Plug-In for Program Manager Help Index

Plug-In for Program Manager (Plug-In) is an enhancement utility that adds to and dramatically improves upon the feature set of the Windows Program Manager.   Instead of replacing Program Manager, Plug-In simply makes it *better!*

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That Tickles!!!

A shell is a control application that starts whenever you start Windows.   It is typically responsible for launching applications and organizing applications and files into logical groups.

Overview

Plug-In for Program Manager (Plug-In) is an enhancement utility that adds to and dramatically improves upon the feature set of Program Manager.   It operates "behind the scenes" and cooperates fully with Program Manager.

Plug-In is unique.   There are several replacement shells on the market, but only Plug-In gives you the same Program Manager you are used to ... only better!

Plug-In works with both Windows 3.0 and Windows 3.1.

Plug-In includes the following features:

- Complete group-file management, including the ability to:

   > Copy groups
   > Instantly Activate / Deactivate groups (Deactivated groups stay on disk, but are
     removed from Program Manager).
   > Reset all group windows to their original positions.
   > Dynamically change the StartUp group.

- The best and easiest way ever to change icons ... much better than what Program
  Manager normally gives you.   Allows visual browsing, and includes a Speed List feature
  to get to your favorite icons in lightning time.

- Each group can be assigned an icon of its own!   In addition,   you can change the default
  group icon.

- Cursors (the standard pointer and the hourglass (wait) cursor)   can be replaced with a
  selection of alternates.

- An enhanced run command, including a history list, browse feature, and various runtime
  options.

- A single menu choice will install a new Windows application.   Just place an installation
  diskette in a drive ... you will be   given a chance to view any ReadMe files prior to
  installation.

- Improved "Exit Windows" dialog also allows you to restart Windows.

- A convenient menu option to "Save Settings Now"

- Enhanced group window commands allow you to minimize all open groups at once, as
  well as do both vertical and horizontal tiling.

- System resources and available memory is constantly displayed on Program Manager
  menu bar and in Program Manager's icon when it is minimized.   (This is fully
  configurable)

- An alarm can be set to warn you of low system resources and/or memory.

- Detailed system information includes system resources, memory, system configuration,
  running applications, Windows up-time, and much more.

- The QuickRun menu provides an easy way to access frequently run applications.

- Full support is provided for Program Manager's Restriction settings.   This is particularly
  value for use by corporate system administrators.

- Complete context-sensitive help is available from all dialogs.   The help file provides a
  complete user's guide for Plug-In.

- Supports standard multimedia sound associations for dialogs and alarms.

- Other features include a customizable shortcut key, fine-grained ProgMan alignment, the
  ability to start ProgMan if not already running, and much more.

Quick Tour

Plug-In is designed to be extremely easy to use, as it is a natural extension to the Windows Program Manager.   Following is a quick tour of some of the more exciting features.   Please refer to the help on individual commands for full details.

o   First of all, keep in mind that Plug-In becomes an integral part of Program Manager. The commands in Plug-In are all accessed directly through Program Manager's menus.

o   Explore the Configure Plug-In dialog for full control over Plug-In's behavior.

o   Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the new commands offered by Plug-In (see Commands for full details).   Note that there are some totally new commands, as well as some existing commands (e.g., Run and Exit) that have been enhanced by Plug-In.

o   Use the Group functions (available in the File / Group menu).   These are very powerful and provide a number of badly needed features in Program Manager.   And, don't forget to take advantage of the external Group utility (see Using the External Group Utility for full details).

o   The next time you have to install a new Windows application, use the "Install Application" command (available on the File menu).

o   Use the Save Settings Now command to organize Program Manager just the way you like and keep it that way!

o   Have fun changing your icons for items and groups (Change Icon) with Plug-In's powerful icon browser.

o   Use System Info!   It's got a lot of information about your Windows environment.   It helps you to understand how your system is configured and how your applications are using memory.

o   Don't forget to take advantage of the two new items in the Windows menu (Tile Horizontally and Minimize All Groups).

Commands (scroll down to see more)

Note: Pressing the Help button or the F1 key while in a Plug-In dialog will bring up the help screen for that dialog.

File Menu

Groups / Copy
Groups / Manage
Groups / Reposition
Groups / StartUp
Change Icon
Run
Install Application
Exit Windows

Options Menu

Save Settings Now
System Info
Configure Plug-In
Register Me!

Window Menu

Tile Horizontally
Minimize All Groups

Help Menu

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About Plug-In

Groups / Copy *(3.1 Only)*

Makes a copy of an existing group and adds it to Program Manager.

To Copy a Group:

1) Select an existing group from the list presented.

2) Enter a description for the new group.   This should be unique.

3) Optionally enter a group file name.   This is not required as Plug-In will automatically create a unique file name.

Groups / Manage

Allows instant activation and deactivation of individual groups.   Deactivated groups remain on disk, but are removed from Program Manager.

Group management is a powerful feature of Plug-In.   By controlling which groups are active at any given time, you can reduce clutter in Program Manager.

Following are some scenarios where Group Management is particularly useful:

1) You will find that most Windows applications will create a new group when they are installed.   Often, there will be several items in the group, but you may find that you only use one or two of them regularly.   You might wish to add the main application item to another group (e.g., Windows Applications) and deactivate the new group.   If you ever need any of the other items in the group, simply reactivate it.

2) Some programs / files are not needed on a daily basis.   Deactivating less frequently used groups reduces clutter on your Program Manager desktop, saves memory, and reduces the loadtime of Program Manager.

3) If you are using Windows 3.0, each group can consume a large amount of system resources.   Deactivating unneeded groups will reduce this resource drain.

Using the External Group Utility

Group Management Vs. Nested Groups

Hint: If you hold down the shift key while closing an existing group (select close from the group's system menu), the group will be deactivated.

Note: Don't confuse Group Deactivation with the File / Delete operation.   When you delete a group in Program Manager, it is gone for good (i.e., removed from disk).   Plug-In's Group Management allows you activate and deactivate groups without deleting them from disk.

Using the External Group Utility

The Group Utility is an external program you can use to activate and deactivate groups.

Plug-In includes a separate, external utility (GROUP.EXE), which can be used to activate and deactivate groups.   You can easily create an item in a group that will activate / deactivate a specific group.   This is almost like having access to nested groups!

Usage:

GROUP ACTivate groupname

GROUP DEACTivate groupname

i.e., "group act Windows Applications" will activate the group Windows Applications, and "group deact Accessories" will deactivate the group Accessories.

If the group cannot be activated or deactivated, a system beep will be heard.

Group Management Vs. Nested Groups

You may be curious why Plug-In does not support nested groups (i.e., groups within groups).   Nested groups are popular in other third-party shells, and are a nice way to organize your programs and files.   However, the philosophy of Plug-In is to enhance Program Manager without getting rid of it.   As there was not a stable, consistent method of implementing nested groups within the confines of Program Manager, the designers of Plug-In opted to use Group Management instead.   After working with the Group Management features, you will find that it provides a high degree of flexibility in organizing your programs and files.

Groups / Reposition *(3.1 Only)*

Repositions all groups to their original positions (at the time of the last save)

This command will reposition all the groups to their saved positions.   This is particularly useful if you have resized a lot of group windows (through tiling / cascading, etc.) and your Program Manager desktop is a mess.

Note: This command will not reposition the items <u>inside</u> of a group, unless you have Auto Arrange enabled (under the Options menu)

Note: This command will also reposition Program Manager's main window to it's saved position.

Groups / StartUp *(3.1 Only)*

Changes (or disables) the designated StartUp group that will be executed when Windows starts.

The StartUp group is a special group where all the items contained within it are executed when Windows is started.   This is useful for programs or utilities that you always want running.   For example, you may wish the File Manager and Calendar to be run whenever you start Windows.   Simply copy them to the StartUp group by holding the control key down while dragging the item from the original group to the StartUp group.

The default StartUp group is named StartUp.   However, with the StartUp dialog you can select any group to be the StartUp group.   For example, you might wish to assign a different group as your StartUp group while working on a particular project.

If you wish to temporarily disable your StartUp group, simply select <<No StartUp Group>> from the StartUp dialog.

Change Icon

Changes the icon for a group or item (also used to browse for cursors)

The Change Icon dialog is a powerful and easy way to change the icon assigned to a group or item.

Please note the usage of the Change Icon dialog in the following situations:

- When changing the icon for an **item** inside of a group.   Select (highlight) the item in the group and then select Change Icon.

- When changing the icon for a **group**.   Select (highlight) the group and then select Change Icon.

- When changing the **default group icon**.   Select the Default Group Icon button in the Configure Plug-In dialog (accessed via the Options menu in Program Manager).

- When browsing for a **cursor**.   Select the Browse button in the Custom Cursors dialog (accessed via the Configure Plug-In dialog).

Note that the title of the Change Icon dialog will reflect the current operation.

Editing and using the Speed List

Using the Default Icon button

Shortcut key: Alt+I

Note: Don't confuse Plug-In's Change Icon command with the under powered Change Icon provided inside of Program Manager's Properties dialog.

Editing and Using the Speed List

Use the Speed List to gain lightning-fast access to your icon collection.

The Speed List is a simple helper which lets you get access to your icon collections with lightning speed.

To use a Speed List entry, simply select an item from the dropdown list in the Change Icon dialog.   You will instantly be "transported" to the location specified by the Speed List.

To edit the Speed List, select the "Edit Speed List" button inside of the Change Icon dialog. In the Path field, you can enter either a full path to an icon or icon library (e.g., C:\ WINDOWS\PROGMAN.EXE) or you can enter a path without a filename (e.g., C:\MYICONS). Selecting the Paste button will paste the currently selected icon or icon library in the Path field.

You may have up to 15 Speed List entries.

Using the Default Icon button

The Default Icon button resets an icon to it's original (default) icon.

Item Icon

The default icon for an item is the first icon which appears in an application's executable file.   For example, if you change the icon of File Manager and later want to reset it to it's original icon, simply select the Default Icon button.

Group Icon

When changing a group icon, selecting the Default Icon button will reset the icon to whatever you have defined as the Default Group Icon.

Default Group Icon

When changing the Default Group Icon, selecting the Default Icon button will reset the Default Group Icon to Program Manager's default.

Run

An enhanced run command with a history list, browse, and run-options

The Run command is used to start applications and/or open documents.

Each time you enter a run command, it is saved in a history list.   Use the dropdown "Command Line" to access the history list.

You can choose to have the application start in normal, minimized or maximized states.

If you don't know the name of the application or document, selecting the Browse button will bring up the Browse dialog.   If you enter a path without a filename and end it with a backslash, the Browse command will automatically switch to that directory.   For example, you could enter "C:\WINDOWS\" in the command line and select Browse to view the files in the Windows directory.

The Run command has full support for application associations.   For example, if you enter "README.TXT" in the command line, this file will be loaded into NotePad.

Using the QuickDOS Feature

Shortcut Key: Alt+R

Using the QuickDOS Feature

QuickDOS executes a DOS command (including DOS internal commands) directly from within the Run dialog.

You can use the QuickDOS feature of the Run Command to quickly execute a DOS command.   For example, you can enter "del c:*.tmp" in the Command Line, check the QuickDOS box, and press enter.   This will create a DOS command shell and execute the command line you specified.

Some examples:

1) Enter "dir a:*.doc" in the "Command Line" and select QuickDOS.   Doing a quick directory list in DOS might often be quicker than using File Manager for some tasks.

2) Enter "Copy c:\mydocs*.doc a:\savedocs" and select QuickDOS.   You might select "Run Minimized" and put this in the QuickRun menu.   Then you could do backups of your documents quickly and in the background (assuming you are running Windows in Enhanced mode).

You can use the QuickDOS feature when you define items in the QuickRun menu.

Install Application

Runs an installation program, while first allowing you to view any ReadMe files.

Most manuals for Windows applications instruct you to select File / Run and then enter "A:\INSTALL.EXE" (or something similar) to start the installation process.   With the "Install Application" command, installing a new program is a cinch!

Just place a diskette in either drive A or B and select the "Install Application" command. If there are any ReadMe files on the diskette, you will be given a chance to view these **before** proceeding with the installation (in general, it is highly recommended that you always read the ReadMe files!).

If the installation program is located in another location than drive A or B, a dialog, <u>Install Path</u>, will prompt you for the location of the installation program and files.

"Install Application" will look for either SETUP.EXE or INSTALL.EXE.   If Plug-In can't find an installation program on your application diskette, please refer to the installation instructions that came with the new product.

Install Path

Prompts for the location of the installation program and files.

Simply enter the path (no filename) where the install program can be found.   For example, you might enter, "J:\APPINST" if you are installing from a network drive.

Exit Windows

Exit or Restart Windows.

This command will allow you to end your Windows session.   You are given the option of saving your Program Manager settings prior to exiting.   However, you might find it easier to create your environment the way you like it and select the <u>Save Settings Now</u> command.

You are also given the option to Restart Windows.   This will restart your Windows session without returning to the DOS prompt and is quicker than exiting Windows and typing "win" again to restart.   This can be useful under a number of circumstances.   Many (particularly older) applications don't properly free system resources.   If you notice your system resources dropping over time, restarting Windows will get back those lost resources.   Also, if you find Windows becoming unstable for any reason, restarting it might be prudent.

Save Settings Now

Saves the current state of Program Manager's desktop configuration.

The only documented way to save your Program Manager settings is to select "Save Settings On Exit."   However, you will often find that your Program Manager desktop is a mess when you wish to exit and you don't want it saved.

The "Save Settings Now" command gives you a convenient way to organize Program Manger just the way you like and save it in that state.   This way, you are always assured of a clean and consistent Program Manager desktop when you start Windows.

It is recommended that you do not use "Save Settings On Exit" (on the Options menu in Program Manager for Windows 3.1).   You will find it much more "cleaner" to organize Program Manager the way you like and select "Save Settings Now" to save it.   This way you are assured that Program Manager will always start in the same, organized state.

An additional advantage of turning off "Save Settings On Exit" is that exiting Windows will be significantly faster!

If you find that your Program Manager groups have become a mess (e.g., you tiled / cascaded the groups) and you want to revert to your clean, saved state, simply select Groups / Reposition.

System Info

Displays information on Windows up-time, system configuration, memory utilization, and active Windows applications.

Windows Up Time

   The first item tells you how long (in days, minutes, and seconds) Windows has been active.   This is the amount of time since you last loaded Windows.   Just think ... now you can have a contest with your friends and fellow workers to see who can keep Windows alive the longest!

System

   The system information consists of DOS version, Windows version and operating mode, Mouse type, Network type, Video resolution and number of colors supported, and Processor type and whether or not a math coprocessor is present.

Memory

   The memory information consists of the percentage free of the USER and GDI <u>heaps</u> and the total amount of memory available.   The amount of Free System Resources is calculated as the lower value of the USER and GDI heaps.   These heaps should ideally be completely irrelevant to a non-programmer.   However, due to limitations on the size of the heaps, it turns out that Windows often runs out of heap space before running out of physical memory.   The USER heap is used to store things like windows structures and menus, while the GDI heap is used for graphical things like pens, brushes, regions, bitmaps, etc.

   The <u>Detail Button</u> will bring up a dialog of further memory information.   Note that this button is enabled for Windows enhanced mode only.

Windows Applications

   The listbox of Windows Applications shows active Windows apps.   If there is an <H> infront of the application's name, this means that it's main window is hidden.   Various system utilities frequently hide their main windows.   As you select each application, the amount of memory it is occupying will be displayed to the right of the listbox. Discardable memory is the amount of memory that Windows can get rid of when it needs more memory for another application.   Keep in mind that most applications will require a good portion of the discarded memory back when they are made active again.

A heap is a memory area that a program uses (directly or indirectly) for storage of dynamic information.

System Info / Memory Details

Provides details on memory configuration and utilization (Enhanced mode only)

Physical Memory

This section gives you details on how the actual memory on your computer is being utilized.

"Total Memory" is the amount of memory installed on your system.   The first figure is in kilobytes (1024 bytes is equal to 1 KB).   The second figure is the number of megabytes (1024 kilobytes is equal to 1 MB), and may be rounded up or down to adjust for small anomalies in the way the memory is used by your system.   If you have an EMS board, the amount of EMS memory on the board will not be included in this total.

"Managed By DOS" includes all memory "owned / managed" by DOS before Windows is started.   Many things can be included in DOS memory, including DOS itself, Smart Drive, TSR's, etc.   If you start DOS applications from within Windows, the memory used by the DOS app is taken from the Windows memory pool.

"Managed by Windows" includes all memory "owned / managed" by Windows.

Virtual Memory

"Swap File Size" is the actual size of your swap file.   A swap file is a disk-based file that is used to swap (or page) chunks of memory to when the system is low on memory.   A swap file is used by Windows when running in 386-Enhanced mode.   Using a swap file can allow you to run many more programs than can actually fit in your physical memory, and is a big benefit of the advanced Intel processors.   Swap files are setup using the Control Panel (386 Enhanced icon).

"Swap Threshold" is an indicator of whether or not you are actively swapping to disk. If this value is very small or negative, there is a good chance that you are actively swapping memory.   You may not notice much activity until you switch to an application that has been dormant for some time ... at which point you may notice the disk chugging.   If it seems that your applications have slowed down substantially, take a look at the swap threshold.   While virtual memory (swapping) is of substantial benefit, it does tend to slow things down a bit.

Configure Plug-In

Configures and customizes Plug-In to suit your specific needs.

CheckBox options

Run Plug-In when Windows starts **(recommended)**

This will configure Plug-In so that it automatically starts whenever Windows is started. Under Windows 3.1, Plug-In is added to the StartUp group.   Under Windows 3.0,   Plug-In is added to the "Load=" line in the win.ini file.

If you use lots of different StartUp groups (Groups / StartUp), you might wish to start Plug-In via the "Load=" line instead of placing it in each StartUp group.

Default: On

Minimize Program Manager when Plug-In starts

This will force Program Manager to be minimized when Plug-In is started.

Default: Off

Enable menubar display of memory / system resources

This will enable the display of memory and system resources on Program Manager's menubar (on the right-hand side).   This display is of the form "xx.xxmb / yy%" where xx.xxmb represents the number of megabytes of free memory available, and yy% represents the percentage of free system resources.

Default: On

Allow fine-grain Program Manager window alignment (3.1 Only)

Windows 3.1 Program Manager uses a technique called "byte alignment" that allows for slightly faster drawing of bitmaps within its main window.   However, there is one problem with this method ... the main window of Program Manager cannot be smoothly aligned on the left side of the screen!   Our research has shown that the speed benefits of byte alignment in Program Manager are *very* small on most systems.

To use this feature, check the box, select the OK button, and then position Program Manager's main window exactly where you want it.   If you save Program Manager's settings (Save Settings Now), the window will be automatically repositioned to this saved position whenever Plug-In is started.

Default: Off

Start Program Manager if not already running

This will start Program Manager if it is not already running.   This setting is only valid if Program Manager is **not** your Windows shell.

Default: On

Configuration Dialogs

QuickRun Menu
Default Group Icon
Program Manager Icon
Shortcut Key
Custom Cursors
Set Resource Alarm

Remove Plug-In (Shutdown)

Selecting the "Remove Plug-In (Shutdown)" button will remove Plug-In from memory. Under normal   usage, there is no reason to use this button.

How to Setup and Use the QuickRun Menu

QuickRun places frequently run applications on a separate menu (QuickRun) in Program Manager.

QuickRun is a drop-down menu which is added to Program Manager's main menubar.   It allows you to define menu items for frequently used commands.

Creating a QuickRun menu item is much like adding an item to Program Manager.   You need to define a Command Line, Working Directory (optional), and execution options.

The "Menu Name" is what will appear in the menu to identify an item.   You can place an ampersand (&) in front of a character in the "Menu Name" to create a shortcut key for that menu item (i.e., "&DOS Shell" will show up as "DOS Shell" in the menu and can be accessed quickly by pressing the letter "D" when the menu is displayed).

An idea for a QuickRun menu item would be to use the External Group Utility as a QuickRun item.   For example, you might create an item, "Comm Group" which would activate your communications group.

You may have up to 12 items in the QuickRun menu.

Program Manager Icon

Configure Program Manager's icon

You are given three choices for configuring the Program Manager Icon (the icon displayed when Program Manager's main window is minimized):

1) Default Icon.   This just displays Program Manager's default icon

2) Custom Icon.   This will display a custom icon that you have selected using the Select Icon button.

3) Icon Display of System Resources / Memory.   This will show you the amount of memory available (top half, in megabytes) and the amount of free system resources (bottom half, as a percentage).   You may use the Background Color and Text Color buttons to choose the colors used for this iconic display.   Note that you must choose a solid color for the text from the dialogs (some colors are actually made up of patterned combinations of other colors).   If you choose a patterned color, you simply won't get what you expected.

Default Group Icon

Select an icon to be used as the default for groups.

This dialog allows you to select the default icon that will be displayed for a group within Program Manager.   If you select "Default Icon" from within the Change Icon dialog, it will be reset to Program Manager's internal default icon.

Shortcut Key *(3.1 Only)*

Assign a shortcut key for Program Manager

This allows you to assign a shortcut key for Program Manager itself.   In Windows 3.1, a new feature in Program Manager allows you to assign a shortcut key when you define the properties of an item.   However, there is no straightforward way to define a shortcut key for Program Manager itself.

Default: Control+Alt+P

Custom Cursors

Select customized cursors to replace the standard mouse pointer and hourglass.

This dialog allows you to select custom cursors to replace the standard mouse pointer and hourglass (wait) cursors.

You can select one of the built-in cursors simply by clicking on it and pressing the OK button.   Or, you can browse for an individual cursor file (.CUR).   Plug-In includes several cursor files (and even more when you register!).

If you select, "Activate Custom Cursors When Plug-In Starts" the cursors will be changed automatically every time you start Plug-In.

If you wish to revert to the original cursors, simply select the Reset button.

Set Resource Alarm

This sets an alarm which will display a dialog box if you are low on either memory or system resources.

It is often handy to be warned of low memory or system resources before it becomes a problem.   With the Resource Alarm feature,   a dialog box is displayed if either system resources or memory falls below the trigger values.

The "Alarm Activated" checkbox is used to enable or disable the alarm.

When the alarm is activated, a dialog box will appear showing the current levels and the trigger values for both system resources and memory.   If you press the OK button, the alarm will be reactivated with lowered trigger values (these new trigger values are not retained past the current Windows session).   If the system resources were lower than the trigger value, the new trigger value would be 10% less than the present level.   If the memory was lower than the trigger value, the new trigger value would   be 250K bytes less than the present level.   If you wish, you can choose the "Disable Alarm" button to disable the alarm for the remainder of this Windows session (if you want to re-enable the alarm, return to the Configuration dialog and press OK).

If you are running in enhanced mode and are using a swap file, you might wish to raise the value of the memory trigger to a higher value.

Note that if you set either trigger (memory or system resources) too low, Plug-In might not be able to get the resources to display the dialog box signifying you are low on resources!

Defaults: System Resources, 30%;   Memory, 500KB

Register Me!

Full details and directions on how to register (order) Plug-In for Program Manager.

This brings up the same screen that you see when you first run Plug-In for Program Manager.   It contains full instructions on how to register Plug-In.   Remember that Plug-In is distributed as shareware, also known as "try-before-you-buy" marketing.   **If you continue to use this software, you must buy it!**

Tile Horizontally *(3.1 Only)*

Tiles open group windows so that they are wide rather than tall.

The Window / Tile menu item in Program Manager will tile your group windows in a vertical (taller rather than wider) fashion.   Tile Horizontal allows you to tile the group windows so that they are wide rather than tall.

Minimize All Groups

Minimizes all groups to icons.

This will minimize all open groups to their iconic state.   This is particularly convenient if you have several groups open and they are overlapping each other.

Shortcut Key: Alt+N

Plug-In Help Index

Brings up the help file for Plug-In for Program Manager, starting at the Main Index.

About Plug-In

Displays copyright and version information.

This is your standard About box.   Nothing exciting.   No hidden developer (gang) screens...

Tips & Techniques

Directly Modifying INI-file Settings

This section will describe various INI-file settings that can be modified by the user.   Plug-In provides Please exercise caution when working directly with the INI-file!

[Settings]

Editor=NotePad.exe.

   This defines the text editor that will be used to view ReadMe files when you use the Install Application command.

HideDialogs=1

   If set to 0, you will possibly see a quick flash of Program Manager's Properties dialog when changing an icon using Plug-In's Change Icon command.   You should never need to modify this flag, unless you have problems with a virtual desktop utility (see Tech Notes).

HistoryCount=25

   This is the number of Run commands that will be stored in the history file.   After this number is reached, the oldest command will be discarded.   You can choose a number between 10 and 99.   If you change this value, it is recommended that you delete the PLUGIN.HST file stored in the Windows directory.

MainTimerSecs=3

   Plug-In checks available memory every MainTimerSecs seconds.   It uses this information to update the menubar display and the Program Manager's icon.   It is also used when checking for low memory / resource situations for the Resource Alarm.   You should never need to change this value, but if you wish, you can set it to a value between 1 and 29.

NoOpeningBitmap=0

   If set to 1, this will disable Plug-In's logo bitmap when Plug-In is first started.   This will result in slightly quicker load time (but the bitmap is so nice, so why would you want to disable it?).   This setting is ignored in the unregistered version of Plug-In.

PMWait=15

   This specifies the number of seconds that Plug-In will wait for Program Manager to become active.   Under normal operation, this will never need to be changed. However, if you get a message saying that Program Manager could not be found when you are starting Windows, you can change this to a higher value.

UseSmallFont=0

   If set to 1, this will use a slightly smaller font when you are displaying memory / system resources in Program Manager's icon.

[Group Icons]

Normally, there is no need to modify the settings under Group Icons as you can change a group's icon by using Plug-In's Change Icon command.   However, if you have renamed groups and/or deleted lots of groups, you may wish to directly edit this section to get rid of any unused entries.

Tech Notes

This section contains miscellaneous bits-and-pieces of technical information about Plug-In for Program Manager.

o When installing an application using the "Install Application" command, you will be given a chance to view any ReadMe files on this disk.   The list of valid "ReadMe" file types includes *.TXT, *.DOC, *.WRI, *.1ST, READ.ME, and README.   All of these files will be passed to Windows NotePad (or your text editor of choice), with the exception of files ending in ".WRI" which will be passed to Windows Write.

o It is possible that you might experience a minor annoyance when using one of the older virtual desktop utilities (products that provide you with a desktop larger than your screen and allow you to move around to different points on this large desktop).   If you select "Change Icon" and are switched to a different desktop, you can try two things:

   1) Experiment with the settings in your virtual desktop utility which control auto-switching to a given desktop when an application is activated.

   2) Set "HideDialogs=0" in the PlugIn.INI file (see Directly Modifying INI-file Settings for more information).

o When Plug-In deactivates a group, it always stores the group in the Windows directory (with the extension ".G_P").   If the group is not located in the Windows directory, it will be copied, and when reactivated, will remain in the Windows directory.

o Items with quotes (") in their titles and/or command line will cause Change Icon to fail. In the unlikely event that you have quotes in your item titles / command lines, simply use Program Manager's Properties dialog to change the icon.

o The Windows up-time display (in the System Info dialog) is initialized when Plug-In starts from an internal counter in Windows.   If you load Plug-In when Windows starts, this counter will always be accurate.   However, if you load Plug-In *after* you have spent considerable time in full-screen DOS applications, this counter may be off.   The result will be that the reported Windows up-time will be less than actual.

o Plug-In provides full support for the [Restrictions] settings available with the Windows 3.1 version of Program Manager.   These settings can be of value to system administrators who wish to prevent users from having too much freedom in the Windows environment.

o Do not name a group, "Groups".   If you insist, this will only cause small problems with just the group, "Groups".

o If you are running Windows 3.0, the Groups / Copy, Groups / Reposition, Groups / StartUp, and Tile Horizontal commands as well as the Program Manager Shortcut Key are not available.   If you run Windows in standard mode, the System Info / Memory Details dialog is not available.

o Feel free to modify the QuickRun PIF and BAT files.   They are located in the Windows directory.   PlugInQM.* is used when QuickDOS and minimized are specified. PlugInQN.* is used when QuickDOS and normal/maximized are specified.

o Plug-In files and their uses (this is only a partial list of Plug-In's distribution files.   For a full list, refer to the PACKING.LST file that cam with Plug-In):

   PLUGIN.EXE.   The Plug-In for Program Manager application executable file.

   GROUP.EXE.   The external group utility.   This file is placed in the Windows directory for easy access.

   PLUGIN.HLP.   The Plug-In help file.

PLUGIN.INI.   The configuration file for Plug-In.   This is created in the Windows directory.

PLUGIN.HST.   Holds the history list for Plug-In's Run command.   This file is created in the Windows directory.   If deleted, Plug-In will simply create a new one.

PLUGINQM.PIF.   The PIF file which runs PLUGINQM.BAT when QuickDOS is used and minimized is specified.   This file is placed in the Windows directory.

PLUGINQM.BAT.   The BAT file that is used for QuickDOS when minimized is specified.   This file is placed in the Windows directory.

PLUGINQN.PIF.   The PIF file which runs PLUGINQN.BAT when QuickDOS is used and normal / maximized is specified.   This file is placed in the Windows directory.

PLUGINQN.BAT.   The BAT file that is used for QuickDOS when normal / maximized are specified.   This file is placed in the Windows directory.

Installation and Usage Hints

The Plug-In installation process

When you first run Plug-In for Program Manager, it looks to see if it has already been configured.   It determines this by examining a flag (Installed=1) in the INI-File (PLUGIN.INI).

International Issues

Plug-In will operate under international versions of Windows.   However, there is one thing you must do for proper operation if you are using Windows 3.1:   Edit (using NotePad) ProgMan.INI and define your StartUp group under the [Settings] section (e.g., "StartUp=Autostart").

If you change a group's title

If you change a groups title (e.g., "Windows Apps" to "Win Apps") and you have assigned a custom icon, you must either a) reassign a custom icon, or b) edit Plug-In.INI and manually change the definition under the [Group Icons] section.

Avoid using identical group and/or item titles

You should avoid using identical group and/or item titles.   While this is permitted within Program Manager, it is confusing and can cause Plug-In to operate unpredictably when changing icons.

"Install Application" and DOS Apps

While "Install Application" can be used for installing many DOS (Non-Windows) applications, you should first read the instructions that came with the product.   Some DOS Apps require that you exit Windows prior to installation.

Libraries of icons are more efficient

If you define a large number of custom group icons (15-20), you may notice that it takes slightly longer to initialize when Plug-In loads.   This is because Plug-In has to read each custom icon from the disk.   If you want to optimize the load time, it is recommended that you try and load custom group icons from a common icon library file.   Since your disk cache (i.e., SmartDrv or similar) will keep the icon library in memory while Plug-In loads, this will reduce the initialization time.

Using MS-MOUSE 8.10 and 8.20 drivers with Plug-In's Custom Cursors

The MS-MOUSE 8.10 and 8.20 drivers come with a utility that provides a high degree of control over the Windows mouse pointers.   However, you are still stuck with the boring arrow and hourglass pointers.   If you want to use Plug-In's Custom Cursors, you <u>cannot</u> set the "growth" option in the MS-MOUSE control panel.

Using "Save Settings On Exit"

When Plug-In installs, it disable the "Save Settings On Exit" setting in Program Manager.   Most users will find it much more convenient to setup Program Manager like they want it and then select "Save Settings Now."   If you enable "Save Settings On Exit," Plug-In will still give you the option to save-or-not when you exit Windows.

An additional advantage of turning off "Save Settings On Exit" is that exiting Windows will be significantly faster!

License, ASP Information, Credits

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Non-registered users of this software are granted a limited license to make an evaluation copy for trial use for the express purpose of determining whether Plug-In for Program Manager is suitable for their needs. **At the end of this 21-day trial period, you must either register (purchase) your copy or discontinue using Plug-In for Program Manager**.

By registering this software, you will ensure continued support and updates of this product. In addition, registered users will receive a registration number to disable the registration reminder window at startup, technical support, additional icons and cursors, as well as a disk containing the latest version of the product.

A single Plug-In for Program Manager license entitles you to install and use the program on one computer (with one exception relating to home and work, which is described in detail below).   To keep it simple, **every user of Plug-In must be licensed.**

Corporate/Site Licenses (Overview)

All corporate, business, government or other commercial users of Plug-In for Program Manager must be registered.   We offer quantity discounts as well as site and corporate licensing.

Quantity discounts are offered, starting with as few as 5 copies.

Site licensing agreements allow duplication and distribution of specific number of copies within the licensed institution.   Duplication of multiple copies is not allowed except through execution of a licensing agreement.   Site license fees are based upon estimated number of users.

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We have included a collection of icons with the registered version of Plug-In.   If any party believes that one or more of these icons should not be included due to trademark and/or copyright infringement, please contact Plannet Crafters, Inc., and we will immediately remove said icons from the product.

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ASP -- What is it

ASP, the Association of Shareware Professionals, was formed in April 1987 to strengthen the future of shareware (user supported software) as an alternative to commercial software. Its members, all of whom are programmers who subscribe to a code of ethics or are non-programmers sincerely interested in the advancement of shareware, are committed to the concept of   shareware as a method of marketing.

ASP's primary goals are:

-    To inform users about shareware programs and about shareware as a method of distributing and marketing software;

-    To encourage broader distribution of shareware through user groups and disk dealers who agree to identify and explain the nature of shareware;

-    To assist members in marketing their software;

-    To provide a forum through which ASP members may communicate, share ideas, and learn from each other; and

-    To foster a high degree of professionalism among shareware authors by setting programming, marketing and support standards for ASP members to follow.

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Program Credits

"Just Place Your Order and Wait for Space to Catch Up With Time"

This program was produced by Plannet Crafters, Inc.   We have specialized in Windows programming since Windows 3.0 was released and plan to ride the crest of the GUI-Wave into the future...

Plannet Crafters firmly believes that high-quality software products can be produced and marketed by small companies with dedicated employees who don't like much of the bureaucracy that pervades most corporations.   We don't wear suits or ties, we avoid overly long meetings, and we make our own hours.   However, we work long and hard to produce outstanding software.

We have growing line of Windows utilities that assist you in making the most of your computer.   Look for them!

Technical Support

Technical support for Plug-In for Program Manager is available to all registered users.   If you are not a registered user, we will provide limited assistance to help you install and become sufficiently proficient for proper evaluation.

Technical assistance prior to registration is only available through electronic mail or regular mail.

Full Technical Support following registration is also available by phone.   However, we encourage you to use electronic mail to contact us.   As you can see below, we have access to most of the common on-line services and we visit them often.   Because it is written, EMail allows for more concise questions as well as more detailed answers.

This support will be provided for a period of 180 days (6 months) following registration (there is a limit of 30 minutes for phone support).

Additional support and/or training contracts may be purchased.   Please contact Plannet Crafters for further information.

For all questions, problem reports, comments and suggestions, please contact us at:

Mail

Plannet Crafters, Inc.
2580 Runic Way
Alpharetta, GA   30202
USA

Phone

(404) 740-9821 (9 - 5 Eastern U.S. Time)

Fax

(404) 740-1914 (24 hours / day)

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How To Order / Register Plug-In for Program Manager

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We have endeavored to make registration easy and painless.   You may register via Mail, Phone or Electronic Mail.   For more details on registration, please select the Register Me! menu item or click on the "Registration Details" button when Plug-In for Program Manager starts.