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Introduction to NoteMaid (the basics)

# *Introduction to NoteMaid*

Well, NoteMaid is just a simple text editor like Windows Notepad, but with added unlimited file length, binary file editing capability, plus HTML tags highlighting. Binary files are discussed in the next section. I devote a section to it, because it is, after all, the main feature. This section concentrates on the basic features in text editing and some important pointers about using NoteMaid.

NoteMaid was designed to give the user all the powerful features in one "package." The program is small enough to replace the standard Windows Notepad, and powerful enough to handle most tasks. NoteMaid can be run with a command line argument. That means you can set NoteMaid as the default text file viewer instead of Notepad. For instance, when you double click a file with .TXT extension, Notepad will automatically bring up the file. And instead of using Notepad, you can override this default and have NoteMaid bring up that file. In other word, you can put NoteMaid in your context sensitive menu and/or associate NoteMaid with certain file extension. In order to associate NoteMaid with .TXT extenuation, you first will need to go into Control Panel and click on VIEW from the menu, then choose OPTIONS. From the popup option dialog, go to the tab named FILE TYPES. All these icons and extensions you see in the file type list box are all the file associations of the current user. From this list box, find Text Document, then you should notice that the association for Text Document is Notepad. You'll need to change this into NoteMaid instead, so click on the Edit button and modify the "Open" command to call the file "NoteMaid.exe" including the directory where you have installed NoteMaid. Now if everything is done right, the next time you click on a file with .TXT extension, NoteMaid will bring up the file instead of Notepad.

The text editing features in NoteMaid are pretty much the same in any other Windows text editors. If you can download this program from the Internet, unzip it, install it, and run it, you'll have no problem editing text document. What's different from the standard Notepad is that NotMaid can highlight HTML tags for easy viewing. Reading an HTML document can be bothersome with all the left and right arrows, or tags. So highlighting will help a little by separating the text from the HTML tags. Changing the display fonts and HTML highlighting colors can all be found from the VIEW menu. Notice that changing the fonts are only for viewing and printing purposes. It does not mean that the document will be saved in that font format. NoteMaid can distinguish two types of files, TEXT or BINARY. All text documents are saved in plain text. Changing the display fonts will have no affect to the original text document. The status bar should also indicate whether you are currently in Text mode or Binary mode. The default or blank new document is always in Text mode.

Note that using the HTML highlighting mode will slow down the editing operation than normal text editing by very little. It consumes, somewhat a bit, more memory than without the highlighting mode. A fast CPU would definitely reduce the slowness. The memory shouldn't be a problem unless you have limited disk cache and/or have a whole bunch of other applications opened and running all at once eating up the system resource. Although you can edit text/non-text file that are of any length, it is not a good idea to edit an HTML file that are really large along with highlighting mode turned on.

You can set a few default startup options for NoteMaid.   These settings will take affect the next time you run NoteMaid, and they are saved in the same subdirectory as the executable file in the file "NoteMaid.dat".   When you first install and run NoteMaid, this file will not be created.   This is an optional file that is used by NoteMaid only if you want to override the default settings.   So if you don't want this file, it is save for you to delete this file at anytime.   If this file doesn't exist, NoteMaid will startup with its default settings.

So much about basic text editing…

Reading and Editing Binary Files

# *Reading & Editing Binary Files*

You might have already noticed that most if not none of the Windows text editors allows you to edit binary files.   If you ever try to open an .EXE file using standard text editors, the file will either be cut off at some point or won't show up on the screen at all.   If you are serious about editing binary files, you'll have to get a Hex Editor program that does that.   But those Hex editing programs are complex, with split screens showing the file offsets, the hex of a certain byte, and the file contents, which they don't give you the easiness and simple console display as regular text editors do.   NoteMaid is different from ordinary Hex editing programs.   NoteMaid allows the user to edit binary files like viewing a text document, showing all the bytes in one simple Window screen.   Bytes are displayed in Windows ASCII character format whether it is human readable or system characters; much like the good old days when editing files in MS-DOS, you, the console, and a stream of bytes.   Note: Windows ASCII characters below decimal 32 are all displayed in a small blank square along with a few others in the 100's range.

I'm thinking of adding more features to binary editing, but for now lets see what are the available features.   Any byte within a file that falls out of the range of human readable characters will cause the file to be opened as a binary file.   The carriage return is an exception.   The status bar will indicate whether the file is opened in text or binary mode.   Although the word wrap options is available in binary editing mode, it will not affect the contents.    Because a byte is a byte even a carriage return.   The contents will always be display in a stream of bytes.   Currently you cannot alter the size of the file.   For example, you can not do backspace, delete, or insert.   You can, however, overwrite the content byte by byte.   How you edit a binary file is as simple as editing a text file, simply move your cursor to the desire location and start typing.   What you typed in are stored in another buffer.   This buffer will eat up quite a bit of memory if you don't flush it once in a while.   So flush the changes once in a while!   When you flush the changes, the file will then be modified, so be careful on whether you want these changes or not.   The data stored in the buffer goes directly to the file at a specific offset (that is why changing the size of the file will complicate things a whole lot more).   Once the data is written to the file, you cannot undo or try any undelete operation unless you have some fancy program that traces the file operation in the Windows background.   Also when saving/flushing the data, you'll need to use the "Write changes" command for binary editing instead of the normal "Save" command which is for text editing.

Last Note and Contact Information…

# *Contact the Author...*

      The standard Windows Notepad is around 34kbytes, and many Notepad replacements are well over 400kbytes in size, comparing the differences in size, which means it'll take longer to load.   So I've tried to keep the NoteMaid's executable file size as small as possible while retaining all the editing features; around 52kbytes.   That way, NoteMaid can load almost as fast as the standard Windows Notepad.   This is the first version of NoteMaid, which means there's gotta be updates and I'm open for any suggestions.   If you run into any trouble or bugs, please contact me and I'll try to respond as soon as possible.   I love to hear suggestions for any improvements that'll make the program better suite you, the user.   You can send comments and suggestions directly to my e-mail. (My average respond time is around 1 to 2 days)

Contact information...
E-mail:   **turbopascal@hotmail.com** *(Primary)*
          **listerman@rocketmail.com** *(Secondary)*
          **recursive@bigfoot.com** *(if all else failed)*

Homepage:   **http://www.angelfire.com/ca/kent/**     --the gateway to my internet empire
If you have problem accessing my homepage then try my other sites...
**http://trailerpark.com/phase1/next/fileutil.html**     --all my programs (freeware) are here
**http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Park/7532/**     --the shareware page (internet tools)
**http://members.tripod.com/~listerman/**

Well, be sure to look for updates and other freeware that I'll be posting to the web.   Enjoy the program!

*Kent H.*   :-)

Hey, if you have time, visit my school's homepages.   They're pretty cool!
http://www.ucdavis.edu/   -- U.C. Davis
http://www.cs.ucdavis.edu/   -- Department of Computer Science
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