Usher 1.4c

As the unobtrusive usher quickly assists theater patrons find and take their seats, the unobtrusive Usher quickly assists Windows users find and launch their applications.

New features with 1.4c

Version 1.4c adds some new features:

- Now you can set up a delay before Usher launches the apps on the LOAD= and RUN= lines in your win.ini file. If the mouse button is pressed within this delay, apps with a '?' prefix won't get loaded. This is called the Quick Start feature. The default delay is 1/2 a second. Here's a portion of a sample win.ini file:

  load=fixarrow.exe ?drwatson.exe ?c:\dos\command.pif
  run=sunres.exe ?eyes.exe

  If the mouse button is pressed within the delay period, drwatson.exe, command.pif, and eyes.exe won't launch. This Quick Start feature only works if Usher is the shell. The delay is user setable in the Options dialog box. The mouse switches from an hourglass to a normal pointer and back to an hourglass at startup. When the mouse is a normal pointer, Usher's Quick Start delay is checking for a mouse click.

- The @MINIMIZE@ macro will minimize all windows except for the currently active window. This macro is part of the @DEFAULT@ setup.

New features with 1.4b

Version 1.4b is a bug fix:

- Fixes a problem with "cancel" or "title" menu items. These are the menu items that don't run a program, they serve as cancel items or titles for the menu.

New features with 1.4a

Version 1.4a is a bug fix:

- Fixes a subtle [extensions] bug.

New features with 1.4

Version 1.4 is a good mix of new features and bug fixes:

- An Options dialog box now exists. Currently there are only two settings you can change:
    Show Usher icon   -- if checked then the Usher icon will appear on the screen
    Ask before quitting   -- if checked then Usher will ask if the user really wants to quit

    NOTE: Show Usher icon should be checked if you normally don't always run a Windows application (such as Clock). Windows 3.0 doesn't behave correctly when no icons appear on the bottom of the screen.

    IMPORTANT: If Usher is used as the shell, and the Adobe Type Manager (ATM) is loaded then Show Usher icon **must** be checked on!

    These settings are stored in your win.ini file.

- The icon, if you allow it to appear, now has a system menu associated with it. In addition, the About and Options menu items appear there.

- A new macro, @RESOURCE@, will display the percentage of free system resources available just like the Program Manager. This options will also appear automatically if you choose the @DEFAULT@ macro.

- Usher should now work with the Adobe Type Manager (ATM).

- Usher now uses the [Extensions] section of the win.ini file. This means you can launch a document and Usher will automatically lauch the application associated with that document as listed in the win.ini file. For example, launching usher.wri will automatically launch MS Write since the win.ini file lists **wri=write.exe ^.wri** under the [Extensions] section.

- Usher, as the shell, will now launch applications listed on the command line when you envoked Windows. For instance, typing "win control" will launch Windows and immediately run the Control Panel application. Typing "win usher.wri" will launch Windows and immediately run Write and load the usher.wri document.

- The Run... dialog now contains a "Run Minimized" checkbox to launch applications in their icon form.

- You can also specify that an application is to be run minimized in the usher.ini file. Simply put an asterisk (*) in front of the application name. For example, to start MS Word:

    MS Word =   e:\winword\winword, e:\winword\docs   (normal startup)

MS Word icon = *e:\winword\winword, e:\winword\docs   (iconized)

- Bug fix: you can no longer open several About or Exit Windows dialog boxes by rechoosing their menu item.

- Bug fix: Usher now correctly changes to the specified directory listed on the load= and run= win.ini lines.

- The @ARRANGE@ option will automatically arrange the icons on the desktop.

- The @EDITINI@ option will launch the Notepad application and load in usher.ini for editing. You can specify an editor by changing the **ini** variable in the [extensions] section of the win.ini file. By default ini files are associated with notepad.

- The @DEFAULT@ macro menu entries have been rearranged into a more logical grouping.

- The @INFO@ macro automatically creates a submenu called Information.

- Usher still only takes up 9K of memory!

New features with 1.3

Version 1.3 mainly consists of bug fixes:

- Usher now has an application icon that appears on the bottom of the screen when you use Usher as the shell. Believe it or not, this simple addition to Usher fixed several minor bugs. If you click on the icon, no menu appears.

New features with 1.2

Version 1.2 mainly consists of bug fixes and documentation enhancements.

- Better handling of mouse button up (sticky menu) activations.
- Added some nifty tips to this documentation!

New features with 1.1

Usher is now more flexible than ever while remaining easy to use! It is important to note that existing usher.ini files for Usher 1.0 must be modified before using with Usher 1.1. Please continue reading this file for the easy fix. The following improvements have been made to Usher 1.1:

- Usher now supports separate menus for the left, middle, and right mouse buttons. Note that the middle button only works if you have a three button mouse.

- You can tell Usher to use "sticky menus". Normal menus appear via clicking and *holding* the mouse button down. With sticky menus you don't have to hold the button down.

- @LINE@ directive to put separating lines into your menus.

- @TIME@ and @DATE@ directives to add time and date indicators.

- @MEMORY@ directive to add a free memory indicator.

- @RUN@ to put the Run... menu entry into your menus.

- @USHER@ directive to put the About Usher, Reload Usher, and Close Usher into a menu.

- @EXIT@ directive to put Exit Windows into a menu.

- @DEFAULT@ directive which combines many of the above directives in a standard layout.

- @INFO@ directive to output the type of CPU and math coprocessor, and if Windows is running in 386 enhanced mode, standard mode, or real mode.

- The Run... dialog box has been improved. It now follows an extended search sequence before deciding it can't find a file. However, Usher doesn't associate file extensions (*.doc) with an application (Winword).

- <u>Warning</u>: Usher 1.1 will not work with Usher 1.0 files!!! You must enclose your existing menu structure in a "root" menu. For example, this tells Usher to display the following menu when the left button is pressed down:

```
<LEFT>=down
   <Word Processing>=
      MS Word=           e:\winword\winword.exe, e:\winword\docs
      MS Write=          write.exe
   <>=
   DOS Box=              c:\command.com
<>=
```

- Please see the updated usher.ini file for examples.

<u>Features in 1.0</u>

- Supports up to 10 levels of menu hierarchy.

- Requires only 9K of memory.

- Usher can replace or work with your existing shell.

- Has a Run... dialog box for executing other programs.

- Its menu configuration file can be reloaded without restarting Usher (or Windows).

- The current working directory can be changed before launching an application.

- The current date and time are displayed as menu entries.

- An Exit Windows entry exists for quitting Windows.

Description

Usher was written to replace memory- and resource- hogging shells such as the Program Manager and hDC Window's Express. Usher is a pop-up menu of applications that appears when the user clicks with a mouse button on the desktop. This menu can have hierarchical sub-menus for grouping applications together. For example, the main menu heading might be Utilities with a sub-menu for system utilities called System.

Important: Usher can be run as the shell or an application under an existing shell. Usher takes up only 9K of memory, so users with less than 2 Meg of memory might want to replace their existing shell with Usher. If you would like to continue running your existing shell as your main shell, just add usher.exe to the load or run command line in the win.ini file. Otherwise, change the shell entry in the system.ini file to shell=c: \win30\usher.exe (or whatever). Usher automatically figures out if it is the shell.

Quick Setup

1. Copy usher.exe and usher.ini to your Windows directory
2. Run Windows
3. Use the Run... under the file menu in your existing shell to run usher.exe
4. Click on the desktop with the left mouse button

Many of these sample menu options won't do anything on your machine (because Usher can't find the applications). However, if you like it, then see the directions below on how to modify the usher.ini file for your own applications. Remember, if you want to replace your existing shell with Usher, change your system.ini file to read shell=usher.exe. Otherwise, add usher.exe to your run= line in your win.ini file to use automatically with your existing shell.

usher.ini

Although the usher.exe file can exist anywhere, the file called usher.ini must exist in your Windows' subdirectory. This file describes how Usher will form the menu entries. Here's the format for the usher.ini file:

```
<BUTTON>=UpDown
   <Menu Name>=
       Menu Entry=              Application Path {, Startup Directory}
       <Menu Name2>=
             Menu Entry=        Application Path {, Startup Directory}
       <>=
   <>=
<>=
```

This form defines a new menu entry titled `Menu Name` for the mouse button labeled `BUTTON`. This menu will activate when the button is down or up (sticky button). The menu name <u>must</u> be within angle brackets and have an ending equals sign. The first item within the `Menu Name` menu is an entry titled `Menu Entry`. When the user chooses `Menu Entry`, Usher will first change the startup directory to the optional `Startup Directory`, then it will launch the application defined by `Application Path`. `Menu Name2` defines a sub-menu under `Menu Name`. The ending <>= defines the end of the menus.

Before you panic, let's look at a simple example. Suppose we want to install Word and Write as entries under the Word Processing menu.

```
<Word Processing>=
   MS Word=             e:\winword\winword.exe, e:\winword\docs
   MS Write=                write.exe
<>=
```

Notice that extra spaces and tabs are ignored when forming the usher.ini file. The `<Word Processing>=` line tells Usher to create a new sub-menu. The next line tells Usher to call the first menu entry under Word Processing MS Word. When the user chooses that entry, Usher will set the current working directory to e:\winword\docs then launch e:\winword\winword.exe. The next line for Write is very similar; however, the optional working directory is empty. This means Usher will launch write.exe without changing the current working directory. The ending <>= tells Usher that we are done describing the Word Processing menu entry.

Important: The ending equals signs on the `<Word Processing>=` and <>= are required!!

Buttons

You can install different menus for the left, middle, and right mouse buttons. You must have a three button mouse to use the middle setting. You basically group your menus under a new root menu. For example, to use the Word Processing menu example with the right mouse button you would type:

```
<LEFT>=down
   <Word Processing>=
      MS Word=                  e:\winword\winword.exe, e:\winword\docs
      MS Write=                 write.exe
   <>=
<>=
```

When you press the left mouse button down a menu will appear with the Word Processing submenu. If you want sticky menus, change <LEFT>=down, to <LEFT>=up. Sticky menus pop up when the mouse button is released so you don't have to hold down the mouse button -- just click on the menu item.

The button choice is case sensitive and must be in upper case! This means that <Left>=down will not work!

Selections are still made with the left button. This means that even if a menu appears using the right button, you must select the item with the left button.

Also, right mouse buttons are always sticky! See the bugs section for details.

Directives

Directives are case sensitive! This means @Usher@ won't work -- you must type @USHER@. Directives will work under a submenu. An example:

```
<RIGHT>=up
   MS Word=         e:\winword\winword.exe, e:\winword\docs
   MS Write=             write.exe
   @LINE@=
   @DATE@=
   @TIME@=
   <System Stuff>=
      @RUN@=
      @LINE@=
      @USHER@=
      @EXIT@=
   <>=
<>=
```

Note that the ending equals signs are required!

@DATE@=   A date indicator. You can only use this once in the usher.ini file!
@TIME@=   A time indicator. You can only use this once in the usher.ini file!
@MEMORY@=   A free memory indicator. You can only use this once in the usher.ini

	file!
@RESOURCE@=	A free system resources indicator. You can only use this once is the usher.ini file!
@INFO@=	Outputs the type of CPU and math coprocessor, and if Windows is running in 386 enhanced, standard, or real mode. Usher places this information under a submenu called Information.
@LINE@=	Adds a separating line in the menu.
@RUN@=	Adds the Run... entry to the menu. The Run dialog box allows you to type in a file to run or search through the directories with the mouse.
@ARRANGE@=	Neatly arranges the icons on the desktop.
@MINIMIZE@=	Minimizes all windows except for the currently active window.
@USHER@=	The About Usher, Options, Reload Usher, and Close Usher entries. You must tell Usher you want @USHER@ if you require any of these features. Reload Usher will reload the usher.ini file without having to restart Usher. That way you can edit the usher.ini file in another window then reload the file to test changes.
@EDITINI@=	Launches the notepad application and loads in usher.ini for editing.
@EXIT@=	Adds the Exit Windows menu entry.
@DEFAULT@=	A macro that is the same as:

                          @DATE@=
                          @TIME@=
                          @MEMORY@=
                          @RESOURCE@=
                          @INFO@=
                          @LINE@=
                          @RUN@=
                          @LINE@=
                          @USHER@=
                          @EDITINI@=
                          @ARRANGE@=
                          @MINIMIZE@=
                          @LINE@=
                          @EXIT@=

                          Note that because @DEFAULT@ contains @DATE@, @TIME@, @MEMORY@, and @RESOURCE@ you can't use these functions elsewhere in your usher.ini file!

Tips (from other Usher users)

1) Add the following to your win.ini file within the [windows] section to speed up the appearance of Usher's hierarchical menus. The lines starting with semi-colons are comments and can appear in your win.ini file.

; Delay before showing the hierarchical menu. Defaulted to 400
MenuShowDelay=0
; Delay before hiding the hierarchical menu. Defaulted to 100, (I think)
MenuHideDelay=0

I strongly recommend changing your MenuHideDelay to 0; however, MenuShowDelay works well with the default value.

2) Use an usher.ini entry as a menu title. This also serves a useful purpose with sticky menus: if you want to remove the popped-up menu, just select the title of the menu to make it go away.

```
<RIGHT>=up
  *** Title ***=
  @LINE@=
  MS Word=              e:\winword\winword.exe, e:\winword\docs
  MS Write=                  write.exe
<>=
```


3) IMPORTANT: If Usher is used as the shell, and the Adobe Type Manager (ATM) is loaded then Show Usher icon **must** be checked on!

Known problems

1) Sticky menus should go away if you click on the desktop again.

2) The right button can't be used to select menu items. Believe it or not, this is a "feature" of Windows. The standard Window's method of tracking menu items expects the left mouse button to choose menu items. If someone has a suggestion, I'd be happy to hear it (I'm not thrilled about this "feature" either).

3) The right button is always sticky. This is related to #2. The left mouse button is also used to remove a menu so clicking on the right button makes the menu appear but to select an item or to remove the menu you have to use the left mouse button.

Thanks

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Chris Tector, for the cool icons!

<u>Payment</u>

Usher is a Shareware product. Please send a $15 contribution if you use this product.
Also, send suggestions describing other utilities you would like to see for Windows.

Feel free to upload Usher to any local BBS's as long as you keep usher.exe, usher.wri,
and usher.ini in the same zip package. However, I will try to keep GEnie and
CompuServe updated with the latest version of Usher.

Thanks for using Usher! Your comments are welcome!

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