AppLaunch 1.3

My little application launcher

Written by Anders Ohlsson

About this document

Read it! You won't regret it. If you read carefully you'll find out how to get rid of the pretty splash screen... It could get quite annoying to look at the splash screen every time you start Windows if you put AppLaunch in your auto start group.

Program

AppLaunch - An application launcher.

Version

1.3.

Copyright

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Availability and rules for distribution

Distribute AppLaunch as much as you want. Do (almost) what you want with the source code. You are not allowed to sell the source code or the application as is. You are however allowed to use portions of the code in your own applications, but they must differ considerably from AppLaunch. If you do use the code in your own applications, a line in your credits would make me happy.

AppLaunch is available at my homepage http://www.it.kth.se/~ao/ and hopefully in the near future at many popular ftp sites.

History

1.3 Released on the 15th of May, 1995.

- Added a working directory option.
- Fixed the looks of the program when using a video driver with large fonts.

1.2 Released on the 8th of April, 1995.

- Added a little window that displays the date, time, free resources and memory.

1.1a Released on the 8th of April, 1995.

- Stupid last-patch-before-release bug (do I feel stupid?) in version 1.1 made 'ProgFile' become the INI file's name on each and every application if the layout was saved. Now it's OK.

1.1 Released on the 7th of April, 1995.

- Entirely rewritten in Delphi and lots of features added.

1.0 Never released. For my own use only.

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Files

Files included in this archive are:

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READ.ME              - Short 'read me first' file
LAUNCH.EXE    - AppLaunch executable
LAUNCH.INI    - A sample INI file
LAUNCH.WRI    - The documentation
LAUNCH.DPR    - The Delphi project file
LAUNCH.RES    - The resource file
SPLASH.DFM    - The splash form
SPLASH.PAS    - The splash form (code)
MAIN.DFM             - The main form
MAIN.PAS             - The main form (code)
INFO.DFM             - The properties form
INFO.PAS             - The properties form (code)
RESOURCE.DFM         - The resource form
RESOURCE.PAS         - The resource form (code)
ABOUT.DFM     - The about form
ABOUT.PAS     - The about form (code)
PREVINST.PAS  - This unit detects multiple instances
YACPU.WRI     - A short presentation of YACPU 2.0
YACPU.ICO            - The YACPU 2.0 icon
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Installation

There are no special installation requirements. My recommendation is that you unzip the files in a new directory (e.g. C:\WINUTILS\LAUNCH\), launch the file manager and drag LAUNCH.EXE to the program manager group of your choice (the auto start group is a very good place). That way you get the icon and everything set up nicely. AppLaunch looks for all its files in the directory where LAUNCH.EXE is located.

AppLaunch does not modify or create any files other than LAUNCH.INI.

Deinstallation

What? Deinstalling already? Have you given AppLaunch a fair chance? Didn't you like the program?

Oh, you need the disk space! Why didn't you say so? Here's what you do: Zip those saved DOOM games, and move them to a floppy disk...

Well, ok...

Provided you put AppLaunch in its own directory, all you have to do is to remove the

files in that directory, delete the directory and finally remove the icon in the program manager group. That's it.

Running the program

Double click the space shuttle icon to launch AppLaunch. You will see a splash screen followed by AppLaunch's application launch bar. If you have a fairly normal installation of Windows, you will see icons for some standard Windows applications, including Program Manager, File Manager, PaintBrush and Mine Sweeper. You will also see an icon "YACPU", which launches a little presentation of another program of mine.

AppLaunch will automagically detect the size of your screen and set the size of itself accordingly. You will have some empty slots ready to be used by your own applications.

If you find the splash screen annoying, disable it by running AppLaunch with a parameter saying "/nosplash" (without the quotes).

Launching an application from AppLaunch

Simply double click the application's icon.

Adding an application to AppLaunch

Method one: Drag a file from the File Manager and drop it on the slot you want the icon to appear in. If the slot was empty you will now see the properties dialog box for this application. The properties dialog box contains four fields where you enter:

- The command (including parameters) to launch the application, e.g. "dosprmpt.pif /c dir *.pas /p" or simply "write.exe". You can also double click in this field to open a file browser.
- The message (information) you want displayed on AppLaunch's status bar when you move the mouse over the application's icon.
- The working directory of the application. AppLaunch will change to this directory before launching the application.
- The file where the icon is found if it differs from the application executable. This information is also (currently) necessary if you have any parameters after the executable's name. You can also double click in this field to open a file browser.
- The icon number in the icon file. The Program Manager for instance has a lot of icons and you can choose any one of them by giving a number in this field.

Method two: Right click on a slot to bring up the popup menu. Choose the properties option to open the properties dialog box for this slot.

A very good way of understanding how all this works is to open the LAUNCH.INI file and take a look at it.

Removing an application from AppLaunch

Drag the application's icon out of its slot and drop it on the status bar. Clearing the properties dialog for the application won't work.

Rearranging icons

Drag an application's icon out of its slot and drop it on an empty slot.

Toggling the resource window on and off

Bring up the popup menu and toggle the 'Resources visible' option. When the resource window is visible it will hide three slots...

Saving the layout

If you have modified the layout you can save it by bringing up the popup menu (right click anywhere on AppLaunch) and selecting the save option. If you have modified the layout and exit AppLaunch, you will be asked if you wish to save the layout before AppLaunch terminates.

Loading the layout

If you have modified the layout and want to revert to the last saved layout, bring up the popup menu and select the load option.

Support

1. If you like this program:

Send me a couple of dollars, a size XL T-shirt (company label, university, football team, WWW shirt and so on), a postcard or whatever you think it's worth. Yes, I collect T-shirts...

2. If you find bugs or other problems with AppLaunch:

Send a postcard, e-mail or a letter describing the problem to me.

Feedback

If you have any questions/comments relating to this program, please feel free to send me mail or e-mail (e-mail is faster). See the author section above for more info.

Troubleshooting

If you run out of resources, my recommendation is that you upgrade your device drivers. Note that this is not a Delphi or AppLaunch problem, it's a Windows problem. Some display drivers has severe problems with resources especially when you use more than 256 colors.

Disclaimer

AppLaunch is released as is. You use this program entirely at your own risk. In no event whatsoever, shall I (the author of this program) be held responsible for any damage inflicted by this program. (Damage is not very likely to be inflicted, I just want to make sure that you don't blame me, should you accidentally overwrite some of your other files, by making an icon run FORMAT.EXE or something. May the force be with you.

Bugs (a.k.a. undocumented features)

If you find any, please let me know, and I will try to fix them. Note that bugs often depend on the phase of the moon. Try again tomorrow...