# Mini Launcher

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

Mini Launcher is available in either a 16-bit version for Windows 3.1 and Windows 3.11 or a 32-bit version for Windows 95.

Under Windows 3.1 or 3.11 there is no convenient method for executing programs from other than the appropriate window or launching applications based on a files name other than through the file manager.   This application provides a single point of selecting one or multiple programs or files from a single point of reference.

With Windows 95 this situation has been addressed but can still result in confusion and delay.   You may create shortcuts on the desktop but these can be hidden by applications that are open.   You can locate programs through the Start icon, but this can lead to multiple levels of menus before locating the program that you wish to use.   You may also use the Document function on the Start icon, but this only lists the last 15 files used in alphabetical sequence and using the actual file name.   Mini Launcher combines all these options into one single point of reference and allows you to specify a meaningful description.   In addition, Mini Launcher will store up to 100 different applications, present this list to you in usage sequence, with the most used application being displayed at the top of the list, and will allow you to start as many applications as you wish at the same time.

Mini Launcher is designed to be very easy to use.   It will execute any program and launch the application associated with any file by double-clicking on the program or file name, or a name defined by the user.   It will also show you the contents of any file with a single click on the file name in the box at the top-right of the screen.   If this file is a graphic file of type **BMP**, **WMF** or **ICO** it will display the graphic in the same box as the text..   It will allow you to delete, rename or create files and select which files you wish to have displayed either by their extension, eg. EXE, DOC, etc. or by their attributes, ie. all HIDDEN files.

However, the main feature of Mini Launcher allows the user to set up a list of their most commonly used programs or files and to execute these directly.   The list shows the most commonly used programs or files at the top and will adjust this list as appropriate. Therefore, as a program or file is used more and more it will work its way to the top of the list.

Additionally, if a file is selected with the right mouse button the editor will be automatically launched with this file loaded.   Because Mini Launcher activates programs synchronously any changes made will be displayed when the file name is next left clicked.

For a detailed description of the facilities available please view the appropriate command.

Mini Launcher was originally written just for myself as a learning exercise from four articles in Your Computer magazine.   Since then I have continually added bits and pieces to it and since I find it very useful in my work, maybe others will as well.   I have reworked most of the coding as well as producing the Help file for general use by others.

Help is available on all screens by pressing **F1** or clicking on the **Help** button.

Click Here to get started.

## The Advantages of Registration

Registration provides you with the following benefits:

Elimination of the evaluation reminder screens

The ability to save up to 100 separate user entries

An automatic and a manual save function for the list of programs (this is normally only saved when Mini Launcher is closed).

The ability to save the preference values that you have set up, eg. whether to minimise on launch, whether to query a file deletion, etc..

The size of the screen as well as the position is restored at program start up (this includes being minimised if that was the state at closure).

The program will continue active until the user terminates it.

All upgrades for the next year and a reduced cost for other products.

Technical support, queries and bug fixes.

You may also register two systems for the one amount.   This allows you to load the software on a home and a work computer.

## How to Register

A registration form is provided by the application.   You may fill this in and either print it for sending via mail or external fax or write the details to a file which can then be faxed or E-Mailed from your PC. You may also register through CompuServe.   My contact addresses are as follows:-

      Postal Address       - **PO Box 3,  Calwell,  ACT.,  2905,  Australia**
      Fax number   - **+61 6 292 6693**
      Internet     - **kjsawyer@ozemail.com.au**
      CompuServe  - **100242,617**
      MSN      - **kjsawyer**

If you are not using the generated form it is **ESSENTIAL** that you provide me with the following information:-

   The Windows Registered User name
   The Windows Registered Organisation name
   The Version of Mini Launcher
   Whether the 16 or 32 bit Version is being used

All this information is printed on the order form or is displayed in the **Help:About** menu box.   This information is used to create a unique serial number and must be provided **EXACTLY** as shown on the registration form or About box, including upper and lower case characters and punctuation.   I accept payment in **Australian dollars** via VisaCard, MasterCard, Australian BankCard or a cheque **drawn on an Australian bank**.   If you wish multiple licenses, please contact me for details.   You may also register through CompuServe.   To do this, **GO SWREG,** locate the registration **ID 10867** and follow the instructions.   This will not request the information as stated above so you will need to Email me separately at my CompuServe address and advise me of this information.   Upon receipt of the fax, postal notification or being advised by CompuServe, I will Email or post you your serial number.   Once registered, you are entitled to revised serial numbers free of charge if you change any of the above details.

You may also use these addresses to notify me of any bugs or features that you would like to see.   Any suggestions accepted will restart your update period from the receipt date of your submission.   I would also be interested in any new applications that you would like to see developed.   If accepted you will receive a complimentary copy of the product and free updates for the product life.

Registration Costs

Per license             AUS$24.95(US$19.95)
Shipping & Handing AUS$10.00(US$7.00) (only if you require the software on disk)*

*Please note that you do not receive anything other than you already have if you request disks.   I do not provide a paper version of any documentation as everything is contained in the Help files.   This option is not available through the CompuServe registration.

## Revision History

Planned for Version 3.0
    Context sensitive help.
    Allow cut, copy and paste facilities.
    Allow setting of file attributes.
    If Exclusive file is checked display only files with no attributes at all.
    Add a toolbar option.
    Allow elastic form resizing.
    Allow macros to launch multiple programs.
    Allow the deletion of directories and all lower level directories and files.
    Allow user to select always on top option.
    Allow user to specify sort sequence in the selected display list.
    Allow the creation of a blank or dummy entry in the selection list for manual creation.


Version 2.0
    Add delete option in tool bar.
    Save the INI file option in tool bar.
    Rename option in tool bar.
    Create new file option in tool bar.
    Allow execution of association files.
    Allow selection of file types to be displayed.
    Move the INI file to Windows.
    Allow the permanent setting of the option minimise on execution.
    Allow the permanent setting of the option confirm on deletion.
    Allow optional date and/or time in title bar.
    Select text automatically when switching to edit mode.
    Allow wordwrap to be turned on/off when displaying text.
    Allow specification of an alternate to the NotePad editor.
    Check for blank fields in the Description and Path fields.
    Allow multiple program launches.


Version 1.1
    Initial basic program developed from articles in Your Computer.

## The Limitations of Evaluation

Although up to 100 user defined applications can be stored during the running of Mini Launcher, when the program is closed either by the user or by Windows only the first ten items will be saved.

During the execution of the program the user may define their own preferences, however these are not saved between sessions.   The default set are always used at program start up.

The size of the screen is always initiated as full and the position is always at the top left of the screen.

There is no manual save available.

Shareware registration screens are displayed at the start and end of the program.

The program will only run for 24 hours at a time.   After 24 hours continuous execution a message will be displayed and Mini Launcher will terminate.   It can of course be restarted for a further 24 hours but saving will only have been performed as stated above.

I will reply to any execution queries you have and any bugs that you may encounter, but this implies no entitlement.

# Main Screen

The main screen can be divided into three separate sections as shown below.   The user has the choice of displaying the three screens together, the Directory and Selection Screens or just the Selection Screen.

**Directory Section**
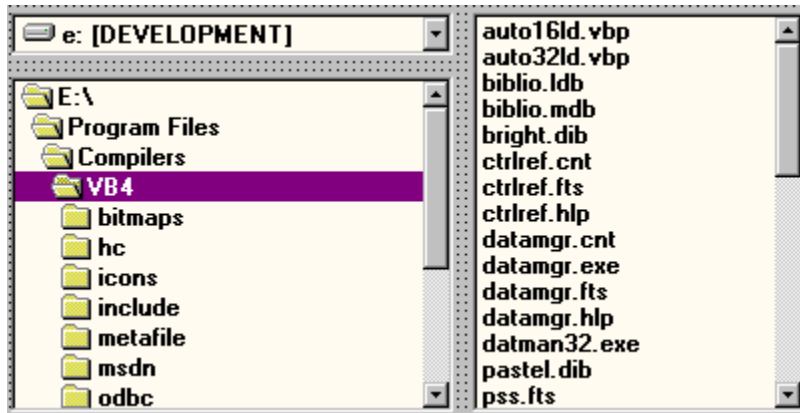


The directory section of the main screen allows the user to select the disk drive, directory path and the final file name(s).   The file(s) selected here may be <u>executed</u>, <u>edited</u>, <u>deleted</u> or copied into the <u>selection</u> box for saving.   By default, the file selection box allows only a single file to be selected, however by selecting the menu **Options:General:Multi File Selection** multiple files can be selected.   If multiple files are selected then the above actions will be performed on each file in turn.   The standard Window mouse controls are used in these windows.   When a file is selected, it is automatically displayed in the box to the right.   A bitmap (BMP), icon (ICO) or Windows metafile (WMF) will be displayed as the image.   Any other file will be displayed as text.   Where this is an <u>executable</u> or some other type of program file the text will probably be unintelligible and it not advisable that this be edited.   Use of the <u>high-bit filter</u> option may improve the display of the file.   When viewing a file there is an option **Options:General:Word Wrap**.   If this option is selected then all lines will be wrapped round at the right of the display box and continue onto the next line. If this option is not selected a line will scroll off the right side of the display box.   Use the horizontal scroll bar to view the rest of this line.

With a file or files selected a right click of the mouse will launch the defined editor and automatically load that file into the application.   By default the editor is NOTEPAD but this may be changed though the <u>preferences</u> screen.

To launch an application from this box you just double left click on the name.   If you have checked the **Options:General:Multi File Selection** you may launch more than one application at the same time; there are two methods to achieve this.   The first is to select all the files you wish to be executed by the standard Windows multiple file selection method but stop before you click on the last one you want selected.   Then with the other name(s) selected double left click on the last one you want to execute.   This will then launch all applications sequentially.   This last double click seems to be a peculiarity with Windows.   The second method to launch multiple applications is to select EVERY name that you want to execute and to then select **File:Execute** from the menu bar.

You may also use this box to select files to delete.   See the section on <u>deletion</u> for information on this function.

## Selection Section
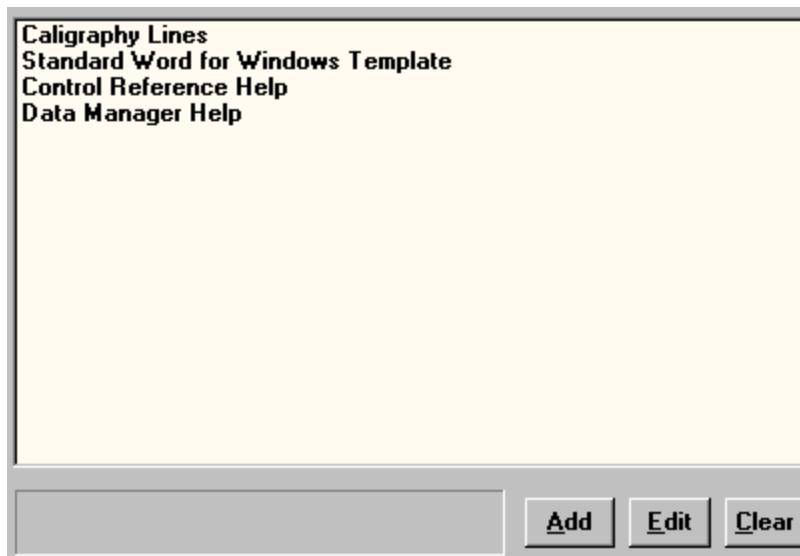


This area lists the commonly used applications.   It is continuously sorted into sequence with the most heavily used application at the top of the list and the most least used at the bottom.   Each entry may be _edited_ to display a meaningful name as well as other information.   File(s) to be added are selected in the main file box as above and the **Add** button is then clicked.   All the selected files will be added to the selection list and will also remain highlighted.   This will allow the user to immediately click on the **Edit** button for _editing each entry_ in turn to put in a meaningful name or other parameters.   This box is what is called a simple multi select box.   This means that each left click of the mouse will either add that selection to the highlighted list or remove it from the list.

To launch an application from this box you just double left click on the name.   If you wish to launch more than one application at the same time, there are two methods to achieve this. The first is to left click on each name to select it but stop before you click on the last one you want selected.   Then with the other name(s) selected double left click on the last one you want to execute.   This will then launch all applications sequentially.   This last double click seems to be a peculiarity with Windows.   The second method to launch multiple applications is to left click and select EVERY name that you want to execute and to then select **File:Execute** from the menu bar. If the program fails to start an _error code_ is returned.

The **CLEAR** button will remove any selected items from this list permanently.

The panel to the left of the **Add** button displays the full path of the last file selected in the main directory file list box.


## Filters and Display Options
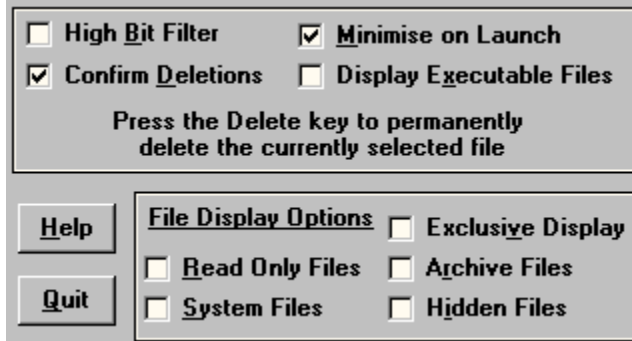
These check boxes, which are also available under the **Options** menu allow the user to define options to the system. The high bit filter prevents non-alphanumeric characters from being displayed.   This makes the result more readable.   However, as only readable characters are displayed, you may corrupt the file if any attempt is made to edit it.   Use this option only for viewing a file.   The **Minimise on Launch** option will determine if Mini Launcher is minimised to an icon when an application is launched.   Mini Launcher will not automatically resize itself when the application is completed.   The **Confirm Deletions** option allows a user to be prompted before deleting a file or files.   See file deletion for more information on this option.   Normally executable files are not displayed when they are selected as the contents are meaningless.   By checking the **Display Executable Files** option ALL files, including EXE and COM files, will have their contents displayed.   The **delete** key or the **File:File Delete** menu option is used to delete selected files.

The **Quit** button closes down Mini Launcher and saves the preferences and file selection list if this has been requested in the menu **Options:General:Save Settings on Exit** and the program has been registered.

The **File Display Options** allows the user to define what file attributes determine the file list.   By default all files which have no attributes or have the **Archive** or **Read Only** attributes set are displayed.   By checking the **System** box, files with the **System** attribute will also be displayed.   This can also be applied to the **Hidden** box to display **Hidden** files. Note, however, that if a file has both the System AND the Hidden attributes set then both the System AND Hidden boxes must be checked to allow these files to be displayed.   If the **Exclusive Display** box is checked then ONLY those files that have their attributes matching the attribute boxes that are checked will be displayed.   See also the menu item **File:Open File Type** on how to display only particular types of files.

## Program or Application Execution

An application file or a program may be executed directly from the main directory file list box.   A double left click on the appropriate file name will launch that application immediately.   If you have selected the <u>multiple selection option</u> option then a number of programs and/or application may be executed simultaneously.   There are two methods to achieve this. The first is to select all the files you wish to be executed by the standard Windows multiple file selection method but stop before you click on the last one you want selected.   Then with the other name(s) selected double left click on the last one you want to execute.   This will then launch all applications sequentially.   This last double click seems to be a peculiarity with Windows.   The second method to launch multiple applications is to select EVERY name that you want to execute and to then select **File:Execute** from the menu bar.   After the program or programs have been launched, Mini Launcher is available for additional functions.   It does not wait for the programs to be completed before returning.   If the program fails to start an <u>error code</u> is returned.
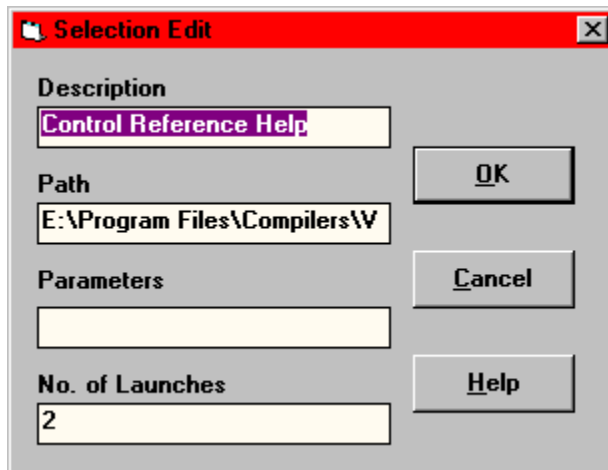
## File Editing

Any file selected in the main directory file list box may be edited if you have an editor that is capable.   By default, Mini Launcher uses the standard Windows NOTEPAD, but this may be changed through the preferences facility.   With the file selected, a right mouse click will launch the chosen editor with the file already loaded. If you have selected the multiple selection option option then a number of files may be edited simultaneously.   Select all the files you wish to edit by the standard Windows multiple file selection method and then click the right mouse button (or you may click on the **File:Edit** menu).   This will then launch an editor for each file selected.   After the editor or editors have been launched, Mini Launcher is available for additional functions.   It does not wait for the editor(s) to complete before returning.   Because Mini Launcher activates programs synchronously, any changes made will be displayed when the file name or names are next left clicked.

**File Deletion**
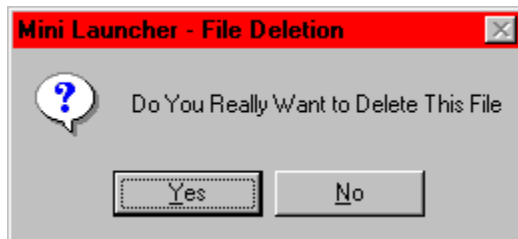


If the **Confirm Deletions** box is checked then this warning will be displayed whenever a file is to be deleted.   If the **Confirm Deletions** box is not checked, the file will be deleted immediately.   In the 32-bit version of Mini Launcher running under Windows 95, the deleted file will <u>NOT</u> be placed in the recycle bin.

## Editing a Selection Entry
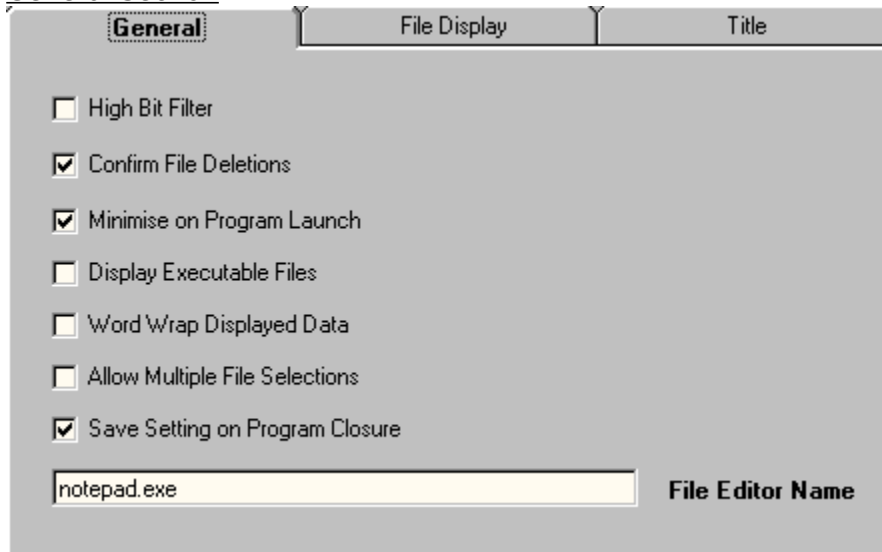


Each item in the selection list box may be edited as required.   When an application file or an executable program is selected in the main file box and added to the selection list the item is automatically highlighted.   A single left click will also just highlight the item.   With the item or items highlighted click on the **Edit** button and the edit screen will be displayed. When an item is first added the **Description** and the **Path** contain the full location of the file.   Also, the **No. of Launches** contains 0.   Normally you would only change the **Description** entry to that of something meaningful, but you may change the other fields if you require.   For instance, if you wish the item to be immediately displayed at the top of the list, then enter a higher number in the **No. of Launches** box.   Clicking on the **OK** button will make the changes and resort the list.   If you are editing multiple items, the next item will then be displayed.

## Preferences

This tabbed screen provides a convenient way to select multiple preferences to tailor Mini Launcher to your own preferences.   When selected, some options will immediately have an effect but they will only become permanently set when the **Apply** or **OK** buttons are pressed.   The **Cancel** button will return all settings to the time of the last **Apply** or **OK** or the **Options:Preferences** menu item.
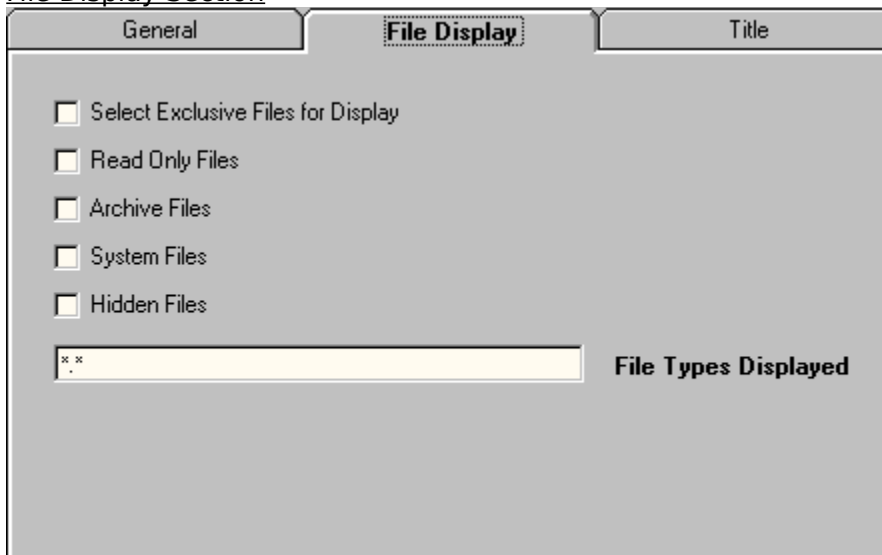
General Section

| General | File Display | Title |
| --- | --- | --- |

☐ High Bit Filter

☑ Confirm File Deletions

☑ Minimise on Program Launch

☐ Display Executable Files

☐ Word Wrap Displayed Data

☐ Allow Multiple File Selections

☑ Save Setting on Program Closure

notepad.exe   **File Editor Name**

This panel sets the high bit filter, whether to confirm file deletions, whether to minimise after launching an application, whether to display executable files, word wrap text data, allow multiple file selections, save the preferences when exiting and defining which file editor to use.

File Display Section

| General | File Display | Title |
| --- | --- | --- |

☐ Select Exclusive Files for Display

☐ Read Only Files

☐ Archive Files

☐ System Files

☐ Hidden Files

*.*   **File Types Displayed**

This panel allows the user to define the listed files according to their file attributes and/or their types.

## Title Section

| General | File Display | **Title** |
|---------|--------------|-----------|

☑ Display Mini Launcher in the Title

☑ Display the Date in the Title

| ◉ Date as 1 <br> ○ Date as 01 | ○ Month as 1 <br> ○ Month as Jan <br> ◉ Month as January | ○ Year as 96 <br> ◉ Year as 1996 | ○ No Day <br> ○ Day as Mon <br> ◉ Day as Monday |
|---|---|---|---|

◉ Format as Day, Date Month Year        ○ Format as Day, Month Day, Year

☑ Display the Time in the Title

○ 9:01 AM/PM        ○ 9:01:22        ◉ 09:01:22

◉ Display as Name - Date - Time        ○ Display as Name - Time - Date

This panel allows the user to edit the information that is displayed in the Title Bar of the program and also the heading when the program is minimised.   The options allow a combination of Program Name, current date and current time in a number of different formats.

## Menus

Most of the preference settings that are available on the <u>main screen</u> and the <u>preferences screen</u> are also available through the various menus.   The user therefore has a choice as to which they prefer to use.   The forward and backward arrows can be used to refer to the various menu commands.

## Open File Type



This option allows the user to specify the types of files that are to be displayed in the main file listing box.   By default, all files types are displayed (*.*).   If, for example, you only wish to see your word processing documents you might change the file types to *.doc or *.wp5. If you wish to display more than one type, separate each with a semi-colon, *.doc;*.wp5 will display all document files for Word and WordPerfect.   If the check box is ticked, then the file types specified here will be restored when Mini Launcher is restarted, otherwise the default of *.* will be used.
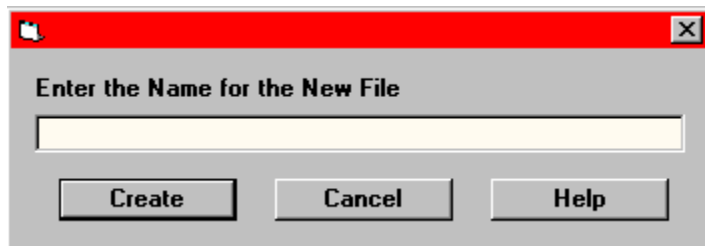
## Delete File

The program will allow you to **permanently**  delete files from your system.   If you are running under Windows 95 the deleted files will **NOT** be placed in the recycle bin.   If you have not selected a file and issue the delete command the Windows system will display an error.   You can not delete a directory at present.   You may also use the **DEL** key for this action.   If you have the <u>Confirm Deletions</u> checked you will be asked to confirm the deletion otherwise there will be no confirmation performed.

**File Rename**

E:\testdata\new folder\one

Enter the New Name for the File

Rename    Cancel    Help
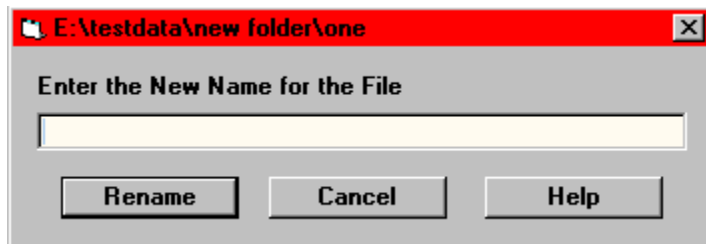
Allows the user to change the name of the file or a directory.   If the multiple file selections option has been selected, then each selected file will be presented in turn for renaming. The name of the current file is displayed in the title bar of this screen.

## New File

**Enter the Name for the New File**

Create    Cancel    Help

Allows the user to create a new file.   The directory is that currently selected in the directory list box.

## Exiting Mini Launcher

Mini Launcher can be closed by either selecting the menu **File:Exit** option or clicking on the **Quit** button on the main screen.

## Save Settings Now

This menu option allows the user to save the current preferences and the list of selected applications immediately without having to close the program.   This option is not available on the <u>unregistered</u> version and so is grayed out.

## Screen Size

In order to minimise screen clutter, Mini Launcher can be configured in three different screen combinations.   The **full screen** displays the <u>Directory Screen</u>, the <u>Selection Screen</u> and the <u>Filters and Display Screen</u>.   The **half screen** displays just the <u>Directory Screen</u> and the <u>Selection Screen</u> while the **quarter screen** just displays the <u>Selection Screen</u>.   Once the user has defined their selection the quarter screen is all that is necessary to launch applications.   This reduces the amount of superfluous information displayed.

## **Preferences**

This menu option launches the <u>Preferences Screen</u> where the user can set many preferences in order to tailor the system to their own preference.   Whilst all options are available in the unregistered version, none of them will be saved when the program is terminated.

## General

This menu option allows the user to select general options as to how they wish the system to operate. All the secondary options are provided on the <u>Preferences Screen</u>, this allowing a quick change to a specific option.

## **File Display**

This menu option provides an alternative method to modifying the file display characteristics available on the <u>Main Screen</u> or on the <u>Preferences Sreen</u>.   This facility is particularly useful if the user does not have the <u>Full Screen</u> available at the moment.

## Getting Started

Using the normal Windows directory and file listings, locate a file that you commonly use (for an example select C:\WINDOWS\PBRUSH.EXE).   Left click on the program name and then click on **ADD** at the bottom of the window.   The program will be added to the Selection window and be highlighted. Click on Edit and the edit screen will be displayed.   In the Description field enter a description of the program (eg. Windows Paint Brush in this example).   Click **OK**.   You may now double left click on this description to execute the program.

| Value | Meaning |
|---|---|
| 0 | System was out of memory, executable file was corrupt, or relocations were invalid. |
| 2 | File was not found. |
| 3 | Path was not found. |
| 5 | Attempt was made to dynamically link to a task, or there was a sharing or network-protection error. |
| 6 | Library required separate data segments for each task. |
| 8 | There was insufficient memory to start the application. |
| 10 | Windows version was incorrect. |
| 11 | Executable file was invalid. Either it was not a Windows application or there was an error in the .EXE image. |
| 12 | Application was designed for a different operating system. |
| 13 | Application was designed for MS-DOS 4.0. |
| 14 | Type of executable file was unknown. |
| 15 | Attempt was made to load a real-mode application (developed for an earlier version of Windows). |
| 16 | Attempt was made to load a second instance of an executable file containing multiple data segments that were not marked read-only. |
| 19 | Attempt was made to load a compressed executable file. The file must be decompressed before it can be loaded. |
| 20 | Dynamic-link library (DLL) file was invalid. One of the DLLs required to run this application was corrupt. |
| 21 | Application requires Microsoft Windows 32-bit extensions. |

The high bit filter prevents non-alphanumeric characters from being displayed.   This makes the result more readable.   However, as only readable characters are displayed you may corrupt the file if any attempt is made to edit it.

The display window will display the graphic or the text of the selected file.   If the file is text then lines which are greater than the width of the display screen will be scrolled off to the right.   An horizontal scroll bar will be created to enable you to view the rest of the lines. By setting the wordwrap option on,   the lines will be wrapped around at the end of the display so that all of the line is visible.   In this case there will be no horizontal scroll bar.

Saving the preferences will restart Mini Launcher as it was previously set up.   Preferences can not be saved in the unregistered version.   Preferences saved include the selection list, all the various options and the screen position and format, including whether it or not it was currently minimised.