ViaCommander

v1.0

Instructions and Notes

(Special thanks to G.L. Alston of **Alston Software Labs** for Beta testing :)

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

IBM Compatible Computer with an 80286, 386, 486, or Pentium
         processor running Microsoft Windows 3.1 or higher.
A hard disk drive.
A mouse is required.

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        the creation of 75 Application Buttons (the shareware
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        Choose to have any application "always on top"!

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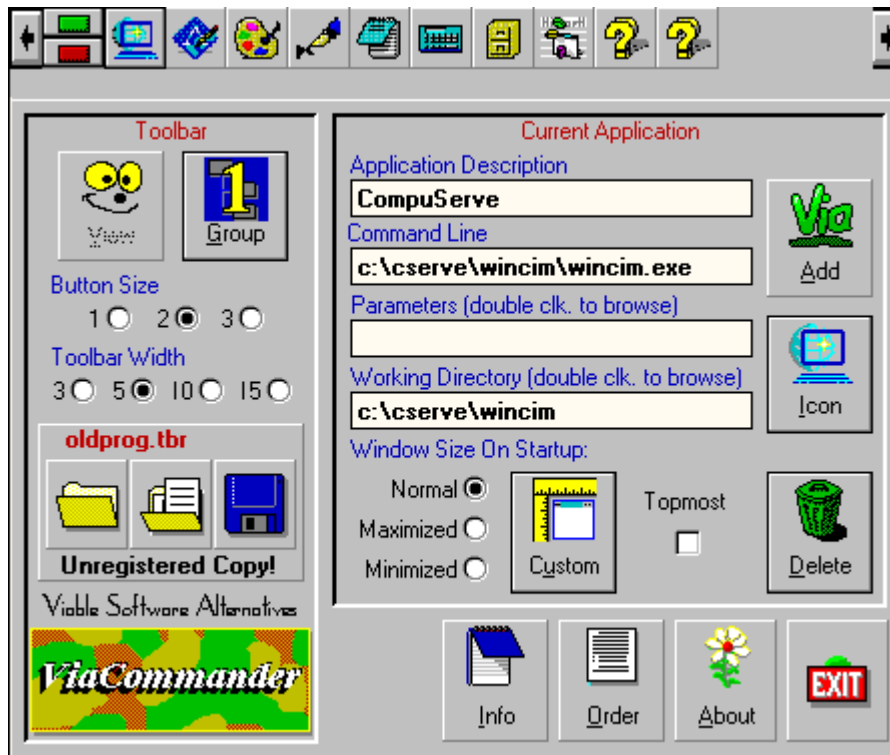**ST14 5DE**

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An order form is provided under the file name "ORDER.TXT".
You can Open this file using Windows Notepad and print it. I can
be contacted via CompuServe at:

Casey Butler, 72043,46

You can also register via CompuServe by entering "GO
SWREG" and requesting product 2194...

Thanks for trying ***ViaCommander***!

==== *I N S T R U C T I O N S* ====

ViaCommander is an invaluable Application Manager that creates a toolbar which is "always on top", making application switching as easy as a button press.

Once you create an Application Button for the **ViaCommander** Toolbar, you're only one click away from using it. If that application isn't yet running in Windows, clicking on its button will cause it to be loaded... if it IS loaded, clicking on its button will bring that application's window to the FRONT, making it the active window.

For example, you can create three Windows Write Buttons, with each loading in a separate document, each Write window maximized. To go from one document to the other just press that document's button on the **ViaCommander** toolbar... no more "switch to" or endless minimizing and maximizing!

Even better, **ViaCommander** allows you to launch your applications in Application GROUPS, their size and position PREDEFINED - so they always come up on the screen the same!

ViaCommander is going to save you work and finger wear!

The *ViaCommander* Button Controls

After installing **ViaCommander** as an icon in your Program Manager (see README.TXT for instructions), double click on the **ViaCommander** icon.

ViaCommander's first appearance on your screen should be as a Toolbar containing Windows utilities like Write, Paintbrush, and Notepad. On the left side of the Toolbar you'll see two buttons stacked vertically - a GREEN BUTTON and a RED BUTTON. The red button is the **ViaCommander** Control Button. Its sole purpose is to toggle **ViaCommander** between two modes: "Toolbar Mode" and "Button Edit Mode".

The green button above the Control Button is the Title Bar Button. This is used to toggle the title bar on and off: on so you can move the Toolbar - off to save screen area.

When **ViaCommander** first executes it is in Toolbar Mode.

Click on the red Control Button and the Button Edit Window will replace the Toolbar.

> **NOTE:** The Edit Window is set to always be "On Top" - this means it will cover any application you have up on the screen until you toggle **ViaCommander** back into Toolbar Mode.

The controls you'll see when **ViaCommander** enters Button Edit Mode - and their functions - are as follows:

The Toolbar

Lined up along the top of the Button Edit Window are all the Application Buttons that make up your Toolbar.

The Title Bar Control Button

The green Title Bar Button on the Toolbar places a "Title Bar" on the **ViaCommander** Toolbar. The Title Bar allows you to move your Toolbar to the any location on your screen.

The best and least obtrusive position for the Toolbar is at the top of the screen. If you reduce the Toolbar's size (using the "Button Size" control) it will be about the size of a Windows application's own title bar - so it won't cover any of the application's functions.

Example: With **ViaCommander** toggled to the Edit Window, click on the green Control Button. A Title bar will appear on the Edit Window.   Now use the red Control Button to toggle

ViaCommander to Toolbar Mode - the *ViaCommander* Toolbar will appear with a Title Bar.

Hold the mouse cursor down on the Title Bar and move the *ViaCommander* Toolbar to the location on the screen where you want it. When *ViaCommander* is placed in the location of your choice you can leave the Title Bar up - or you can press the green Control Button to turn the title bar off.

ViaCommander takes up less space without a title bar.

ViaCommander Toolbar Functions

The "Group" And "View" Command Buttons

For an explanation of these buttons see below under "CREATING AN APPLICATION GROUP.

The "Button Size" Option Buttons

These buttons change the size of the Toolbar Buttons. There are three sizes available:

> Size 1: With this size selected, your application icons will be displayed on their Toolbar actual size.
>
> Size 2: This size is slightly smaller though easier to see than Size 3.
>
> Size 3: The smallest size and most unobtrusive. This size makes the toolbar the same size as application title bars.

The "Toolbar Size" Option Buttons

These buttons determine how many Toolbar Buttons are displayed on the toolbar in *ViaCommander*'s ToolBar Mode.

The "New Toolbar" Command Button

This is the button with the picture of the empty file folder on it. When you press this all Toolbar Buttons are deleted. If the current toolbar has been changed you will be reminded that it needs saving.

The "Open Toolbar" Command Button

This button is represented by a picture of a FULL file folder. Use this option to load in previously saved Toolbars.

The "Save Toolbar" Command Button

This button is represented by a picture of a floppy disk. Use this option to save your Toolbar.

> **NOTE:** You can load a Toolbar file into *ViaCommander* on startup by adding the file's path and name to your command line entry in the PROPERTIES Window of the Windows Program Manager.

ViaCommander Application Button Functions

The "Application Description" Text Box

Text entered here serves as a description to remind you of the application the current Toolbar Button represents. You can enter any text here. If the current button is assigned to Windows Notepad, for example, you'd enter "Notepad" in the Application Description Text Box.

The "Command Line" Text Box

This is where the command line associated with the currently selected button is displayed. The application whose path and file name appears here is the one that will be executed or activated when that button is pressed. This line is filled automatically after selecting an .EXE, .HLP, or .PIF file.

The "Command Line Parameters" Text Box

Here is where you'll enter command line parameters that will be passed to your application when it is executed. An example of a valid parameter would be the path and file name of a document when the application to be run is a word processor. Most applications will automatically load the file that is passed to it as a parameter. You can double click on this box - bringing up a "browse" File Window to assist you in locating a file to be used as a parameter.

The "Working Directory" Text Box

A working directory is the directory an application defaults to upon startup. The directory entered here must be a valid PATH. You can double click on this box - bringing up a "browse" File Window to assist you in locating a directory.

The "Add" Button Command Button

When you press this button a File Window will appear. Use this to maneuver through you directories and find the application to be started when the Toolbar Button you are adding is pressed (with *ViaCommander* in Toolbar Mode).

Use the list box at the bottom of the File Window to select the .EXE, .HLP, or .PIF file you want *ViaCommander* to activate.

> **NOTE:** Help Files are treated differently in *ViaCommander* - the application that displays Help Files is called "winhelp.exe". Because of this, when you select "Add .HLP" and choose a file - "winhelp.exe" is entered in the Toolbar Button's Command Line text box, and the Help File itself is entered in the Command Line Parameter text box.

The "Icon" Button

Use this button to change the icon displayed on a Toolbar Button. When you create a Toolbar Button for an application using Add "Button" command button, *ViaCommander* automatically displays that application's default icon here.

The Icon Button allows you to change that icon if you wish.

PIF files, for example, HAVE no icon - so you'll need to add one to distinguish it from other Toolbar Buttons. First click on the Toolbar Button whose Icon you wish to change, then click on the Icon Button (or drag that button to the Icon Button and drop it on top). Use the Icon Viewer that pops up to locate and select the new Icon.

The "Delete Button" Command Button

Pressing this button will cause the currently selected button to be removed from the *ViaCommander* Toolbar. Alternatively, you can "drag" the Toolbar button over the Delete Button and "drop" it in the trash can.

The "Window Size" Option Buttons

How these option buttons are set for each Toolbar application determines how that application's window will initially appear on the screen. Select "Normal", "Maximized", or "Minimized".

> **NOTE:** The CUSTOM SIZE BUTTON - Pressing this button (or dragging a Toolbar Button here and dropping it) causes *ViaCommander* to record the current size of an application's window (THE APPLICATION MUST HAVE BEEN STARTED FROM *ViaCommander* FOR

THIS TO WORK). All subsequent activations of the application's Toolbar Button will bring the application's window up on the screen at this size.

The *ViaCommander* Command Buttons

In the bottom-right hand corner and right side of *ViaCommander*'s Edit Window are grouped more program functions.

They are:

The "Info" Command Button

Selecting this button will display *ViaCommander*'s documentation files.

The "Order" Command Button

Press this often! An order blank will appear. Fill it out and print it regularly!

The "About" Command Button

Puts my name on the screen. :)

The "Quit" Command Button

This will end the current instance of *ViaCommander* and remove the Toolbar from your screen.

Creating An Application GROUP

The "Group" Command Button allows "Groups" of Toolbar Buttons to be created. You can activate up to 10 applications at once by grouping them in a Group Toolbar Button.

To create a group, "drag" the Toolbar Button of the first Application to be included in the group - to the Group Button and "drop" it on top. This will cause the currently selected button to be added to the new *ViaCommander* Group.

The Group Button will now have a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 on it, representing which group you're using. *ViaCommander* Deluxe allows Six groups, the shareware version only one.

Keep adding Toolbar Buttons (applications) to your group in this way until you have all that you need.

> **NOTE:** If you want an application to load "sized and positioned" specially, you must size it PRIOR to adding its Toolbar Button to the group. Adding a button to the group in effect COPIES all the application information from that button into a group button.

When you've add all the applications to the group that you need, DRAG the Group Button up to the Toolbar and place it where you want it to be. You can now add a Description or change the Icon if you wish. Once a Group Button has been added to the Toolbar it can be treated almost like any Toolbar Button.

A step by step example of how to create custom-sized application windows that are activated at the touch of a Group Toolbar Button:

> 1. With *ViaCommander* in Edit Mode, add the Toolbar Buttons for all the applications you wish to include in your group - using the "Add" Button.

> 2. Toggle *ViaCommander* to ToolBar Mode and activate each application from *ViaCommander* - then size and position each one where you want it on the screen.

> 3. Return to Edit Mode and drag each Toolbar Button (the ones belonging to the applications you activated) to the Custom Size Button. This step allows *ViaCommander* to record the application windows' current size and position.

> 4. Return to Toolbar Mode. Now CLOSE all applications that are to be added to the group.

> 5. Finally, toggle once more to Edit Mode and drag all of your application Toolbar Buttons (the ones to be included in the group) over to the Group Command Button and drop them - one at a time.

> **NOTE:** The order in which you drag and drop application buttons is the order in which the actual applications will be activated from *ViaCommander*. The last application added will be the active window after the entire group is launched.

6.   When all the applications have been add to the Group, drag the Group Button up to the Toolbar and drop it!

7.   You can view the command lines of the Application Toolbar Buttons included in the group by selecting the their new Group Button on the Toolbar - then clicking on the "View" Command Button.

That's it!

Other Stuff

ViaCommander has not been tested with program managers other than Windows own PROGMAN.EXE.

To change the order in which buttons appear on the Toolbar, you can "drag" them to their new location...

Although I know of none as of this writing, any reported bugs will be cleaned up, removed, and updated in the registered version. Thanks.
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