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About Nico's Commander

Nico's Commander is a Norton Commander like file manager for Windows 95 and Windows NT. Besides basic file management capabilities it offers several useful additions:

- ten or twenty application buttons you can configure to start your favourite applications with a mouse click, and at the same time feed a selected file to the application
- show the current date and time in the title bar of the current application
- built-in zip and unzip function with support for long file names
- try out facility for ZIP files
- search for files and for text strings in files
- compare directories
- compare (text) files
- built-in editor for ASCII files
- Explorer like context menus
- reach your desktop icons with one click of the mouse, even when the desktop is cluttered with windows
- use FTP sites as local disks
- print ASCII files one or two page on a sheet
- command prompt with command history
- minimize by right clicking on empty space in the main window
- Esc key instantly activates your screen saver
- a button ExitWin to log off and on, to exit and restart Windows or reboot the machine.

Nico's Commander is shareware. You may try in for 30 days. After that you have to register. See the READ.ME file for details about how to register.

Any suggestion? Found a bug? Please contact the author:

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Check for new versions on **http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Way/2686**

Click on a menu choice to get help

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File - Attributes (and time stamp)

In this window you can change the attributes and the time stamp of a file or a range of files.

Attributes are:

- archive (file is modified since last backup)
- read only
- system
- hidden.

If you select only one file then its attributes are shown. If you select more than one file, you can select the attributes to be modified on all files.

Normally hidden and system files are not shown. You can change the behaviour of Nico's Commander in this respect in **Settings - Other settings for file windows**.

The time stamp can be changed to the current date and time, or to the date and time you choose.

File - Search

To start the search you must specify:

- a **file specification**, specifying where to start the search and what files to search. The use of jokers and wildcards is supported. Mandatory.
- an optional **text string** to be searched for in the specified files. Drop down to use a search string from the history list.
- whether or not to **search through subdirectories**
- whether or not to do a **case sensitive search**.

Found files appear in a listbox. Use the **Execute** and **Edit** buttons to run or edit one of the files. Specify the path to the editor to be used in **Settings - General settings**. The **Go there** button makes the file that was found the selected file in the active file window.

File - Associate

You can associate a file extension with a program. This program will be executed for the file if you double click on it a file window.
In this dialog window you can specify the path to the program to be executed. The path should be followed with %1 which stands for the name of the file on which you will double click.

File - Compare

The two selected files in the two file windows are compared. A report is shown, in which the differences are indicated in red. With buttons you can navigate to the next/previous match/difference. There is also a button to start the editor for one of the files. There are settings that influence the way of comparing.

File - Edit

The editor is started for the selected file in the current file window. In **Settings - General settings** you can select which editor to use: the internal editor of Nico's Commander or an external editor. The path to that external editor can be specified there as well.

File - Edit new

Within the current directory of the current file window a new file will be created. You will be prompted for a file name. Next the editor will be started for the file. In **Settings - General settings** you can select which editor to use: the internal editor of Nico's Commander or an external editor. The path to that external editor can be specified there as well.

File/Directory - Copy

Files and directories selected in the current file window are copied. You will be prompted for a destination path. Default is the current directory of the other file window. If you specify a non existent directory it will be created. If you have an FTP connection active and you want to copy there preceed the path with **[FTP]**.

In the same dialog window you can choose to copy only newer files.

Files and directories can also be copied using drag-and-drop.

File/Directory - Rename

The file or directory selected in the current file window is renamed. You will be prompted for the new name.

File/Directory - Move

Files and directories selected in the current file window are moved. You will be prompted for a destination path. Default is the current directory of the other file window. If you specify a non existent directory it will be created. If you have an FTP connection active and you want to move to that site preceed the path with **[FTP]**.

File/Directory - Delete

Files and directories selected in the current file window are deleted (put in the Windows Recycle Bin).

File/Directory - Delete

Files and directories selected in the current file window are deleted without being put in the Windows Recycle Bin.

File - Filter

A dialog window pops up, asking you for a file specification. From then on only files conforming to this specification will be shown in the two file windows. The default filter is *.*.

File - Select

A dialog window pops up, asking you for a file specification. Files conforming to this specification will be added to the current selection. With this choice you can extend the number of selected files.

File - Deselect

A dialog window pops up, asking you for a file specification. Files conforming to this specification will be removed from the current selection. With this choice you can decrease the number of selected files.

File - Select all (All button)

All files and directories in the file window are selected. Only selected files and directories can be candidate for copy, delete and other actions.

File - Deselect all (None button)

Nothing will be selected in the file window.

Unzip files

Choose **File - Open archive** or double click a filename with a zip extension to show a list of files contained in the archive.
You can extract all files, or only the ones you selected.

A zip file can contain path information for the files it contains. If it does you will be asked if NC should use this information during unzipping.
An example: the current target directory is C:\DOS. The archive contains a file MOUSE.COM with MOUSE31 as path information. If you choose not to use this path information then MOUSE.COM will be unpacked to C:\DOS. If you choose to use the path information MOUSE.COM will be unpacked to C:\DOS\MOUSE31.

Of course you can override the destination. If you specify a non existent directory it will be created.

Besides unpacking you can also select one file and have it run or shown in the editor.

The zip facility of NC supports long file names.

File - Zip

The selected files in the current file window are packed in a zip type archive.
The selected file in the non active file window will be the output zip file. Files to be zipped will be added to that archive.
If no output zip file is selected the current path in the other file window is used as destination and the name of the output file is composed from the directory name of the current file window and a .zip extension.
Of course you can override both name and destination. If you specify a non existent directory it will be created.

If a file to be zipped already exists in the ZIP file, it is replaced in it.

You can also zip complete subdirectories.

A zip file can contain path information for the files it contains. That can be useful if you want to recreate the directory structure during unpacking.
Before the zipping starts you will be asked if path information should be stored. You can choose to have no path information, relative path information or absolute path information.
An example. Suppose the source directory is C:\DOS. You selected its subdirectory MOUSE31 which contains the file MOUSE.COM.
If you choose relative path information this file will be stored with MOUSE31 as path information.
If you choose absolute path information the file will be stored with DOS\MOUSE31 as path information.

The zip facility supports long file names.

Creation of an archive on a removable medium (for instance floppy) supports disk spanning: when the floppy is full you will be asked to insert a new floppy, and writing continues on this new floppy. In the end the archive will span several floppies.

File - Zip to self extracting file

The selected files in the current file window are packed in a zip type archive, which is then made self extracting.
The current path in the other file window is used as destination and the name of the output file is composed from the directory name of the current file window and a .EXE extension.
Of course you can override both name and destination. If you specify a non existent directory it will be created.

You can also zip complete subdirectories.

A self extracting zip file can contain path information for the files it contains. That can be useful if you want to recreate the directory structure during unpacking.
Before the zipping starts you will be asked if path information should be stored. You can choose to have no path information, relative path information or absolute path information.
An example. Suppose the source directory is C:\DOS. You selected its subdirectory MOUSE31 which contains the file MOUSE.COM.
If you choose relative path information this file will be stored with MOUSE31 as path information.
If you choose absolute path information the file will be stored with DOS\MOUSE31 as path information.

The zip facility supports long file names.

Self-extracting archives do not support disk spanning: a self-extracting archive must fit on one floppy.

File - Try out

The selected ZIP-file in the current file window is unpacked to a newly created directory. The name of this directory is equal to the name part of the file name of the ZIP-file. The new directory is created in the path specified in **Settings - General settings**. A popup window appears listing the unzipped files. There are buttons to run or to edit each of these files. Use the **Cancel** button to close this window. You will be asked whether to delete the newly created directory and its files.
Only ZIP files can be unpacked.
Specify the path to the editor to be used in **Settings - General settings**.

File - Print (Print button)

Files selected in the current file window are printed on the default Windows printer.
Choose from different formats: one page on a sheet in portrait or landscape, or two pages on a sheet in landscape.
Choose from two character sets, ANSI or OEM. ANSI is the default Windows character set. OEM resembles old DOS: line drawing characters will be printed correctly with OEM.
Make these choices in **Settings - Print settings**.

Printer set up

Pick this menu item to make one of the installed printers the default printer, and to set the properties of the default printer.

Directory - Make

Within the current directory of the current file window a new directory is created. You will be prompted for a directory name.

Directory - Compare

Pick this menu item to compare the directories in the two file windows. Note: directories are compared here, not the contents of the files in those directories! (See File - Compare for that.) Comparison is based on file name, file size and time stamp.

Directory - Calculate disk space

Make this choice to calculate to total amount of disk space occupied by the files in the selected directory and its subdirectories.

Directory - Refresh

Make this choice to force Nico's Commander to rebuild the information in the two file windows from disk. Normally, Nico's Commander takes care of this itself, but sometimes after a disk action in another program, the file windows and the situation on disk are out of sync.

Disk - Properties

Shows the properties of the selected disk.

Disk - Format

Formats the selected disk.

Disk - Copy

Copies the selected disk.

Disk - Connect over network

You can make a connection between your computer and a shared directory on another computer.

Disk - Disconnect over network

Make this choice if you want to disconnect your computer from a shared directory on another computer.

Disk - FTP Sites

Make this choice to add or delete FTP sites, and to make an FTP connection.

In the list on the left in the dialog window all defined FTP sites are shown. One of them is selected. On the right in the dialog window are shown the site's properties. You can also see if a connection to this site is active.

Steps to take to move data to or from an FTP site:

- make sure an Internet connection exists. You can't use Nico's Commander to do that!
- add the FTP site to the list (Disk - FTP Sites - Add). Specify as site address for example FTP.MICROSOFT.COM.
- make an FTP connection to the FTP site of your choice (Disk - FTP Sites - Connect)
- if the connection is made the FTP site is added to the list of diskstations. You can now do file management as if the FTP site were a local disk.
- when you're ready stop the connection with the FTP site (Disk - FTP Sites - Disconnect).

Most FTP sites accept anonymous logins if you don't have a valid acount. Specify "anonymous" as your user-id for a anonymous login. The convention in that case is that you enter your e-mail address as your password.
If you want to login anonymous click the "anonymous login" box.

Settings - Save current paths

For each of the two file windows the current drive and current directory are saved in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Settings - General settings

In this dialog window you can change these settings for Nico's Commander:

- the title of Nico's Commanders main window
- whether or not you want to use application buttons, and if yes, how much
- whether or not you want the application buttons to contain application icons
- whether or not you want to use the command prompt of Nico's Commander
- whether or not you want to have buttons for the function keys
- whether or not you want to show the "stop" and "menu" icons in the task bar
- whether to show the current date and time in the title bar of the current window
- whether or not the Esc key should instantly activate the screen saver.
- whether you want to use the internal editor of Nico's Commander or and external editor, and where to find this external editor
- the path to use in try out actions

Choose **OK** to save the settings in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Settings - Choose font for file windows

In this dialog window you choose the font to be used in the file windows.

Settings - Choose colors for file windows

In this dialog window you choose the colors to be used in the file windows. You can use different colors for files and directories, and for both you can specify a text color and a background color.
You can also choose the color of the rectangle that highlights the current file window (the focus rectangle).

Settings - Other settings for file windows

In this dialog window you can change these settings for Nico's Commander:

- whether to show filenames in the file windows in upper case, in lower case or in the case they are in
- whether to show files with the "hidden" or "system" attribute
- whether to show the Explorer like context menu on a right mouse click in the file windows or a dialog box to change a files attributes, date and time.

Choose **OK** to save the settings in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Settings - Print settings

In this dialog window you can change these settings for Nico's Commander:

- the number of pages printed on a sheet of paper (one page portrait or two pages landscape)
- whether or not to print line numbers in front of the lines
- whether or not to truncate long lines.
- what character set to use, ANSI or OEM. ANSI is the default Windows character set. OEM resembles old DOS: line drawing characters will be printed correctly with OEM.

Choose **OK** to save the settings in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Settings - Confirmations

In this dialog window you can change these settings for Nico's Commander:

- whether or not Nico's Commander will ask you to confirm a deletion of files
- whether or not Nico's Commander will ask you an extra confirmation before deleting a non empty directory
- whether or not Nico's Commander will ask you to confirm an overwrite of files.
- whether or not Nico's Commander will ask you to confirm a shut down when you click the stop icon in the task bar.

Choose **OK** to save the settings in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Settings - File compare settings

In this dialog window you can change these settings for Nico's Commander:

- whether or not to ignore white space during file comparisons
- in how many spaces a tab character must result when showing files.

Choose **OK** to save the settings in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Settings - FTP settings

In this dialog window you can change these settings for Nico's Commander:

- whether or not to log FTP actions, and the file specification of the log file
- the type of file transfer. Use ASCII for text files if the host uses a different end of line character than the PC does. Use L8 for the transfer of non-text files to or from a VMS host. Use binary in all other cases (nearly almost).
- whether you want to confirm a temporary transfer to the local harddisk for edit or unzip actions
- whether or not a temporary file transfer to the local harddisk for an edit action should always be done in ASCII mode, regardless of the general file transfer setting
- whether or not a temporary file transfer to the local harddisk for an unzip action should always be done in binary mode, regardless of the general file transfer setting
- of een bestandsoverdracht voor de editor (dus waarschijnlijk een tekstbestand) altijd in ASCII moet plaatsvinden, ongeacht de algemene instelling voor het soort bestandsoverdracht
- of een bestandsoverdracht voor de uitpakker (incl. try-out) altijd in binaire modus moet plaatsvinden, ongeacht de algemene instelling voor het soort bestandsoverdracht
- whether or not to reread the directory of the FTP host after a file transfer. This takes time, especially on a slow link. The disadvantage of not rereading is that what is shown on screen not always reflects the real situation.
- the e-mail address to be used as password at anonymous log-ins.

Choose **OK** to save the settings in the registry so that they can be used the next time Nico's Commander is started.

Use of the keyboard

- use the **TAB key** to switch to the other file window
- use the **Esc key** to instantly activate your screen saver (see also **Settings - General settings**)
- **cursor up, cursor down, PgUp, PgDn, Home en End** let you navigate in the file windows. Pressing Shift with these keys extends the selection of files/directories
- press a **character key** to select the file whose name starts with that character
- use the **space bar** to select a file or directory
- use the **Ins key** to select a file or directory, and go to the next line
- the **Enter key** has the same effect as double clicking a directory or file name
- the **Del key** has the same effect as **F8** or the **Delete** button: files/ directories are deleted (to the Windows Recycle Bin)
- **Shift+Del of Shift+F8** deletes files/directories without sending them to the Windows Recycle Bin
- **Alt+F1 and Alt+F2** drop down the list of available disk drives. Make a choice with the cursor up and down keys and the Enter key
- **Num+ and Num-** let you extend and decrease the current selection
- use **Ctrl+R** to force a refresh of the file windows
- use **Ctrl+P** to switch from the file windows to the command prompt and back
- use **Ctrl+Num+ and Ctrl+Num-** to select all files or no files in the current file window
- use **Ctrl+PgUp** to go up one level in the directory tree in the current file window
- use **Ctrl+** to go to the root directory in the current file window
- use **Ctrl+F3 through Ctrl+F6** to sort the current file window on name, extension, file size or time stamp
- **Alt+F7** has the same effect as File Search.

Use of the mouse

A tip: filenames to long to fit in the file window are abbreviated. However, let the mouse pointer rest on the name for a few moments and a tooltip appears, showing you the complete filename!

Use the mouse to drag and drop files and directories.

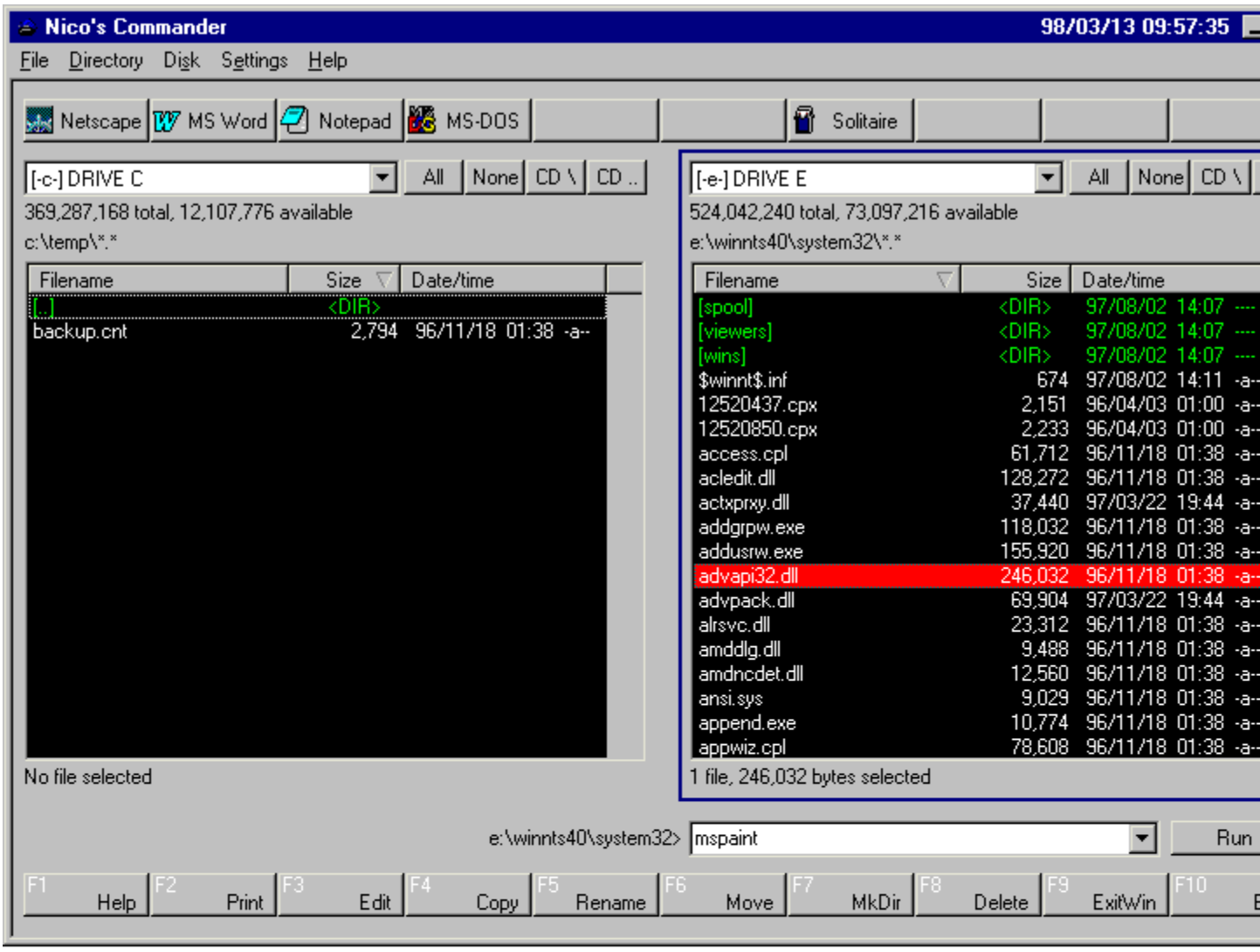
In several circumstances the right mouse button has a special use:

- right click on an application button to pop up the properties dialog for the button.

- right click on a filename in one of the file windows to pop up its context menu or a dialog to change the attributes and the time stamp of the file. Select what to display in **Settings - Other settings for file windows**

- right click on empty space in Nico's Commanders main window to minimize the window.

Click on a screen object to get help



Change the title

The text in the title bar of Nico's Commanders main window can be changed. Use **Settings - General settings**.

Properties for application button

In this dialog window you set the properties of the application that this button starts:

- application name, this will also be the button name
- specification of the executable to start (use the **Browse** button)
- command line parameters for the application
- working directory: name of the directory to become the current directory at the start of the application
- how to start the application (normal, maximized, minimized).

Tip: if you specify a working directory but no executable to start, the result will be that when you click the button the working directory you specified wil become the current directory in the active file window, and no program will be started.

File windows

Each of the two file windows shows the directories and files in the current directory for that file window. The current directory is shown just above the file window.

One of the file windows is the current window, marked by a square around it. Commands like print, copy, delete operate on files and directories in the current window.

Directories have **<DIR>** printed behind their name. Change to a directory by double clicking on its name. Go up one level in the directory tree by clicking on the directory called **[..]** or click the button called **CD..**. Go to the root directory by clicking on the button called **CD**.

Change disk drives by selecting the disk drive in the drop down list.

There are a number of ways to select files and directories:

- press the space bar
- press the Ins key
- left click on a file or directory
- to select another file or directory: hold the Ctrl key and left click
- to select a range: hold the Shift key and left click the first and the last of the range
- to select all: **File - Select all** on the menu or the button called **All**
- to deselect all: **File - Deselect all** on the menu or the button called **None**
- to extend or decrease the selection: **File - Select file** or **File - Deselect file** on the menu.

Double click a file name to:

- execute the file if it is a program or batch file
- execute the program associated with the extension of the file and use the file name as command line parameter
- show the contents of a ZIP file and give you the option to unpack, edit or execute files in the ZIP file.

Drag-and-drop between the file windows is supported.

You can sort the directories and files by clicking on the header of the column on which you want to sort. Default sort order is on file name.

Sorting file windows

A file window first shows the directories and then the files. Directories and files are by default sorted on name. Change the sorting order by clicking on the header of the column on which you want to sort. You can sort on name, extension, size and time stamp. Clicking the header another time will change the sorting order (from down to up, or from up to down).

Drag-and-drop

Drag and drop files and directories from the path in the current file window to the path in the other file window or one of its subdirectories. Proceed as follows:

1. select one or more files and/or directories
2. keep the left mouse button depressed
3. drag the mouse pointer from the current file window to the other file window. Release the mouse button on a subdirectory (marked by a rectangle around its name) to copy the dragged files to that subdirectory. Release the mouse on another part of the file window to copy to the current path of that file window.

Drag-and-drop always implies a copy, never a move, of files and directories.

Current disk drive

Shows what the current disk drive is for this file window. Pick another drive from the list to make that current.
On the next line the total number of bytes and the available number of bytes on the drive is shown.

Go to root directory (CD \ button)

Press this button to go to the root directory on this drive.

Go to parent directory (CD .. button)

Press this button to go up one level in the directory tree. You can do the same by clicking on the **[..]** directory in the file window

Exit Windows (ExitWin button)

If you press this button you can choose:

- to log off the current user and log on a new user
- to reboot the machine
- to shut down the machine.

If you choose to **reboot** applications are killed, so they cannot for instance save open files. Therefore use this option with caution.

You can also **shutdown** the machine by clicking on the stop sign in the taskbar:

Exit Nico's Commander (the Exit button)

Use this button to exit Nico's Commander.

The desktop menu

Click on the menu icon (fork, knife, spoon) in the task bar to activate the desktop menu. It contains the name of every icon on your desktop. Click on a name to activate the icon. A nice feature when your desktop is cluttered with windows.

The command prompt

Here you can type in commands, eg. the name of an executable program. An example: type **calc** to start CALC.EXE (the Windows calculator). You can also give command line parameters. Example: type **notepad c:\autoexec.bat** to start NOTEPAD.EXE and have it open the file C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT. Besides executables you can type in the name of a file. The program associated with the extension of the filename (if any) is started, and the file is opened in it.

A history of commands you typed in is maintained. Drop down the list box to search for and re-execute such a command.

In front of the command prompt window the path is printed that will be the current path when executing the command.