Tech Support Assistant™ Read Me

August 1, 1997

Introduction

Tech Support Assistant has been included with this application in order to help you detect and resolve many configuration-related problems. Such problems include not satisfying the minimum system requirements, wrong or missing application extension files (DLLs, Active Xs, OCXs, drivers, etc.) and wrong or missing application settings (in Registry and INI files). It does not attempt to help you understand how to use the application or fix problems with the application itself.

If you are not having problems with this application, you do not need to run Tech Support Assistant.

If you are having problems, Tech Support Assistant will check your system configuration and report any problems. Hopefully it will help you find the problem, but if not you can use the report generated by Tech Support Assistant to help the technical support personnel diagnose your problem. You should always run Tech Support Assistant before contacting technical support.

What Tech Support Assistant Does

Tech Support Assistant will do the following:

- ask you a series of questions to determine the type of problem
- verify that your system satisfies the minimum requirements
- verify that the application components and settings match those specified by the vendor
- verify that the application components load properly
- determine if there are any recent configuration changes
- give you additional advice on how to track down the problem
- give you instructions on how to contact technical support

Don't worry if you don't understand much about computers or software. Tech Support Assistant will walk you through a series of steps that clearly indicate if there are any problems. If a problem is found, just follow the instructions. Most steps have a **Notes** column that describes what the problem is, a **Details** button that provides additional information, and a **Fix** button that will try to fix the problem, if possible. In many cases, you can have Tech Support Assistant solve the problem by just clicking the **Fix** button.

Minimum Requirements

Tech Support Assistant requires Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0, but it can check both 32-bit and 16-bit (Windows 3.1) applications.

If you are using Windows 3.1, please run TSA16.exe to generate a Tech Support Assistant report.

Starting Tech Support Assistant

When Tech Support Assistant starts it looks for a Configuration Database file (a file with a ".cdb" extension). If it finds only one file, it will load it automatically. If it finds more than one or it doesn't find any, it will ask you to select a Configuration Database file. Be sure to select the Configuration Database file that matches the application that you are having trouble with.

Using Tech Support Assistant

Tech Support Assistant will walk you through a series of steps. Since there are many steps, the steps are divided into sections. The first step in each section describes everything you need to know to perform the section and has **Skip Section** and **Last Section** buttons to allow you to move quickly to the desired section. Ordinarily you start with the first section and continue until the problem is solved, but you may choose to stop Tech Support Assistant at any point and pick up where you left off later.

Tech Support Assistant has the following sections:

- Describe the Problem
- Check Application Configuration
- Check Recent Changes
- When All Else Fails
- How to Contact Technical Support

Some sections may be omitted if they do not apply.

All steps have complete on-line help, so if you don't understand something or want more information, click the **Help** button or the F1 key.

Describe the Problem Section

This section will ask you a series of questions to help determine the type of problem you are having. The answers you give will determine what steps Tech Support Assistant will take to track down the problem. Most questions will have 'yes', 'no', and 'don't know' answers. Select 'don't know' if you are not sure of the answer. All responses you give are saved, so you don't need to do this section unless your answers are different from last time for this application.

Check Application Configuration Section

This section will check the application configuration for the following problems:

- Checks your system to verify that it satisfies the minimum requirements.
- Checks the program files, components, and drivers for their versions, sizes, and dates.
- Checks for component loading problems by loading the components individually.
- Checks the relevant Registry and INI settings.

Tech Support Assistant will give you the option of fixing many problems by pressing the **Fix** button. The **Fix** button is not enabled if Tech Support Assistant cannot fix the problem. In this case, click the **Details** button for additional information.

Any of the above checks may be skipped if not required by the application. The component load check is not performed if you did not report loading problems in the first section.

This section may ask you to insert a CD-ROM. Doing so will allow it to verify that your installed files have the correct size and date. If you do not need to check the file sizes and dates, select **Cancel**.

Check Recent Changes Section

This section is used to list all the changes made to the application configuration since a date you specify. This allows you to see what changes have been made recently and possibly revert to a previous configuration. This process is useful if the application worked correctly in the past and just recently started having problems. It is not useful if the application never worked correctly at all. The dates that have changes are given in a drop down list. Select a date when you think the application was working correctly. If you are not sure, select the earliest date. If no relevant configuration changes have been made since that date the list will be empty.

When All Else Fails Section

This section will present a list of steps to try when you have no idea what else to do. While these suggestions are useful and can help you fix or isolate the problem, it is usually more productive to try them only if the preceding sections didn't find the problem.

These suggestions generally try to accomplish the following:

- Make your configuration as much like an average PC as possible.
- Make sure there aren't any general software, hardware, or driver problems.
- Make sure the problem isn't caused by another program.

How to Contact Technical Support Section

This section will present you with an opportunity to describe yourself and the problem you are having. It then provides instructions on how to contact technical support. The information you provide will be included with the Tech Support Assistant report that will be generated when you are finished. You can then e-mail or fax the report to technical support if requested.

Be sure to provide a complete problem description, including a description of what you are trying to do, exactly what the problem is (including the exact error message, if any), and instructions on how to reproduce it. Also include any other information you think will be helpful.