Chez Otto 4.1 - A Windows Menu System

Function:
Provide quick access to a large number of programs and utilities under Windows 3.1 using a combination of icons and radio buttons. This is a menu-only system.

Prerequisites:
Windows 3.1.

Installation:
Copy the program file CO.EXE , help file CO.HLP and sample logo COLOGO.BMP to any directory you wish.
Install the CTL3D.DLL file *carefully*:

1. Check your Windows system directory for the file CTL3D.DLL, usually c:\windows\system.
2. If you don't find it, copy the new one into the system directory
3. If you find an existing copy, try using Chez O' with it - if it works, stick with it.
4. If it doesn't work, rename the old version to CTL3D.OLD, copy the new version into the system directory, and test it.
5. If other programs have problems(this shouldn't happen), delete CTL3D.DLL, and rename CTL3D.OLD to CTL3D.DLL. Chez Otto is not compatible with your system.

If this is your first outing with CO, copy the sample CO.INI to your main windows directory - this will give you some sample program items when you fire up CO for the first time. If you have been using a older verion of Otto, rename your OM.INI file to CO.INI. You may also wish to copy the icon files (.ICO) to whereever you placed CO.EXE.
Launch CO.EXE from the program manager, the file manager, put it in the Startup Group of program, or include it in the run= or load= line of your WIN.INI file.

Using Chez Otto
CO comes with slots for 10 iconic buttons across the top of the display window, a second row of 5 preconfigured buttons underneath, a center group of 20 configurable radio buttons, and 5 page icons along the bottom of the window. At the center - left is space for a logo of your choice.

Use the top row of icons to access various Windows and DOS programs. You can configure the icons to launch any programs you wish. If you use the sample CO.INI file included with the.zip file, the first and second icons will launch the Program manager and File manager respectively along with other standard Window's utilities. You can configure the icons to launch DOS applications too - and associate an icon file

with the DOS application. More on that later.

The second row of 5 icons represent preset functions:

     * DOS prompt
     * Run a program dialog
     * See free drive space
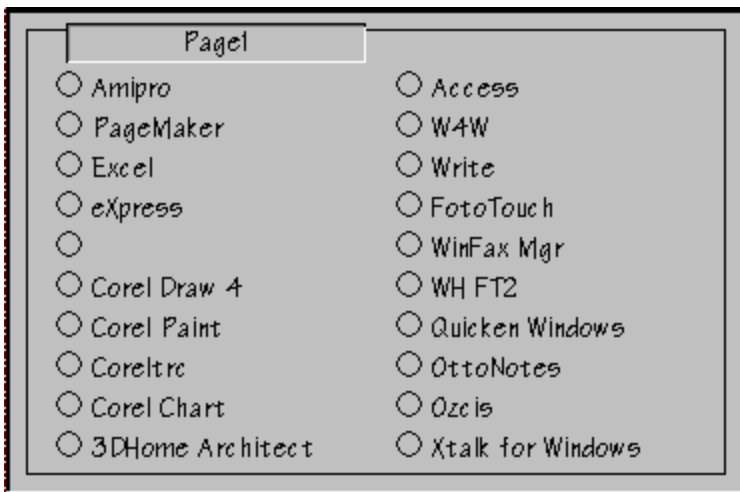   * Get Help on Chez O'
     * Exit! Windows

To activate a function or program, just press the button.

The text box on the right displays either free memory, the current video mode, or date/time.

The memory display lists the free Global memory , %Free of User Segment , and % Free of GDI segment memory. The display is regularly updated 30 seconds or so. It is also recomputed whenever you click a page icon along the bottom of the window. To switch between the various displays, just click the text box with the right mouse button. The video mode reports the logical screen size in pixels, and the color depth in **BPP** (bits per pixel).

The middle of the window contains 20 radio buttons which launch Windows and DOS programs, or batch files. You will need to configure these items to suit your own needs.

The page icons at the bottom let you access additional 'pages' of 20 items. There are 5 pages for a total of 100 possible program items. You can use the default 'page' icons supplied with CO.EXE or create your own. Here's a sample set I use:

At the right side of the program items is a small button labeled 'E'. Use this button to quickly exit **chez**

Otto.

Configuring Program Items
CO lets you configure its various apects by setting the 'properties' of visible objects on the screen. In general there are two ways to set these properties:

* you can click on the item with the right mouse button to activate a properties dialog, or (where it makes sense)
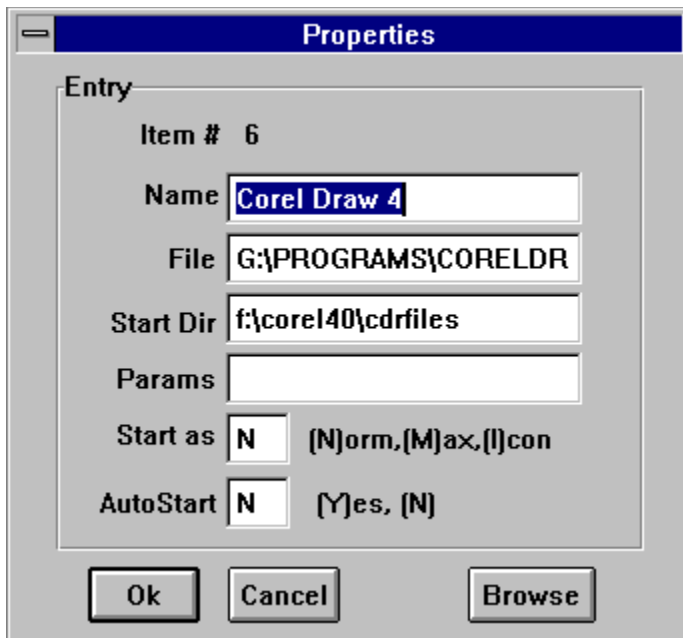* you can drag a file from the file manager window and 'drop' it on the item you wish to set.

Using the Properties Dialog:
Click on the item you wish to set with the right mouse button to activate the properties dialog. What can you set? -- well, just about everything you see in the Chez Otto window will respond to a right mouse button click. Here's what you can configure:

* 10 program icons along top
* Program radio buttons (20 for each page)
* DOS shell icon to specify dos shell program (command.com, 4DOS, or whatever)
* Background color (try the custom color dialog for fun)
* Center logo (must be a .BMP file.)
* Sculpted text display - memory or video mode display
* Global Options (click the Chez Otto title bar!)
* Page Text (click a page icon in lower left corner and change "Name" entry)
* Page Icon (click a page icon in lower left corner and change "File" entry)

See the next section for info about configuring the global options.

To set up program items right-click an icon or radio button, and answer the entries in the properties box. You'll see a dialog box with six fields for entry .

If an entry already exists for an item, the remaining fields will be filled with the existing data.

Name: enter the text you want displayed next to the radio button. Brevity is needed - no more than 20

characters.

File and Start Dir: enter respectively the filename of the program and the starting directory. If the .exe file is in the path, you can omit the path, otherwise give the complete pathname in the File box. The Start Dir is optional - CO will change to the Start Dir just before launching the program if you supply one.

Params: enter any parameters you wish to pass to the program such as a filename or command switch. These depend upon the particular application you are using.

Start As: entry lets you request that the application start normal, maximized, or iconized. Whether this actually happens depends upon the application - it can choose to honor the request or not!

AutoStart: will have CO automatically launch this application as part of its own startup.

Browsing for applications

If you click the Browse Button, a file dialog box opens that lets you navigate the disk and locate the program file you wish to use. After you find it and select it, choose OK, and the full pathname will be entered into the File field (as well as a Name entry based on the filename). You may want to change the Name field, but this is a quick way to find an application without memorizing the pathname.

Path Considerations

Although OTTO lets you specify a full pathname for the program file and a different starting directory, your application may not support that arrangement. Typically, programs that use link libraries need to be either in the DOS path (before Windows starts) or start in the directory that contains the link libraries. Under Windows 3.1 this requirement is mostly overcome - you may need to experiment however. To accommodate this, change the path or make sure that the Start Dir entry is set to the directory containing the program and link libraries.

Using Drag&Drop:

The icons, radio buttons, and the logo can also be configured using drag and drop. For this magic to work you need to have the Win 3.1 file manager running. To configure an item, find the file in question in File Manager, click and drag the 'filename' from the File Manager window, and drop it on the target item in CO. CO will use the full pathname of the dropped file, construct a program item name from the root name, and store the info in your configuration file. If you 'dropped' on an icon button, the button will redraw to reflect the new program; if you reconfigured a radio button, the text will change to the new program name. If you drop on the logo, the new bitmap image will be drawn.

If you need to set the starting directory, change the program item name, or any other property, use the right-click method to bring up the properties box.

Moving Items:

You also move items using Drag&Drop. Hold down the shift key and click the item you wish to move - the cursor changes to an up arrow. Move the cursor to the new item (still holding down the shift key), and 'drop' on the new item. The old item will be moved to the new item. You can do this between the 10 iconic buttons and the radio buttons. If you wish to change pages, move the cursor over the page icon you wish to go to, and the page will change.

Item Templates:

You can use a template in place of an actual file name for a program items, and Chez O' will display a selection dialog to let you choose the actual file/document to launch. This option lets you group several items under one menu item. For example, you might have the following:

         Name: 'Search Utilities'
         File: '*.exe'
         StartDir: 'c:\util'

When you click on 'Search Utilities', Chez O' will put up a file selection dialog displaying all the **.exe** files in the c:\util directory. Select one, and it will be started.

Associations:
You can use a 'document name' in place of a program file if you have established an 'association' for the document type with Windows. This would include all document types registered with the OLE registration database.
For example, if you have registered '**.sam**' as belonging to Ami Pro, you can use

Name:	'Book Chapter 1'
File:	c:\book\'ch1.sam'
StartDir	'c:\book'

to launch Ami Pro with the **ch1.sam** document.

Iconic Buttons & DOS Programs:
The top row of 10 iconic buttons build their image from the icons stored in the program files. If you configure a button to run a DOS program (.exe,.com, .bat, .pif) Chez Otto will look for an .ICO file with the *same* root name and path, read the icon file, and display the image on the button surface. For example, if you run Paradox from the C:\pdox45\paradox.exe directory, Otto will look for c:\pdox45\paradox.ico when it starts up. On the other hand, if you start Paradox using the PIF file d:\windows\pdox.pif, then CO will look for d:\windows\pdox.ico. Under this scheme you should follow these conventions:

   * Always supply a full path for the 'DOS' program file
   * Use only 16 color 32 by 32 bit icons (the usual)
   * Only one icon per .ICO file

DOS Icon
This icon starts up a DOS window. If you wish to specify the command shell program (command.com or 4DOS, for example) or the starting directory, use the right-mouse button to set the 'program' name to whatever shell you wish. The default is **command.com**.

Page Text & Icons:
CO supplies 5 default icons to represent the 'pages' of the menu. You can change these icons if desired by setting the properties of the icon. If you right click the icon in question, and set the 'file' option to a .ICO icon file, CO will use that icon. If you set the 'name' field CO will display that text in the sculpted box above the radio buttons. See the discussion above re suitable formats for .ICO files.

Configuring Chez Otto
Text Fonts:
Right clicking the CO title bar and choosing 'SetFont' puts up a font selection dialog. Whatever you choose will be used to display the text in CO. I've found that TrueType fonts generally display better than ATM ones if you choose a decorative typeface such as **Architect.**

Maximum Page Number
If you find CO takes to long to startup, you can speed up the process by reducing the number of 'pages' that are displayed. To change the number of pages, enter a number between 1 and 5. You will have to restart chez O' for the changes to take effect.

When you reduce the number of pages, chez O' does not delete the program items - it just skips them while loading. Thus, you can recover the 'lost' pages by just increasing the Maximum Page Number and restarting.

Custom Configuration Files
CO uses a default configuration file, CO.INI, located in your main Windows directory. This file contains all the properties and choices which you have setup. It can become fairly large, as CO supports 110 configurable program items as well as several other properties - all of which are stored in this file. Make sure you back up this file occasionally so that you don't have to rebuild your menu system from scratch if it

becomes damaged. If you wish to use an alternate configuration file, just specify it on the command line that startsup up CO (e.g. *co.exe c:\sc\doug.ini* would start CO using the configuration file *doug.ini* in c:\sc). This way you can have several versions of CO tailored to various needs.

"E" Button
You can choose to not display the small "E" button used to **Exit** chez Otto. Manually edit the CO.INI file with a text editor, and make the following entry (on a line by itself):

Exit=0

You can put the line anywhere in the file you choose. Be sure to save the file as an ASCII text file.

Logo
CO will display a logo of your choice to the left of the program item radio buttons. The maximum visible area is approximately 175 by 175 pixels. If you configure a larger bitmap, it will be clipped on the right and bottom sides to 175 by 175. Since it takes time to load the image when CO starts up, you might want to limit your bitmap to approximately this size to minimize the delay.

CO can read only Win 3.0 (and 3.1) compatible .BMP files. It supports 2, 16, and 256 color bitmaps. OTTO looks for a default filename of COLOGO.BMP in the startup directory.

How can I create my own Logo? There are many options here. Take your favorite wallpaper file, edit it using PaintBrush to the size you want, and you're ready to roll. Since PaintBrush also reads .PCX files, you can do the same with those too - just remember to save the file in .BMP format. If you use WINGIF, ShowGIF, PaintShop , or DODOT (among others), you can convert .GIF files to the .BMP format and perform your artistry. AND, of course, you can draw your own from scratch using PaintBrush, Corel Draw, Arts & Letters, or Designer. In the end, of course, you must produce a .BMP file - ideally one that is about 150 by 150 pixels. Take a look at the sample COlogo.bmp file using PaintBrush - and get to work on your own creation.!

General
Limitations/Notes:
The class libraries used by Chez Otto are incompatible with the "Launch" feature of the original 1.0 release of Norton Desktop for Windows. CO is written in Borland Pascal - earlier verions were in C and Openscript. The various iconic buttons build their images from the disk when COstarts up - there's some overhead involved which translates to a few seconds wait. Chez Otto was previously known as Ottomenu - that name has been dropped to avoid confusion with the similar sounding Automenu. Please do not distribute any of the prior versions of Chez Otto. My favorite cat was named **Otto**.

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Disclaimer
Chez Otto comes with no warranties. You use it entirely at your own risk. It may or may not be suitable for your setup and needs.

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Comments, Problems
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