

WindowsTools
OXKO Corporation

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There are a few glaring weaknesses in *Windows* - even *Windows 3.0*. For example, the product completely takes over your system's resources (a **necessary** evil) rendering such critical utilities as screen blankers useless. So, it's no surprise that the ranks of enterprising software developers who are creating tools to extend *Windows*' functionality are so full. OXKO (an acronym for *OXman Knowledge Organization*) is not the developer of *WindowsTools*, merely the U.S. distributor, but they've hitched their wagon to a product that could well see their name become synonymous with well thought out, well implemented software. It's not that *WindowsTools* does that many things unavailable elsewhere, but it's one of the rare utilities packages that compartmentalizes its code in a manner that allows you to run only what you need, saving both RAM and disk space.

Developed by a German company named Gesys, *WindowsTools* is comprised of about twenty individual programs that all can be run independently, or from an included integration and disk management program called Program Starter. Essentially a clone of *Windows*' Program Manager shell facility, Program Starter provides integrated direct access to the various programs that make up *WindowsTools* (plus whatever other programs you designate), as well as the ability to display and change your system's PATH statement, display directory trees, and move files from assignment in one directory to another. It's text driven, rather than iconic, and doesn't provide a compelling reason for its own use. We recommend deleting it from your system, and moving on.

Installing *WindowsTools* is a matter of running the program provided for that purpose. The documentation indicates that it can only be run from DOS's command line, but it can in fact be used as indicated, or from within *Windows* via a "run" command directed at it, or by choosing it using File Manager. You must create the directory you intend to use for storage before installation, and the process then places Program Starter in the directory you've named, creates a subdirectory called "TTOOLS", and puts the utilities themselves there. Install also places two copies of a program that makes certain system calls on your disk. This program is used only by the screen blanking utility, and if you choose not to take advantage of that particular tool's services, the copies may both be deleted, as well. In any event, kill the copy that is placed in the directory which contains Program Starter - it serves no purpose. The WIN.INI configuration file is also amended, to include a path statement to aid Program Starter in its search for the other files.

Once installed (at a total cost of some 450 kilobytes of disk space), you can start using the tools, which individually occupy from 7K to 43K of room. The programs' more generic functions include several that are found in many other packages, such as a screen blanker (it can be customized to take effect after as long as 900 minutes), a system hardware survey, display-only monthly calendar covering the period from January 1900 to December 2199, stopwatch, file locator, and a tool for setting file attributes. Also included are some very useful programs that provide benefits not as easily found elsewhere, if at all. The pesky step of transferring the contents of Clipboard to an application program before printing it is eliminated, a programmer's hexadecimal calculator augments *Windows*' own standard/scientific Calc, you get a utility from which the Backup/Restore programs in DOS can be used, ASCII and ANSI character charts in several languages, and a (not very useful in *Windows 3.0*) dynamic free memory counter. *WindowsTools* also has alarm and countdown timers (which even work when you are using DOS or an application, full screen in 386 enhanced mode), an album for storing your bit-mapped graphics files for easy access, and a measurement conversion program that handles temperature, pressure, power, energy, and an assortment of U.S., British, and German linear, nautical, volume, and area manipulations.

Most impressive is a program called Camera, which takes a "snapshot" of any part of your screen, is aware of a particular window's boundaries, and can even be used to capture screen objects such as a buttons and dialogue boxes, eliminated the need for painstaking edits of such images. This could spell the end of an era for such specialized programs as Atech's *Pizazz Plus*. *WindowsTools* adds one other module of note, which unfortunately is not as well implemented as it could be. You can display the time and date from as many as sixteen time zones on screen at once, each personalized with the title of your choice. Too bad they need to be reset manually every time you run *Windows*.

If there's any flaw in *WindowsTools*, it's documentation. Translated from German, the basically clear text suffers from syntax errors and uneven grammar. This can be overlooked, but there's a more serious problem. *WindowsTools* provides no on-line help, and the relatively short printed documentation is housed in a three ring binder that simply takes up too much space for its own good, especially when you consider that many users will only need several pages covering their favorite tools.

Windows Spell

Palsoft

We know what *Windows Spell* is, and we know what *Windows Spell* does. The question is, is this the way to implement spell checking under *Windows*?

Consisting of just three files occupying under 350 kilobytes of disk space (and in an interesting twist for *Windows*, simply copied to the directory of your choice - there's no installation procedure), *Windows Spell* is the first of a small suite of applications for *Windows 3.0* planned by Palsoft. Yet to come are a word processor, flat file database, and scanner control