

ToolQube[©]

Version 2.0

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WHAT IS TOOLQUBE?:

ToolQube is a program that allows you to create stay-on-top toolbars for all of your Windows applications.

Some programs, like Word for Windows and Ami Pro, use toolbars or buttonbars for the most common commands. Most programs, however, don't. Instead, they make you go up to the menu bar and make a selection.

Sometimes, to make this selection, you need to move through three or more levels of menus and windows to get to the selection you want. Take the PRINT command for example. Usually, to print a document, you need to select FILE from the menu, then PRINT, then click OK. With ToolQube, you can set a button to do all this and more in one click.

With ToolQube, you can make a toolbar that only has the commands you need, and allows you to choose the size, shape, and placement. ToolQube can send any command you can send from your keyboard, plus it can be set to always float on top of your program, or be sent to the background when it isn't needed, and it can even run other programs and type the current date into your document for you. These ToolQubes float ONLY above the application that they were designed for, staying out of your way when you switch to another program. This way, you are allowed to have multiple ToolQube's open at once.

Using ToolQube's built-in macro language, you can make commands as simple or complex as you want. Commands can range from a File/Open command to spell checking, reformatting, and printing a document all with one button-click. Your imagination and needs are the limit.

INSTALLING TOOLQUBE:

ToolQube was written with Visual Basic 3.0, and as such, it requires the file VBRUN300.DLL to be in your Windows directory. If you don't have this file, look for it where you found this program.

Unzip the file TOOLQUBE.ZIP into its own directory. This will create two programs, over a hundred button images, and some control files. Move the files THREED.VBX and TOOLQUBE.INI into your Windows directory.

WALK-THROUGH DEMO:

ToolQube consists of two programs, TQMAKER.EXE and TOOLQUBE.EXE. The first allows you to make and design a ToolQube, the second allows you to utilize your saved ToolQubes. If you would like to see an example of a ToolQube in action right now, run the program TOOLQUBE.EXE. A menu bar will open up with a list of available ToolQubes for you to choose from. Click on Notepad, then select "OK".

Notice that the first thing ToolQube does is start Notepad.exe. ToolQube automatically runs the program it was designed for, saving you the trouble of running two programs, or having double icons for each program. Now check out the buttons. Some you will probably recognize, some you won't.

The first button is for the menu selection FILE then NEW, the second is for FILE then OPEN, the third FILE then SAVE, the fourth FILE then PRINT (this could just as easily be set to send the ENTER key to complete the printing process), the fifth, EDIT then CUT, the sixth EDIT then COPY, the seventh EDIT then Paste, the eighth EDIT then UNDO, the ninth SEARCH then FIND, the tenth types in the correct date for you, the eleventh toggles the ToolQube between SINK and FLOAT modes, and the twelfth exits notepad.

Try out some of these buttons to get a feel for how ToolQube works. Soon, ToolQube will feel like it is a built-in part of your program. Notice what happens to the ToolQube when you minimize Notepad. ToolQube was designed to stay completely out of the way of other programs.

SETTING UP A TOOLQUBE:

Exit Notepad and run the program TQMAKER.EXE. For the purpose of this example, we will set up a ToolQube for Write, so you will need to start Write.exe now. When you first run TQMAKER.EXE, you will see an empty ToolQube on the right half of your screen, and the configuration program on the left.

Using the Controls

The Status Bar

As you move your mouse over the various controls in the program window, the status bar on the bottom will change to reflect the function of the current control. Try it now. Move the mouse over the buttons across the top of the window, and notice the text in the status bar below. This will help you when you first learn how to use the ToolQube maker.

Float Button

The first button on the tool bar will toggle the window between float mode (stay on top of ALL other windows), and normal (fall behind other windows when switching programs).

This will become useful when you are setting up new ToolQubes. When float is set to ON, you can click on other programs to read their menus, while not losing sight of your ToolQube. This will save you from having to switch back and forth when configuring buttons.

Setting the Size of the ToolQube

You can set the height and width of a ToolQube independently of each other. Upon starting, TQMAKER.EXE measures your screen and determines the maximum number of buttons that ToolQube can display in each direction without clipping off a portion of a button. This way, you can create a ToolQube which extends all the way across the screen horizontally or vertically.

This is a good time to mention that it is not a good idea to try to make a grid of buttons that fills your entire screen. Most computers will run out of memory before this happens. Instead, if you are going to extend buttons all the way across the screen, keep the number of rows or columns in the other direction down to just a couple. A good rule of thumb is to try to keep the number of buttons down below 100-150 (which should be plenty for just about any program).

To set the size of your new ToolQube, click on the "Number of Buttons Wide"

scrollbar until it reads "4", and the "Number of Buttons Tall" scrollbar until it reads "5". Now click the second button on the toolbar (the one that looks like a group of buttons). This is the "Set Buttons" tool. A window will pop up and ask you if you want to create a new ToolQube or resize the current one. Select "Yes" to create a new one (selecting "No" will resize the current ToolQube, while retaining all of the current information. See the section titled "Resizing and Adding Buttons" for more details).

Getting Application "Fingerprint"

The Program Fingerprint and Path "lights" at the top of TQMAKER.EXE both indicate that they aren't set-up (red indicates that they aren't set-up, green indicates that they are). Now we must set up the Program Info (this is the reason that we had to start Write). Each program has its own personal "fingerprint" in Windows. ToolQube needs to find out what this "fingerprint" is so it will send the keystrokes to, and float above, the appropriate program.

Click the Get Fingerprint button (the magnifying glass). A message will pop-up telling you to select the title bar of the correct window, in this case, Write. Click OK then click on the title bar of Write. Now a message confirming that the information was collected will appear. Click OK. If a message tells you that the path wasn't found, click the "Edit" button and type in the correct path to the selected program (ie. C:\WINDOWS\WRITE.EXE).

ToolQube uses the path information to launch the application when it loads. If you would like, you can add command-line switches to the path. An example of this would be if you wanted to set-up a ToolQube to load a document on start-up (ie. MYDOC.WRI). Change the command-line to read C:\WINDOWS\WRITE.EXE MYDOC.WRI.

Note: It is EXTREMELY important that you click on the title bar of the correct program in this step, or your ToolQube won't work (if you clicked on the wrong title bar, you can go back and do it again).

Setting the ToolQube Title

You need to name your ToolQube in order to be able to call it up later. Usually, you will just name it after the application it was made for, in this case "Write". If you make a tall, thin Toolqube, keep in mind that you may not be able to read the full title. Also, if you make several ToolQubes for one program, each with different command-line switches, make sure each ToolQube has a unique name.

Adding Pictures to your ToolQube

ToolQube comes with several pre-made pictures to add to your buttons. To access these pictures, click the Picture tool (the one with a camera) on the toolbar. A list of pictures will appear on the screen.

As you click on the file names in the list box (or scroll through them), the picture will be displayed in the lower right side of the window. When you see a picture that you want on your ToolQube, click on the picture with the left button of your mouse and hold it down. The cursor should change into an arrow pointing down and to the right. While still holding down the left mouse button, drag the arrow onto the button that you want to contain the picture. When the mouse is over the correct button, let go of the left mouse button, and the picture will be dropped onto the button.

Add the following pictures to the buttons from left to right, top to bottom. OPEN1, NEW, SAVE1, PRINT, CUT1, COPY1, PASTE1, X, BOLD1, ITAL1, UNDER1, NORMAL, LFT, CENT1, RT, JST, CUSTVIEW, FONT, RULE_H, and EXIT.

Once you are finished adding your pictures, select cancel to go back to the main menu.

Assigning Commands to ToolQube

ToolQube essentially sends keystrokes to your application for you. In order to do this, you need to tell it what keys to send.

Look at the menu for Write. See how the F in File is underlined? That means that pressing Alt + F will select this. Try it now. Now, notice how the O in Open is underlined. That means that pressing O will select this item. Go back to TQMAKER.

Click on the first button on the ToolQube. This brings up the command editing box for this button. Press the Alt key, followed by the F key then the O key. You should see "%FO" in the box. Now click OK.

The reason that a "%" showed up when you pressed the Alt key is that this key has no character representation, so this symbol is used instead. Some of the other special keys that have symbols are Ctrl "^", Shift "+", Enter {ENTER}, and Tab {TAB}. All of these special symbols (except for the shift key, for obvious reasons) will be entered for you when you press them in the command editing box.

Refer to the keystroke table for more information about sending keystrokes to your programs.

Now, set up keystrokes for buttons 2 through 20 on your new ToolQube. Use the commands: Alt FN, Alt FS, Alt FP, Alt ET, Alt EC, Alt EP, Alt EU, Ctrl B, Ctrl I, Ctrl U, Alt CG, Alt PL, Alt PC, Alt PR, Alt PJ, Alt NF, Alt CF, Alt DR, and Alt FX.

Saving a ToolQube

Now you are ready to save your ToolQube. Select the Save tool (the button with a disk) from the main window's toolbar. If everything is done correctly, your ToolQube will now be saved. If there was a problem, a warning box would have appeared telling you of the problem. This ToolQube has now been added to the list of saved ToolQubes.

Selecting a Pre-Configured ToolQube

If you would like to go back and change a picture or edit a command on a previously saved toolqube, just select it from the list entitled Saved ToolQubes. Once it appears, you can edit it just as we did earlier. Remember to save your changes when you are done. Go ahead and select the ToolQube we just configured for Write.

Deleting a Pre-Configured ToolQube

If you would like to remove a ToolQube that you no longer use from your list, select it just as you did in the previous example. When it appears, press Delete on your keyboard to remove it.

Resizing a ToolQube and Adding Buttons

If after using a ToolQube you've designed you decide that you'd like to change the height and width of it, or change the number of buttons, you can do so very easily.

Select the ToolQube from the Saved ToolQubes list. Change the height and width scrollbars to their new settings, and click the Set Buttons tool. When a message box appears asking if you'd like to make a new ToolQube, answer No. This will resize the current ToolQube.

Edit the commands and pictures as always, then save the changed ToolQube.

Keystroke Table

Each key is represented by one or more characters. To specify a single keyboard character, use the character itself. For example, to represent the letter A, use A in the textbox. If you want to represent more than one character, append each additional character to the one preceding it. To represent the letters A, B, and C, use ABC in the textbox.

The plus sign (+), caret (^), percent sign (%), tilde (~), and parentheses () have special meanings to ToolQube. To specify one of these characters, enclose it inside braces. For example, to specify the plus sign, use {+}. Brackets ([]) have no special meaning to ToolQube, but you must enclose them in braces as well, because in other applications for Microsoft Windows, brackets do have special meaning that may be significant when dynamic-data exchange (DDE) occurs. To send brace characters, use {{} and {}}.

To specify characters that aren't displayed when you press a key (such as Enter or Tab) and keys that represent actions rather than characters, use the codes shown below:

Key	Code	Key	Code
Backspace	{BACKSPACE} or {BS} or {BKSP}	Break	{BREAK}
Caps Lock	{CAPSLOCK}	Clear	{CLEAR}
Del	{DELETE} or {DEL}	Down Arrow	{DOWN}
End	{END}	Enter	{ENTER} or ~
Esc	{ESCAPE} or {ESC}	Help	{HELP}
Home	{HOME}	Ins	{INSERT}
Left Arrow	{LEFT}	Num Lock	{NUMLOCK}
Page Down	{PGDN}	Page Up	{PGUP}
Print Screen	{PRTSC}	Right Arrow	{RIGHT}
Scroll Lock	{SCROLLLOCK}	Tab	{TAB}
Up Arrow	{UP}	F1	{F1}
F2	{F2}	F3	{F3}
F4	{F4}	F5	{F5}
F6	{F6}	F7	{F7}
F8	{F8}	F9	{F9}
F10	{F10}	F11	{F11}
F12	{F12}	F13	{F13}
F14	{F14}	F15	{F15}
F16	{F16}		

To specify keys combined with any combination of Shift, Ctrl, and Alt keys, precede the regular key code with one or more of the following codes:

<u>Key</u>	<u>Code</u>
Shift	+
Control	^
Alt	%

Note: The Control, Alt, Enter, F-Keys, and Tab codes will automatically be entered correctly in the text box when they are depressed.

To specify that Shift, Ctrl, and/or Alt should be held down while several other keys are pressed, enclose the keys' code in parentheses. For example, to have the Shift key held down while E and C are pressed, use +(EC). To have Shift held down while E is pressed, followed by C being pressed without Shift, use +EC.

To specify repeating keys, use the form {key number}; you must put a space between key and number. For example, {LEFT 42} means press the Left Arrow key 42 times; {h 10} means press h 10 times.

Some other special commands that may be entered in the command editing box are: FLOAT, RUN, DATE, and PAUSE. These commands must be the first word in the command editing box (unless you are stacking commands; see that section for more details) and must be entered in all capitals. The following describes each command:

Special Commands

FLOAT	Toggles the ToolQube between stay-on-top mode and normal mode.
RUN	Executes a program listed after the word RUN. For example, RUN C:\WINDOWS\CALC.EXE will start the Calc program.
DATE	Enters the current date at the cursor.
PAUSE	Pauses for between 0 and 10 seconds. Must be entered in the format PAUSE nnnn where nnnn is a 4-digit number denoting milliseconds (1/1000) of a second. 1000 milliseconds = 1 second, 2000 = 2 seconds, etc.

Note: ToolQube can't send keystrokes to an application that is not designed to run in Microsoft Windows. ToolQube also can't send the Print Screen (PRTSC) key to any application.

Stacking Commands

Sometimes, you may wish to Stack multiple commands on one ToolQube button, that is, specify several commands that each wait until the previous command is completed before it begins. Reasons for doing this might be: ToolQube is sending the keystrokes before Windows is ready to receive them (which happens when Windows has to open dialog boxes, such as the File Open box; or when you want to use multiple special commands on the same button, such as RUN.

To specify multiple command strings on a single button, separate the command strings with a "|" character, and end the string with the same character. For example: `RUN calc.exe|RUN Notepad.exe|Pause 1000|%FO|{TAB}{ENTER}|`

The above example will launch Calculator, then Notepad, then it will wait 1 second, then send the keys Alt FO, then wait until the File Open Dialog box is loaded, then send a Tab and an Enter (opening the first document).

RUNNING TOOLQUBE

Startup Options

ToolQube can be launched two ways; using the command-line options, or using the menu bar option.

Command-Line Option

ToolQube can be set up to automatically launch a specified application directly from an icon, bypassing the opening menu. To do this, create a new icon for ToolQube, and edit its command-line as follows:

C:\TOOLQUBE\TOOLQUBE.EXE (option)

Where (option) is the name of a saved ToolQube, such as "Write" which we created earlier in the manual. Double-clicking on this icon will automatically launch Write and load the correct ToolQube for this application. Make sure that you specify a ToolQube that has been saved.

ToolQube can be further set up to load a specified file into the specified application directly from the command-line. To do this, add a "|" character immediately after the (option) specified in the above paragraph, followed by the filename, like this:

C:\TOOLQUBE\TOOLQUBE.EXE Write|readme.wri

If you wish, you can associate a file type with ToolQube in File Manager, allowing you to double-click on a file in File Manager, and launch the application that created it, along with the correct ToolQube. To do this, associate the file type with ToolQube like this:

C:\TOOLQUBE\TOOLQUBE.EXE WRITE|

The above line would be the correct association for WRI files. Make sure that you follow the association line with a "|" character.

See your Windows manual for information on editing your command-line and associating files.

Menu Bar Option

If you launch ToolQube with no command-line, a pop-up menu bar will appear with a listing of all of your saved ToolQubes. You can then select the one that you wish to run from this list, then click OK. ToolQube will then launch the

application selected, as well as the correct ToolQube for this application.

Hidden Menu:

Clicking the right mouse button on any button in ToolQube will bring up a menu with four items. They are as follows:

Float: If the ToolQube is set to sink mode (not floating on top of the program it was created for) it will automatically be set to float mode. If it is currently floating, it will sink.

Edit Macro: This will pop-up a window that will allow you to temporarily re-configure the button you right-clicked on. This change will only last during the current session. To make a permanent change, you must use the program TQMAKER.EXE.

Time: This will pop-up a window with the current time.

About: This will tell you about ToolQube.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

Q) *The ToolQube started, but it had no buttons. It immediately ended, and no other program started.*

A) The command switch (in the above example, Write) was either misspelled, or not saved. Check to make sure that the spelling appears in the Saved ToolQubes section of TQMAKER.

Q) *The ToolQube started, but it immediately ended, and the correct program started.*

A) The wrong title bar was probably selected in the "Getting the Application Fingerprint" step above. Do this step again, then click Save.*

Q) *The ToolQube button isn't sending all of the characters that I have set up. For example, I have a button set to send the keystrokes "%FOC:\WINDOWS*. *{ENTER}", but nothing after the first "C" is being sent.*

A) ToolQube can send keystrokes much faster than Windows can accept them. In the above example either insert a PAUSE command, or a "|" character (which will break the command into two separate commands). See the **Keystroke Table** section.

*Note: At least one program (Fox Pro for Windows), because of the way it loads itself, will not work with ToolQube. I do have a special version of ToolQube for these programs which will be made available to registered users upon request.

I can be reached on America On-Line for further help under the screen name ZaneR, by Internet as ZaneR@aol.com, or by phone at (916) 428-2831.

REGISTRATION:

When you register ToolQube, you will get a software key that removes the "Please Register" message when the ToolQube exits. You will also receive a disk full of other programs to evaluate.

A lot of time and effort goes into programming. Please reward my efforts to bring you top-quality Shareware at a low price.

If you like ToolQube, please fill out the enclosed registration form and send it along with \$19.95 (+\$2 S&H) to the address below.

**Zane Rathwick
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Please specify where you got your copy of this program.