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Overview

ViaCommander is an invaluable Application Manager that creates a Toolbar which is "always on top", making application switching and launching as easy as a button press. There are two powerful "Button Types" in VIaCommander:

-Application Buttons
-Group Buttons

Application Buttons

Once you create an Application Button for the ViaCommander Toolbar, you're only one click away from using it. If that application isn't yet running in Windows, clicking on its button will cause it to be loaded... if it IS loaded (from ViaCommander), clicking on its button will bring that application's window to the FRONT, making it the active window.

For example, you can create three Windows Write Buttons, with each loading in a separate document, each Write window maximized. To go from one document to the other just press that document's button on the ViaCommander toolbar... no more "switch to" or endless minimizing and maximizing!

This version of ViaCommander also offers drop down lists of Application parameters. See "Setting Up Applications..." for more information. To start reviewing the ViaCommander Command Buttons, see "Edit Window..."

Group Buttons

Group Buttons: Even better, ViaCommander allows you to launch your applications from Group Buttons..., their size and position PREDEFINED - so they always come up on the screen the same!

ViaCommander is going to save you work and finger wear!

Program Requirements

IBM Compatible Computer with an 80286, 386, 486, or Pentium processor running Microsoft Windows 3.1 or higher.
A hard disk drive.
A mouse is required.

Version Information and Notes:

ViaCommander Version 1 files can NOT be loaded by ViaCommander Version 2.0... Sorry! But too many changes were necessary.

NOTES:

ViaCommander has not been tested with program managers other than Windows own PROGMAN.EXE.

To change the order in which buttons appear on the Toolbar, you can "drag" them to their new location...

Although I know of none as of this writing, any reported bugs will be cleaned up, removed, and updated in the registered version. Thanks.

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The registered version of ViaCommander may be used on only one machine at any one time.

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An order form is provided under the file name "ORDER.TXT". You can Open this file using Windows Notepad and print it. I can be contacted via CompuServe at:

Casey Butler, 72043,46

Thanks for trying ViaCommander!

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The CONTROL Buttons

The Red ViaCommander Control Button

ViaCommander's first appearance on your screen should be as a Toolbar containing Windows utilities like Write, Paintbrush, and Notepad. On the left side of the Toolbar you'll see two buttons stacked vertically - a GREEN BUTTON and a RED BUTTON.

The Red Button is the ViaCommander Control Button. Its sole purpose is to toggle ViaCommander between two modes: "Toolbar Mode" and "Button Edit Mode".

When ViaCommander first executes it is in Toolbar Mode.

Click on the red Control Button and the Button Edit Window will replace the Toolbar.

NOTE: The Edit Window is set to always be "On Top" - this means it will cover any application you have up on the screen until you toggle ViaCommander back into Toolbar Mode.

The Green Title Bar Button

The Green Title Bar Button on the Toolbar places a "Title Bar" on the ViaCommander Toolbar. The Title Bar allows you to move your Toolbar to the any location on your screen.

The best and least obtrusive position for the Toolbar is at the top of the screen. If you reduce the Toolbar's size (using the "Button Size" control) it will be about the size of a Windows application's own title bar - so it won't cover any of the application's functions.

Example: With ViaCommander toggled to the Edit Window, click on the green Control Button. A Title bar will appear on the Edit Window. Now use the red Control Button to toggle ViaCommander to Toolbar Mode - the ViaCommander Toolbar will appear with a Title Bar.

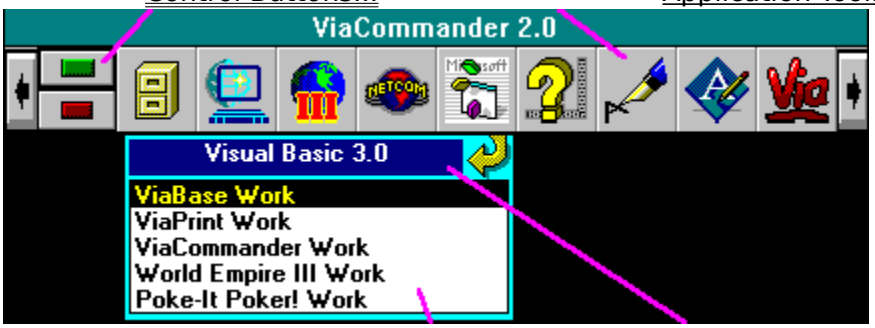
Hold the mouse cursor down on the Title Bar and move the ViaCommander Toolbar to the location on the screen where you want it. When ViaCommander is placed in the location of your choice you can leave the Title Bar up - or you can press the green Control Button to turn the title bar off.

ViaCommander takes up less space without a title bar.

The ViaCommander Windows

ToolBar Mode Buttons and Controls

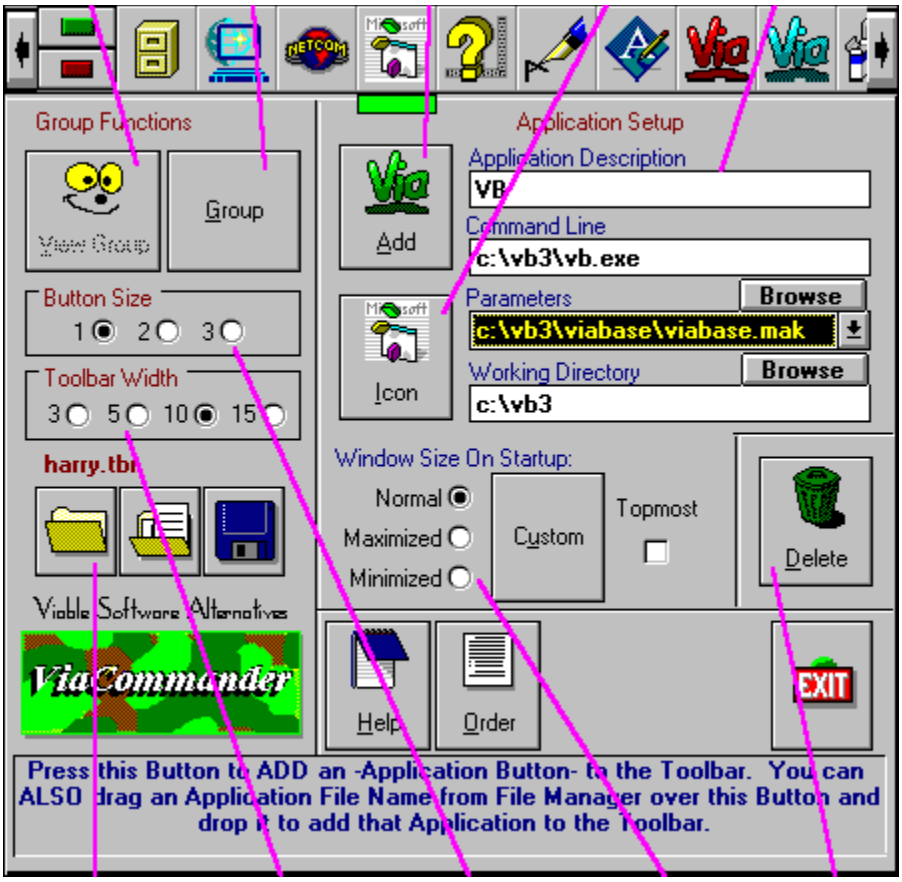
Control Buttons... Application Toolbar Buttons...



Parameter List Box... Title Box...

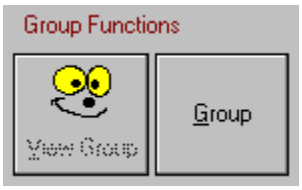
Edit Mode Buttons and Controls

Group View... Group Button... Add Button... Icon Button... Setup...



File Controls... Toolbar Size... Button Size... Custom Size... Delete Button...

ViaCommander Group Buttons



Creating An Application GROUP

The "Group" Command Button allows "Groups" of Toolbar Buttons to be created. You can activate up to 10 applications at once by grouping them in a Group Toolbar Button.

To create a group, "drag" the Toolbar Button of the first Application to be included in the group to the "Group" Command Button and "drop" it on top. This will cause the currently selected button to be added to the new ViaCommander Group.

The "Group" Command Button will now have a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on it, representing which group you're using.

Keep adding Toolbar Buttons (applications) to your group in this way until you have all that you need in that Group.

NOTE: If you want an application to load "sized and positioned" specially, you must size it PRIOR to adding its Toolbar Button to the group. Adding a button to the group in effect COPIES all the application information from that button into a group button. See "Launch Size..." for information on setting Application Window sizes.

When you've added all the applications to the group that you need, DRAG the "Group" Command Button up to the Toolbar and place it where you want it to be. You can now add a Description (See "Setting Up Applications...") or change the Icon (See "Icon Button...") if you wish. Once a Group Button has been added to the Toolbar it can be treated almost like any Toolbar Button.

A step by step example of how to create custom-sized application windows that are activated at the touch of a Group Toolbar Button:

1. With ViaCommander in Edit Mode, add the Toolbar Buttons for all the applications you wish to include in your group - using the "Add Button...".

2. Toggle ViaCommander to ToolBar Mode and activate each application from ViaCommander - then size and position each one where you want it on the screen.

3. Return to Edit Mode and drag each Toolbar Button (the ones belonging to the applications you activated) to the Custom Size Button.... This step allows ViaCommander to record the application windows' current size and position.

4. Return to Toolbar Mode. Now CLOSE all applications that are to be added to the group.

5. Finally, toggle once more to Edit Mode and drag all of your application Toolbar Buttons (the ones to be included in the group) over to the "Group" Command Button and drop them - one at a time.

NOTE: The order in which you drag and drop application buttons is the order in which the actual applications will be activated from ViaCommander. The last application added will be the active window after the entire group is launched.

6. When all the applications have been add to the Group, drag the "Group" Command Button up to the Toolbar and drop it!

7. You can view the command lines of the Application Toolbar Buttons included in the group by selecting the their new Group Button on the Toolbar - then clicking on the "View" Command Button.

Application Toolbar Buttons are the buttons you add to your Toolbar for launching applications.

The Add Application Button

There are three ways to add Application Toolbar Buttons in version 2.0 of ViaCommander:

1. In Toolbar Mode, srag an Application file name from Windows File Manager to the Control Buttons... and drop it

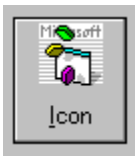
2. In Edit Mode, drag an Application file name from Windows File Manager to the Add Button and drop it...

3. In Edit Mode just click on the Add Button and select the Application file name from the File Window that appears.

Use the list box at the bottom of the File Window to select the .EXE, .HLP, or .PIF file you want ViaCommander to activate.

NOTE: Help Files are treated differently in ViaCommander - the application that displays Help Files is called "winhelp.exe". Because of this, when you select "Add .HLP" and choose a file - "winhelp.exe" is entered in the Toolbar Button's Command Line text box, and the Help File itself is entered in the Command Line Parameter text box.

The Icon Button

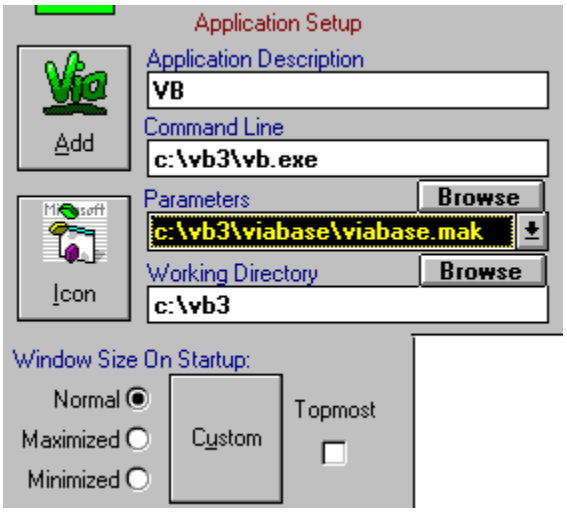


Use this button to change the icon displayed on a Toolbar Button. When you create a Toolbar Button for an application using Add Button... command button, ViaCommander automatically displays that application's default icon here.

The Icon Button allows you to change that icon if you wish.

PIF files, for example, HAVE no icon - so you'll need to add one to distinguish it from other Toolbar Buttons. First click on the Toolbar Button whose Icon you wish to change, then click on the Icon Button (or drag that button to the Icon Button and drop it on top). Use the Icon Viewer that pops up to locate and select the new Icon.

Setting Up Applications



The "Add" Button Command Button

You add Application Buttons to the Toolbar using this button. See "Add Button..." details.

The "Icon" Button

This button lets you change the button icon used to represent an Application on the Toolbar. See "Icon Button..." for more details.

The "Application Description" Text Box

Text entered here serves as a description to remind you what application the current Toolbar Button represents. You can enter any text here. If the current button is assigned to Windows Notepad, for example, you'd enter "Notepad" in the Application Description Text Box.

The "Command Line" Text Box

This is where the command line associated with the currently selected button is displayed. The application whose path and file name appears here is the one that will be executed or activated when that button is pressed. This line is filled automatically after selecting an .EXE, .HLP, or .PIF file.

The "Command Line Parameters" List Box

Here is where you'll enter command line parameters that will be passed to your application when it is executed. An example of a valid parameter would be the path and file name of a document when the application to be run is a word processor. Most applications will automatically load the file that is passed to it as a parameter.

You can drag parameter file names here from File Manager, or you can use the "Browse" Button - bringing up a "browse" File Window to assist you in locating a file to be used as a parameter.

Version 2.0 allows you to enter up to 15 parameters for an individual Application Button. In Toolbar Mode a list of parameters will drop down when the mouse cursor passes over an Application Button with more than one parameter set.

You can EDIT Parameters after they've been added, as well as add a meaningful name that will be displayed in the Parameters List Box in Toolbar Mode.

To edit a parameter:

In Toolbar Mode click on the parameter in the Parameters List Box using the RIGHT mous button. A dialog will appear where you can edit.

In Edit Mode click on the Parameters List Box and select the parameter you want to edit from the drop down list.

The "Working Directory" Text Box

A working directory is the directory an application defaults to using upon startup. The directory entered here must be a valid PATH. You can double click on this box - bringing up a "browse" File Window to assist you in locating a directory.

Setting Custom Window Sizes

See "Custom Size Button..." for details.

The File Buttons

The "New Toolbar" Command Button

This is the button with the picture of the empty file folder on it. When you press this all Toolbar Buttons are deleted. If the current toolbar has been changed you will be reminded that it needs saving.

The "Open Toolbar" Command Button

This button is represented by a picture of a FULL file folder. Use this option to load in previously saved Toolbars.

The "Save Toolbar" Command Button

This button is represented by a picture of a floppy disk. Use this option to save your Toolbar.

NOTE: You can load a Toolbar file into ViaCommander on startup by adding the file's path and name to your command line entry in the PROPERTIES Window of the Windows Program Manager.

Adjusting Toolbar Button Size

These buttons change the size of the Toolbar Buttons. There are three sizes available:

Size 1: With this size selected, your application icons will be displayed on their Toolbar actual size.

Size 2: This size is slightly smaller though easier to see than Size 3.

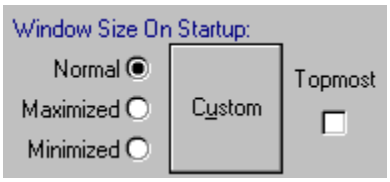
Size 3: The smallest size and most unobtrusive. This size makes the toolbar the same size as application title bars.

Adjusting The Size Of The Toolbar

These buttons determine how many Toolbar Buttons are displayed on the toolbar in ViaCommander's ToolBar Mode.

The two Control Buttons... count as one place on the Toolbar.

Setting Custom Window Sizes



How these option buttons are set for each Toolbar application determines how that application's window will initially appear on the screen. Select "Normal", "Maximized", or "Minimized".

NOTE: The CUSTOM SIZE BUTTON - Pressing this button (or dragging a Toolbar Button here and dropping it) causes ViaCommander to record the current size of an application's window (THE APPLICATION MUST HAVE BEEN STARTED FROM ViaCommander FOR THIS TO WORK). All subsequent activations of the application's Toolbar Button will bring the application's window up on the screen at this size.

Deleting Toolbar Buttons

Pressing this button will cause the currently selected button to be removed from the ViaCommander Toolbar. Alternatively, you can "drag" the Toolbar button over the Delete Button and "drop" it in the trash can.

This box is where the parameters you have set for an Application Button are displayed. See "Setting Up Applications..." for information on how to add paramaters.

The text you entered in your Application Buttons "Description" text box (See "Setting Up Applications...") is displayed here as the mouse cursor passes over the button.