WinU Help

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Introduction

WinU is a Windows 95 menu system with timeout and security access features. It is excellent for parents that want to allow their children to use only certain software on the family PC, without worrying that Junior might delete the household tax records.   It is also ideal for computer stores that want to let the shopping public try their featured software without allowing access to the entire computer.   WinU lets you set the amount of time that shoppers (or children) can use a program.   It allows a warning "grace period,"   with a custom warning message that you can set, before it terminates the program.   Vendors and businesses will appreciate the File Logging feature, which tracks exactly when each programs was run, and for how long.   And WinU allows you to use any Windows bitmap as its fullscreen background image.   Use your company logo or sales information, or just your favorite pretty picture.   Or put the image in the top half and the menu buttons on the bottom, to give an unobstructed view of the picture.

How To Order WinU

Thank you for trying WinU.   You are welcome to test the fully-functional evaluation version for 30 days.   That is, you can run the program on 30 different dates.   These dates do not have to be consecutive calendar days.   If you don't run WinU on a particular date, it doesn't count against your 30 days.   This gives you plenty of time to try it under actual working conditions on your own system, to see if it meets your needs. After the trial period, you must either purchase WinU or remove it from your system.

To order, send $29.95 (plus shipping, see below) to:

Data Outlet
P. O. Box 37278
Richmond, VA 23234

Payment: You can pay with cash, check, money order, MasterCard, or Visa.
Shipping: Please enclose $5 for shipping and handling.
Outside North America: Please add an additional $6 overseas shipping surcharge.

With a MasterCard or Visa you can also order WinU by phone, either directly from Data Outlet at **804-768-0424** (noon to 8:00 Mon-Thu) or through Data Outlet's toll-free telephone order-taking service at **800-242-4775** (weekdays 7 to 6 Central time), or 24 hours a day by fax at **(713) 524-6398** or on CompuServe at **102676,667.**   Include card number, expiration date, and name as it appears on the card.

If you order with a MasterCard or Visa by phone at **804-768-0424,** you'll be given your registration number immediately so you can get rid of those reminder screens and limitations right away.   Or simply mail in your card number and expiration date.

When you order, you'll get a copy of the most recent version of WinU, a registration number that will turn off the reminder screens and remove the limitations of the evaluation version, a printed manual, support, and update notices.

You will also get a **FREE** copy of **Reverend Lowell's Treasury of Humor, Volume 1: "He Who Laughs, Lasts!"** Reverend Lowell's Treasury contains thousands of humorous anecdotes collected by Reverend Lowell during his long career as an ordained minister.   After thirty years of public speaking from the pulpit, the podium, and on television, he has amassed over 200,000 items, and Reverend Lowell's Treasury represents the "cream of the crop."   These are Reverend Lowell's favorite funny stories, revealing quotes, interesting anecdotes, and zingy one-liners.   And there's nothing that would be unsuitable in any public setting.   There are plenty of items to choose from.   Each volume of the Treasury covers a different topic, and contains at least as many items as you'd find in a full-size book.   Many are illustrated in color or black-and-white.   You can search for any item by keyword or first line.   Or simply browse through every item page by page.

The File Menu

Password: First you are asked for the current password.   Then the Change Password dialog lets you change it to a new password.   Give the new password twice, once on each line.

Configuration Parameters: The Configuration dialog is where you set the background bitmap, indicate which WinU functions require a password, set up a logging file to record which apps were run when, and toggle Convenience Mode.

Applications On Buttons: The Applications dialog is where you add, change, or delete applications and their timeout parameters.

Shut Down The Computer: In Security Mode, WinU covers the entire screen.   With no access to any other Windows 95 controls, this is how the user can shut down the computer.   A password is required (if this is set in the Configuration Parameters).

Exit: This is how the user exits from WinU.   A password is required (if this is set in the Configuration Parameters).

The Help Menu

The **Help** menu has two items: **Help** and **About WinU**.

Use the **Help** item (or press F1) to get on-line help about WinU.

The other item, **About WinU**, is a typical About box.   It gives the WinU version number and copyright information.

Notices

VERSION: WinU version 1.0

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Requires Microsoft Windows 95

SOFTWARE LICENSE: Anyone is welcome to distribute unregistered evaluation copies of WinU, in its entirety as distributed with this file, subject to these conditions:

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Uninstalling WinU

WinU tries to be considerate of the rest of your Windows system. It just copies its own files to the directory you specify, and adds its icons to the Start button group you specify. If you decide to uninstall, just delete the specified files and icons.

Related Topics:
Installing WinU

Installing WinU

To install WinU, run the included program **install.exe** that comes with WinU.   It will ask you for the directory you'd like to install into, the Start button group name you prefer, and whether you'd like WinU to run at startup.   WinU will not install anything to any other directory, other than the one directory you specify.   It will not change any system files.   If you choose to uninstall, simply delete this one directory, plus any Start button shortcuts that point to it.

WinU includes the following files which are installed to the directory you choose:

winu.exe	the WinU program, file 1
winu2.exe	the WinU program, file 2
winu.hlp	the documentation, in Windows help file format
readme.txt	overview and installation instructions
whatsnew.txt	new features and revision history
install.exe	WinU's installer

Related Topics:
Uninstalling WinU

Quick Start

There are three steps to setting up WinU:

1) Set the password which you probably did already, at startup.

2) Configure the system by using the **File** menu item **Configuration Parameters** to display the **Setup Options** dialog.

3) Add programs by using the **File** menu item **Applications On Buttons** to display the WinU **Applications** dialog.

You'll also want to give some thought to security considerations, and understand the Convenience Mode option.

Here are a few more things to consider:

In Security Mode... there's a countdown timer in WinU's menu bar, so the user always knows how much time is left ... if a button app is running at WinU exit, the button app is terminated ... you can't shut down the computer when WinU is running (oh, OK, yes, the power switch still works) ... you can't exit from WinU improperly (it restarts) ... WinU won't run smaller than fullscreen, and when set up properly the user can't access the Start button, task bar, desktop, Explorer, nothing except what you've provided ... You can only run one program at a time. When you click on a new button, the previous app closes ... You can't restart a program sooner than the restart time interval ... If you minimize a WinU button app, Winu reopens it ... WinU always tries to start apps fullscreen. The user has the option of clicking the "normal size" titlebar button ... The current app cannot get buried under the WinU window; WinU keeps it on top ... Those big-font warning message boxes time out in two minutes; they don't hang around on the screen looking like something's broken.

Setting The Password

The first time you start WinU, it asks you for a password.   This password is saved permanently (note: the evaluation trial version of WinU does not save the password between sessions) so you never need to enter one again if you don't want to. However, you can change the password at any time with the **Password** item on the **File** menu.

Configuring WinU

Use the **File** menu item **Configuration Parameters** to display the **Setup Options** dialog.   There are five parts to this screen.   They are:

Bitmap Image: WinU has its own "built-in" background image, or it can display any Windows bitmap as the background image by giving its file name here.   Also, indicate here whether you want to show the image fullscreen behind the menu buttons, or unobstructed in the top half of the WinU screen.   You can type it in, or use the Browse button, or "drag and drop" bitmap image filenames from Explorer onto this dialog.   It will appear as the bitmap file name.

Image Display Mode: This sets the display mode for the background bitmap image. The best mode for color images is usually Mode 2.   However, on some systems Mode 1 or Mode 3 may work better.   Try it and see.

Password: Is a password required to shut down the computer?   To exit WinU?   To change WinU's configuration and applications list?   Consider that if it's easy for the user to exit or bypass WinU, or shut down and restart the computer, this may provide an access route around WinU's security features.   If security is your goal, you may also want to place a shortcut to WinU in the Startup folder, so WinU is always activated when Windows 95 starts its GUI desktop.

Log To File: When checked, WinU adds a line to your chosen log file noting the start time and duration of each application run from WinU.   It also notes the start and end times for this WinU session. (Note: the evaluation trial version of WinU does not allow logging to file.)   In "convenience mode" application start times are logged but not end times. You can type it in, or use the Browse button, or "drag and drop" any filename from Explorer onto this dialog.   If it's not a bitmap (see above) it will appear as the log file name.

User Restriction Enforcement: WinU has a convenience mode   in which it can be run smaller than fullscreen.   Since this allows the user to bypass WinU and run programs from the Start button, Explorer, etc, in "convenience mode" WinU's security features are suspended.   This turns WinU into a convenient way of launching applications from a handy list.   "Convenience mode" is also very useful when setting up WinU.   Since WinU is smaller than fullscreen, it's easier to navigate through the rest of your system to find the programs you want to add to WinU.   (Note: the evaluation trial version of WinU allows you to use "convenience mode" for setup, but does not allow applications to be launched from buttons.)

Adding Or Changing Programs

WinU displays each program name on a button.   To run that program, the user clicks the button.   To add, change, or delete a button, bring up the **Applications** dialog on the **File** menu, and enter this information:

File to run: This is the full filename of the program. You can type it in, or use the Browse button, or "drag and drop" any filename from Explorer onto this dialog.   If it's not an icon file (see below) it will appear as the file to run.

Command parameters: Give any command-line parameters or switches needed by the program.

Initial Directory: This is the starting directory for this program.   If you don't list anything, the WinU's current directory is used as the program's initial directory.

Icon File: If you'd prefer an icon other than the usual one, give its name here. You can type it in, or use the Browse button, or "drag and drop" .ico (icon) filenames from Explorer onto this dialog.   It will appear as the icon file.   You can also list almost any Windows program, and even some DLLs.   Whatever you list, the first icon in the file will be used.

Button Text: This is the title text to be displayed on the button.   You've probably noticed that all buttons are the same size.   This size is determined by the length of the longest button title text.

Warning Message: This is your customized warning message to be displayed for this program.   If you don't provide a message, a generic warning message is used.   It's helpful to indicate in your warning message just how much time remains before termination.   Your message can be up to 300 characters long.

Minutes Until Warning: This is the number of minutes until the warning message is displayed.   Set this to zero if you don't want any time limits for this program

Minutes Until Termination: This is the number of minutes until the program is terminated.   It must be a larger number than the Minutes Until Warning.   For example, you might set 10 Minutes Until Warning, and 14 Minutes Until Termination.
Set this to zero if you don't want any time limits for this program.

Minutes Before Application Restart Allowed: It's sometimes useful to be able to set a "waiting period" before an application can be restarted after termination.   For example, if a parent sets up Junior's game with 30 Minutes Until Termination, what's to prevent Junior from simply restarting the game right away?   Just set 60 Minutes Before Application Restart Allowed and Junior will have to do something else for an hour. Maybe even homework...

App Requires MS-DOS Mode: Check this box if the program has been configured to run in "MS-DOS Mode."   You'll hardly ever need to do this.   Almost all DOS programs run just fine under a normal Windows 95 DOS session.   But a few older or ill-behaved DOS programs need to run in what's called "MS-DOS Mode."   In this mode, Windows 95 starts the program and then shuts itself down almost entirely.   The DOS program has the use of the entire machine.   When the DOS program exits, Windows 95 reboots. This creates some security considerations that deserve careful thought before you include such a program in a security-oriented environment like WinU.

After you give this information, click the **Add App** button to create a new listing.   To delete an app, select one from the list and click the **Delete App** button.   To change an app, select one from the list, change its information, and click the **Change App** button.

To get you started, there's also a **Find All Apps** button.   This will list every exe, com, bat, and pif file in your system.   You can scroll through this list, and when you find an app you want to add, select it from the list and click on the **Add This App** button.   It will be added with default parameters (which you'll probably want to customize with the **Change App** button).   Click the **Done** button when you're finished with this list.

Security Considerations

WinU can control many, but not all, ways that a user might try to access your system. Here are some things you should do to provide further protection.

Put A Shortcut To WinU In Startup: Consider putting a shortcut to WinU in the Startup folder.   That way, if the system is turned off at the power switch, WinU will become active instantly when the Windows 95 desktop boots next time.   If you're comfortable using Explorer to create a shortcut to winu.exe in the Startup folder, that's a fine way to do it.   If not, here are step by step directions:

a) Click the Start button
b) Select the Settings menu item.   A sub-menu appears.
c) In the sub-menu, select Taskbar
d) The Taskbar Properties dialog comes up
e) Select the tab labeled "Start Menu Programs"
f) Under Start Menu Programs, click the Add button
g) If you know the full directory path to the winu.exe program, type it into the command line.   Otherwise, click on the Browse button to find it and select it.   Either way, the full path to winu.exe winds up in the command line. When it's there, press Next.
h) When you press Next, the Start menu's directory structure appears.
i) Scroll down until you see the Startup folder, and select it.
j) Now you'll be asked to give a name for this new shortcut.   Pick your favorite name, and click on the Finish button.
k) Back at the Taskbar Properties dialog, click OK.

Close All Other Programs: WinU doesn't mind when other programs run at the same time it is active, but before you start Winu in Security Mode, you should still exit from all other programs.   This is because Windows lets the user Alt+Tab to any running program, and this may provide a way to bypass WinU's security.   (Alt+Tab is when you hold down the Alt key and tap the Tab key.   It takes you to the next open application.) Don't worry, you can't Alt+Tab to the Start button or taskbar, or to static icons on the desktop.

Disable Boot-Time Function Keys: Another possible security hole is the use of the function keys when the computer boots.   For example, at boot time F4 starts your previous version of DOS, and F8 brings up a menu of options including bare DOS, "safe mode," and various other ways to continue.   To ensure security you'll want to disable these boot-time function keys.   Here's how.

a) Open Explorer
b) Go to the root directory of your boot drive (usually C)
c) Find the file MSDOS.SYS
d) Right-click on the filename to bring up the context menu
e) At the bottom of the menu, select Properties.   The Properties dialog comes up
f) At the bottom, under Attributes, un-check Read-only and Hidden

g) Click OK to close the Properties dialog

h) Run Notepad (or any text editor) to edit this file.

i) In Notepad, you'll see the block called [Options], usually at the top of the file.   Add a line to this section (that is, under the [Options] line and above the next lower line in brackets) that reads:

BootKeys=0

The zero means to ignore function keys when the computer boots.   To turn the boot-time function keys back on, remove this line.   Setting BootKeys=1 should turn the function keys back on, too.

j) Close Notepad and save the MSDOS.SYS file.   You don't have to reset the Read-only and Hidden attributes.   The next time you boot Windows 95 will do it for you.

Un-Topmost The Task Bar: The task bar is sometimes set as a "topmost" window. That is, it is always on top of all other windows.   This is not a good idea if your goal is a secure system, because the user can click on the Start button and run whatever is on your system ... exactly what you're trying to avoid.   Fortunately, it's easy to "un-topmost" the task bar and Start button.

a) Click the Start button

b) Select the Settings menu item.   A sub-menu appears.

c) In the sub-menu, select Taskbar.   The Taskbar Properties dialog comes up

d) Make sure that "Always on top" is NOT checked

e) Click OK to close the Properties dialog

Don't Use MS-DOS Mode: A few older or ill-behaved DOS programs need to run in what's called "MS-DOS Mode."   (It's set in the DOS program's Properties, on the Program tab, under Advanced.)   In this mode, Windows 95 starts the program and then shuts itself down almost entirely.   The DOS program has the use of the entire machine. When the DOS program exits, Windows 95 reboots.

If you've put WinU in your Startup folder, as suggested above, it handles this situation easily.   WinU restarts smoothly when Windows 95 reboots, and again covers the entire screen.   However, while the MS-DOS mode program is running, nothing else is.   Not Windows, not WinU, nothing.   So there's no way to enforce timeouts or other security considerations.   Windows restarts when the MS-DOS program exits.   It's a complete reboot.   Nothing is carried over from the previous Windows session before the MS-DOS program ran.   At that reboot time, WinU restarts too, because you put WinU in the Startup folder.   But the new WinU doesn't know what happened "before," so it doesn't log the MS-DOS app's exit, it doesn't know to enforce restart control on that app, it doesn't know if that app went over its time limit, nothing.

As you can see, MS-DOS Mode creates a large security hole.   Fortunately it's really a very small problem, because very few DOS apps require MS-DOS Mode.   Most run just fine under a normal Windows 95 DOS session.   For those few apps that require it,

WinU will run the "MS-DOS Mode" apps easily.   All you need to do is check the "MS-DOS Mode" box in the Apps dialog if you decide to use one of these few problem programs.   But before you put one on the menu, consider the security tradeoffs involved.

Differences between Convenience Mode and Security Mode

Here are the differences between **Convenience Mode** and **Security Mode**.

In Security Mode, WinU covers the entire screen all the time.   In Convenience Mode, WinU can run smaller than fullscreen.   This simple fact drives almost all the other differences.

Since the rest of the system is "available" in Convenience Mode, WinU makes no attempt to enforce timeout, warning, or restart restrictions.   The menu does not show "Minutes Left" as it does in Security Mode.   If file logging is turned on, application start time is logged but not ending time.   (Session start and end times are logged in both modes.)   WinU doesn't vigorously resist being shut down abnormally, as in Security Mode.

In Security Mode, WinU will run only one program at a time.   If you start a new one, the old one is terminated.   In Convenience Mode you can run as many programs simultaneously as you like.

In Security Mode, when and if WinU closes, it will terminate the currently-running app. In Convenience Mode, when WinU closes, any programs it launched continue to run.

Differences Between Evaluation And Registered Version

There are a number of differences between the trial evaluation version of WinU, and the the features available after you purchase it.

In the registered version, there are no registration reminder screens when WinU starts and exits.   The title bar does not read "UNREGISTERED COPY, FOR EVALUATION ONLY."   The text of the warning message box can be set as you choose (no more WinU advertising...), and no message box appears when an app terminates.

The registered version lets you set the warning time to something other than three minutes, and the termination time to something other than five minutes.

In the registered version, logging to file is available.   If you use this feature, the start and end times of each app run from a button, as well as the start and end times of the session itself, are logged to file.

The registered version does not pause to request that you enter a new password every time you start WinU.   The password is saved between sessions.   This makes it much more convenient to keep WinU in the Startup folder.