

PDProPrefs

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Chapter 1

PDProPrefs

1.1 The PowerData Professional Preferences Editor

Documentation for

PowerData Professional Preferences v1.0

An editor for the PowerData Professional
transparent data crunch/decrunch utility

Written by Michael Berg
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This document fully describes how to use the PowerData Professional preferences editor. Please select an item from the table of contents listed below:

Introduction

Introduction to the PDPro Preferences editor

Installation

How to install it

Usage

How to use it

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Configuration do's and don't's

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The format of the PDProPrefs preferences file

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1.2 Introduction

Introduction

The PowerData Professional preferences editor (PDProPrefs) is an editor which allows you to customize the operation of the PowerData Professional transparent data crunch/decrunch utility. It allows you to select the mode of operation for individual applications (clients), and it lets you select XPK crunch methods for individual file types.

Note that this editor isn't explicitly required to use PDPro. PDPro sets up some internal defaults when it is run, and if no other preferences are found, it simply uses these. However, to take full advantage of the power of PDPro, you will need this editor to enable transparent crunching and to select which XPK methods should be used for each file type.

See the section on

Usage

for a complete description of all features.

1.3 Installation

Installation

Scripts for both IconX and for Commodore's Installer utility (not included) are provided to make installing PDProPrefs as convenient as possible. Installing it by hand is also quite easy, if you follow the instructions below.

Copy PDProPrefs and its icon into the directory or drawer where you want it (SYS:Prefs/ is a typical location). If you want the editor to run localized, you must also copy the necessary catalog files to your LOCALE: directory (requires AmigaDOS V38 or later to work).

PDProPrefs uses GUIFront to build and maintain its graphic user interface, so you will need guifront.library (included) in your LIBS: path before running it.

To handle XPK related issues PowerData Professional and this editor also requires at least version 2 of xpkmaster.library and (hopefully) some XPK method libraries in libs:compressors. Please consult the XPK documentation for further details of what XPK is and how you go about installing the full package.

Like the PDPro program itself, the PDPro preferences editor requires at least AmigaDOS 2.04.

1.4 Usage

Usage

The PowerData Professional preferences editor allows you to customize the operation of the PowerData Professional transparent data crunch/decrunch utility. It allows you to select the mode of operation for individual applications (clients), and it lets you select XPK crunch methods for individual file types.

Clients are specified by name and file types are defined by their filenames. AmigaDOS wild cards are supported for both client- and file names.

To use the editor, either double-click on its icon or activate it from a shell. You should see the main editing window pop up.

Before continuing there are a few things you need to know about the graphic user interface (GUI) of PDProPrefs. First of all it uses GUIFront to build and maintain the GUI, so in general you will be able to alter almost all aspects of its visual appearance. This includes the font used for frame headlines or gadgets, the backfill color, window refreshing, etc. Please consult the GUIFront documentation (GUIFront.guide) for a full description of GUIFront and its preferences editor.

Secondly, all windows in PDProPrefs are "asynchronous". This means that generally, whenever more than one window is open, all of them will accept input. If a window (such as the Pick window, described later) pops up and obscures the main window, simply drag the window out of the way and the main window will be usable again.

Okay, enough about the GUI details. I'm sure you're much more interested in the actual operation of PDProPrefs, so let's get started on that :-)

The main window contains a list of clients, the crunch and decrunch setting for each client and an XPK configuration gadget. The bottom of the window contains the three familiar Save, Use and Cancel gadgets.

Initially the client listview contains only one entry marked "« Default »". This is the default client, and PDPro uses whatever settings you configure for this entry each time an unlisted client makes a DOS call.

Below the client listview you'll find three gadgets which enable you to modify the list. The first one, New, allows you to create a new entry in the list and type in the name of the client you need to configure. You can enter the name of the client directly in the listview string gadget (wildcards are supported, case is insignificant), or you may use the Pick gadget. This gadget opens up a new window with a list of all clients currently running on your system. Double click (or press Enter) on any entry in the Pick window to transfer that particular name to the client listview string gadget. The Pick window remains open after you've made a

selection, so (as explained above) if you want to use the main window you will have to move the Pick window out of the way or close it manually.

Technical note: Clients are matched by their name only. Any path part of a command is skipped in all comparisons, so you cannot match C:Dir and dh2:b/Dir separately.

The Delete gadget lets you delete entries from the client listview. You will be prompted to confirm the operation.

Below the client listview you will find two checkbox gadgets named Crunch and Decrunch. These gadgets control the mode of operation for the currently selected client. Check Crunch if you want the client to use transparent data crunching, and check Decrunch if you want it to use transparent data decrunching. Note that the default mode of operation is NO crunching, and this also applies if PDPro can't locate an initial preferences file.

Finally, there is the XPK Config button. This gadget opens up a new window with a bunch of gadgets in. The purpose of this window is to let you define file types and associated XPK crunch methods. Please refer to the XPK

Config

section for a full description of the various gadgets and functions ←

of this window. Note: You must configure the default XPK crunch method for transparent crunching to work.

The Save button at the very bottom of the main window allows you to save the current preferences permanently on your system. Specifically, they will be saved to ENVARC: which means the system will remember the settings from one system boot/cold start to another.

The Use button works pretty much like the Save button, except the settings are saved only in ENV: which means the settings will be used only until the system is rebooted (or until the settings are re-edited of course).

The Cancel button discards any changes you've made to the current preferences. Note: You won't get a confirmation requester here, so if you press Cancel there's no way to recover the settings you were working at at the time.

The PDPro preferences editor also has a few menus. See the menu section for a detailed explanation of these.

1.5 XPK Configuration

XPK Configuration

This GUI allows you to select which XPK methods should be used to crunch what files.

The window comprises of two listviews. The leftmost listview contains filename patterns and the right one contains a list of XPK methods found on

your system.

The file pattern listview contains an initial entry of "« Default »". This entry indicates the default filename which files not matching any other entry in the list will be matched against.

To add an entry to the pattern listview, press the New gadget below the listview. A new entry will be added to the listview. Edit the new entry so it reflects the AmigaDOS pattern of the file or files you are trying to match. Once you've entered the pattern, select which XPK method should be used for this pattern.

Note: Paths are always matched using volume labels, not device names. You can match "Empty:dir" or "My_Disk_1:dir", but not "DF0:Dir".

Note: To match a single file, simply enter the name (including path) of the file in question. A regular filename is simply a pattern which matches exactly one file.

If you do not recall the exact name of the file or files you wish to enter in the file pattern listview, you may use the Pick gadget to select files via an ASL file requester. Multi-selection is allowed, and each file you select is transferred with path to the listview.

If the XPK method you select supports password encryption, you can use the checkbox gadget below the filetype pattern listview to specify whether or not you wish to use encryption for the currently selected file type. If you enable password encryption, PowerData Professional will prompt you for a password whenever a file of this type is accessed or created.

Note: You need Nico François' reqtools.library to use encryption with PowerData Professional. PDProPrefs will NOT warn you if you don't have this library installed.

Some XPK methods are dedicated encryption methods and require a password in order to work. If you have selected one such method for the currently selected file type, the password gadget will be enabled and locked.

To delete an entry from the pattern listview, press Delete. You will be asked to confirm the operation before the pattern is actually deleted.

The XPK method list contains an entry marked "« None »". This entry is a dummy method which indicates "no compression". If you have a file pattern which you specifically want PDPro not to crunch, enter the pattern in the file pattern listview and select "« None »" as the XPK method for that pattern.

Individual XPK methods can also be configured. To do this select any XPK method and press "Configure" below the XPK crunch method listview. A new window containing some informative text and a mode control listview will pop up. Select which mode you want the XPK method to use.

The mode benchmarks represent the time taken to compress and decompress the "AmigaVision" executable on a stock A3000. You can read much more about this in the full XPK distribution archive.

In case you've forgotten, let me just remind you again that all windows are

asynchronous. If the XPK mode configuration window is open, simply drag it out of the way to select another XPK method from the filetype configuration window. The XPK method window will be transparently updated with the new selection.

Note: XPK mode configuration is "global". You cannot specify that one pattern should use "Nuke.100" while another should use "Nuke.50". Unless you are a complete configuration nutcase, this shouldn't really be a problem. Just thought I'd let you know anyway :-)

1.6 Menus

Menus

The PowerData Preferences editor currently has the following menu items:

Project/

Open...

This menu item allows you to load a complete set of preferences into the editor. Note that the current preferences (plus any changes you've made) will be lost in the process.

Save As...

This menu item allows you to save the current preferences to a file.

About...

This menu item shows you some incredibly important information about the PowerData Professional preferences editor.

Quit

Select this menu item to quit the PowerData Professional preferences editor. The current settings will be lost in the process!

Edit/

Reset to Defaults/

This menu item resets all PDPro preferences to their initial values. The current settings will be lost in the process.

Last Saved

This menu item resets the current settings to whatever you last saved using the Save gadget.

Restore

Select this menu item to undo all changes you've made to the

current preferences.

Options/

Create Icons?

Check this menu item if you want project icons to be saved along with the preferences, every time you select Save As... from the menu.

PDProPrefs uses the image of the first of the following icons it can locate, for the icon to be saved:

ENV:Sys/def_pdproprefs
ENV:Sys/def_project
ENVARC:Sys/def_pdproprefs
ENVARC:Sys/def_project

If you design your own icon and store it under one of these names, PDProPrefs automatically uses it next time you save the preferences with an icon.

1.7 Author

Author

If you have any suggestions, comments or catalog translations for PDProPrefs, you can reach me at the following addresses:

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1.8 Program history

Program history

3-Dec-94 - Release 1.0, internal revision 38.1 (internal beta)

7-Sep-94 - Release 0.5, internal revision 38.1 (internal beta)

1.9 PDProPrefs file format

PDProPrefs File Format

The PowerData Professional preferences editor loads and saves files in human readable ASCII. This section describes the exact format of this file and serves as a reference for anyone who wonders about it, or is contemplating writing an alternative to PDProPrefs (a MUI version, for example).

Note that this information is subject to change. Plan for this.

The preferences file is parsed one line at a time, and essentially consists of three different types: An ID line, a configuration line and a remark.

The ID line MUST be the first line of the file. PowerData Professional and its preferences editor will not load the file if this is not the case. The format is:

```
PPRO <major>.<minor>
```

Example:

```
PPRO 38.1
```

Currently the version number is ignored but future versions may use it to transparently convert old preferences files to a new format. This version number should always match that of the version of PDProPrefs which saved it.

After the ID line follows intermixed lines of remarks and configuration lines. A remark may appear anywhere and has the following format:

```
; <remark text>
```

Example:

```
; This is a remark
```

Configuration lines do the actual work of describing individual preferences settings. They are parsed with `dos.library/ReadArgs()` and must match one of the following command templates:

```
METHOD/K/A,MODE/N
```

This template is used to define crunch modes for XPK methods. Please consult the official XPK documentation for a description of XPK methods and modes.

Example:

```
METHOD SHRI 50
```

```
FILETYPE/K/A,NONE/S,METHOD/K,ENCRYPT/S
```

This template is used to define file types and their associated XPK methods. The NONE keyword is used to indicate that this file type shouldn't use any XPK method (i.e. should never be crunched). Use a

filetype pattern of "DEFAULT" to indicate the default XPK crunch method.

Some XPK methods support (or even require) password encryption, and PDPro allows you to control encryption for each filetype definition. Specify ENCRYPT to use XPK encryption for this file type (assuming the selected method supports it; if it doesn't, ENCRYPT is ignored).

Example:

```
FILETYPE "DEFAULT" METHOD SHRI
FILETYPE "#?.data" METHOD NUKE
FILETYPE "#?.(sample|song)" METHOD SQSH
FILETYPE "#?.secret" FEAL ENCRYPT
```

CLIENT/A/K,CRUNCH/S,DECRUNCH/S

This template is used to define clients and the mode of operation for each. CRUNCH indicates the client should use transparent crunching and DECRUNCH indicates the client should use transparent decrunching. Use a client name of "DEFAULT" to specify the default client settings.

Example:

```
CLIENT "DEFAULT" DECRUNCH
CLIENT "LhA"
CLIENT "Cygnus Ed 3.5+" CRUNCH DECRUNCH
CLIENT "SomeApplication" DECRUNCH
CLIENT "AppProg#?" DECRUNCH CRUNCH
```

TEMPPATH/K

This template is used for miscellaneous other settings and will probably expand in the future. For now, the single TEMPPATH option is used to indicate the temporary path PowerData Professional should use. The default is "T:".

Example:

```
TEMPPATH "dh2:MyTempPath"
```

1.10 Credits

Credits

- Thanks to SAS Institute for their excellent C compiler, version 6.51 of which was used to compile both PDPro and PDProPrefs.
- All betatesters for their invaluable help in getting the bugs out of PDProPrefs.