

Flash! Menu Help Index

Version 2.0, February 1994

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What the hell does that program do?

Maybe you also don't like the methods for launching programs offered by the standard Windows environment. Doing this with the Program manager is a very uncomfortable thing... you have to switch to progman, select the right program group and start the program with a double click. This is not very fast, I mean.

Flash! Menu is an alternative: you can launch programs from wherever you want. You don't even have to switch tasks. Simply click anywhere at the screen with your right or middle mouse button (depends on the options you have set) and the *Flash! Menu* appears. Now you can select a program to launch with one or two mouse clicks. It can't be easier and faster to start programs, I mean.

Many people only have mouses with two buttons. That can cause problems using *Flash!* together with applications which also use the right mouse button (eg. WinWord or Excel). Switching *Flash!* to the so-called inactive mode solves these problems: *Flash!* doesn't work in this mode if you click at the client area of a window, but it always works if you click at other parts of the window (eg. menu bar, status bar and title, button bar and scrollers...)

If you run *Flash! Menu*, you'll only see the icon of the program. Double clicking that icon won't have any effect. You may use the system menu of that icon (just click at it) to open the options or menu edit dialog or to see this help file.

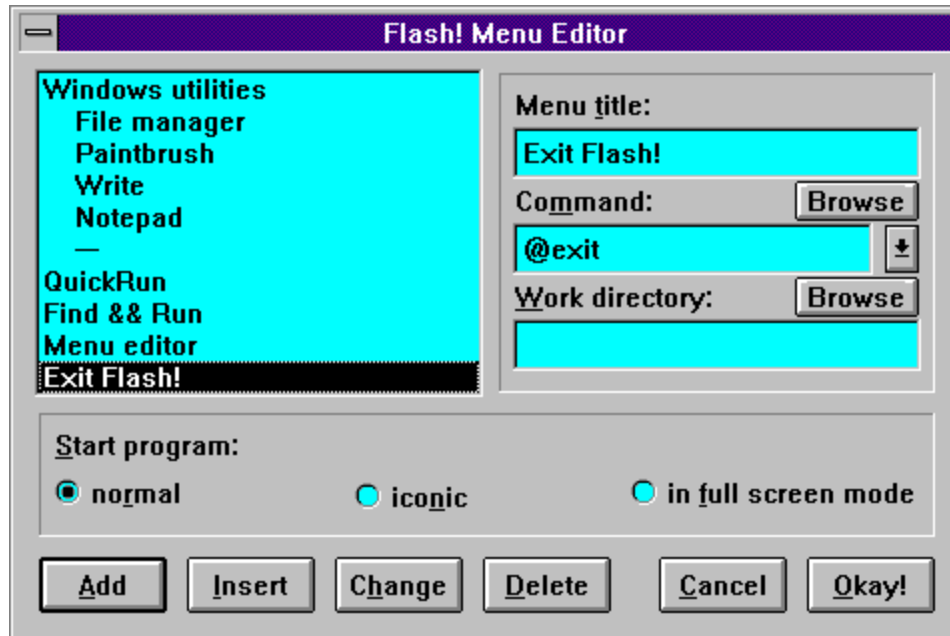
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Building your own menu - the menu editor

There are 3 ways to open the menu editor dialog:

- Select "Menu Editor" from the system menu of *Flash*.
- If you have added an "menu edit" item to your menu, you can open it from there.
- It also pops up if you drop a file to the *Flash!* Icon (see drag & drop for more information).

This is a picture of the menu edit dialog. Use the mouse to click at any part of dialog you'd like to learn more about.



The 'Add', 'Insert', 'Change' and 'Delete' buttons will look disabled (grayed) if the connected action isn't possible, maybe 'cause the edit fields are empty or no list entry is selected.

It's recommended to read also the sections about internal commands and submenus.

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Drag & drop with the file manager

Flash! Menu v. 2.0 offers new methods to add menu items via drag&drop.

Steps:

- Open the Windows file manager (or any other program that supports file dragging) and place it on the screen that the *Flash! Menu* icon is still visible.
- Select a program file in the file manager.
- Click at this file with the left mouse button and hold the button down. The mouse cursor will change its look now.
- Draw the cursor to the *Flash! Menu* icon. If the *Flash!* menu editor is already active, you can draw it also there. Release the left mouse button.
- If the menu editor is not open yet, it will pop up now. The command and directory edit boxes will be filled with file name and directory of the file you just dropped. Now you only have to enter a menu title, select a startup state and add the item to the menu. See [editing menus](#) for details.

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The menu item list

Contains the list of all items in the menu.

If you want to insert a new item, select a list entry (click at it) to choose the position where to insert a new item or which one you want to delete.

Double click at an entry to edit it.

The list indents items in a sub-menu to give you a better view of the menu structure.

The title edit box

Enter the name of the menu item here. It can be up to 256 characters long, but may not contain the '|' character. If you want to use the '&' character in a menu title you have to type it twice (eg. 'Find && Run'). Otherwise Windows would display the following character underlined. In normal menus the '&' is used to specify the keyboard shortcut for the menu item, but this doesn't work in *Flash! Menu*. The menu title will appear in the menu item list and later in the menu itself.

To create a menu separator, just enter '@separator' (small letters!) as a title. All other settings of this menu item (command line, work directory) will be ignored then.

The command edit box

This edit field contains path and program name of the command which is connected with the menu item (eg. 'c:\windows\notepad'). The file extension of the program (eg. '.exe') is not necessary here. Valid program types are '.exe' (DOS or Windows executable program), '.com' (DOS program), '.bat' (DOS batch file) and '.pif' (Windows program information file). The command may also contain command line parameters (eg. 'c:\windows\notepad readme.txt' to edit the file readme.txt) which are passed to the application. It is also possible to enter the name of a document file here if the document type is connected with an application (eg. 'readme.doc' will run Word for Windows).

See also:

[Browse command](#)

[List of internal commands](#)

List of the internal commands

Shows a list of all internal commands supported by the current version of *Flash! Menu*. Click at this button and you'll get a list box with them. Here you may select an entry and it'll be filled into the command edit field. If you don't want to use that list, just click at the arrow button again.

Browse command

Opens a file selection dialog. Here you can choose a program file and it will be filled into the command edit box. This is very comfortable if you don't know the exact file name and path or if you don't want to type the whole path.

Browse directories

You can select the work directory here - just select any file from the desired work directory. Sorry, but this doesn't work if this directory is empty. You'd have to type the whole path then manually.

The work directory edit box

Some applications require that a special directory is the current DOS directory when they are started. Enter this path here. If the program doesn't need a special directory, leave the edit box empty.

See also:

[Browse directories](#)

Program start mode

Select here if you want to start the application at normal size, minimized (as an icon) or maximized (full screen). Note that some programs don't evaluate this parameter.

Add menu item

A new menu item will be created with the data from the command line, work directory and startup state settings. This item will be added at the end of the menu.

Insert menu item

Inserts an item with data from the edit boxes to the item list at the position of the currently selected entry. Nothing will happen if there's no item selected.

Change menu item

The currently selected entry from the item list will be replaced by the data from the edit boxes. You can use this to change existing items: double click at the list entry, change the data in the edit boxes and press 'Change'.

Delete menu item

Deletes the currently selected entry from the item list.

Cancel

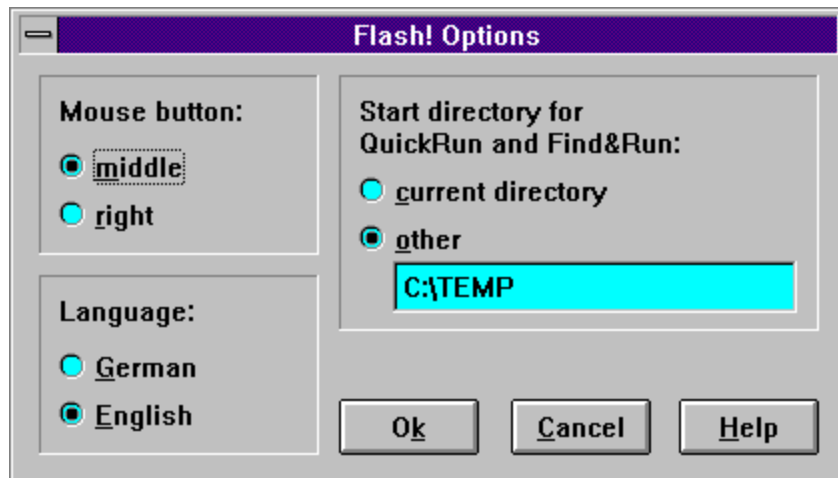
Closes the menu editor without saving any changes.

Okay

Saves all changes to the flash.ini file.

Setting the options

Here is a picture of the options dialog. Use the mouse and click at the parts of the dialog you'd like to learn more about.



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Menu separator

A separator is a horizontal line in a menu to divide it into groups of related items.

Problems

Although my mouse has 3 buttons, *Flash! Menu* doesn't work with the middle mouse button.

That problem isn't caused by *Flash!* itself, but by your mouse driver. Some driver versions don't recognize or support the middle mouse button at all. Ask your hardware dealer for a better mouse driver.

I only have a mouse with 2 buttons and I'm using some applications which make use of the right mouse button. How can I avoid conflicts between *Flash!* and such apps?

If such applications are running, you could deactivate *Flash! Menu*. Use the 'Inactive' command in the system menu of *Flash!* or add an 'Activate/Deactivate' item to your menu (see [editing the menu](#) and [internal commands](#)). The menu will only pop up now if you're clicking outside of the client area of a window. By clicking at the menu or title bar of a window the menu is still always available then.

I was using *Flash! Menu* version 1.1. Can I use my old menu settings also with the new version?

Yes, it is possible. The new version will use the old menu settings without any change.

Couldn't you add an internal command to call the Windows task manager?

That's not needed - just add a menu items that runs the program taskman.exe from your Windows directory.

Is the number of menu items in *Flash! Menu* limited?

The limit caused by the program (about 64000 items) should be enough. The more important limit is that the flash.ini file - where all menu items are stored - may not become larger than 64 Kbytes. That means - depending on the size of your menu entries - about 1000 entries.

If you have problems using *Flash!* - just write me or send me e-mail.

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Mouse button

Here you may select the mouse button which activates the *Flash! Menu*. Default setting is the right one, but you should prefer the middle button - if possible.

Language

These 'radio buttons' select the language for the system menu, the dialog windows and error messages.

Start directory for QuickRun and Find & Run

Normally the internal commands QuickRun and Find&Run use the current DOS directory as their start directory. You may specify a different directory here.

Okay

Saves and applies the new settings.

Cancel

All changed settings get lost...

Help

Opens this help screen.

Internal commands

Flash! Menu offers some useful 'internal' commands - commands that can't be used by running a program. To use internal commands, just put the command name into the command line or select them from the list.

Command	Action
@exit	exit <i>Flash! Menu</i>
@options	pop up options dialog
@menuedit	open the menu editor
@exitwindows	exit Windows (asks for confirmation)
@reboot	reboot your system (also with confirmation)
@help	show <i>Flash! Menu</i> help file index
@popup	the lines following this command will appear in a <u>submenu</u> (popup menu)
@endpopup	end of the submenu (menu title is meaningless here)
@onoff	toggle active/inactive mode of <i>Flash! Menu</i>
@quickrun	with QuickRun you can choose a program from a file selection list and run it
@search	Find&Run - searches in a directory tree for files matching a mask and you can choose a program from the found files to start it.

To find out more about the usage of the @popup and @endpopup commands please read the submenus section.

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Inserting submenus

To insert a submenu into the *Flash! Menu* you have to do the following steps:

- Insert a menu item with the `@popup` command in the command line. The menu title of this item is the name of this popup menu.
- Behind this menu item insert all items which shall be located in the submenu. It's also possible to insert more submenus here.
- The end of the submenu is indicated by a menu item with `@endpopup` in the command line. The menu title is meaningless here, but you should enter something like '---' to make the end of the popup menu visible.

If the last line of your menu contains a submenu it's not necessary to add the `@endpopup` line.

To make your menu structure clear you should put groups of related programs into submenus (eg. games, programming, utils...). The most frequently used applications shouldn't be put into submenus to make the access faster.

What's new in version 2.0?

Flash! Menu v. 1.1 was the only version I released officially in October 1993. In the meantime I did many changes, added features and improved some functions. Thanx to all users who gave me hints and reported bugs in version 1.1.

So what's new in 2.0?

- *Flash!* now works anywhere on the screen, not only on windows. The active/inactive modes were changed.
- Added an 'About' dialog that gives you some information about your system and the free resources. It's activated if you select the very first item, called 'Flash! Menu' in the menu which can't be removed.
- Drag & drop with file manager supported.
- Improved menu editor, it indents items in submenus, some bugs were fixed.
- *Flash!* is now an 'icon only' application - it has no longer a main control window and starts now without that disturbing flicker which was criticized by many users.

Maybe this list is not complete - you'll see if you use the program.

System requirements and installation notes

Flash! Menu only needs about 150 Kbytes of your valuable hard disk space. It should run on every computer system with Windows 3.1 (older versions are not supported), in standard or extended 386 mode.

To install the program, just copy the following files into a separate directory:

[flash.exe](#)
[menulib.dll](#)
[flash.hlp](#)

German users should copy the file [flash_de.hlp](#) instead of [flash.hlp](#).

Note:

If you're already using *Flash! Menu* v. 1.1 be sure to overwrite the [menulib.dll](#) with the new version delivered with v. 2.0!

The file [ctl3d.dll](#) (needed for the 3D look of the windows) must be copied into your Windows directory. If this file is already in your Windows or system directory you don't have to copy it.

That's all - now you only have to start [flash.exe](#) from program or file manager. How to do that, please refer to Microsoft Windows users guide or program manager help file.

If you start the program for the first time you also will get the chance to start *Flash! Menu* automatically (when Windows starts) by adding an entry in the 'win.ini' file (located in Windows directory, too).

About *Flash! Menu*

Flash! Menu is copyright 1994 by André Engelhorn and VisiSoft Dresden, Germany.

Flash! Menu is freeware, you may use it without license fee and registration. You may distribute it freely. Please be sure to include this help file if you distribute it.

Do you really like this program? Feel free to send me a small donation to support further development of VisiSoft applications...

Flash! Menu is supplied without any warranties of any kind. Use at your own risk.

Thanks to:

- René, Toad, Kestrel and Thoralf for their hints and help with testing this program.
- David Gardiner for adapting the Windows Help Author Templates to WinWord 6.
- All users of version 1.1 who gave hints and reported bugs or told me their opinion.

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Please tell me your opinion about *Flash! Menu*. Please report bugs, incompatibilities with other software products, but also mistakes in this help file and documentation. Hints and new ideas for program design and functions are always appreciated. Thanx.

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