

ODS CD Browser



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Welcome to the ODS CD Browser

This is a special version of the help file that normally accompanies the product, with an additional section,

[How to construct a CD using the ODS CD Browser](#)

that doesn't usually appear in the shipping version and that the CD purchaser therefore never sees. If you click on the jump it will take you to a section that describes how you would put together a CD of your own. You can actually construct a test CD using this demo version, but of course you cannot ship it without first

[licensing a copy](#)

from us or one of our agents.

The ODS CD browser is designed to make it easy for you to navigate around the CD and find the programs that interest you. You can see descriptions and screenshots, and in most cases try the programs out direct from the CD. And when you have found what you are looking for a single button click will install the program straight onto your PC. You can also uninstall the program in the majority of cases.

There is "tool-tips" style help for each button and control that the browser has. Rest the mouse pointer over an area of interest and an explanation of what it does and how to use it will appear.

For more details, click on the relevant option below:-

[Menu Commands](#)

[To Licence the ODS CD Browser](#)

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How to construct a CD



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Overview

Constructing a CD is not complicated, all that is required is to get all the files in the right places, with the correct content in each file.

To help you ensure you have covered all the steps required we have included a

[simple checklist](#)
you can work to.

There are three basic types of files that dictate the layout of the CD and where the ODS CD Browser should look for screenshots, descriptions etc., that you have to prepare. There are then a number of ancillary files such as Icons, screenshots, product descriptions and so on that you need to supply for each product that you put on the CD. The three "layout" files, each with an extension of SCD, which are created or modified using a text editor such as Notepad, are:-

[The odscd.scd file](#)

[The products.scd file\(s\)](#)

[The .scd files for the individual products](#)

Icons

Icons for each product must also be present in the directory which contains the products.scd file. (This common location is for speed, so that the ODS CD browser doesn't have to read lots of files to determine the location of Icons. The Icons are also not read until they are needed by the product appearing in the list box to allow for a quick start of the program even on a CD with hundreds of products, and the icons are cached for quick re-display).

The icons should be in standard Icon files (.ico), named with the product's "Name Key" (see the description of the products.scd file for details of the "Name Key").

Screenshots

Screenshots should be in standard Windows Bitmap format. Screenshots larger than the end-users display capability will automatically shrink to fit, but this does cause some loss of resolution, so in general consider the possibility of some users having a 640*480 screen and provide screenshots appropriately.

Product Descriptions, Requirements and Publisher Details

These files need to be created in standard HTML, with a couple of restrictions.

- Only standard HTML is supported, not some of the more esoteric Netscape extensions (although tables are supported).
- You can include [http://](#) style and [ftp://](#) style and [mailto:](#) style links and the CD Browser will attempt to determine the user's Web browser and start that with the link as a parameter.

- Individual lines in the HTML files are restricted to 255 characters. This should not present a problem as the text is reformatted anyway and newlines are dropped. If you require a new paragraph you should use the standard <P> HTML tag.

You can look at the example HTML files in this demo to help you understand the requirements here.

What other files are needed

Only the ODSCD.EXE program, the ODSCD.HLP file and the ILIB31HT.DLL files are needed in the highest level directory in addition to the files described above. However, it may be an idea to consider including an autorun.inf file which will allow any CD to autorun on Windows 95. All that is required in the file (which must be in the CD's root directory) is:-

```
[autorun]
open=odscd.exe
```

Checklist



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Actions Required.

- 1 Put a copy of the ODSCD.EXE and ODSCD.HLP files in the root directory of the CD. (or in an empty directory on your hard drive if you are experimenting).
- 2 Determine how many "subsections" the CD will have and what the title will be. Construct a ODSCD.SCD file to reflect those decisions and put it in the same directory as the ODSCD.EXE file.
- 3 For each subsection, create the appropriate directory (named in the ODSCD.SCD file) as a subdirectory of the location of the ODSCD.EXE file.
- 4 Pop an autorun.inf file in the same directory as ODSCD.EXE if you want this to be an autorun CD on Win95.
- 5 In each subsection directory create a products.scd file which lists the products on this branch of the CD structure.
- 6 For each product listed in the products.scd file create an individual SCD file which contains details of the locations of installers, uninstallers, screenshots, descriptions etc. Put these in the same directory as the products.scd file.
- 7 Create an Icon for each product, and put them in the same directory as the products.scd file.
- 8 For each product create the description, requirements and publisher information HTML files and pop them in the correct locations as dictated by the individual SCD file for the product. Also create the screenshot in Windows .BMP format and put it in the appropriate place.
- 9 Put a distribution .ZIP file in the appropriate place as specified by the individual .SCD file if you intend to use one.
- 10 Put the product itself in the correct location, with the installer and uninstaller and the file used to run the program from the CD in the correct places as described in the individual .SCD file.

For more information on:-

[The ODSCD.SCD file](#)

[The PRODUCTS.SCD file](#)

[The individual product .SCD files](#)

Click on the appropriate jump.

Hints and Tips.

- There are lots of ways you can lay the CD's directory structure out, and as long as the .SCD files reflect that structure everything should work fine, but as a starting point you could do worse than mimic the layout we have used on this demo.
- You can "share" some of the HTML files between different products if you want to. Prime candidates for sharing might be the publisher information HTML if you have multiple products from one company.
- Beware that if you attempt to run a program from the ODSCD browser as though it was on a CD, but is actually on your hard disk, the program might create some files that you will end up shipping that you would rather not. Some programs write .ini files back to the directory they run from if they can, but are smart enough to realise if they are on CD and don't. Be careful you don't ship some initialization data from your system that won't work on somebody elses!

The products.scd file



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The products.scd file(s) contain a single record (maximum 255 bytes long) for each product in the particular subsection of the CD. Each record has 5 fields, separated by the ^ character. Below is an example of the record for SmartDoc 95 V2.0 from this demo.

1^smtdoc20^04/09/1995^SmartDoc 95 V2.0^Windows Help File Printer

The fields have the following meanings

- 1 The first field gives the "level" that the product or header will appear in the outline. This line can either signify an actual product, or it can identify a "folder". If the line immediately following has a higher number in field 1 then this line signifies a "folder", otherwise it signifies a product.
- 2 The second field gives the "name key" for the particular product. This name key is used when searching for the individual product's .scd file, and also to locate the product's icon.
- 3 The third field is a no-longer used "date" field, but it must be present. The date you put in here does not matter, but it must be in dd/mm/yyyy format.
- 4 The fourth field gives the name of the product or folder, as it will appear in the main list box just to the right of the icon, immediately above....
- 5 The fifth field gives a short description of the product which will appear underneath the name of the product in the main list box.

As many of these records can be included in the products.scd file as required.

The .scd files for the individual products



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Each product has an individual .scd file. The name is constructed from the first field of the product's record in the

[products.scd file](#)

with the extension .scd appended.

The individual product's .scd file has the form of an INI file (which is what it really is). There is only one section, [Details]. A typical file looks like:-

```
[Details]
PreInstallMsg=Optional Preinstallation Message
Install=smtdoc20\product\install.exe
UnInstall=smtdoc20\remove\uninstal.exe
Run=smtdoc20\product\smartdoc.exe
Zip=smtdoc20\smtdoc20.zip
Tab1Data=smtdoc20\smtdoc20.htm
Tab2Data=smtdoc20\smtdoc20.bmp
Tab3Data=stdreq.htm
Tab4Data=publishr.htm
```

The individual lines detail filenames that contain the information required or program to run to display details about, install or remove the product. Note that all references to files and path are relative to the location of the products.scd file. The individual lines have the following functions:-

- PreInstallMsg= allows you to specify a message that will appear when the user presses the Install button, before the installer starts. This is usually to give some message like "Password XXX required during installation" or similar.
- Install= specifies the program to run to install the product, if an install routine is provided.
- Uninstall= specifies the program to run to uninstall the product, if an uninstallation routine is provided.
- Run= specifies what to use to run the program direct from CD.
- Zip= specifies the location of the product's distribution .ZIP file if you choose to include it.
- Tab1Data= specifies the file containing the HTML which is associated with the first tab.
- Tab2Data= specifies the file containing the Windows bitmap which is associated with the second tab. Note that at this time only normal windows bitmaps (.bmp) are supported.
- Tab3Data= specifies the file containing the HTML which is associated with the third tab.
- Tab4Data= specifies the file containing the HTML which is associated with the fourth tab.

Any or all of the Install, Uninstall, Run or Zip lines can be omitted which causes the relevant button and menu item to appear disabled.

You can also optionally override the text that appears on the tabs (the default is specified in the odscd.sdc file) by including a

- Tab1=Some text
style line.

You can also remove tabs completely by specifying for example

- Tab4=
but note that you must work from Tab4 backwards. You can't just drop Tab2 and leave the other tabs there. Obviously if you drop say Tab4 then you don't need the Tab4Data= entry.

You can also change the canvas and logo that appear at the left, by specifying filenames in Bitmap= and Logo= lines. When you switch back to the main content list they will revert to the defaults specified in the odscd.scd file.

The odscd.scd file



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This file lives in the same directory as the ODSCD.EXE program itself. This will usually be the root directory of the CD, but it doesn't have to be, the ODSCD browser will work quite happily from a subdirectory as all file references are relative to the location of the ODSCD.EXE program file.

The basic function of this file is to provide details of the caption required on the Browser Window, to specify a date after which products are considered eligible for the "What's New" category, to specify the subdirectories which contain the products, and to specify a few other variables like sounds etc.

Note that you can have multiple subdirectories - useful if you are gathering material from different sources, or if different people (perhaps sub-editors on a magazine) are responsible for various parts of the content. This design allows each part to be produced and tested separately before finally pulling everything together for the production CD.

The odscd.scd file has the structure of an .INI file (which is what it really is). The odscd.scd file that was used for this demo contains the following.

```
[General]
Caption=Generic CD Front End
WhatsNewDate=25/07/1995
;WhatsNewDate not used anymore, but needed 'til we change the code!
Logo=LOGO.BMP
Canvas=CANVAS.BMP
Splash=SPLASH.BMP
Legal=AGREE.HTM
;Take the Legal= line out and the legal agreement at start doesn't appear.
OrderMenu=1
;Take the OrderMenu line out and the Help/Order menu item goes away
;(If there it calls the Help File with context id 100).
DefaultTab1=&Details
DefaultTab2=&Screenshot
DefaultTab3=&Requirements
DefaultTab4=&Contacts
HelpPhone=Call 01451 810788
HelpEmail=email 100714.334@compuserve.com
;if you take both the above two lines out the "Need Help"
;button vanishes
Intro=intro.mid
Background=back.mid

;just list all the directories under the next section
;it looks for the products.scd file in each of them
[Directories]
test=Test Directory
```

In the [General] section

The Caption= line is used to specify the caption (title) that appears on the ODS CD Browser's caption bar.

The WhatsNewDate= line specifies the date after which products are considered eligible for the "What's New" category. (Not used any more but still required for historical reasons - just leave it there.

The Logo= Canvas= and Splash= lines define three bitmaps to be use for the logo and canvas at the left of the product list, and the splash screen that comes up at the start.

The Legal= line allows you to point at some legal HTML that the user must acknowledge before proceeding.

The OrderMenu=1 causes the appearance of an "Order Form" command on the Help menu, which links to context Id 100 in the Help file. Obviously you have to construct your own Help File for this to be of any use.

The DefaultTab*= lines specify the default text that will appear on the product tabs (this can be overridden on a product by product basis).

The HelpPhone= and HelpMail= lines specify the text to appear in the dialog box when the user presses the "Need Help" button. If you leave both these out the "Need Help" button disappears.

The Intro= and Background= lines (optional) specify Midi files that will play if the user has Midi playing capabilities.

In the [Directories] section

There can be multiple lines, each of which specifies the name of a subdirectory which contains products. The text to the left of the = sign specifies the name of a subdirectory which contains the products, the text to the right of the = sign is not used by the ODS CD Browser program and can contain any text which the designer feels appropriate. Note that there must be something there though, it cannot be blank.

In this case only a single directory is specified, named **test**. The ODS CD Browser will therefore look in that directory for a

[products.scd file](#)

which will give details of the individual products.

To Licence the ODS CD Browser



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You can licence this CD Browser to use on CD's you produce yourself, and we can undertake customization work if required. The cost depends on the quantity you intend to duplicate and ship. Note that we always require an advance against any requested customization.

You might also like to consider some of the uses a customized version of this browser could be put to. Whilst it is ideal for allowing the user to easily find their way around a CD full of software, it could just as easily be modified to produce product catalogs or similar CDs.

For more information please contact:-

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Menu Commands



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Click on the menu required.

[File Menu](#)

[Edit Menu](#)

[View Menu](#)

[Action Menu](#)

[Options Menu](#)

[Help Menu](#)

[Return to Contents page](#)

"Note that not all the menu items are always present. Some can be selectively disabled by the CD designer.

File Menu



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Printer Setup

Allows the user to configure his printer.

Print

Prints the currently displayed information, either the text or the screenshot.

Exit

Terminates the ODS CD Browser program

Edit Menu



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Copy

Copies the currently displayed text or screenshot to the Windows clipboard.

View Menu



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Selected Product

Switches the display to "Detail Mode" showing details of the product currently highlighted in the list displayed in "Contents Mode". Double-Clicking on the product you require, or pressing the "View" button have exactly the same effect.

Next in Sequence

Shows the details for the product after the one currently highlighted in the list displayed in "Contents Mode". This works whether you are in Contents Mode or in Detail Mode, but is more useful from Detail Mode. A good way to use the ODS CD Browser is to create a list of products you are interested in using the category and keyword selection controls, and then browse through them using the Next/Previous controls.

Previous in Sequence

Shows the details for the product before the one currently highlighted in the list displayed in "Contents Mode". This works whether you are in Contents Mode or in Detail Mode, as above.

Full Screen Screenshot

This option is only available when you have the Screenshot tab selected in Detail Mode. It displays the screenshot "full screen" avoiding the need to scroll about it. Double-clicking on the screenshot has the same effect. To return to normal mode simply click on the full screen screenshot.

Action Menu



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Run From CD

This option causes the currently selected product to be run direct from the CD, without installing to the PC first. If the product cannot run direct from CD but must be installed first then this option will not be available. The ODS CD Browser will minimize once the other program has started, and re-appear when it terminates.

Install to PC

This option causes the currently selected product to be installed on your PC. The installation routine used is the one supplied with the product, and there are many different flavors. Most ask a number of fairly obvious questions such as where you want the product installed and so on. The ODS CD Browser will minimize once the installation routine has started, and will re-appear when it terminates.

Uninstall from PC

This option causes the currently selected product to be removed from your PC. The uninstallation routine used is the one supplied with the product, and there are many different flavors. Most ask a number of fairly obvious questions such as where the product installed was originally installed, whether you want the Program Manager Group removed and so on. The ODS CD Browser will minimize once the uninstallation routine has started, and will re-appear when it terminates.

Copy Distribution ZIP File

This option will make a copy of the product in a standard ZIP file and ask you where you would like it copied. This is most useful for BBS Sysops, Shareware Disk Vendors etc.

Options Menu



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Default Content List Font

Allows the user to specify the font used for the list of contents.

Default Proportional Font

Allows the user to specify the default proportional font used in product descriptions etc. if it is not otherwise specified in the HTML.

Default Fixed Font

Allows the user to specify the default fixed font used in product descriptions etc. if it is not otherwise specified in the HTML.

Background Music Off

Allows the user to turn off the background music. (If there is no background music provided by the CD designer this menu option will not be present).

Help Menu



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Note that not all these menu items are always present. Some can be selectively disabled by the CD designer.

Help Contents

Jumps to the Contents page of this Help File.

How to use Help

Jumps to a tutorial on how to use the Windows Help system.

Context Help

Allows the user to point at items on the interface and receive a short tutorial on their use.

Order Form

Causes a jump to Context Id 100 in the Help File, where the CD compiler may have included an order form.

About

Displays the ODS CD Browser's copyright notice and release details.

Licensing this CD Browser

Jumps to details of how to licence the ODS CD Browser for use on CDs you produce yourself.

Order Form



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This page could contain an order form if you developed your own Help File to accompany your CD. It has a context_id of 100 which matches the context_id that will be requested by the Order Form option in the Help Menu if you have enabled it.

