

ARIS Visual Diff

for Microsoft Windows™

Version 1.3

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1. Introduction to Visual Diff

Comparing different versions of a file with the same name is an every day task of a programmer. Normally you often have the same source files incorporated in different projects. These files may differ more or less, according to the modifications you found necessary to fit the requirements of the task you want have done. Comparing such files in a text editor visually is a boring operation, specially if the files are almost identical and the changes are only minor.

Much more convenient is the way Visual Diff presents the differences of such files. You see both files side-by-side in two windows with the differences marked in colors. More, each class of difference (changed, deleted or inserted) is highlighted in a different color (blue, red, green).

Even more convenient is the toolbar of Visual Diff which allows you to jump from one difference to the next by a simple mouse click. Aside from this the two windows are synchronised in both, horizontal and vertical scrolling.

2. Installing Visual Diff

Also Visual Diff is a small application we added an automatic installation procedure for your convenience. In order to install Visual Diff, select **Run...** from the **File** menu of your Program Manager and type

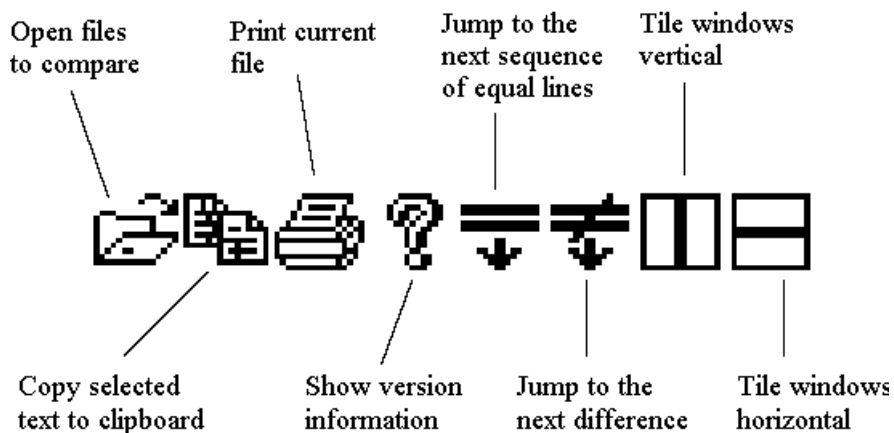
A:\SETUP

or any other drive letter, depending on from where you are installing Visual Diff. Now you can select the directory (i.e. C:\VISDIFF) where you want Visual Diff to be installed and SETUP will do the rest. After SETUP has completed the installation you will have a new group in your desktop, called Visual Diff. It contains Visual Diff as well as this manual.

3. Using Visual Diff

Using Visual Diff is probably much easier than you expect. Simply double click on the Visual Diff icon and it is up and running. Select Open from the file menu to specify the first of the two files you want to compare. The dialog for selecting the second file will automatically appear after you specified the first file.

For further convenience there is a button bar below the menu of Visual Diff. For a description of these buttons see the picture below.



3.1 The menu structure of Visual Diff

After startup Visual Diff has only one menu, the **File** menu. At this stage it contains only the two topics **Open...** and **Exit**. Select **Open...** or click onto the corresponding button in the button bar below the menu in order to specify the two files to compare. By selecting **Exit** Visual Diff will terminate.

After you selected the two files to compare six menu items will show up:

1. File

The topic available in this menu are:

- a) Open... This topic allows the selection of the two files to compare. If there are already two files compared at this time, these two windows will be closed automatically.
- b) Print... This topic prints the file in the file in the currently active window.
- c) Print layout... Here you can specify the borders (upper,lower,left and right) and whether there should be a page header in front of each page.
- d) Exit By selecting this item, you will end your current Visual Diff session.

2. Edit

There is only one topic available in this menu: Copy. This item will be grayed (inactive) as long as you have not highlighted any text in either window. If you have highlighted some text (i.e. by double clicking onto a word) and select this topic, the contents of the marked area will be copied to the Windows clipboard.

3. Goto

The Goto menu has the following topics:

- a) Search... This function opens a dialog box, where you can enter a search expression, which may be either an ordinary string or a regular expression. Upon pressing the OK button Visual Diff will search the file in the currently active window for this string or expression. If it found a match it will scroll both windows to this location and highlight the found match in the active window. If no match for your search expression is found a gentle beep will be heard.
- b) Next difference This item causes Visual Diff to scroll to the next difference encountered in the active window. Any found difference will be shown starting in the first line of the window. The second window will be positioned accordingly. If there are no more differences in the two files currently compared a message box will inform you.

c) Next equal sequence This function allows you to jump over differences. It searches for the next sequence of lines that are equal in both files. The behavior of this depends on whether you have a difference shown in the first line of a window or not. If not, this function first scans for the first difference in order and then for the next equal lines. If a difference is in the first line, it jumps to the place where the two files are synchronous again.

4. Options

The Options menu also has only one topic, **Font...** It allows you to select the font, its size and attributes (bold, italic etc.) which Visual Diff uses to show the files in both windows. Which fonts you may select from depends on the fonts you have installed in your system. At this time only fixed fonts are available with this function. Once you selected another font and terminate Visual Diff, you settings will be stored in the VISDIFF.INI file, which enables Visual Diff to use the same font in the next session.

5. Windows

The Windows menu has the following topics:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| a) Tile vertical | This function arranges both windows so that each uses the full height of the Visual Diff main window. |
| b) Tile horizontal | This function arranges both windows so that each uses the full width of the main window. |

Note that both windows will be arranged again according to your selection whenever you resize the main window of Visual Diff.

6. Help

This menu also has only one topic: About Visual Diff. The version and build date information in the About box are necessary if you need some support from us. Please include this information in any request. If you have a registered copy of Visual Diff, this will also show your name.

3.2 The VISDIFF.INI file

This file is used by Visual Diff to store some setting for reuse in the next session. It will be updated any time you exit Visual Diff. There is no need to poke in this file, as all is done automatically.