



# 12Ghosts SaveLayout

## Save your Desktop Icon Layout

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Save your desktop icon layout directly on your desktop as an easy to handle file. You can transfer your layout between different PCs or Windows 95/98/NT/2000. Command line options for scheduled backups.

### 12Ghosts SaveLayout Features

- Save and restore the desktop icon layout easily
- Auto-Save, up to 100 versions, between 1-9999 minutes, easy to restore
- Automatically restore newest layout on
  - startup
  - change of display resolution
  - move or size the taskbar!
- Set the focus to the desktop via hot key
- Tray icon and movable icon (optional)
- Hide all windows and set the focus to the desktop
- Minimize all windows and set the focus to the desktop

- Transfer icon layout between Windows 95/98/NT/2000 and between different PCs
- Save icon layout into an easy to manage file
- As many different layouts as you want
- Command line options for shortcuts, batch control, or backups
- SL does not stay resident in memory (and "SLtray" is optional)
- Optional sound and graphical confirmation
- This is actually a version 6.0 (!), stable and reliable, crash-proof protection (Structured Exception Handling).

### **When to use SL**

Save your icon layout before you install any new software, a new version of Windows, or a shell extension, and before you move the taskbar or any application's taskbar, or change the screen resolution. Include your SL file into your backup! You can restore the layout on another version of Windows 95/98, NT/2000 or on a different PC!

### **Usage**

To save your layout, double-click the SL file on your desktop.

To restore, right-click the SL file and select 'Restore Layout'.

### **Command Line Options**

sl.exe /s PATH Save desktop icon layout to PATH

sl.exe /r PATH Restore desktop icon layout from PATH

### **Tip: Restore at Startup**

If you don't use SLtray, create a shortcut in your Startup folder that consistently restores your layout each time you start Windows. The Target line of the shortcut should be similar to the following:

```
"C:\Program Files\12Ghosts SaveLayout\12savelay.exe" /r "C:\Windows\Desktop\Layout1.sl"
```

### **Set Desktop Icon Text Colors**

12Ghosts SaveLayout is now capable of setting the colors repeatedly as well. In the SLtray settings select your preferred colors and select the number of minutes for how often the colors should be set.

Note, this does not switch a setting to anywhere because there is none in Windows. Instead, it sends a color command directly to the desktop icons. When Windows repaints the desktop later, if, for example, you apply changes to the desktop settings or restart the system, the colors need to be set again. You can set up the interval how often this should be done. The colors, however, will only be set if they have changed.

If you use Windows 98 or IE 4.0 and have the Active Desktop enabled, and your desktop view is set to "View as Web Page", and you apply a new color, then you need to click on

the desktop and press F5 to refresh the display and show the changed colors.  
Transparent background does work with [comctl32.dll](#), version 4.72 or higher, only.

Please read the SaveLayout **Manual** for an in depth description of how to use 12Ghosts SaveLayout.

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# **12Ghosts SaveLayout Manual**

**Keep Positions of Desktop Icons - Even Automatically!**

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## **Welcome to SaveLayout!**

- Setup and uninstall
- How do I save my layout?
- Adding a shortcut
- Command line options

## **FAQ Frequently Asked Questions**

- Why can't Windows keep the layout?
- Can Microsoft do it better?
- AutoSL for Documents?
- Can SL copy the desktop items?
- Why does SL use a file instead of the registry?
- I get the error message "Layout NOT Saved"!?

## **Welcome to SaveLayout!**

Welcome to 12Ghosts SaveLayout! This tool will help give you more confidence in your desktop. You intuitively know the layout of your desktop icons, where an icon is located,

the color of the icon, etc. This way you can locate an icon much faster than by searching through an alphabetic list! 12Ghosts SaveLayout saves your favorite icon layout with one click, or even automatically with a timer or scheduler, and it reliably restores different layouts exactly when you want them. Now you can really use the full functionality of your desktop!

## **Setup and Uninstall**

Just double-click 12savelayout.exe to execute setup. Click OK to accept the default installation options.

SL can be completely uninstalled, like every Windows compatible program, by selecting Start - Settings - Control Panel - Add/Remove Programs. Or double click uninstall.exe in the installation path.

## **How do I save my layout?**

When you start SL.EXE for the first time after installation, you will recognize a new file on your desktop, named 'layout1.sl'. This file contains your saved desktop icon layout. You can rename, move, or copy this file to wherever you want. However, when renaming the file you should keep '.sl' as the extension.

When you right-click, i.e. when you click with the secondary mouse button on this icon, you'll notice three entries at the top of the context menu: Save Layout, Restore Layout, and SL Help.

## **SaveLayout**

To save the layout at any time after the first start, you can select Save Layout in this context menu. Please note that the file you clicked on will be overwritten without warning. You should backup this file regularly to keep from losing data.

As you can see in the context menu, the first command, Save Layout, is bold-faced and the default. In other words, to save your layout at any time you can simply double-click the SL file.

If you have changed the layout, added new shortcuts to the desktop, or renamed or deleted a file, you just double-click on the SL file again.

## **User interface**

All commands are right where they are needed, in the context menu of the SL icon - if you wish, directly on your desktop.

## **Restore Layout**

To restore the saved layout simply click with the right mouse button on the SaveLayout '.sl' file and select Restore Layout. All saved icon positions will be restored without further notice. However, icons without a saved position will stay where they were before.

Again, there will be no confirmation to prevent you from restoring a layout you didn't really want. You should verify that you have already saved the current layout in another file.

## **Make a copy!**

Don't leave yet without making a copy of your SL SaveLayout file in a secure place, for example, in another folder named d:\backup\important, as you should do with all your important files. Why?? Every now and then everyone selects the wrong command inadvertently. It happens to me regularly and also to everybody I've asked. Imagine you have just completely rearranged your icon layout and you select Save Layout... well, your previously saved layout is gone forever. By the way, I don't think a confirmation window would help much because after a while everyone tends simply to confirm them without giving it much thought. It would be better to make a new copy every day or to set a timer to do this for you.

## **Multiple Layouts**

If you wish to save several different layouts, for example, for different screen resolutions, you may wish to copy the SaveLayout file and rename it something like 'My layout for 800x600.sl'. To do this, right-click on the icon and select Copy, then right-click on the desktop and select Paste. Now change the resolution, arrange your icons accordingly and save the layout into this copied file by double-clicking it.

**Important:** Save your icon layout before you change your desktop resolution or move the taskbar. Also try using it before you install any new software, install a new Windows version or any other shell extension!

## **Adding a Shortcut**

You may want a key combination to call up SL quicker. Or perhaps you already know that you can add a key combination to start any program or document through the use of a shortcut. If not, to implement Ctrl+Alt+S as a key combination to save your layout, you just need to

right-click on the SL file

select Create Shortcut

right-click on the new icon named 'Shortcut to Layout1.sl'

select Properties

select the Shortcut tab

click into the Shortcut Key field

and press Ctrl+Alt+S

Note, you can only press Ctrl+Alt or Ctrl+Shift in combination with another key. You need to keep the shortcut on the desktop or somewhere in or below the Start Menu for the key to work. Also, it may be confusing if you have two shortcuts with the same key...

To call up the program, you simply press Ctrl+Alt+S no matter where you are, i.e. you do not need to select the desktop first.

## **Command Line Options**

Instead of a right-click, you can also use the following options in a shortcut or batch file. Please remember, when using the switch /s an existing file in PATH always gets

overwritten without confirmation.

You might want to implement a scheduled batch routine or save the layout somewhere else, like to a network home path, but still start SL from the desktop. Add /s to specify the path to save to, or /r to specify the path to restore from.

SL /S PATH Save desktop icon layout to PATH

SL /R PATH Restore desktop icon layout from PATH

**Tip** Restore your layout at Startup. Create a shortcut in your Startup folder that consistently restores your layout each time you start Windows. The Target line of the shortcut should be similar to this:

```
"C:\Program Files\12Ghosts SaveLayout\12savelayout.exe" /r "C:\Windows\Desktop\  
Layout1.sl"
```

## **FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions**

- Why can't Windows keep the layout?
- Can Microsoft do it better?
- AutoSL for Documents?
- Can SL copy the desktop items?
- Why does SL use a file instead of the registry?
- I get the error message "Layout NOT Saved"!?

### **Why can't Windows keep the Layout?**

You might wonder why the layout is not saved automatically by Windows itself. Usually this is the case! Windows 95/98 as well as Windows NT 4.0/5.0 do save the layout when the user logs off or shuts down Windows. Actually, as soon as any normal folder is closed, its layout is saved automatically, so here there's no trouble. However, the desktop cannot be closed short of logging out and leaving Windows.

Let's think about it. There are some instances in which this method cannot work: a power failure before saving, when you inadvertently select Arrange Icons, when the desktop (Explorer) has to restart for whatever reason, or when another program initiates a refresh to the desktop because a file type has been changed, etc. Beyond that, there is one inherent problem: when you change the display resolution from, let's say, 1024 down to 640 or when you move or resize the taskbar, half of your icons will be hidden and inaccessible. What now?

You would need a tool to save and restore the appropriate layout, and not mechanically but at your command only. 12Ghosts SaveLayout enables you to handle all the situations described above. You will have the relaxed feeling of having a saved layout in your backup, either in a file or maybe a copy on a second disk. Or you may have several different layouts that you can switch between. Layout files can be restored at any time and are easily transferable between different PCs and Windows installations.

### **Can Microsoft do it Better?**

Ideally, in order to prevent a layout from not being saved, you would have to be able to control each change, movement, and renaming of icons on the desktop. In that case you'd never have an unsaved layout.

The desktop itself is simply a control, a "COM" or "ActiveX" control, and this control could best handle the saving of any changes in the icon appearance or layout. But were it to do this, then it would suddenly have a lot of extra work to do; it would have to watch and save every change, and not only those made to the desktop but to absolutely everything under its umbrella. The desktop already is a quite extensive control, but if it were any bigger and slower it wouldn't do anybody any good. Expanding the tasks of the desktop doesn't sound like such a good idea after all.

Other possibilities for implementing this watch dog function would be in the parent application of the desktop control, the Explorer, or by entering a "hook" in the command message exchange of the operating system in order to filter out the related messages. Well, Microsoft did not do that, and to be honest, I wouldn't have liked having to do this kind of work either. I don't even know of a tool that implements such a hook.

If you consider it a bit more carefully, even if we had this functionality, it would only take care of half the problem. This functionality would deal with the power supply failure, but not the problems arising when another program initiates a restart on the Desktop or when you inadvertently select Arrange Icons from the desktop's context menu. The automatic feature of the control would, in the latter instances, jump in and save the changes, thus causing your 'good' layout to be lost. OK, you may ask to confirm the saving after each and every change, but is this something that you really want to do?

In actuality, there is no other solution: when you want to save your layout, click on Save Layout. Keep a copy of your saved layout. If it happens that you need to restore it, click on Restore Layout. That is how SL works. Could it be done any better?

SL also provides the "lumberjack" method: Just save a new version of your layout every couple of minutes to a new file and relax. Don't worry about all the problems described above!!! No matter what happens, with 20 or 30 previous saved layouts you will always have one good layout.

AutoSave saves up to 100 different versions, every 1-9999 minutes, to a folder that you can specify. You can restore older versions as easily as clicking on undo/redo. That solves both problems: first, should the layout get saved at exactly the wrong moment, you can always restore a previous version as needed, and second, you can restore the version you want, when you want.

### **AutoSL for Documents?**

Yes, we know what you must be thinking: multi-copies of your important documents, automatically stored every couple of minutes...?! AutoSL is a pretty nice piece of work, alright. We thought, hey, if it is good for SL, why not make the functionality available for documents, too?

This concept initiated the creation of several new applets, now all delivered with 12Ghosts. First of, there is 12Ghosts 2ndBackup. This handy tool is often just sitting there and doing nothing until a change occurs in one of the watched files. Then, an additional copy is backed up, so that you end up with a history of all changes. This is very comforting.

To save the layout every couple of minutes or hours according to a schedule, you might want to use 12Ghosts Timer, also included with the 12Ghosts.



### **Can SL copy the desktop items?**

SL only saves and restores the layout. To have the desktop items copied, please use 12Ghosts ProfileCopy, which also leverages the features of SL of backing up and transferring the icon arrangement.

### **Why does SL use a file instead of the registry?**

The difference is important, especially for users of remote profiles saved on a server. As long as you keep the SL file on the desktop, the whole desktop folder should be transferred to your profile path automatically. The idea of using a file is to give everyone the opportunity to move, copy, and backup the settings as easily as possible and as often as desired. I think that this is easier with a file than with a bunch of registry keys.

Besides, Microsoft recommends that you do not save more than 2 KB of data to the registry, but instead to revert to a file. With 50 icons on your desktop, each SL file is about 2 KB.

It is possible to transfer your layout to another PC, or between Windows 95/98 and Windows NT 4.0/5.0, by merely copying the file. If you have several Windows versions installed on one machine you can keep your single, most preferred SaveLayout file in one location.

### **I get the error message "Layout NOT Saved"!?**

This is reportedly caused by an older version of Microsoft's comctl32.dll, which has also caused various other problems. It is recommended to update to the latest version of comctl32.dll, version 4.72. Here is the Knowledge Base URL from Microsoft:  
<http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q186/1/76.asp>

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