resources that Windows is willing to give up. The result is often slow, jerky motion or garbled sound. There are also disk and memory utilities that can't be run in multitasking environments.

One solution I tried was to abandon Enhanced Mode but that defeats the purpose behind having the 386 in the first place. Then I wrote a menu program that came up after exiting Windows. That was a drag, and difficult for young users to follow.

Finally I wrote this little utility. With one double click, my kids can happily run their DOS-based programs under DOS, with the full resources of the computer, and return automatically to the Windows shell when done.

Installation and Use:

Outside! requires the Microsoft runtime module VBRUN200.DLL. If you do not already have VBRUN200.DLL, you can download a copy from Compuserve (MSBASIC forum, Library 5) or many other bulletin board systems. Copy the program, OUTSIDE.EXE, and the runtime library, VBRUN200.DLL, to the same directory where Windows is installed on your computer.

Outside! uses a special Windows API function call to terminate Windows, run the program you specify (under DOS), and automatically reload Windows. There are three ways to use **Outside!**

1. The Outside! Icon Option:

You can create a program item in one of your Program Manager groups for **Outside!**

> In Program Manager, pull down the File menu and click New. Select Program Item. Under Program Item Properties:
>
> > Description: **Outside!**
> > Command Line:**Outside.EXE**
> >
> > Click on OK.
>
> The **Outside!** icon will appear in the your program group.

Start **Outside!** by double-clicking the icon. A file selection box will appear from which you can select the drive, directory and program to run outside Windows. Click your selection and the OK button to terminate Windows and run the program.

2. The Command Line Option:

With **Outside!** installed in your Windows directory you can run DOS programs outside with a single command: From the File/Run Menu option, type:

> **Outside** [*d:*][*path*\]*programname*.[exe, com, or bat] [*parameters*]

where   *d:* is the drive ID where the program is located;
                 \path is the full directory path to the program;
                 programname is the name of the program to run;
                 .EXE, COM, or BAT is the program file extension **(required)**; and
                 parameters are command line parameters you would normally
                 include from the DOS prompt, separated from the program name by
                 a space.

You may or may not need to include the complete path, depending on your DOS program and the PATH= statement in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. **You must include the period and three-character extension.**

3. Permanent Outside! Program Items.

You can also create program icons for each of your DOS programs using the complete **Outside!** command line in the properties selection. I usually include **Outside!** in the program description as a reminder that starting the program will terminate other open windows. The **Outside!** icon will appear in Program Manager unless you specify one of your own. For example, the program item properties for Chuck Yeager's Air Combat are:

        Description   **AirCombat Outside!**
        Command Line **Outside C:\COMBAT\YEAGER.EXE**
        Icon   **C:\WINDOWS\P51.ICO** (my son's rendering of a P51)

Using DOS Batch Files:

Some DOS programs need to be started from their own directory. If this applies to the program you are trying to run **Outside!**, the solution is to run a DOS batch file. Use Windows Notepad (or another ASCII editor like DOS 5.0 EDIT.EXE) to create a batch file that changes directory to the specific directory, runs the program, and then changes directory back:

```
REM Sample Batch File
CD > C:\RETURN.BAT          ;find the current directory
CD \YOURDIR                 ;change to the desired directory
PROGRAM                     ;run the program
CALL C:\RETURN              ;change back to where you started from
```

Save the batch file and use **Outside!** to run it, instead of the program itself. If your Windows directory is listed in your PATH= statement and you normally start Windows from the root directory, the line "CD > C:\RETURN.BAT" is unnecessary. Eliminate it, and change the last line from "CALL C:\RETURN" to "CD \".

Some DOS utilities display information on the screen and then give you back a DOS prompt. When run with **Outside!**, the display may be erased before you can read it as Windows restarts. For these programs, make a batch file with the PAUSE command:

        REM Sample Batch File with Pause
        CHKDSK /f
        PAUSE

This example will run CHKDSK (with the "fix" switch). After the disk specifications are displayed, the system will stop and display the prompt "Press any key to continue . . ." (may differ depending on your version of DOS). When you press a key, Windows will restart. This, by the way, is the only safe way to run CHKDSK from Windows.

Other comments:

Before Windows can terminate, it must close every open window. You will be asked to save any unsaved data in open windows. Open DOS sessions, however, won't respond to a request from **Outside!** to terminate and must be closed before you can use **Outside!** With all windows closed, **Outside!** will terminate Windows and run your program under DOS. When you exit the DOS program, Windows will automatically reload.

Naturally, you cannot run Windows applications outside of Windows; **Outside!** checks first, and gives an error message if you try.

Outside! is intended primarily to provide easy access to DOS for 80386 or higher processors, running in Windows Enhanced Mode. Normally, 80286 processors or others running Standard Mode gain no direct benefit from using **Outside!** because their DOS sessions are not limited in the same way as under Enhanced Mode. There are, however, some utilities or functions which cannot be run from a DOS prompt inside Windows. **Outside!** is ideal for these.

Outside! and BOOT.COM

BOOT.COM, a tiny utility available from bulletin boards everywhere, is a popular program for rebooting your computer from a batch file. This is commonly used to restart the computer with different configurations or drivers, but BOOT.COM (which simply makes the software equivalent of the Ctrl-Alt-Del key combination) won't work in a DOS session under Windows in Enhanced Mode. You can, however, run BOOT.COM with **Outside!**, either by itself or embedded in a DOS batch file.

Using Outside! with Windows for Workgroups:

Windows for Workgroups requires some special considerations for using **Outside!**. Any user sharing your disks or printers will be disconnected when **Oustside!** closes Windows. Windows for Workgroups will display a dialogue box advising you if others are connected to your computer and giving you a final choice whether to exit or not. *Disconnecting a user who might be updating a spreadsheet or database on your machine will likely result in data loss.*

In addition, when you exit Windows for WorkGroups with **Outside!**, any connections you have made to other resources in your workgroup will also be broken. If the DOS program you want to run **Outside!** will require those workgroup resources, you must use a batch file to first establish a DOS connection with the **NET START WORKSTATION** command.

For example, to use Central Point Backup 8.0 (which won't run in a DOS Window) to back up a network drive, use **Outside!** to run a batch file:

```
NET START WORKSTATION
C:\PCTOOLS\CPBACKUP
NET STOP FULL /YES
```

NET START WORKSTATION will make your computer a network client. In most installations it will automatically make the same connections that are normally made when Windows is first loaded. Be sure you use the NET STOP FULL command at the end of the batch file before Windows restarts. The /YES parameter eliminates the "Are you sure?" prompts for the disconnect.

Compatibilty:

Microsoft Diagnostic (MSD), Norton Disk Editor and other utilities that test for the presence of Windows will report that Windows is running, even when run with **Outside!** According to Microsoft, in order to reload, Windows leaves a small portion of itself, inactive, in memory. Some of these programs see this and believe they are running in a DOS session under Windows. They are not! After running **Outside!**, Windows is completely terminated, inactive, and removed from memory (except for that small part of the kernel which serves only to restart Windows). You can test this yourself by running CHKDSK without the /f (or MEM if you have DOS 4 or higher) before you load Windows, in a DOS session under Windows, and with Outside! On most computers you'll see that available memory (conventional, EMS and Extended) is very similar between no Windows and **Outside!** Windows (with **Outside!** conventional RAM is about 5K less on most computers I've tried), while the results from the DOS session under Windows may be drastically different.

A few disk utilities will, as a safeguard, absolutely refuse to run if Windows is present. The few we have found so far are:

Norton SPEEDISK.EXE	**DBLSPACE.EXE (MS-DOS 6.0)**
Norton CALIBRAT.EXE	**DEFRAG.EXE (MS-DOS 6.0)**
Norton UNERASE.EXE	**PC Tools DISKFIX.EXE**
Norton UNFORMAT.EXE	

Please notify me of any others you find so I can update this list periodically.

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> CompuServe: 72500,1406
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