

UltraClip - a Clipboard Extender

Function

UltraClip extends the capabilities of the Windows clipboard by storing multiple objects placed on the clipboard. It stores all formats associated with a given object, displays each in a separate window, and provides quick retrieval via cut and paste.

Prerequisites

UltraClip requires Windows 3.1.

Constraints

UltraClip stores all its objects in memory - you'll need sufficient memory to support whatever you wish to store. Large color bitmaps consume several megabytes, so beware. UltraClip stores everything put on the clipboard as long as there is at least one displayable format: text, bitmap, DIB or picture. UltraClip ignores owner-display formats. If you store several color-rich bitmaps with palettes, the contention for the system palette may produce a rather strange display of colors in the **non-active** windows. Not compatible with the original release of Norton Desktop for Windows 1.0.

Installation

Copy UC.EXE to any suitable directory. Launch it from the Program Manager or your favorite menu system. UC does not have any special path or directory requirements.

The UltraClip Display Window

UC is an MDI application with a button and status bar along the top of the window area, and separate image windows for each object stored.

From left to right the button icons represent:



Cut to Clipboard - copy currently active window to clipboard, then delete image window

Copy to Clipboard - copy currently active window to clipboard

Paste from Clipboard - create new image window from clipboard

Delete Window - remove image window from UC

Clear Clipboard - delete current contents of clipboard

Tile Windows - tile the image windows for easy viewing

These buttons duplicate options on the UC menus.

To the right of the buttons is a status display showing ...

Status of Auto Paste function (P or _)

Information about currently active object (if any)

Size of DIB stored in memory

width*height*resolution of image

PICT memory size

Text object size

Native size if OLE data available

-or-

A short explanation of active icon if mouse button depressed

In the client area are windows which display thumbnails of the objects currently stored in UltraClip. You can drag these windows around in the display area, iconize them, tile them or use the other options on the Window menu.

Using UltraClip

Once UC is running, just use the paste icon or menu option to paste the current contents of the clipboard into UC. If there is a bitmap on the clipboard, UC makes a copy, creates a window, and displays it - size permitting. You can store as many objects as memory and resources allow.

To restore an object to the clipboard, highlight the window you wish to access, and either click the **Copy** button, choose **Edit/Copy** from the menus, or right-click the window's title bar. This will copy the object to the clipboard, replacing whatever was there before. You can also choose **Edit/Cut** (or the **Cut Button**) to copy the object to the clipboard and delete the UC copy.

Using AutoPaste - UltraClip has an Auto Paste mode that will automatically paste every new object placed on the clipboard (except those copied from UC). To activate AutoPaste choose the Edit/Start AutoPaste menu option or click the text box with the right mouse button. The status box displays P or _ depending on the current status of AutoPaste.

You can configure UltraClip to start in AutoPaste mode using the File/Configure menu option. Choose the startup mode you desire and it will take effect the next time you start UltraClip.

You can clear the current contents of the clipboard using the Edit/Clear menu or the Clear button. This may free up some memory if the clipboard is currently storing a large image.

When you depress an icon button, the status display box temporarily displays a brief explanation of the action.

Configuring UltraClip

You can configure UC by choosing Configure from the file menu, or right-clicking on the title bar with the mouse. In addition to setting the startup AutoPaste mode, you can choose a new thumbnail size. Your choice is written to **uc.ini** and takes effect with the next object pasted into UltraClip.

Clipboard Objects

The clipboard is largely a convention that lets programs share data directly via system memory. When you "copy" to the clipboard, your application formats various blocks of global memory and turns them over to the clipboard (the Windows system) to manage. Any application can retrieve those blocks from the system, make copies, and interpret them as best as it can. An application can use both predefined formats and custom formats when creating the data for the clipboard. Since the various formats usually refer to the same general item, we can collectively call them a clipboard 'object' which has various formats. When you copy to the clipboard or empty it, you remove the existing object and replace it with another.

UltraClip allows you to take a snapshot of the clipboard and preserve the current object. These snapshots are also stored in global memory, just like the original, but have a longer life.

UltraClip and OLE

UltraClip is OLE aware. It does not embed or link to objects but it lets you store OLE data for embedding and linking in other applications. When you copy an OLE object into UC, it captures all the OLE data; when you restore an object to the clipboard, it places copies of the original data back on the clipboard in the same order and format. The goal is to transparently restore the state of the clipboard.

The UltraClip Display Windows

Each window displays a thumbnail of the object it is 'storing' - either a graphic or an unformatted dump of text. When you paste an object into UC, it stores all the available formats as well as building a thumbnail image if a graphic format is found.

If both graphic and text formats are found, the display window has an '*' in the title. For these windows, you can right click inside the display to toggle between the text and graphic displays.

You'll also notice that the text dump is not a thumbnail - I figure it's hard enough to read full size.

Known Peculiarities

Publisher's Paintbrush may fail to render an image to the clipboard if it thinks memory is low - this sometimes results in a error message. Just paste into UC a second time and PubPaintbush will actually deliver up the image to the clipboard. Corel PhotoPaint causes problems with autopaste. If you get an error on autopaste, try manually pasting the image. Micrografix Designer 3.1 is unhappy with the MGX_... formats as restored by UltraClip, so they are ignored by UltraClip even if present on the clipboard. It is possible to create metafiles in advanced drawing applications (such as Corel Draw) that are simply too complex for Windows to render. Typically Windows crashes when trying to display these files. One possible workaround is to copy sections of the image to the clipboard and store them in UltraClip. If, for example, Corel warns you that a given image is 'too complex' for the clipboard, do not try to display the clipboard version - rather clear the clipboard and start again.

Copyright

UltraClip and the accompanying source code are a copyrighted work of Doug Overmyer.

Registration

UltraClip is distributed as shareware. If you continue to use UltraClip after a 21 day period, or use the source code, you are expected to register your copy. The registration fee is \$5.00 payable to:

Doug Overmyer
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Disclaimer

UltraClip carries no warranties. You use it entirely at your own risk. You must determine its suitability for your system and needs.

Source Code

UltraClip is written in Turbo Pascal for Windows. The source code is distributed with the application. It is included because I have learned much from others' code, and some may find mine useful.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Nord-Jan Vemeer and Nat Johnson whose many suggestions contributed materially to UltraClip. I appreciate your help a great deal!

Problems, Suggestions

Please drop me a note on Compuserve (71021,2535) or Internet: overmyer@netcom.com

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Notes:

Release 1.1 added OLE support, reworked entirely the storage of objects, display of metafiles, improved error recovery.

Release 1.2:implemented thumbnails, reworked owner-draw format , reworked large metafile display code, added various configuration options.

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