

# **The Desktop Helper**

Version 0.8  
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A Microsoft ® Windows™ Based  
Desktop Accessory

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## **The Desktop Helper**

Written by Robert E. Alleger  
317 Monroe Avenue  
Edgewater Park, NJ 08010

Electronic mail:  
CompuServe 70240,264

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**The Desktop Helper** was written with the aid of the following tools and publications (in alphabetical order):

Tools:

Brief text editor  
Microsoft C 6.00A compiler  
Microsoft Windows 3.0 SDK

Publications:

"Microsoft Systems Journal"  
"Programming Windows, version 3" by Charles Petzold  
"Windows 3.0 Power Programming Techniques"  
by Peter Norton & Paul Yao  
"Windows 3.0 Programming Primer" by Alan Southerton

Services:

CompuServe's Windows forums

### **DISCLAIMER**

The accuracy of the information contained herein and the fitness of **The Desktop Helper** program for any purpose may change without

notice, and should not be construed as a commitment of any kind. No guarantee is made, expressed or implied pertaining to the use, misuse, or problems caused by this program.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### Licensing Policies

**The Desktop Helper** is a copyrighted program protected by both U.S. and international copyright law. You are authorized to use and evaluate it for a limited time without charge.

**The Desktop Helper** is distributed as shareware. This allows you to decide whether the application satisfies your needs before you have to pay for it. **The Desktop Helper** may be freely copied and distributed for evaluation as long as these four rules are followed:

- 1) The program and this documentation are not modified in any way, shape, or form.
- 2) A copy of the files: READ.ME, DH.WRI, DH.INI, DH.EXE, and DHHOOK.DLL are provided with each copy of the program.
- 3) No charge, other than a media and handling charge (not to exceed \$5.00), is made.
- 4) A user may use the program for 30 days before paying the registration fee. If the program is used after the 30 day evaluation period, an obligation to register and pay the registration fee is incurred.

If after this trial period you do not feel that this program is worth the registration fee then you are obligated to discontinue the usage of **The Desktop Helper**.

The registration fee for **The Desktop Helper** is \$10 (US Dollars). Payment of this fee entitles you to technical support via electronic mail.

Site licenses are available. Please use electronic or US mail to find out more information.

### **Registration Instructions**

Registering (purchasing a license) a copy of **The Desktop Helper** may only be done via mail. If you wish to become a registered user of **The Desktop Helper**, enclose the following items in an envelope and mail to the address below:

- 1) The version number of the copy of **The Desktop Helper** you currently have. You can find the version number in the About... item in the pop-up menu.
- 2) Where did you obtain your copy of **The Desktop Helper**?
- 3) Name and address. Please include both a first and last name.
- 4) A check for \$10.00 (US Dollars) made out to Robert E. Alleger.

A registration form is provided at the end of this documentation. It is recommended that you use this form when registering.

Send to:

Robert E. Alleger  
317 Monroe Avenue  
Edgewater Park, NJ 08010

## GETTING STARTED

### Introduction

**The Desktop Helper** is a Desktop utility that provides capabilities missing from Microsoft's Program Manager while also providing the more important capabilities of the Task Manager. The capabilities include:

- convenient pop-up menu at the click of a button
- configurable launch list
- switch to or terminate a task even if it is not currently visible
- browse a pop-up file selector to choose a file to run

### Installation

If you are upgrading to a newer version of **The Desktop Helper** then exit the older version before installing the newer one.

Copy DH.EXE and DHHOOK.DLL to a convenient directory and DH.INI to your Windows directory. Next, use Microsoft's SysEdit, NotePad or any other ASCII text editor to add the DH.EXE program to the "load=" line in your WIN.INI file. The line might look something like this:

```
load=d:\win_apps\DH.EXE
```

If you install DH.EXE in a directory located on your environment path then you do not have to specify the directory where it is. If you have additional programs on the "load=" line then separate them by at least one space character.

The next time you start up Windows **The Desktop Helper** will be automatically loaded. For now, use the Program Manager's Run command to execute DH.EXE.

The first thing that you will notice is that **The Desktop Helper** remains invisible until you call upon it. There is no ICON or window associated with it when running. It will not show in its

own or the Task Manager's task list.

### **Activation**

There are two ways to activate **The Desktop Helper**.

The first way is to move your mouse cursor to a vacant spot on the Desktop. The Desktop is the bottom-most screen, where no windows are displayed. It is also the place that displays your selected wallpaper.

Now, press and hold the left mouse button. A floating pop-up menu will appear next to your mouse cursor. You can move your cursor up and down the list. If, when you release the mouse button, your cursor is outside the menu then the menu will disappear. If it is on top of a menu item then that item will be selected and the requested action will be performed.

The second way, more convenient way is to hold down the <Control> key while pressing the left mouse button on top of any non-client area of any window. The non-client areas of a window are such areas as the title bar, blank portion of the menu bar, scroll bars, ICONs, etc.

We will now look at each resident menu item. These items are found within the "Desktop Helper" menu item.

## ABOUT

This menu item simply displays a dialog box that contains the name of the program, version number, copyright information, and a request to send money.

After viewing the information, activate the "Thank You!" button. **The Desktop Helper** will respond by removing the dialog box from the screen.

## EXIT

This menu item will terminate **The Desktop Helper** and remove it from memory. If other desktop accessory-type programs were loaded *after* **The Desktop Helper** then this command may not succeed.



## TASKS

This menu item will display a dialog box that lists all the *visible* tasks currently running. You may take one of three actions:

- cancel the dialog box
- switch to a task (eg. make it the current task)
- terminate a task

### **Cancel**

Just click on the "Cancel" button to terminate this dialog box. This is the only button that is active (eg. not grayed) when a task has not been selected.

**The Desktop Helper** will respond by removing the dialog box from the screen.

### **Switch To**

Select a task from the task list and click on the "Switch to" button or hit the "Enter" key. You may also double click the left mouse button on the task.

**The Desktop Helper** responds by removing the dialog box from the screen and bringing the selected task to the foreground, opening a window if it was minimized to an ICON, and making it the active task.

### **Terminate**

Select a task from the task list and click on the "Terminate" button.

**The Desktop Helper** responds by removing the dialog box from the screen, bringing the selected task to the foreground, and requesting the task to do a normal shut down. If the task cooperates then it will terminate normally. Any properly written program will not refuse to cooperate.

## **RUN**

This menu item will display a dialog box that lists all the *visible* ".EXE" files located in the current disk directory. You may take one of several actions:

- cancel the dialog box
- select another directory or drive
- enter a new file name
- enter command line parameters
- specify that the program should start up as an ICON
- execute a file

### **Cancel**

Just click on the "Cancel" button to terminate this dialog box.

**The Desktop Helper** will respond by removing the dialog box from the screen.

### **Select Another Directory or Drive**

Select a directory or drive by double clicking on the directory or drive from the list box located on the right-hand side of the dialog box underneath the "Directories" caption.

**The Desktop Helper** responds by making the selected drive or directory active and placing a list of files in the files list box that satisfy the file name appearing in the edit control to the right of the "Open File Name" caption at the top of the dialog box.

Unless the file name in the edit box has been changed to something other than the default of ".EXE", you will see a list of files with an extension of ".EXE" in the list box.

### **Enter a New File Name**

Position the cursor inside the edit control next to "Open File Name", click the left mouse button, and type a new file name, such as "\*.PIF", and press the "Enter" key.

**The Desktop Helper** responds by filling the files list box with a list of files that match the new name.

### **Execute a File**

Select a file from the left-hand list box and click on the "OK" button or double click the left mouse button on a file.

Before running the file you might want to enter some command line parameters or check the "Run Minimized" box.

**LAUNCH**

This menu selection is grayed out in this release, but should be available in the next one.

## CONFIGURABLE LAUNCH LIST

### Purpose

The purpose of this feature is to allow you to select and run a program located in a list of programs that you use frequently. The list of programs is appended to the top of **The Desktop Helper's** pop-up menu.

### Maintaining the List

**The Desktop Helper** is distributed with a list of programs that are packaged with Windows. You may delete some or all of these and/or add your own programs to this list. Until the "Launch" menu item is available in a future release, you must use an ASCII text editor, such as Microsoft's NotePad to edit the DH.INI file.

The DH.INI file distributed with The Desktop Helper looks like the following:

```
[Tasks]
Calculator=      calc.exe
Calendar=       calendar.exe
Cardfile=       cardfile.exe
Clipboard=      clipbrd.exe
Paintbrush=     pbrush.exe
(SEPARATOR)=
Notepad=        notepad.exe
PIF Editor=     pifedit.exe
Sys Config=     sysedit.exe
Write=          write.exe
(SEPARATOR)=
DOS Shell=      command.com
File Manager=   winfile.exe
Program Manager= progman.exe
```

Up to 48 programs may be included in the list, though you probably will be limited more by the resolution of your screen. For example, about 31 programs will fit comfortably on an 800 x 600 super VGA screen. The lower your resolution the fewer programs that will fit in the menu. Don't worry, no matter how

many programs you add to the list **The Desktop Helper** will only display those that fit on the screen.

Each program entry in the list has two parts- the program description and the command line information. The description may be up to 16 characters terminated by an equal sign. The command line consists of an optional path, file name and extension, and optional program parameters. For example:

```
Space Invaders=d:\games\spaceinv.exe /lives=5/dif=easy
```

Separator bars may be included anywhere in the list by entering the following line of information:

```
(SEPARATOR)=
```

Each separator bar occupies one of the possible 48 maximum menu positions available.

If you want **The Desktop Helper** to always prompt you for command line parameters before running the file place a question mark immediately before the file name. For example:

```
Write=?write.exe
```

If you wish to make a change to the launch list once **The Desktop Helper** is running, then terminate **The Desktop Helper** by using the "Exit" menu selection, edit DH.INI, and rerun DH.EXE. This will not be necessary once the "Launch" menu selection is available in a future release.

### **Launching a Program in the List**

To run, or *launch*, a program located in the list, just use the mouse cursor to select a program from the menu, let up on the mouse button, and the program will be launched.

## **FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS**

Please use Electronic Mail to tell me what future enhancements you would like to see. This could include changes to the currently available commands or new commands that may be added to the pop-up menu.

The current wish list is:

- 1) Implement the "Launch" menu selection.
- 2) Include a pop-up ASCII chart with a font selection box and a copy to clipboard function. This would be helpful because Windows doesn't give you a way of viewing the entire character set for a given font.
- 3) Alternative pop-up menu containing a list of current tasks. Selecting one from the list will make that task active. This is a quicker alternative to the current "Task" menu box. This alternative pop-up menu would be presented if the shift key is held down when activating **The Desktop Helper**.
- 4) Ability to view a text file.
- 5) Recognize the WIN.INI associated file extensions table.

REGISTRATION FORM  
**The Desktop Manager**

Remit to: Robert E. Allegor  
317 Monroe Avenue  
Edgewater Park, NJ 08010

Your Name (Last, First): \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CompuServe Account Number (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Current version number of The Desktop Manager (displayed in About): \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you obtain this version?: \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity	Product	Unit Price	Total
_____	Single User registration fee \$10	_____	
	Total:	_____	

Suggestions for future releases:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Complaints about this release:  
\_\_\_\_\_



