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## Description of BC/Outline

BC/Outline is a general purpose outlining program. An outline in BC/Outline consists of a collection of items created and arranged by the user in a hierarchical fashion, so that each item is subordinate to a parent item, and in turn can have any number of subordinate sub-items. Items can be expanded to show subordinate sub-items or collapsed to hide this information.

**Attached notes.** Each item is limited to one line of text, but a free form note of arbitrary length can be attached to each item. Each attached note can be opened in its own resizable window.

**Uses** Outlines are useful for a wide range of applications: To-do lists, project plans, brainstorming, note taking, research projects, or just organizing the minutia of daily life. As the user freely reorganizes data, moving items up and down, expanding and collapsing items, and reorganizing items and their sub-items within other items, new patterns and relationships among the information often emerge.

**Hoisting** BC/Outline supports hoisting which is outline jargon for the ability to temporarily display an item (and its sub-items) in a window of its own as if it were the highest level item in the outline. This is extremely useful for zeroing in on very detailed information, while screening out irrelevant surrounding information. Since each hoisted item and its sub-family appear in their own resizeable window, hoisting is also very useful for displaying different parts of an outline side-by-side.



## Tool bar



Save file



Print



Launch



Hoist



or



Attached note

Clicking any part of the tool *except* on a button, executes Scroll item to top.



## Inserting a new item

To insert a new item:

1. Select the item that you want to insert *after*,
2. Press <enter> OR  
Select Edit / Insert item from the menus.

The new item is inserted immediately below the current item. The new item will be blank (ie, will have no text) until you edit it. The location of the new item in the outline is determined by these rules:

1. If the current item has *no sub items*, OR if the current item has sub-items but is currently collapsed, AND the current item is not the root item of the current view, then the item is inserted at the same indentation level as the current item).
2. If the current item has one or more sub-items, AND is currently expanded, OR if the current item is the root item of the current view, then the new item will be the first sub-item of the current item.



## Editing an item's text

To edit an existing item's text:

1. Select the item,
2. Press <space> OR  
Select Edit / Edit item from the menus.

An entry/edit window will appear. After making your changes, press <enter>. If you decide not to keep your changes, press <esc>.



## Promoting an item (moving left)

When an item is promoted, it is moved to the next higher indentation level, and it becomes the next sibling item of the item that was its parent prior to the promotion. On screen, it appears to move to the left, and it also may drop down, because it is now displayed following what were its siblings prior to the promotion. The item's sub-family is not altered. That is, all sub-items are moved along with the item.

### To promote an item,

1. Select the item,
2. Press <alt><left arrow> OR  
Select Edit / Promote from the menus.

Since each view has one distinct item at the highest, or "root" level, you cannot promote an item to the highest level of a view. Attempting to do so displays an error message. If you're in a view other than the base view, and you want to promote an item to a level equal to the view's root item, simply switch to the base view and then do the promotion.



### Demoting an item (move right)

When an item is demoted, it is moved one level to the right, and becomes the *last sub-item* of what had been its adjacent sibling. If this new parent item was collapsed in the current view, then it is automatically expanded so that the item being demoted is visible on completion of the operation. The item's sub-family is not altered. That is, all sub-items are moved along with the item.

#### To demote an item:

1. Select the item as the current item,
2. Press <alt><right arrow> OR  
. Select Edit / Demote from the menus.

If an item is the first sub-item of its parent, then you cannot demote it, because this would make it 2 indentation levels below its parent, which makes no sense. Attempting to do so displays an error message.



## Moving an item up

When an item is moved up, it changes places with its next higher sibling item, if any. The sub-families of both items remain intact and move along with the items. An attempt to move an item up that has no higher sibling results in an error message.

### To move an item up:

1. Select the item,
2. Press <alt><up arrow> OR  
Select Edit / Move up from the menus.



## **Moving an item down**

When an item is moved down, it changes places with its next lower sibling item, if any. The sub-families of both items remain intact and move along with the items. An attempt to move an item up that has no higher sibling results in an error message.

### To move an item down:

1. Select the item,
2. Press <alt><down arrow> OR  
Select Edit / Move down from the menus.



## Deleting an item

To delete an item:

1. Select the item,
2. Press <alt><delete> OR  
Select Edit / Delete item from the menus.

Warning: When an item is deleted, all of its sub-items and its attached note, if any, are also deleted. If the item has any sub-items and/or an attached note, you will see a warning message allowing you to cancel the deletion. If there are *no* sub items and *no* attached note, the deletion takes place without warning. Once a deletion is completed, it cannot be un-done (other than by manually reentering the deleted information).



## Hoisting an item (creating a new view)

To hoist an item:

1. Select View / Hoist from the menus OR
2. Press F7 OR
3. Click the  button on the button bar.

When an item is hoisted, it becomes the top level root item in a new outline view in its own window. Each of these hoisted windows is referred to as a "view". You can have up to 15 views open at a time.

Changes made to item text, attached notes, or outline structure, in one view are reflected in other views. (this does not pertain to expanding and collapsing items-- the expanded or collapsed state of an item is local to each view.)

Hoisting is very useful when you have items nested deeply within an outline's structure or when you want to view different sections of an outline side-by-side. Hoisting lets you remove all the surrounding detail and focus only on one item and its sub-family.

Views can either be maximized or normalized, like any Windows window, by clicking on the appropriate button in the upper right corner of the view window. To switch between views, simply click anywhere in the view (if the views are normalized and the desired new view is visible) or select the view from the numbered listing at the bottom of the "View" menu item.

To close a view, click the close button in the view's upper left corner or press <alt>F4. The base view cannot be closed.

See also [Scrolling an item to top of view](#).



## Launching a text, Write, or BC/Outline file

If an item's attached note contains the name of a Microsoft Write® file (with a file extension of ".wri"), a text file (with a file extension of ".txt"), or a BC/Outline file (with a file extension of ".o"), then when you select the "launch" function, : , will cause the file to be opened using the appropriate program (write.exe, notepad.exe, or a new copy of BC/Outline, respectively).

### To launch a file:

1. Select View / Launch from the menus OR
2. Press F8, OR
3. Click the launch button:  on the button bar

Note that a BC/Outline file opened in this manner uses a separate copy of BC/Outline and is not a new "view" under the launching copy.

If the file name as it appears in the item's attached note includes the full path, then that path is searched for the file. If the only file name appears, without the path, then the current default path is searched. For information on setting the default path see: Options.



## Scrolling an item to top of view

This function moves the current item to the top most place in the view. It only effects the display, not the outlines structure. The difference between this an hoisting is that it only involves scrolling the current view, while hoisting opens a new view in anew window.

### To scroll-to-top:

1. Select View / Scroll-to-top from the menus OR
2. Pressing F6, OR
3. Clicking *anywhere in the button bar except on a button.*

See also Hoisting.



## Options dialog

To set user options, select Options from the View menu. This displays the Options dialog. Whenever options are changed, they're saved and remain in effect for future sessions, until changed again.

There is only one option: default path.

### Default path

The path name entered here is used for two purposes:

1. It determines the default path in a File Open or Save As dialog.
2. It determines the directory that will be searched during a Launch, when no path name is encoded with the file name in an item's attached note. For more information see Launching.



## Printing

To print an item's attached note, select the item, then select "File / Print attached note" from the menu.

To print the item's attached note plus all sub-items and their notes, select "File / Print family" from the menu.

In either case, the item's text is used as a heading, and appears at the top of every page. The item's attached note, if any, is printed flush left.

If "Print family" was selected from the menu, then following the attached note, all of the items in the item's sub-family are printed: text first (indented from its parent), attached note (indented from the item), and all sub-items (starting at the same indentation as the attached note).

To print the entire outline, select the root item of the base view and select "Print / family".

Alternatively, you can click on the print button: . This will do either a "Print attached note" or "Print family", depending on the most recently executed print menu selection.



## Searching for text

To search for a particular string of text characters in the item text (not the attached notes) in the current view:

1. Select "Edit / Find" from the menus, OR
2. Press <ctrl>F

If an item is found with matching text, then that item will become the current item. If the item's parent is collapsed, it will be automatically expanded.

Note that this only searches in the current view. To search the entire outline, simply switch to the base view.

To repeat the search starting from the prior match, press F3.



## Creating a new outline

To create a new outline, select the menu item, File / New. If the current outline had not been saved, you will be prompted to do so. If the current outline is untitled, and you choose to save it, the "File save as" dialog will open.

When you first start BC/Outline, if there was no command line argument, you start with a new outline, just as if you had selected File / New.

A new outline consists of a single item, with text "New outline". The first thing you will probably want to do is change this, by pressing the space bar. (See Editing text). Next you will probably want to add new items by pressing <enter> (See Inserting a new item), or attach a note (See Attached notes).

Whatever you enter as item text in the highest level item of a view (the "root" item), will appear in the view's title bar.



## Saving an outline

To save an outline:

1. Select File / Save or File / Save-as from the menus, OR
2. Press <ctrl>S, OR
3. Press the  button on the menu bar. If the little red dot is missing, this indicates that the file has *no changes* since the last save, and BC/Outline will do nothing unless you select Save-as.

If the file is "Untitled" (i.e., has never been saved), the "Save-as" dialog appears.

BC/Outline saves the item text, the attached notes, the indentation structure, and the expanded/collapsed structure of the base view, in a single file with a file extension of ".o".

No information on views other than the base view is saved.



## Opening an existing outline

To open an existing outline:

1. Select File / Open from the menus. OR
2. In Windows File Manager, double click on the name of a BC/Outline file. BC/Outline files have file extensions of ".o". In order for this to work, you need to have "associated" the file extension, ".o", with the BC/Outline program file, "bco.exe". Use File Manager's "File / Associate" feature to establish this association.

If the current file has not been changed since the last save, you will be prompted to do so.



## Attached notes

If an item has an attached note, this button appears on the button bar when the item is selected: . If the item does not have a note, this button appears instead:



To edit an attached note, or to create and edit a new note if none exists:

1. Click on the button in the button bar, OR
2. Select View / Attached note from the menus, OR
3. Press F9

To save the changes to the note, simply close it.

To close an attached note:

1. Click on the close button in the upper left corner of the note, OR
2. Press <alt>F4.



## Expanding and collapsing items

If an item has one or more sub-items, then it can be expanded or collapsed. Expanded means that its sub-items are visible, and it is displayed with this picture icon: .

Collapsed means that its sub-items are hidden, and it's displayed with this picture icon: .

If an item has *no sub-items*, it's called a leaf item, and it is displayed with this picture icon: .

To expand a collapsed item, or to collapse an expanded item:

1. Click on its picture icon, OR
2. Press the grey plus key (to expand) OR the grey minus key (to collapse)

This also makes the item the current item, just like clicking on the item text. Clicking on the picture icon of a leaf item has no effect (other than making it the current item).

The sub-items of an expanded item may themselves be expanded or collapsed. The sub-items of a collapsed item, on the other hand, are all automatically collapsed.



## How to register BC/Outline

Registering BC/Outline is very simple. BC/Outline is released as shareware, which means you can try-before-you-buy. Feel free to pass BC/Outline along to friends, online services, and bulletin boards (BBSs). If you like BC/Outline and continue using it after a 30 day trial period, you are required to register it (pay the licensing fee).

After registering BC/Outline you will receive a registration number, either through CompuServe Email, or by mail, with which to disable the reminder screen. You will be also notified when any upgrades are released.

### Registration fees:

Basic registration: \$19.00. Add \$2.00 for a diskette containing the BC/Outline files.

### Registration through CompuServe

You can register BC/Outline via CompuServe by entering GO SWREG, and specifying registration ID# 2592.

### Registration by mail

Print the order form in the orderfrm.txt file, and submit as follows. Make checks payable to:

**Bob Clemens, DiamondLine**  
**900 Mix Ave #82**  
**Hamden, CT 06514**

**Sub-item**

An item that is subordinate to another item. The other item called the sub-item's parent item. The sub-item appears below and to the right of the parent, when the outline is displayed.

**Item**

The basic building block of an outline. Items are single lines of text, created and arranged by the user in a hierarchical manner. Item text is limited to 80 characters.

**Parent Item**

An item that has another item subordinate to it. The subordinate item is called a sub-item.

**Sub-family**

An item plus all its sub-items , plus *their* sub-items, and so on.

**Hoisting**

Outline jargon for the ability to temporarily display an item (and its sub-items) in a window of its own as if it were the highest level item in the outline. This is extremely useful for zeroing in on very detailed information, while screening out irrelevant surrounding information. Since each hoisted item and its sub-family appear in their own resizeable window, hoisting is also very useful for displaying different parts of an outline side-by-side.

**Outline**

An outline in BC/Outline consists of a collection of items created and arranged by the user in a hierarchical fashion, so that each item is subordinate to a parent item, and in turn can have any number of subordinate sub-items.

**View**

A view in BC/Outline is a window which displays a hoisted item and its sub-family. The view that is open immediately after you start BC/Outline, or open an outline, or create a new outline, is called the base view. It cannot be closed. You can open up to 15 views, by hoisting items.

**Base view**

The view that is displayed when an outline is first opened. The base view can never be closed.

**Root item**

The highest level item in a view. There is one and only one root item per view. It appears at the top and all the way to the left of the view.

**Promote**

To move an item to the next higher indentation level. When promoted, an item's parent becomes the item that was its parent's parent before the promotion.

**Demote**

To move an item to the next lower indentation level. When demoted, an item becomes the last sub-item of the item that was its next higher sibling prior to the demotion.

**Sibling**

An item is a sibling of another item if they both have the same parent. If 2 items are siblings, they will have the same indentation level.

**Indentation level**

Indicates how far an item is displayed from the left side of a window. The root item of a view is said to have an indentation level of 1, its sub-items 2, their sub-items 3, and so on.

**Attached note**

A free form note of arbitrary length that can be attached to each item. Each attached note can be opened and edited in its own resizeable window.

**Expanded item**

An item whose sub-items, if any, are visible. You make a collapsed item expanded by clicking on its picture icon. An expanded item's picture icon is the open folder: .

**Collapsed item**

An item whose sub-items, if any, are hidden. You make an expanded item collapsed by clicking on its picture icon. A collapsed item's picture icon is the closed folder: .

**Leaf item**

An item that has no sub-items. A leaf item has this picture icon: .

**Launch**

To open a Write file (.wri), text file (.txt) or BC/Outline file (.o) whose name appears in an item's attached note.

**Default path**

The path name that BC/Outline uses for:

1. The default directory displayed "in a file open" or a "file save as" dialog.
2. The directory that's searched when launching a .wri, .txt, or .o file, if no directory is included in the name.

See [Options dialog](#).

**Item text**

The text associated with an item.

**Current item**

The item in an outline that is currently highlighted.

