WCompare Help Contents

WCompare points out the differences between two text files.

Using WCompare

Options

Using WCompare

Select File|Open to open a text file. WCompare is designed to work with text files only, and is limited to a maximum file size of 32k. Select File|Open again to open a second similar text file to which you want to compare the first. When you have two files open, select the Compare|Compare menu item to start the comparison process. The first difference found between the two files will be highlighted. Note you can open more or less than two files, but there must be only two files open to do a comparison.

WCompare compares the two files a character at a time, starting at the cursor positions in each file window. To fully compare two documents, make sure the cursor is at the start of each document (as it is when you first open the files). If a mismatch is found during the comparison process, it will be highlighted and the cursor placed at the end of the highlighted difference. If you select Compare again, the comparison will start at the end of the last. If no mismatch is found, nothing will be highlighted.

WCompare will easily identify an added line in a file. If you have a section in one of the files that is significantly different from the other, such as a large insertion or deletion, you may find that WCompare can't figure out where the mismatch ends and the files become the same again. One way of handling this is to adjust the comparison options. Another way is to simply move the cursor past the large difference. This will synchronize the files so you can continue comparing.

Compare Options

The options for WCompare are set through the Compare|Set Options dialog box, and are saved in a file called WCOMPARE.INI in your Windows directory. The first two options, Synchronization Reach and Synchronization Sensitivity, let you adjust the comparison algorithm to suit your needs.

When WCompare finds a mismatch, it attempts to find a place in each file past the mismatch point where the files are synchronized again. The maximum number of characters WCompare looks ahead for a match is called the **Synchronization Reach**. The default value for the Synchronization Reach is 400 characters. You can increase or decrease this value from the Compare|Set Options dialog box.

When WCompare looks ahead and finds a match, it then insists on a string of consecutive matching characters before it considers the two files back in sync. This is called the **Synchronization Sensitivity**, and defaults to 10 consecutive matching characters (excluding spaces). Synchronization Sensitivity prevents false matches of embedded words. For example, you wouldn't want to match "the" in one file to "thesis" in the other. You can increase or decrease the Synchronization Sensitivity from the Compare|Set Options dialog box.

By default WCompare automatically tiles the file windows so you can easily see both files while comparing. You can change this to Cascade Automatically or turn it off altogether in the Compare|Set Options dialog box. To reverse the position of two tiled windows, click on the one you want to be in the top half, and then choose Window|Tile. Or if you prefer cascaded windows, click on the one you want to be on top of the cascade stack and choose Window|Cascade.

Once you're satisfied with the selected options, click OK to use the changes temporarily for just the current session, or click Save to save the changes to WCOMPARE.INI.