DeskTool
Version 2.10

DeskTool is a desktop toolbar designed to give you easy access to frequently used applications by displaying an organized row of buttons from which to choose. DeskTool is tightly integrated into the desktop shell of Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0. It has also been tested and cleared for use with the beta versions of the upcoming Windows 98 and Windows NT 5.0. Keep in mind that we cannot guarantee compatibility with the final versions of Windows 98 and NT 5.0 until they are released. Versions of Windows NT prior to version 4.0 and versions of Windows prior to Windows 95 are not supported.

DeskTool has some nifty features that you might have come to expect from a modern Windows application. Drag and Drop is supported for adding, deleting and moving buttons around on the toolbar. You can "dock" DeskTool to any one of the 4 edges of your screen, much like the Windows 95 taskbar, or leave it free floating on the desktop. You can also make the toolbar "auto-hide" when docked to an edge, just as you can with the taskbar. DeskTool can be made to stay on top of other windows, making it readily accessible.

There are two types of buttons that you can define within DeskTool. Application buttons are the most commonly used. They allow you to start any application, utility or registered file type with the click of a button. You can also define Menu buttons, which contain a set of applications. These buttons display a popup menu when they are clicked. The menu contains each of the applications assigned to that menu button. Start any application by choosing the corresponding menu item.

By default an edit control is also displayed within DeskTool. This edit control is known as the "command box" and is used to quickly issue commands to the operating system. The command box is synonymous to the "Run" dialog in the Windows Start menu and can be issued the same types of commands. For example, you can start programs by simply typing their names and pressing Enter, assuming you specify the full path to them or they can be located in your search path. You can also issue special shell commands like a drive letter and directory to get a graphical view of that directory, such as: C:\WIN95.

Adding, Moving and Editing Buttons

When you first start DeskTool a small window containing a single edit box appears free floating on your screen. This is DeskTool in its standard non-docked form. You'll notice that you can drag the toolbar around by clicking the titlebar and moving the mouse. To dock the toolbar just drag it to the edge to which you want it docked. Notice that the titlebar disappears and DeskTool sticks to the side of the desktop when it is docked. To undock it just click somewhere outside of any buttons and the command box and drag it away from the edge.

At this point you can start adding buttons to the toolbar. The simplest way to do this is to open the Windows Explorer and find an application that you want to add (or a shortcut to it). Just drag that file onto DeskTool and a new button will be created for you at the point where you dropped it, but before the command box. Now you can click the newly created button to start the associated application. Once you have more than one button you can move them around by holding the Alt key down and dragging the button to where you want it. Note that if you click a button without holding down the Alt key the application will start! To delete a button hold down Alt and drag the button off the toolbar, you'll then see it disappear. Be careful when dragging a button, as there is no warning if you drag it off the screen and let the mouse button go the button is deleted. You can also Right click on a button and choose the "Remove Button" menu item.

To add a spacer between buttons Shift double click on a button. The spacer will be inserted before the clicked button. Spacers are useful for logically grouping a set of buttons. Currently spacers can only be removed using the Properties dialog.

There are other ways to add new buttons. You can Ctrl double click in some blank part of the toolbar or you can right click and choose one of the "Insert" menu items from the resulting menu. If you Ctrl double click a menu will appear that will let you choose between inserting an application button or a menu button. Choosing either will bring you to the appropriate insert dialog.

In the Insert Applications Button dialog the "Title" and "Target" fields must be filled in. You can use the browse button (labeled "…") to choose a target from the explorer. The browse button at the end of the "Start In" field allows you to select a directory to make current when starting that application. You may also select an icon to display for this button using the Select Icon button. When you're done a new button will appear near the place that you Ctrl double clicked. To edit the properties of an existing button you can Ctrl double click on the desired button or Right click and choose "Edit Button…". The appropriate Edit dialog will appear with the fields filled in with the current properties. Change whatever fields you like.

To pass parameters to an application you can specify them on the "Target" line but you'll need to enclose the parameters in double quotes. Also make sure any parameters are specified after the target itself. As an example:

C:\Program Files\Accessories\WordPad.exe "C:\Win95\Desktop\TextFile.txt"

If you are passing parameters that contain spaces and you normally need to enclose the parameters in quotes you may continue to do so. In this case you might have 2 sets of double quotes in your parameter specification. As an example:

S:\CCMAIL\CCWIN2\WMAIL.EXE "S:\CCMAIL "Brett Robichaud" PASSWORD"

In the above example you can see that one of the parameters includes a space (the name) so it is itself enclosed in double quotes as well as the whole parameter specification.

Another method of specifying parameters is to create a Windows "Shortcut" to the application. Using shortcuts you can easily specify parameters. You can then point one of your buttons at this shortcut and you're all set! See your Windows documentation for more information on shortcuts.

When adding or editing a menu there is only one edit field, the menu title. You can also select the icon to display on the menu button.

Context Menu Options

To get a context menu of possible DeskTool actions you can right-click on the toolbar (anywhere other than the command box). This menu allows you to Exit the toolbar, see the About box, edit the Properties of the toolbar and any buttons, Refresh the button icons and toggle the AutoHide or Titlebar display status. The following is a description of each item:

The **Properties** menu item is used to view and change the various options for DeskTool. It is described in the sections titled "Properties Dialog".

The **Refresh Icons** menu item is used to retrieve the current icon from the applications represented by the toolbar buttons. For performance reasons DeskTool is designed to cache the application icons by default (this can be overridden with the Verify Targets option). There are rare times when the icon being displayed can become out of date, such as when you update an application with a new

version. To make sure that the icons being displayed by DeskTool are current, select this option. It may take a few seconds as it runs around your disk getting the latest icons from your applications.

The **Insert Application Button** menu item is used to add a new application button to the toolbar. If you right clicked on DeskTool to open the context menu then the button is added near where you clicked, else it is placed at the end of the buttons. See the section on adding buttons for details on creating new buttons.

The **Insert Menu Button** option is used to add a new menu button to the toolbar. If you right clicked on DeskTool to open the context menu then the button is added near where you clicked, else it is placed at the end of the buttons. See the section on adding buttons for details on creating new buttons.

The **Edit Button** option is used to edit the clicked button. If you did not right click on a button this item is disabled. See the section on adding buttons for details on editing buttons.

The **Remove Button** option is used to delete the clicked button. If the point where you right clicked was not over a button this item is disabled.

The **AutoHide** menu item allows you to toggle the AutoHide option on and off. You can also toggle it using the Properties dialog (described below), this is simply a quick way to toggle it. A check mark will appear next to it when the option is enabled. This option is disabled if DeskTool is currently free floating since AutoHide is meaningless in this state.

The **Titlebar** menu item allows you to toggle the Titlebar from being display to hidden. This option is useful if you have DeskTool free floating and want to save the screen real estate wasted by the titlebar. This option is disabled if DeskTool is currently docked to any edge since the titlebar is always disabled when docked.

The **About** menu item displays a simple dialog that documents the version number and copyright information.

The **Exit** menu option shuts down DeskTool, saving all button and state information. Keep in mind that when you properly shut down Windows DeskTool will shut itself down gracefully and save all pertinent information. Should you simply shut your machine off without shutting down Windows, or should Windows crash, DeskTool will not be able to gracefully shut down. In this situation you may lose the modifications you have made since you last started DeskTool.

Properties Dialog

The **Properties** menu option brings up a dialog that has multiple "tabbed" pages. This dialog is useful for changing the way DeskTool operates, and for modifying the buttons that exist on the toolbar.

Settings Tab

The "Settings" tab has a number of options that alter the way DeskTool operates. The first groupbox, labeled "**Display Settings**", contains some overall options.

The **Enable Command Box** option should be enabled if you would like the command box to appear in the toolbar. This is enabled by default.

The **Always on Top** option forces the toolbar to stay on top of all other windows. Any window that might normally overlap it will end up underneath the toolbar. This makes DeskTool readily available whenever you need it. This is enabled by default.

The **Enable Tray Icon** option is used to toggle the display of an icon in the taskbar tray. If you're unfamiliar with the taskbar tray, it is a small recessed part of the taskbar that normally displays the time of day. With this option on the DeskTool icon will appear in the tray. You can right click on it to choose from the DeskTool context menu, double click to bring up the Properties dialog or single click to bring DeskTool to the front if free floating. The Tray Icon is enabled by default.

The **Enable Titlebar** option is used to toggle the display of the titlebar when DeskTool is free floating. Disabling the titlebar allows you to reclaim the valuable screen real estate taken by the titlebar. The Titlebar is enabled by default.

The **Enable Splash Screen** option can be disabled if you do not want to see the humble copyright information that appears each time you start DeskTool. This is enabled by default.

The **Verify Targets** option forces DeskTool to go out to each application and get its icon each time you start DeskTool. This slows down the startup of DeskTool in direct relation to the number of buttons you have added, by disabling the caching of application icons. Typically this option should be disabled to get the best startup performance from DeskTool. This is disabled by default.

The groupbox labeled "**Button Size**" has two options: Small buttons and Large buttons. Choose one of these to determine how big the toolbar buttons will appear. Try them both to get a feel for which is easier for you so use. Small buttons are enabled by default.

The "**AutoHide**" groupbox allows you to enable the AutoHide feature. AutoHide is only relevant to docked toolbars and allows the toolbar to slide off screen when not being used. To gain access to the toolbar after it disappears just move the mouse cursor all the way to the edge that the toolbar is docked to and it will reappear. Once you've shifted focus back to another application the toolbar will magically disappear again. One limitation of the AutoHide feature is that only one toolbar with this setting can exist on any edge. You can have multiple toolbars on an edge, but only one can be Auto Hidden, including the taskbar. You can also set the speed at which DeskTool will slide off the screen when AutoHide is enabled. Simply adjust the AutoHide Speed slider control to make it disappear and reappear faster or slower. There is also a Reveal Speed slider to control the speed at which DeskTool will reveal itself once you have hit the docked edge with the mouse. Making is slower will keep DeskTool from revealing itself when you accidentally and quickly bounce off the docked edge. Experiment with these controls to see what works best for you. AutoHide is disabled by default.

The "**ToolTips**" groupbox allows you to enable the ToolTip feature. ToolTips are small popup text boxes that appear when you hold the mouse cursor over a button (without clicking). The text that appears in the popup is the title text you set for each button. ToolTips is a great feature that makes it much easier to determine what a button does. Without ToolTips you have to recognize each icon by picture only. You may also set the speed at which the ToolTip appears by adjusting the Display Speed slider control. ToolTips are enabled by default.

Finally the **"Button Activation"** groupbox allows you to choose how DeskTool acts when you click on a button. When set to the Single click option DeskTool will start the application each time you click on a button. When set to the Double click option nothing will happen until you double click on a button. Single Clicks are enabled by default.

Buttons Tab

The other tab in the Properties dialog is labeled "Buttons". From here you can insert/edit/delete and move any of the buttons you have defined.

The tree control shows you the layout of the buttons you currently have defined along with their icons. The tree is displayed in the order the buttons are currently shown on the toolbar. Menus are shown with their included applications as subitems in the tree control.

To the immediate right of the tree are buttons for inserting, editing and removing toolbar buttons. The **Insert App**, **Insert Menu** and **Edit** buttons will bring up the familiar Insert and Edit dialogs mentioned previously. Using these is synonymous with Ctrl Double clicking in the toolbar itself. The **Remove** button simply removes the currently selected button in the list and is synonymous with Alt dragging a button off the toolbar. Note that you can also right click anywhere in the dialog to view a context menu that gives you the same options.

The final button labeled **Insert Space** is used to add a space between buttons. This is useful for grouping related buttons on the toolbar. You may use multiple spacers to widen the gap between groups. You can also add spacers by Shift double clicking a button on the toolbar, a spacer will be inserted before the clicked button. Note that there currently is no way to remove spacers directly from the toolbar, you must use this properties dialog to remove spacers.

Moving buttons around is accomplished by simply dragging the button to its new location. If you left click and drag, the button will be inserted BEFORE the button that is highlighted when you release the mouse. If you right click and drag, a context menu will appear when you release the mouse. It will allow you to insert before or after the highlighted item, or to insert into the highlighted menu if a menu is the drop target.

Supporting Multiple Users of a Single Machine

Under normal operation DeskTool writes its data to the file named "DeskTool.cfg" within the same directory as the DeskTool executable. Because of this, running DeskTool on a machine where multiple users login requires a special command line option. Using -d{name} on the command line when starting DeskTool (where {name} is some string up to 8 characters in length) allows you to name each instance of DeskTool.

For instance, say you have two users that login to the same machine a various times. If those two users want to have different DeskTool setups you would need to create two shortcuts, one to run DeskTool with the option –dUser1 and the other with –dUser2 (replace the UserX with the users initials or some other unique text). Do this by specifying the following text within the quotes in the Target editbox of the Shortcut:

"desktool –dUser1"

Specify a directory where necessary. Then start DeskTool using these new shortcuts instead of running DeskTool directly. Another option is to install DeskTool into two different directories, but this wastes disk space unnecessarily.

You can create as many DeskTool setups as you like as long as they have unique names.

Assigning an Icon to a Button

DeskTool allows you to define the icon that is displayed in any of the buttons. If you do not like the default icon simply edit the button and choose the Select Icon option. You are then shown a dialog that will allow you to choose any file that contains icons. By default all icons within the file currently selected as the icon file will be displayed in the listbox. You can choose any of these icons or click the browse button to choose a different file. Once you have chosen a different file the list control will show

you all icons contained within that file. Simply choose the desired icon and it will be assigned to the button.

Use the "View Small Icons" checkbox to see the icons in their small form. You can toggle back and forth to get a feel for what all of the icons will look like in both sizes. Once you have selected the desired icon just click OK and the edit dialog will reappear with the updated icon.

Known Problems

1. When using the AutoHide feature ToolTips may not work correctly in other applications. If this is a problem for you simply disable the AutoHide feature of DeskTool.
2. DeskTool does not detect screen resolution changes on the fly. You have to exit then restart DeskTool before it will recognize the change.
3. There have been a few sporadic reports of DeskTool disabling the use of screen savers and the power saving mode of the monitor. There is currently no known work around for this problem.
4. A small number of users have reported DeskTool disappearing from the screen when used in conjunction with other toolbars. If this happens you can restore DeskTool by removing the following registry key: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Robisoft\DeskTool
5. There is a bug in Windows NT 4.0 that can in some cases keep Desktool from displaying icons on its buttons. To fix this problem you must install Windows NT 4.0 Service Pack 3 or higher. This service pack is available on the Microsoft web site.

Release History

Version 2.10 (11/16/97)
- The sporadic appearance of the text "Comm" is really fixed in this version.
- Some users have reported that icons do not show up on DeskTool buttons when running Windows NT 4.0. Installing Service Pack3 or higher solves this problem. Service Packs are available directly from Microsoft (http://www.microsoft.com).
- Popup menus have been re-arranged to be more context specific. You'll notice different options when right clicking on a DeskTool button as opposed to clicking outside of a DeskTool button or on the tray icon.
- You are now asked to confirm all button deletions except when Alt-dragging a button off the toolbar. It was too easy for users to accidentally delete buttons in the past.
- There is now a registration dialog. Be sure to register DeskTool if you use it for more than 30 days!

Version 2.02 (7/25/97) – Minor bug fixes
- Added full support for 256 color icons.
- Fixed a bug where dropping items on DeskTool while in AutoHide mode did not display the added icons immediately. Note that all dropped files end up at the end of the list when in AutoHide mode.
- The text "Comm" no longer sporadically appears at the beginning of the buttons.
- Fixed an installation bug where the chosen program folder was ignored. The DeskTool icon was always added to a newly created "Desktool" program folder.

Version 2.0 (5/24/97) – Many requested features have been added with this release. Most notably:
- You can now select the icon to display for any button using the new select icon dialog.
- You can now define Menu buttons as well as Application buttons. This enables DeskTool to control many more applications without wasting screen space.
- A tray icon is now displayed by default to allow easy access to DeskTool features. This option can be disabled in the Properties dialog.
- You can now disable the titlebar when undocked to save screen real estate.
- The time before DeskTool reveals itself after you hit the docked edge of the screen in AutoHide mode can now be defined in the properties dialog. This reduces annoying accidental hits.

- You can now Alt-Drag a file from Explorer onto an existing DeskTool button to start that application, passing it the dragged file.
- When dropping an application on DeskTool the new button is now created at the point where you dropped the file, not at the end of DeskTool as in the past.
- The Properties dialog now supports drag and drop for moving buttons around. It also has a context menu for easy access.
- When adding buttons the placement of the click is now taken into account when positioning the new buttons.
- There is now Right click access to button editing options.
- Many, many more minor tweaks…

Version 1.7 (4/6/97) – An interim release to address a number of annoying problems, including:
- Now includes full install/uninstall support! DeskTool is now available in a full install/uninstall version or a much smaller zipfile with just the EXE and this document.
- Switched back to using statically linked MFC libraries to minimize download size. Adding the DLLs in version 1.51 increased the download size by 250%.
- Icon handling has been dramatically improved, particularly small icons. Choose Refresh Icons from the context menu and your small icons should improve their appearance.
- Also fixed a long-standing bug where the links in shortcut files were not being properly resolved. This resulted in the wrong icons often appearing for .lnk files.
- There is now a documented workaround for assigning a custom icon for a button. See the new section titled "Assigning a Custom Icon to a Button" for details.
- A rather nasty little resource leak was plugged with this release.
- Ctrl double clicking a button that resides to the left of a spacer no longer pushes that button to the right side of the spacer.
- Ctrl dragging buttons has been replaced with the more standard Alt dragging.
- The drag positioning logic has been greatly enhanced. It is now possible to place a button on either side of an existing group of spacers. Previously the button would only position to the right of the spacer group.
- You can now insert a spacer by Shift double clicking a button. The spacer will be inserted before the clicked button. Currently the only way to delete spacers is in the Properties dialog.

Version 1.51 (3/9/97) – Recompiled with Visual C++ 5.0 (reduced binary size by 12%). Changed to using shared MFC DLLs to further reduce binary size and promote code sharing. Limited release.

Version 1.5 (5/30/96) – Feature complete! Everything is implemented and working, with a few known limitations. Wide availability.

Version 1.0 (2/15/96) – The first release. Some functionality not yet implemented. Limited release.

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