Big Desk V2.22

What On Earth Is BIG DESK?

One of the best things about Windows is that you can run several programs at once. The only real problem with this (apart, perhaps, from excruciating slowness when there are 30 or so copies of some game running at the same time) is that the screen gets awfully cluttered. Bigdesk is the answer to this problem, and we think you're going to like it once you get the idea.

Installation instructions are after the next section; first, we'll tell existing users what's changed.

What's New?

*   **V2.22** has snap to grid for applications. If you move an application window around with BigDesk and it's top left corner is within a certain number of pixels (as displayed on the map) of a grid point, the window is snapped to that grid point. This distance is user configurable.

*   **V2.21** has desktop dragging on the icon working again (a bug fix).

*   The user interface has been changed. If you are using grid snap, then right clicking and/or dragging will move you in whole screen sized units. If you want to move the desktop in smaller units, shift+right click will do this.

*   You can now decide what BigDesk is to do with the desktop when you close it down. There are four options:-
              Scale desktop onto screen
              Cascade all windows
              Tile all windows
              Do nothing

*   Bigdesk is now Shareware. We don't like to be bugged for money by the programs we use, so we won't bug you for money in our stuff, but registering will make Ian very happy. Go on, open ORDERNOW.WRI and do it!

Installation

To install Bigdesk, extract the files **BIGDESK.EXE,** and **BIGDLIB.DLL** into any directory named in your DOS path. We use C:\WINDOWS, but you may want to do something else.

Now from the Run... dialog of Program or File Manager, type BIGDESK. An icon will appear with a grid showing on it. Double click on the icon, and a window with a grid on it will appear. OK, time to explain....

Imagine that you had nine monitors attached to your computer, all hidden behind a wall. Imagine a one-screen-sized hole in the wall. Now imagine that you can move the hole to look at any of the screens or even at parts of several of them. That's the thing BigDesk is going to give you.

That's all you need to know, but we'll go on to explain some of the gadgets you can use within Bigdesk if you wish.

Mouse Operations

There are several different operations which can be performed with the mouse.

Choosing a new virtual screen
These operations work on both the map and the icon.

To move to a new grid cell
      click in the cell with the right button
To move anywhere on the Bigdesk desktop
      drag the mouse pointer with the right button. If Snap Desktop To Grid' option   is enbled, the desktop can only be moved in units of the gdir size. If you want   to place the desktop anywhere, use Shift+Right click, then drag.

You need to turn on the 'Snap Desktop to Grid?' option for the first operation to work; otherwise, the virtual screen selected will be centred on the point on the map where you click.

Choosing an application window
These operations only work on the map

To activate a particular application window
      double click the left mouse button on the box representing the window
To activate an application which is iconized
      double click the left mouse button on the box representing the icon

Moving an window around the Bigdesk desktop
This is only possible on the map, not on the icon.

To move an application window or icon to another place on the Big desktop
      drag the box representing the window using the left mouse button.

Menu Operations and Options

The menu operations are all to be found on the System menu. To access this, click once on the icon or, with the map window open, click on the bar in the top left corner or press Alt+Spacebar.

First, there are the menu options which appear on most system menus; we'll assume you can handle those.

The Bigdesk options follow these; they are:

Set Options...
Allows you to tweak the various options in BigDesk. For more details see the section below.

Save BigDesk Position
Save the current size, position and state of the map.

About...
We'll leave you to explore this on your own.

BigDesk Options

Selecting the Set Options... menu option from the system menu will produce the following dialog box:-

Keep Bigdesk At Front
This option is either on (default) or off. To swap between on and off, select the menu item. When this option is On, Bigdesk will keep its icon or map display on top of any window you may open. It may get in the way of something like word-processing, but is a very useful option if you are switching between virtual screens often.

Snap Desktop To Grid
This option is either on (default) or off and works as above. When this option is on, clicking the right mouse button in a cell on the map or icon will move the 'hole in the wall' to line up with the dotted lines, thus providing a repeatable view of a group of windows.

Track Active Window
This option is either on (the default) or off and works as before. When this option is on, changing the window focus with Alt+Esc and Alt+Tab results in the newly selected window being moved to give the best view (all on screen if

grid snap is off, in the cell with the largest proportion of the window if grid snap is on).

Update Desktop Map
BigDesk will update its map of the desktop every second. Normally this is fine as you can see windows appearing as they are created. On some slower systems this may cause delays or slow response, so you can turn this feature off. If you do the map display will only update when you click on BigDesk.

Snap Application Window to grid if...
When moving application windows around on the BigDesk map, you may want them to be aligned on the grid (if you have it enabled).The value here defines how close (in pixels on the map display) the top left hand corner of the application window has to be to a grid point for the window to be snapped to that grid point. This option only works if you have *Snap Desktop to Grid* enabled. To turn off this feature, give a distance value of 0.

Virtual desktop size...
From here, you can decide how big to make your array of available virtual screens. Don't forget they all have to show on the icon!

On Closing BigDesk...
Here you can decide what BigDesk is to do with all the windows spread over the virtual desktop when you close it. There are 4 options:-
> **Scale Desktop To Screen** - moves all windows onto the screen, giving them a position which roughly denotes where they were on the vurtual desktop.
> **Cascade All Windows** - Move all windows onto the screen offsetting each a little to the right and down from the previous.
> **Tile All Windows** - Move all windows onto screen and arrange them so they cover the screen.
> **Do Nothing** - Leave all windows in their current positions.

All of the option settings are saved in WIN.INI in the [Big Desk] section along with the window position and whether Bigdesk was iconized or not. The items are saved every time you click the OK button.

Hope you like Bigdesk. It's become indispensible for us. We welcome suggestions and comments by electronic mail to **ih@ecs.soton.ac.uk** or to **sphipps@cix.compulink.co.uk**; as ever, these addresses will need reversing, munging and otherwise manipulating to make them work on the network. We will always send a reply to your note; if you don't get one, send it again trying an alternative (reverse the bit after the @; drop the cix bit; add a gateway name to the end; ask your local mail guru; etc). No promises of support or implementation but we're all fairly nice people (or so our mothers say).

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Sorry, we don't take phone calls (apart from registrations on +44 703 550037!)