About DesignerDraw

DesignerDraw is a program for drawing diagrams.   It is useful for such things as structure charts, flow charts, organization charts, dataflow diagrams and other diagrams which have boxes containing text connected by lines.   Because connections remain between boxes when the boxes are moved, diagrams are much easier to maintain than when a standard drawing program is used to create them. DesignerDraw deals mainly with boxes which contain blocks of text.   When a box is moved, the text in it is moved as well and when it is resized, the text is adjusted to fit.

Although this program is copyrighted, there is no charge for its use.   I do like to hear from users, so feel free to send E-mail to me on Compuserve at 71340,1210.

Basic Information

Be sure to look at the sample diagrams that come with the program for more information.

Tool Palette - From top to bottom, the items in the palette are:
Pointer: Used for selecting boxes, annotation symbols, or connector handles.
Text: Used for adding text to boxes or adding text to the diagram.
Box: Used for drawing boxes.
Annotation Symbol: To add an annotation symbol, click here, select a symbol from the dialog box which appears, and then click on the diagram where the symbol should be placed.
Square connector: Click here to make all connectors consist of horizontal and vertical lines.
Straight connector: Click here to make all connectors consist of straight lines.
Arc connector: Click here to make all connectors consist of arcs.
Line thickness settings: Select one of these as the default line thickness.

To draw a box - Select the box drawing tool (the rectangle) from the palette and click where the upper left corner of the box is to go.   Or click and drag to set the box size when creating it.   Alternatively, a box can be created while another tool is selected by holding down the command key (âŒ˜) while clicking.   To select a box shape, choose Select Box Shape from the Boxes menu before creating the box.   Once a box is created, its shape can be changed (see additional options, below).

To draw a connection between boxes - First select the starting box by clicking in it (if its not already selected) and then click and drag from one of the open squares at the center of a side to the box where the connection is to end.   If you create boxes by command-clicking, connections will be drawn initially from all selected boxes to the new box.

Moving boxes - Make sure the pointer tool is selected, then click in a box and drag.   You can select several boxes and drag them all at once.

Moving connections - Connections automatically move when the boxes they are attached to move. However, connections can be moved by themselves to attach to boxes at different places.   To move a connection, first select it by clicking on it. Then click in one of the squares shown along the line (a "handle") and drag the line.   The end of the line nearest the square you pick will be moved.

Adjusting Text - After selecting Adjust Text from the Boxes menu, moving the mouse moves the text inside the box.   Holding down the option key while moving the mouse does the following: Moving to the right widens the text margins while moving to the left narrows the margins; moving up narrows the spacing between lines while moving down widens the spacing.

Creating Your Own Box Shapes - You can draw a box shape in a drawing (not painting) program and import it using Import Shape from Clipboard in the Shapes menu.   Be sure to create your objects with no fill pattern, or the text will be covered up.

Pictures - Pictures may be pasted from the clipboard into the diagram.

Child Windows - Any box may have a child window, which can be used to contain a sub-diagram showing additional levels of detail.

Miscellaneous stuff

Two useful shortcuts: Double clicking in a box switches to text entry mode, and clicking outside of all boxes after editing text switches to pointer mode.   This saves a lot of going to the palette to change modes.

Boxes have the default text "Untitled" in them.   I did this because it is the only way I could get the default style to take effect.   The default style is the combination of font, size, and style which was selected when not in text editing mode.   This style is supposed to apply to the text in any new boxes, but doesn't seem to take effect unless some text is put in the boxes right away.

The default justification is Centered, since this is the most commonly used one in diagrams.   The default font is Helvetica, if present, or Geneva otherwise.

Moving a connecting line from one box to another causes it to attach itself to the new box.

When a connecting line is split (from Split Connection in the Connections menu), a small connecting box is created in the middle and the connecting line is replaced with two lines, one going from the original box to the connecting box and the other going from the connecting box to the destination. This connecting box can have other connections made to it, which can be used to give the effect of a connecting line being attached to another line.

The program keeps track of which side of a box a line is connected to.   This affects the way square and arc connectors are drawn and the direction which arrowheads point.   This is true for connecting boxes also, so you can change the way square or arc connectors going to a connecting box look by moving the connector from a side to the top or bottom or vice versa.

Recent changes:
Version 4.6.1 prevents a crash that happened if "Show Reduced View" was selected while the reduced view window was already open by dimming the "Show Reduced View" item when the window is already up.

Version 4.6 is able to route square connecting lines from the side of a box to the same side of another box, a valuable feature when drawing flowcharts.   See the sample file Flowchart Hints for more information.

Version 4.5 changes the user interface to make it more standard - the pop-up menus which appeared when the option key was pressed are gone and replaced with menu bar menus.   In addition, an option to print all windows at once has been added, and several minor improvements and bug fixes were made.

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