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Launching Programs

MC is a program to help you launch programs easily within the Microsoft Windows environment. Because it is made with Microsoft's Visual Basic, it **cannot** be used as your Windows shell.

There are basically three ways to launch programs from MC - with Groups, much like in Program Manager, via a History List which MC keeps and from a File List. All three methods are shown on the Main Screen which appears when MC loads. Normally, you'll only use this main screen.

MC Groups

MC keeps a list of groups and items just like Program Manager does-indeed, you can load your Program Manager groups into MC as a starting point. However, unlike Program Manager, MC is totally text based to keep the display as compact as possible. There is a drop down list of groups directly above an item list. As you change the group, the displayed item list changes.

History List

MC keeps a list of the last few commands that you issued. By default it keeps 20 commands but you can change that number. It even remembers commands from one session to the next if you remember to save MC's state. This appears as a drop down list on the lower left side of MC's main screen. You can recall and reissue previous commands editing them before issuing if you wish.

Any file launched from the File List File Launching and any command typed in is stored in the history list. Commands issued from the group lists are also stored.

File Launching

MC also has linked Drive/Directory/File lists set out like the Common Dialog lists used in Windows 3.1. Once you find a file you want to launch on the file list, double clicking will launch it. You can also find the file for adding to the Items in a Group.

Date/Time Display

Instead of its name, you can place the time or the date and time into MC's caption. This gives you a useful little "clock" when MC is iconized. You can [configure](#) the format of the date and time.

MC.INI

MC stores its configuration in a file called MC.INI in the Windows directory. The entries are of the form

```
[Topic]
variable=value
```

just like in win.ini. Among the information stored there are

- preferred sizes for the history list, number of groups and maximum number of items per group
- preferences for date/time display
- other preferences
- the complete history list
- the complete group list and items in each group

Configuration Overview

You'll likely configure MC once and then only see the main screen unless you want to retune your configuration after using MC for a while.

You get to the configuration screen by hitting the Configure button on the main screen which calls up a detailed dialog of Configuration Options. Included are Date-Time Settings, maximum parameter numbers for items like the size of the history list, the filespec displayed in the file list box and launch options.

Minimizing MC after loading

You can arrange to have MC minimize whenever it loads another program. To give you maximum flexibility there are two check boxes involved so you need to understand them to avoid confusion. On the main screen, there is a check box which determines whether MC will minimize itself on the next loading of a program. On the configure screen, there is a check box that determines the default for the main screen check box. If you check the box on configure screen, then after you load any program, MC automatically checks the box on the main screen for you!

Starting Out

When you first start out with MC, we recommend that you make a group called Favorite Programs or My Own or ... If you place this first, then it will be the default group whenever you start MC. After doing that, go to the configure Screen with the Configure Button and choose the "Load Progman Groups" Button. Then load all your ProgMan groups into MC.

Group drop down

On the main screen, in the upper left corner is a drop down group list. Changing it changes the set of programs listed in the item list box directly below it. You add/delete/rename groups via the buttons of the same name.

Item list

Below the Group drop down on the left side of the main MC screen is the item list for that group. If you double click on an item, you launch the associated program. Or you can single click on an item and choose a button from the Run Box and so choose whether the program is launched Minimized, Maximized or Normal. You can delete/rename an item with the buttons of the same name. You can add parameters to the launch command line and see what program is associated to a given item by choosing the item and clicking the Params button.

To add an item, you need to click on a program in the history list or a file in the file list and click on the Add button.

History List

MC keeps track of the commands that you have issued through it. Towards the bottom of the left hand column is a drop down edit box which lists any program launched in one of three ways

- double clicking (or using the Run Box) on a program from the [File List](#)

- double clicking (or using the Run Box) on a program from your [Item List](#)

- commands that you type in the history list

You can also type in directly in the History drop down and issue commands. One command has a special meaning to MC in this context: CDD will change directory and drive - for example,

- CDD D:\excel\january

will change the active drive to D: and then the directory.

Run Box

The bottom left of the main screen is a box with buttons to launch a program in one of three states:

- Minimized, that is as an icon

- Maximized, that is full screen

- Normal, that is in whatever partial screen location and size that your program determines

A configuration screen choice determines what action double clicking in the item or filelist produces.

When you click on a button in the Run Box, it will launch a program from any of the history, file or item list depending on what you last clicked. The border of the Run box tells you what program will be launched.

Add Button

Adds a group or item as determined by a radio button. To add an program item, you must select it in the file list box or history list as shown in the border of the Run Box. If you have not, then the Add Item radio button will be greyed out. The name you choose for the item is only for display in the list.

Delete Button

Allows you to delete a group or item; a radio button determines which. You can only rename a currently selected group or item. Deleting a group also deletes the items within it. Deletion here just means from MC's lists and does not delete the on disk files associated to a program. You must Save the MC configuration for MC to remember the deletion.

Rename Button

Allows you to rename a group or item; a radio button determines which. This does not effect what program is run, only what appears in the group drop down or item list. You can only rename a currently selected group or item.

Params Button

You must single click on an item in the item list before choosing this button. If you do, a dialog is called up which displays the drive, directory and filename associated to that item and you have a change to modify the parameters passed to the program.

File List Box

This list appears in the top part of the middle section of the main screen to the right of the Add/etc buttons. If you double click on a file, it will attempt to launch that file. Or you can single click and add to the item lists with the Add button or launch from the Run Box. The hotkey to move to the File List box is Alt-V

The files it displays are executables by default but you can choose what files are displayed from the configuration screen. If you choose all and double click on a file without association, then MC offers to run the file with notepad. The hotkey to move to the File List Box is Alt-F.

Directory List Box

To the right of the File List Box is the Directory List Box which lets you choose the directory displayed in the file list box. The drive displayed is determined by the Drive List box. The hotkey to move to the Directory List Box is Alt-D.

Drive List Box

Below the Directory List Box is the Drive List Drop down which lets you choose which drives directories are displayed in the Directory List Box. The hotkey for getting to the this list box is Alt-V (for drive).

Minimize MC Check Box

This check box to the right of the Run box determines the action that MC takes after it launches a new application. If the box is checked then on the *next* launch, MC will minimize itself (that is iconize itself). Whether the box is rechecked automatically after each running is determined via an option set on the configure screen.

Save Button

Clicking this causes MC to save the following information in the file mc.ini. If you fail to click this button (or accept the offer to save during exit), then this information is not updated for the next time:

- history list
- groups and their items
- configuration choices set in the configure screen

Configure Button

This calls up the configuration screen.

Caption Choice Frame

MC can act like most programs and display its name in the caption. But it can also display the current time continuously updated or the time and date. This caption appears at the top of the MC window but also on the desktop giving you the display of date and time. On the configure screen, you have considerable freedom of the display used.

Help Button

Invokes this help file. To do so, winhelp needs to find mc.hlp. It is recommended you put the file in your windows directory.

About Button

Call up the about dialog including the amount of free memory.

Exit Button

Exits MC. If you have unsaved changes in the history list, configuration options or group/item list you are asked if you want to save them.

Date Time Options

DD-MM-YY

Show Secs

09 on the 9th

Weekday

Month

Year

Time

Date Separator

DD-MM-YY

Determines whether the date appears as 4 Jan 92 or Jan 4 92. Check the box to place the day before the month.

Show Secs

Determines whether the time shows seconds; check the box to show them

09 on the 9th

Determines whether the date for days before the tenth has leading zero before the day number

Weekday

Determines whether the day of the week (Monday, etc) displays with the date. Choice of no day of week, in full (e.g. Monday) or short form (e.g. Mon)

Month

Determines format. Choices are full (March), short (Mar) or number (3)

Year

Determines whether the year is included with the date and format used. Choices are no year, full (e.g. 1992) or short (e.g. 92)

Time

Determines whether European/military time is used and if not, whether am/pm are displayed. Choices are 24 hr (e.g. 16:30), caps AM/PM (e.g. 4:30 PM), lower case (e.g. 4:30 pm) or nothing (12 hour, e.g. 4:30 at 16:30)

Date Separator

Choices are none (e.g. January 4 1992), hyphen (e.g. 1-4-92), slash (e.g. 1/4/92) or comma after day (e.g. January 4, 1992)

Launch Choice

Minimize after loading
Double Click Option

Minimize after loading

Determines the default for the Minimize check box on the main form. That box determines if MC is minimized. This one only determines whether that box is automatically rechecked after each loss.

Double Click Option

This lets you choose which button in the Run box is simulated when you double click on a program in the file list or on an item or when you hit enter in the history list box.

Files Displayed

EXE

COM

BAT

PIF

Associations

All Files

EXE

Clicking this box in the files displayed frame of the configure screen will cause the FileList on the main screen to display all *.EXE executables.

COM

Clicking this box in the files displayed frame of the configure screen will cause the FileList on the main screen to display all *.COM executables.

BAT

Clicking this box in the files displayed frame of the configure screen will cause the FileList on the main screen to display all *.BAT batch files

PIF

Clicking this box in the files displayed frame of the configure screen will cause the FileList on the main screen to display all *.PIF program information files

Associations

Checking this box will cause MC to look in win.ini for the list of associated extensions and place all files with those extensions on the FileList. Because of a Visual Basic limitation, if you have more than 25 associations, only the first 25 are used.

All Files

Checking this box causes all files to appear in the FileList. [File List Box](#)

OK Button

Accepts the changes you made in the Configuration dialog.

Cancel Button

Cancels the changes you made in the Configuration dialog.

Defaults Button

Returns all options to the MC default values.

Help Button

Invokes this help file. To do so, winhelp needs to find mc.hlp. It is recommended you put the file in your windows directory.

Maximum Values

Groups
Items/Grp
History

Groups

Determines the maximum number of groups that MC sets up memory for.

Items/Grp

Determines the maximum number of items per group that MC sets up memory for.

History

Determines the maximum number of items on the saved history list that MC sets up memory for.

Load Progman Groups Button

Calls up the dialog to load your progman groups as MC groups. This should normally only be done when you first start using MC.

If you invoke it, multiple times and are not careful to only choose new groups, MC will generate multiple groups with the same name.

Load Progman Groups Overview

You can transfer all or some of your Progman groups to MC. Call Up the Load Progman Groups Screen from the Configure Screen. MC will read your list of Progman Groups. When you press "Add Selected Groups", the groups on the list on the right will all get added to your MC groups. If you don't want them all you can move some of them to the list on the left of groups that will not be processed.

Even if you already have groups with the names of your progman groups, MC will just make multiple groups with the same name.

Add Button

Adds the high lighted group on the left to the list on the right of progman groups that will be processed.

Remove Button

Removes the high lighted group on the right and move it to the left hand list where it will not be processed.

Start Over Button

This removes all groups from the list on the right

Add All Button

Adds all groups to the list on the right

Process Selected Groups Button

Adds each group from the list on the right as an MC group. The program items within each group are used to make items in the MC item list for that group.

Cancel Button

Returns to the Configure screen from the Load Progman Groups screen.

Keyboard Shortcuts

While MC is best used with a mouse, it can be used with the keyboard alone. Even if you use a mouse, there are times that you may prefer to use the keyboard anyway. The Tab key will take you from one field to the next on the various screens with an order set logically. F1 will bring up this help file from anywhere in MC. Enter choose the current item or the button with focus. Alt-key shortcuts are shown by underlined letters in words with three exceptions. Alt-V (for driVe) goes to the drive box on the main form, Alt-D to the directory box and alt-F to the File box. Alt-down arrow will open up drop down list boxes.

A list of file extensions which Windows associates to a program. Double clicking on a file with that extension launches the associated program.

A collection of related programs (items) that are put on a single list