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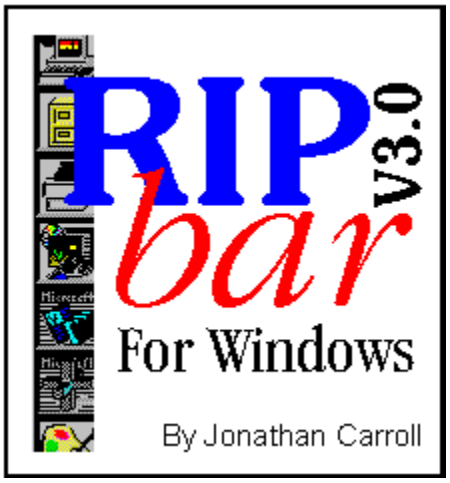
Introduction



RipBAR is designed to provide the user with system information, and the ability to launch applications. It does this in such as way as to remain as flexible as possible while consuming little screen "real estate".

RipBAR is available in separate files for both Windows 3.1 and Windows NT. While the two versions are similar in most respects, differences between the two will be pointed out whenever necessary. In some cases, pictures in this help file may differ slightly from what you actually see on the screen.

RipBAR is an icon bar that you may set up with applications of your choice. Configuration options include the ability to set up startup directory, and command line parameters. Additionally, files may be dropped onto the application icons sitting on the bar-- causing the application to launch and open that file automatically.

The Windows 3.1 version displays the time, memory information, and the remaining resources available to the system. The *Resource Tracker* (Windows 3.1 only) is included to allow you to monitor an application's use of memory and resources.

The Windows NT version displays the time, along with available physical and virtual RAM.

Many thanks to *Brad Burns* who provided some of the "3D-look" in RipBAR, and *Naomi* who patiently watched as I spent many a night attempting to get RipBAR "just right".

Author / Registration

I want to thank you for trying RipBAR. It is designed to provide the most convenient access possible to applications without having to remember hot keys and the like. Even for those who own Norton Desktop or some similar enhanced shell, the resource and memory displays are invaluable.

RipBAR is one of a number of applications written for the sheer pleasure of programming. It was originally designed on Windows NT, where I missed my Norton Desktop!

If you find this program useful, and end up using it on a regular basis, I'd appreciate a $20 registration-- for which I will keep you notified of updates etc. There are no annoying "Register Me!" screens, and no disabled features-- so I leave it up to you.

You may now register your copy of RipBAR via CompuServe. Simply type GO SWREG at any CompuServe prompt and follow instructions. You may search for RipBAR there by using the RIPBAR keyword.

If this program doesn't live up to your dreams, let me know-- I'm always open to ideas. I can be reached in one of four ways :

Conventional Mail
Jonathan Carroll
28 Parkland
Pointe Claire, Quebec
CANADA H9R 2E8

CompuServe
user id : 74017,3242

GEnie
user id : J.H.CARROLL

E-Mail (Internet)
jonathan@cc.mcgill.ca

New In This Version

This is version 3.0 of RipBAR. The following is new or enhanced with respect to earlier versions

RipBAR has a new tool : The *RUN* tool. Double clicking on this, permits the user to type an application name on a command line along with any command line options and run the application.

RipBAR includes new options to display both memory and resource statistics as graphs.

RipBAR now includes support for those who want it to run as a shell-- instead of Program Manager.

RipBAR can now load icons from .ICO files, Norton .NIL icon library files and PC Tools For Windows icon files.

RipBAR now sports a new *Customized Minimize* option that let's the user detemines how RipBAR gets minimized and where it gets minimized to.

RipBAR now allows the user to customize the fonts that RipBAR uses for display purposes.

RipBAR 's System Info dialog now includes an option to exit or restart Windows.

RipBAR occasionally neglected to save settings when a user exited Windows-- this is fixed.

The following was new in Version 2.0 :

RipBAR may now be resized horizontally and vertically, allowing you to place icons in columns.

RipBAR items may be reordered according to user's taste.

Preferences now include a new option that lets you tell RipBAR to either show or hide icon titles.

Preferences now include a new option that lets you set the date format displayed in the Clock/Date pane.

Preferences now include a new option that lets you determine alternate means of activating applications.

Preferences now include a new option that lets you determine whether RipBAR displays some, all, or none of its tools (memory, clock etc.).

Preferences now include a new option that lets you format the time display for either 24hr or 12hr display.

The following was new in Version 1.6 :

When running under Windows NT, RipBAR now saves and loads its setting from the Registry rather than an .INI file.

When running under Windows NT, RipBAR will now read .ICO files in addition to the .EXE and .DLL files already supported when browsing icons for an application.

Minor display problem that occured when adding an application to the bar that didn't have an icon is fixed.

The following was new in Version 1.5 :

RipBAR now includes *preference* or option settings that allow you to determine whether RipBAR stays on top of all other windows, and whether RipBAR minimizes itself when you run an application from it.

RipBAR now reports memory statistics in a more reliable fashion -- it will no longer be fooled by virtual memory.

RipBAR no longer has a *minimize* button. See *Minimizing RipBAR* for more info.

RipBAR is able to load up to 120 icons from icon files (EXEs & DLLs) -- up from 40 in previous versions.

The following was new in Version 1.2 :

RipBAR now makes use of threaded processes under Windows NT. If you're using RipBAR under Windows NT, executing an application will no longer make RipBAR "busy". In other words, you'll be able to launch many applications from the bar in quick succession.

RipBAR now sports a minimize box so that you can quickly and conveniently get it "out of the way".

Double clicking on the memory display will now cause a dialog to appear with more system information. See the section titled *System Information* for more information--the display depends on whether you're running Windows 3.1 or Windows NT.

The *Resource Tracker* is now available by double-clicking on the Resource Display pane.

Your First Time

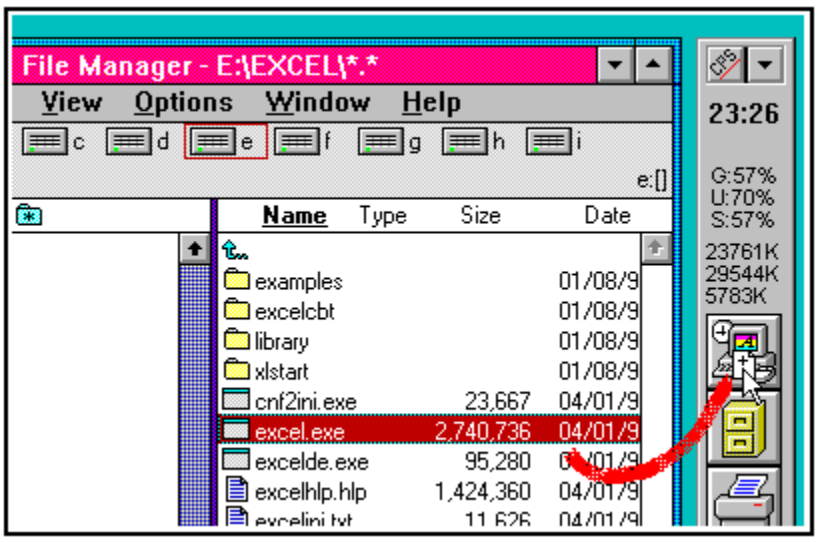
The first time you run RipBAR, it will warn you that it can't find its setup file. It will then proceed to fill the bar with default applications that include Help, RUN, Control Panel, Notepad and PaintBrush. You may delete these from the bar if you don't want them.

To find out how to add your own applications to the bar, see Adding Applications To The Bar

Getting Help

The first time you use RipBAR, a Help icon is installed. (The one with the yellow question mark.) If you remove this icon, you can display help at any time by double-clicking with the *left* mouse button on the clock pane or by double clicking with *right* mouse button on RipBAR's title bar.

Adding Applications To The Bar



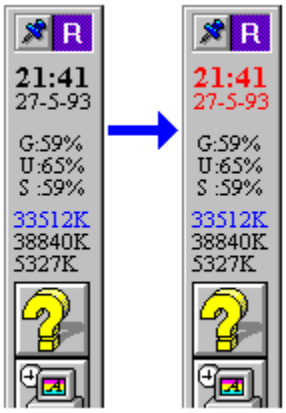
You can add applications to the bar by dragging program names to the bar from the File Manager or other programs that allow you to perform drag operations. (Such as Norton Desktop) Simply drag an application file on top of any of the other icons on the bar or on an empty space and let go. The new application will appear. If there is no icon associated with applcation (because perhaps it is a DOS app), RipBAR will place a generic Windows icon which you can customize-- see Customizing RipBAR Items

It is possible that you won't see the new icon or application id there wasn't extra room on the bar before you added the new application-- Just re-size the bar so that you can see what you just added. (See Changing The Way RipBAR Looks if you don't know how to re-size RipBAR.)

RipBAR will accept files with EXE or PIF extensions as candidates for a spot on the bar.

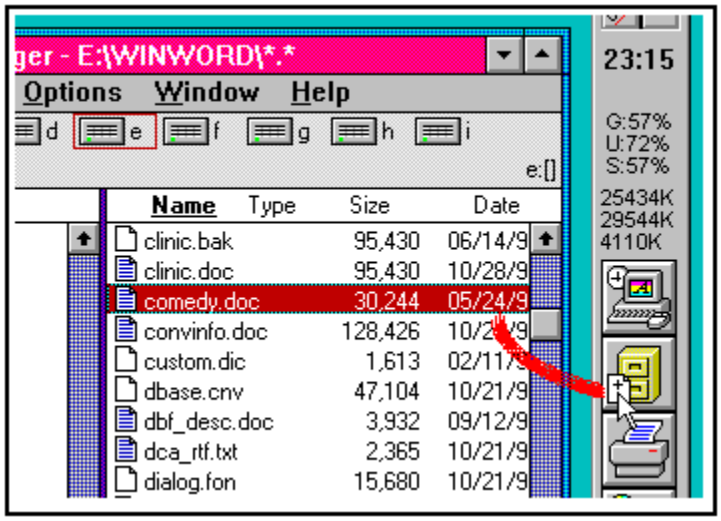
Launching Applications

To execute or launch an application on the bar, simply double click on it with the left mouse button.



RipBAR's clock pane will turn red to let you know it has begun launching the application. (See picture above.)

Launching Applications With A Document

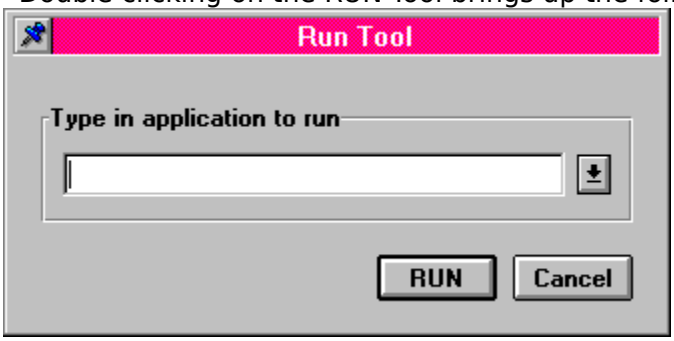


To execute or launch an application with a document, simply drag a document from the File Manager, a *drop* it onto one of the application icons. The application will launch and open the document you dragged to the bar-- if the application supports this kind of operation.

Launching Apps With The RUN Tool

The RUN Tool is displayed by default when you first install RipBAR. After that, it can be activated or deactivated by selecting the *RUN Tool* option in Preferences.

Double clicking on the RUN Tool brings up the following dialog :

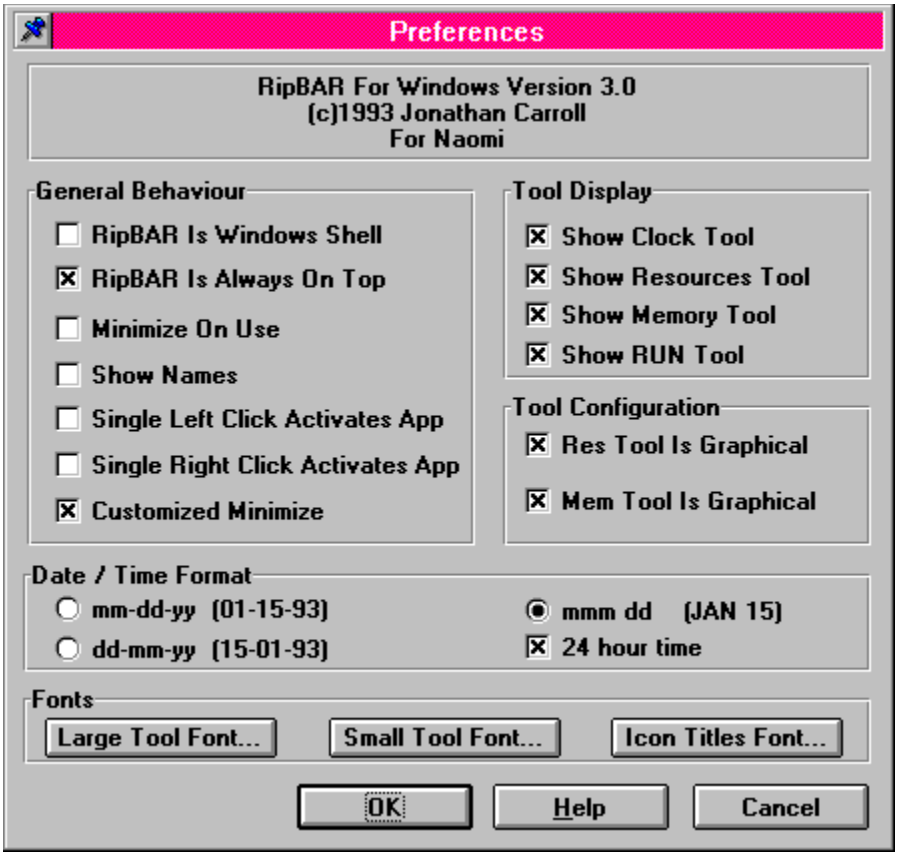


You may type in the name of an application you want to run. If you neglect to include the program's file extension, RipBAR will automatically add .EXE for you. If the program needs to run from a particular directory and/or drive, include the entire path.

RipBAR will store the 20 most recent applications you have run in this fashion. You can view these by clicking on the button to the right of the command line.

Customizing RipBAR (Preferences)

Double-clicking with the *right* mouse button on the Clock pane or on RipBAR's title bar, brings up the following dialog :



General Behaviour options

RipBAR Is Windows Shell *(default is **No**)*

When selected, this option causes RipBAR to configure itself as the primary Windows shell--the replacement for Program Manager. Choosing this also causes RipBAR to change the *SHELL=* setting in the Windows *SYSTEM.INI* file, meaning that RipBAR will be run instead of Program Manager. When this becomes the case, closing RipBAR causes you to exit Windows.

While you wouldn't normally set this option, some people with laptops etc. requested this feature.

Always On Top *(default is **Yes**)*

When selected, this option causes RipBAR to always remain on top of any other windows on the screen.

Minimize On Use *(default is **No**)*

When selected, this option causes RipBAR to minimize itself when you launch an application off of the bar.

*Show Names (default is **No**)*

When selected, this option causes RipBAR to display application names (that you may customize) under each icon. This makes each icon pane a little longer vertically, but can be useful when icons are not easily recognizable.

*Single Left Click Activates App (default is **No**)*

When selected, you can run an application from the bar by clicking *once with the left mouse button*. (Normally you must *double click* the left mouse button)

*Single Left Click Activates App (default is **No**)*

When selected, you can run an application from the bar by clicking *once with the right mouse button*. (Normally you must *double click* the left mouse button)

*Customized Minimize (default is **No**)*

Normally, when you minimize an application, the window turns into an icon and goes to the bottom of the screen. You can tell RipBAR to handle this default behaviour differently-- by turning this option on, you are able to determine how small RipBAR shrinks, and what location the bar moves to when you minimize it. For more details see Minimizing RipBAR.

Tool Display options

Checkmarks next to items indicate that RipBAR will display the tool. Uncheck any items you *don't* want displayed. If you uncheck the Clock tool, you can still invoke the Preferences dialog (which is normally available by double clicking with the right mouse button on the Clock) by double clicking with the *right* mouse button on RipBAR's title bar.

Tool Configuration options

These options let you choose whether Memory and Resource displays will be in numerical or graphical format.

Fonts

Three buttons are displayed. Each one of them activates a dialog that allows you to select font name, size and style. *Large Tool Font* is the font that RipBAR uses to display the time in the Clock pane. *Small Tool Font* is the font that RipBAR uses to display the date, memory stats in the Memory Tool, and Resources stats in the Resource Tool. Finally, *Icon Titles Font* is the font that RipBAR uses to display the icon titles if you have this option set (see above).

Time / Date Format options

RipBAR lets you select from one of three different date formats to be displayed on the Clock/Date pane and whether time is displayed in 12 hour or 24 hour format.

Minimizing RipBAR

To Minimize RipBAR, simply double-click with the *left* mouse button on the title bar.

What happens after you do this depends on how the *Customized Minimize* option was set in Preferences.

If you *don't* have *Customized Minimize* set :

When you minimize RipBAR, the window turns into an icon and goes to the bottom of the screen beside all other minimized programs-- just like any other Windows application.

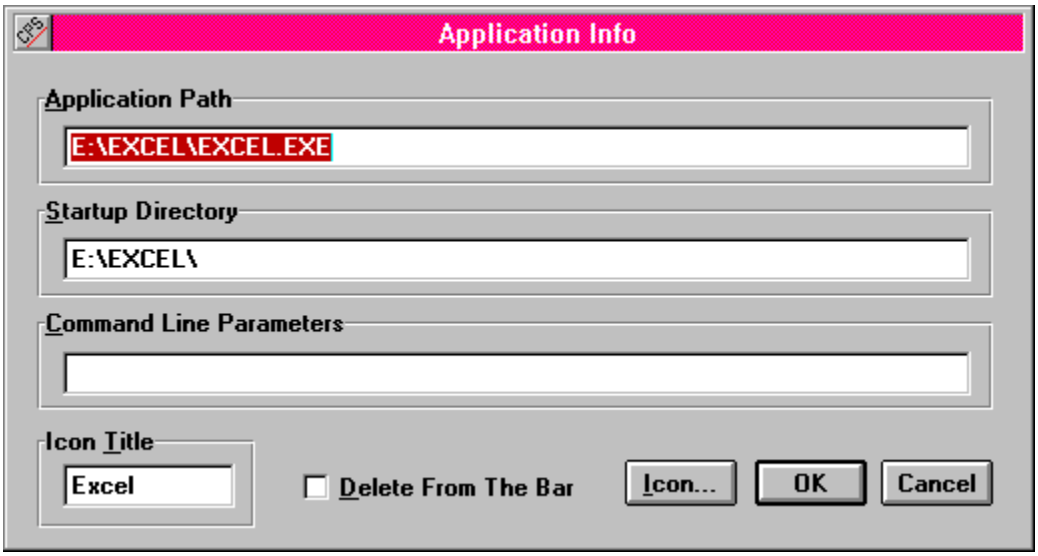
If you *do* have *Customized Minimize* set :

By setting the *Customized Minimize* option on, you are able to determine how small RipBAR shrinks, and what location the bar moves to when you minimize it. The first time you minimize RipBAR after it has been installed on your computer, RipBAR will minimize to the top left corner of your screen so that only the clock tool is visible. You can now move RipBAR to wherever you like-- and resize it to display any additional information you want. Double-click with the *left* mouse button on the title bar, and RipBAR is restored to its full size and original location. Hereafter, RipBAR will remember where it was when it was minimized.

Customizing RipBAR Items

General Options

To customize certain properties of an item on the bar, double click on it with the *right* mouse button. This will result in a dialog box that lets you set the startup directory, and any command line options you want to set.



Custom Icons

Click on the *Icon...* button to browse for an icon you'd like to use as a representation of the item on the bar. See Custom Icons

Custom Names

If you have set RipBAR to display icon names (see Preferences), then whatever text is entered in this field shows up as the name. When adding new applications to the bar, the name defaults to the application's file name. Keep names short-- space is limited on the bar!

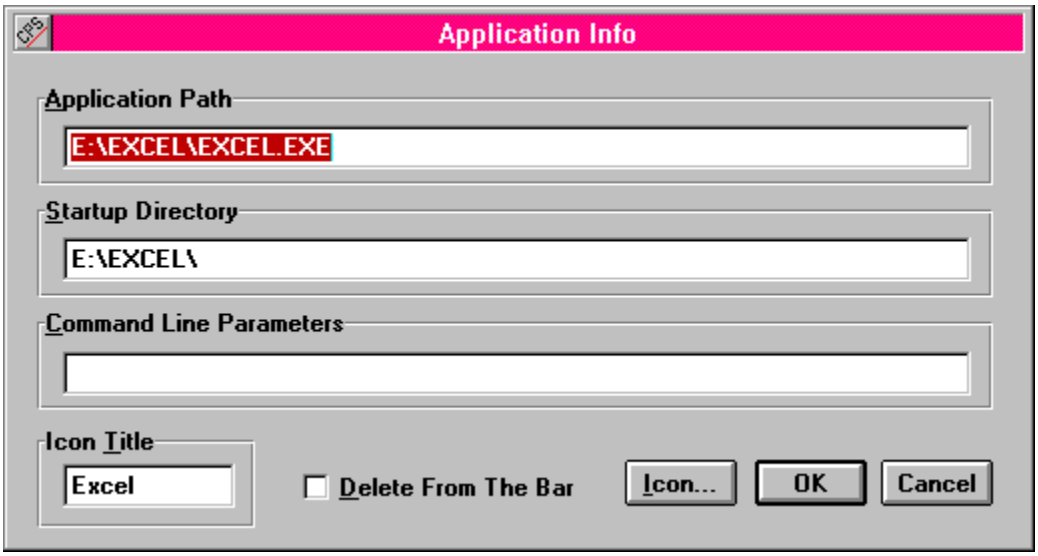
Deleting Entries

Click on the *Delete From The Bar* checkbox and click on *OK*. The item will be deleted, and RipBAR will resize its window to display any remaining icons.

Deleting RipBAR Items

Deleting Entries

Bring up the customizer dialog for an item by double clicking with the *right* mouse button, on an icon. Click on the *Delete From The Bar* checkbox in the dialog, and click on *OK*. The item will be deleted, and RipBAR will resize its window to display any remaining icons.



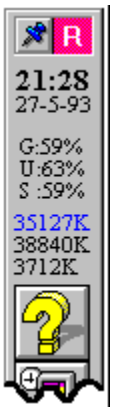
Moving RipBAR Items

You can change the position of items on the bar by dragging (hold down the left mouse button) the icon representing the application you want to move, to a new location on the bar-- i.e. drop it on top of the icon in the location you want to move the application to. This way, you can organize icons such that your most-used applications are on top and others below etc.

If you have the *Single Left Click Activates App* setting in Preferences then the above method doesn't work because the minute you click the left mouse button to start a drag, you activate an application. In this case, simply hold down the CTRL (Control) key as you perform the drag.

Changing The Way RipBAR Looks

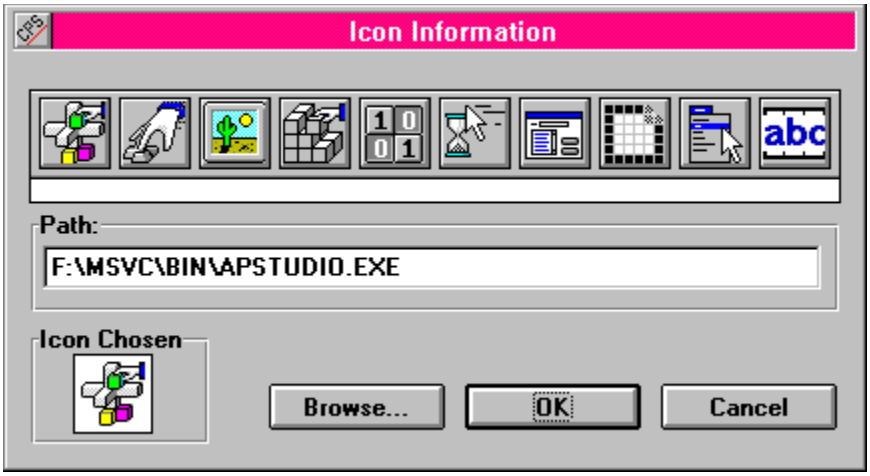
RipBAR is displayed by default, in a horizontal fashion. You may resize RipBAR by dragging one of the bar's borders with the mouse. This way, RipBAR can be positioned vertically, or widened so that icons appear in columns. RipBAR will automatically arrange the icons so that icons fit properly. If the size of RipBAR's window is too small, you won't see all of the icons. See the pictures below for sample RipBAR layouts.



Custom Icons

There are times that you will want to change the icon RipBAR places on the bar when you add an application because you like something else better, or the application has no icon.

Bring up the Item Customizer, by double clicking with the *right* mouse button on an item icon. Click on the *Icon...* button in the dialog. The following dialog appears :



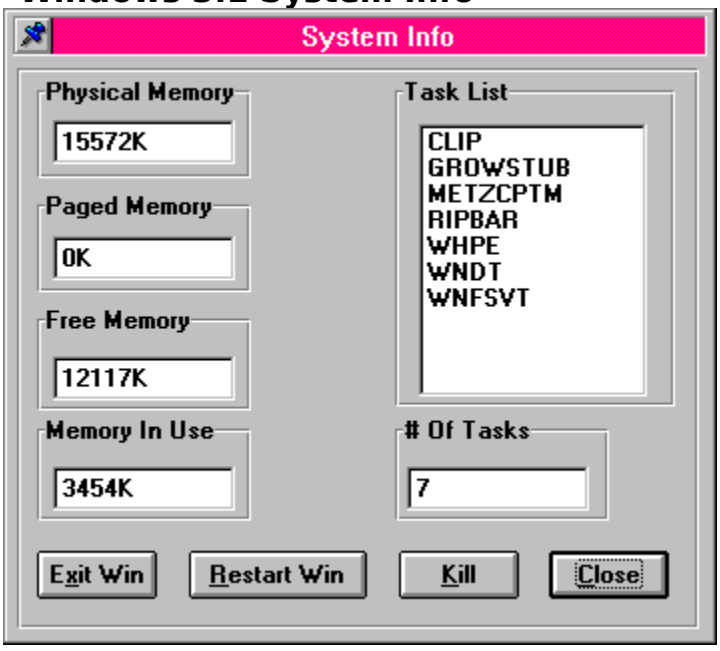
All icons for the current application are displayed. (Up to 120 icons) To choose one, just click on it. If you'd like to select an icon from another file, click on *Browse*. This will allow you to choose either an EXE or DLL file from which to display icons. RipBAR will save this information so that the application on the bar will always come up with the icon you choose.

System Information & Exiting Or Restarting Windows

Whether you are running RipBAR on Windows 3.1 or Windows NT, an overview of your system is presented. You gain access to this information by double-clicking on the Memory Display pane.

The information presented depends on the operating system you are running. We start with Windows 3.1 and Windows NT information follows.

Windows 3.1 System Info



On the left of this dialog, there are important pieces of information concerning memory. In Windows Enhanced Mode, these readings include both physical and virtual RAM. You get ***Physical Memory*** (the amount of RAM Windows recognized at startup time), ***Virtual Memory*** (the amount of hard disk space Windows is using for virtual RAM), the **currently available RAM** (*Free Memory*) , and the **total memory currently being used** by applications.

At the bottom on the right, the number of currently loaded/running tasks being serviced by Windows is displayed, with a list of these tasks, immediately above.

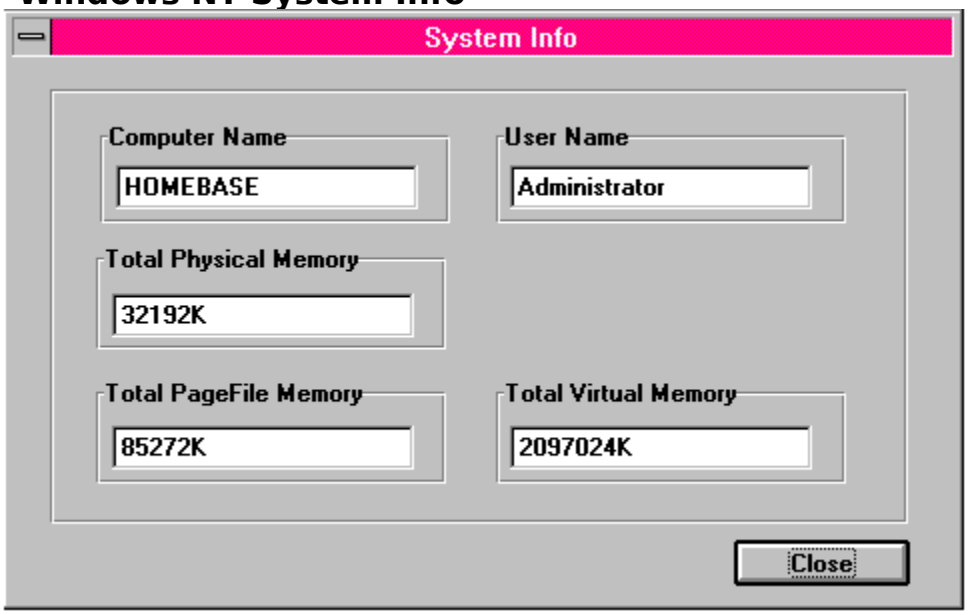
Tasks are running applications. This list will be different from what you see in the Windows Task Manager-- which displays a list of open windows on your desktop. Some applications spawn multiple tasks.

RipBAR lets you shut down a task simply by highlighting it, and clicking on the *Kill* button. This can be useful in situations where a program is crashed and has closed its window but has left remnants of itself in memory. Be careful shutting down tasks, it can sometimes lead to unpredictable behavior on Windows' part.

Exiting And Restarting Windows

Finally, you may choose to exit Windows (back to DOS) or restart Windows by clicking on the *Exit Win* or *Restart Win* buttons. RipBAR will ask you to confirm your choice.

Windows NT System Info



On the top left and right, you have the computer name and user name. The computer name was set when Windows NT was installed. The user name reflects who you are logged in as.

Next, total Physical memory and PageFile memory. Physical memory is the RAM you have installed in your computer. PageFile memory is the amount of virtual memory you have set in the Control Panel.

Total Virtual memory is the total virtual addressing space available to an application.

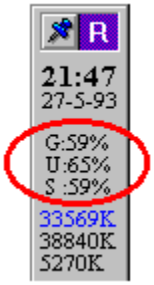
Resource Display

(Windows 3.1 only)

The Resource Tool displays information about Windows resources. Resources are used by programs for storing information about icons, bitmaps and other data. This space is limited and as you have more applications loaded, there is less available resources.

The Resource Tool in RipBAR can display information in one of two ways : either in numerical form, or in graphical form.

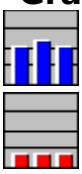
Numerical Form



These numbers represent GDI, User, and System resources (in this order). The numbers are presented as *percentage remaining* -- i.e. when these hit 0, you're out of resources. Windows will begin displaying odd behavior when these numbers fall too far below 10%.

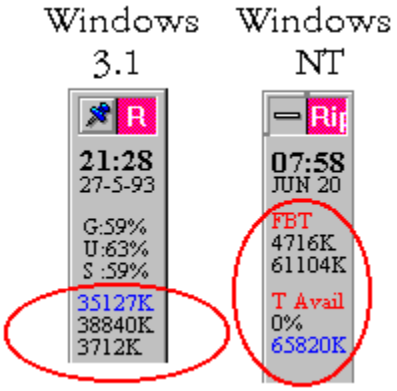
You can track an application's use of resources with the Resource Tracker

Graphical Form



As you can see, the pane is split into quarters. Normally, the bars are drawn in blue, but if a resource falls below 25% free, the bar turns red. In the picture on the left, all resources are somewhere between 50% and 75% free. In the picture on the right, all resources are below 25% free.

Memory Display



Windows 3.1

Relevant memory information is displayed in one of two ways-- either in numerical form or in graphical form.

Numerical Form (Picture Above)

At the top (in highlighted colour) is the remaining free memory, still available for use by Windows. Second, is the total amount of memory in your machine Windows recognizes *plus* virtual memory. (Some memory, like that used by SmartDrive, is not included in this number.) Third, the amount of memory currently being used by Windows and running applications. (This number is the difference between the first two numbers.)

Graphical Form

The pane is divided from left to right, in quarters. Your total memory is the entire length of the graph bar. The memory in use is displayed in red, while the remaining (unused) memory is displayed in green. In the graph above, a little over 25% of our memory is in use.

You may track an application's use of memory with the Resource Tracker

Windows NT

Relevant memory information is displayed.

FBT - Free By Type

In the first pane, free Physical RAM and PageFile memory are displayed.

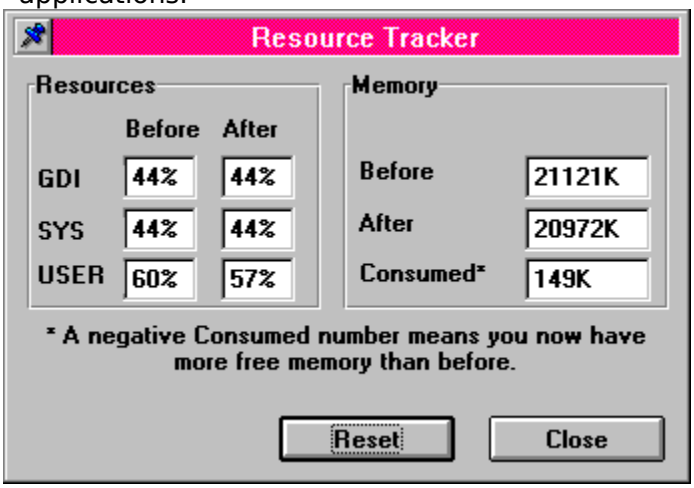
T Avail - Total Available

In the next pane, percentage of memory resources being used and total free memory (both physical and paged) are displayed.

Resource Tracker

(Windows 3.1 only)

You can access the Resource Tracker by double-clicking on the Resource Display pane. Use this feature to track memory and resource consumption by a single or multiple applications.



To use this utility, invoke the dialog whenever you want to begin tracking. Click on the *Reset* button so that resources and memory are updated to reflect current system information. Close the dialog, and start / finish whatever applications you're interested in tracking. Invoke the Resource Tracker dialog again and you'll get an immediate picture of the resources and memory used by the application(s) you just used.

Many applications are sources of memory and/or resource leaks-- in other words they don't always free up the resources and memory they used. To check for this, start tracking prior to launching one of these applications. Launch the application a number of times and then go back to the Resource Tracking dialog to verify that all resource and memory readings match. If they don't, you've found your leak.