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VDT General Help

The Virtual Desk Tools are designed to improve productivity. There are Two major tools included in the set. The VDT, and the VGM. Both tools are designed to be powerful, while attempting to stay out of the way. These tools provide ways to organize your work and access the system without creating clutter on the desktop. Either tool can be run independently of one another.

The VDT is used to expand the working space on your desktop. Each different colored square represents the equivalent size of your monitor. The picture below shows six viewports, each containing a screen-full of space.

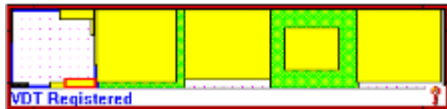


Figure 1. VDT Window

The yellow squares represent windows on the desktop, and appear in the proper relative size and shape of each visible window active on the system. Use the mouse to point to a window and it's title will appear in the status box along the bottom. If the mouse is not over the VDT window the status line will display the name of the active window on the system(the window that receives the keyboard input). The active window is outlined in red in the VDT window.

To move around in VDT use the mouse to point at the desired viewport and click the right mouse button. To move windows around on the VDT use the mouse to point at the yellow square representing the desired window (it's name should appear in the status window). Then press and hold the left mouse button and drag the window to it new location.

For more HELP see the [Table of contents](#)

OR

Activate the [Floating Control Menu](#), select a topic using the arrow keys, and press F1.

Minimize Manager (Manager of Iconics)

MINMAN organizes all active icons on the system. Instead of having your icons spread way out across the bottom of the screen, and having them take up more space than necessary, MINMAN shuffles them into the lower left hand corner of the screen.

A truly graphical environment shouldn't need text to indicate what an icon represents. Have you ever heard the old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words"? Well, an icon is a picture. And if the saying is true then do you really need a title to give you a few more? With correctly chosen icons it has been found that users only read titles on occasion. Therefore why waste valuable screen space on titles?

MINMAN removes titles to allow more working space on the desktop. If you need to see the title simply point to the gray bar above the icons with the mouse cursor. The title of the icon directly below the bar where you are pointing will be displayed in the VDT status window (see VDT General Help). Another floating window can be enabled to appear above the gray bar which will also display the titles. See Floating Titles in the Set VDT Params dialog box.

If you prefer not to have your icons managed MINMAN can be turned off. See Run Minman the Set VDT Params dialog box.

If while running MINMAN you see that an icon has escaped from MINMAN (doesn't appear under the gray bar) click once on the gray bar and the icon should be returned to MINMAN's control.

Floating Control Menu

The Floating Control Menu is used to access control features of the VDT

Activate the menu by using the mouse to point anywhere in the VDT window, hold down the control key, and click with the left mouse button.

About/Quit

This topic brings up the About/Quit dialog box. The About/Quit dialog box gives you information on the version of VDT that you have, who it is registered to, and the creation date.

About/Quit also allows you to quit VDT by selecting QUIT, or exit from Windows to DOS by selecting EXIT WINDOWS.

On closing the VDT any open window on the system will be moved to the default viewport (the upper left corner). This will prevent any application windows from becoming unreachable. If however a window does seem to disappear and VDT is not running, the Windows default Task Manager may be used to retrieve all open windows to the default screen. To do this double click on the background screen. When the Task List is visible select CASCADE or TILE.

For retrieving lost windows when the VDT is running see [Display Window List](#)

Note

Note

Some applications save their own coordinates when they are closed. This presents no problem to VDT. However if, for some reason you choose not to run VDT every time that you run Windows, you may experience a missing windows phenomenon.

For example, let's assume that, while you are running VDT, you have finished using an application and you have closed it. Your favorite place to run the application is in the third viewport to the left. When you closed the application, it saved its coordinates so that when you start it next time it will appear in the same spot.

Next time the application is started, if VDT is running there is no problem. If VDT is not running the next time, the application will move itself over to viewport three coordinates but you will not be able to reach there, until you run VDT.

If you don't want to run VDT then to move the lost window back to where it can be seen you should use the Windows default Task Manager.

Launch an Application

This menu item allows the user to launch any windows application from anywhere on the system. When LAUNCH is selected, the 'Launch Program' dialog box will appear. There are two fields to enter data into. The 'Path and File to Run' field allows the user to enter the program path and name to run. The path is not required if the application is located in the search path. The browse button may be used to select the desired file through a second Brouse dialog box. The second edit field 'Command Line Parameters' can be used to supply any additional information that an application may need.

VDT

Virtual Desk Top.

See also: [VDT General Help](#)

VGM

Virtual Group Manager.



The Virtual Group Manager performs the same function as (and in conjunction with VDT can replace) the Windows Program Manager. The Virtual Group Manager, however, has many additional (and powerful) features that are not available with the Windows Program Manager.

If it not already running, start the Virtual Group Manager by using the Launch option in the VDT floating menu. The default Group Manager window will appear at the top left corner of the display. The top button is the 'Group' button, it is used to close the group (right mouse button) and to add subgroups (left button double-click). The next set of four small buttons are the group controls. With them you will be able to move, rotate, expand, contract and rearrange the group.

See also: [VGM General Help](#)

Set Window Params

This menu item allows you to set parameters for the window which was active when you called up the help menu. That is, choose the window for which you would like to set parameters for by making it the active window. VDT shows the active window by drawing a RED border around it.

There are many ways to activate a window. A simple way is to use the mouse to click on the title bar of the desired window.

After the desired window is active bring up the VDT floating menu by holding the control key down and clicking anywhere on the virtual desktop window. Then Set Windows Params should be chosen.

Set VDT Params

This menu item allows you to set parameters for the VDT. Bring up the VDT floating menu by holding the control key down and clicking anywhere on the virtual desktop window. Then select Set VDT Params.

List All Windows

This menu item allows you to view all windows currently running on the system. You will see many more entries in the list than there are windows actually visible on your screen. That is because many windows exist in a hidden state and are used by the system. You can learn some things about your system by viewing the active window list. You can verify the existence of windows and find out the location of the executable module that created the window. You can also retrieve misplaced windows with the Bring button.

Current Windows list box

Windows Is

Class

Style

Extra Style

Class Style

Bring

Bring up the VDT floating menu by holding the control key down and clicking anywhere on the virtual desktop window. Then select Set Windows Params should be chosen.

List Parent Windows

This menu item allows you to view all parent windows currently running on the system. You will see fewer entries in the list than there are in the 'List All Windows' box. That is because all child windows, and control windows are not listed. It is easier to see just the main windows of interest with this option. You can also retrieve misplaced windows with the Bring button.

Current Windows list box

Windows Is

Class

Style

Extra Style

Class Style

Bring

Bring up the VDT floating menu by holding the control key down and clicking anywhere on the virtual desktop window. Then select Set Windows Params should be chosen.

View VDT.INI

This menu item allows you to view the 'vdt.ini' file located in the Windows directory. This file is used to keep all configuration information that VDT uses. It is not usually necessary to look at the file since it is used and built by the VDT.

If you modify this file by hand you could cause problems for the VDT software. BE CAREFUL!!!

Current Windows List Box

Click on an entry to highlight it. Only one entry may be active at a time. When a listed window is highlighted, all of the other information in the dialog box will pertain to the highlighted entry.

The **first column** contains the HANDLE of the window. This is how the system keeps track of every resource it uses or supplies. In general handles are really useless to a casual user, but programmers find many uses for HANDLES. The **second column** tells you if the window is a parent or child window. A child window always has a parent, i.e., another window which has some involvement with starting the child window. Parent windows could exist by themselves and may or may not have a parent. The **third column** is the name of the window. This is what appears in the title bar for windows which have them. The **fourth column** is the name of the file which was loaded to run the application which created the window. The **fifth column** contains the HANDLE of the parent window, if one exists.

Window Is

The WINDOW IS: heading exists above a checkbox. The checkbox is titled Visible, and tells you if the window selected in the "Current Windows" list box is visible or not. You can click on the checkbox and toggle the state. If it is visible it can be made invisible and visa versa(IMPORTANT).

IMPORTANT

Please note that some windows cannot be made visible and attempting to do so could hang your machine. This is true of most DLL files! So try this at your own risk!

Note also that many items in the list are controls, such as buttons, toolbars, etc. All of those items are, in fact, windows.

Class

This static text box indicates the class name of the window which is selected in the Current Window list box. Every window on the system belongs to a class.

Style

This static text box indicates what style attributes are possessed by the window which is selected in the Current Windows list box .

Extra Style

This static text box indicates what extra style attributes are possessed by the window which is selected in the Current Windows list box .

Class Style

This static text box indicates what class style attributes are possessed by the class of the window which is selected in the Current Windows list box .

Bring Button

The BRING button will move the window which is selected in the Current Windows list box to the current viewport. This feature can be used to retrieve displaced windows.

Cascade All Windows

This menu item allows you to set parameters for the window which was active when you called up the help menu. That is, choose the window for which you would like to set parameters for by making it the active window. VDT shows the active window by drawing a RED border around it.

After the desired window is active bring up the VDT floating menu by holding the control key down and clicking anywhere on the virtual desktop window. Then select Set Windows Params should be chosen.

Minimize VDT

This menu item allows you to set parameters for the window which was active when you called up the help menu. That is, choose the window for which you would like to set parameters for by making it the active window. VDT shows the active window by drawing a RED border around it.

After the desired window is active bring up the VDT floating menu by holding the control key down and clicking anywhere on the virtual desktop window. Then select Set Windows Params should be chosen.

VDT Config Dialog

This dialog box allow configuration of various parameters related to the functionality of the virtual desktop itself.

Virtual Screen Size - (number of rows and columns)

Viewport Colors

Snap to Viewport

Keep to Front

Activate Top Window on Move

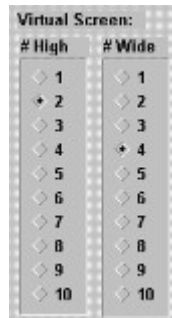
Run Minman

Floating Titles

Virtual Screen Size

The actual size of the virtual desktop can be adjusted, as with any window, by using the mouse to drag the window border. Each smaller square inside the VDT window (these squares make a checker board pattern) is called a viewport. Each viewport represents an area ,on the desktop, equal in size to your computer screen. When the main VDT window is resized the viewports will be adjusted to fit the new size.

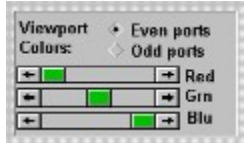
You can select the number of viewports (rows and columns) displayed by the virtual desktop (VDT):



Simply select the number of rows and columns that are displayed by the VDT. The above example shows two rows and four columns selected.

Viewport Colors

You can choose the colors that please you the most to appear as the even and odd viewport colors. Select even or odd then use the sliders to adjust the RGB contributions of the final color.



As the sliders are moved the color adjustments can be seen by viewing the virtual desktop.

Viewport

The VDT can only display one viewport at a time. Think of the monitor as a viewport to a much larger desktop.

Note: Although the each square on the checker board represents the size of a single viewport, the current view area is not restricted to falling directly on one of those squares. See [Snap to Viewport](#).

Snap to Viewport

The right mouse button is used to set the desired viewport. Simply point the mouse at the VDT window to where you would like to set the view and click the mouse button.

If this box is selected then the viewport will always lock to one of the rectangular regions on the VDT display window. When the button is not checked the viewport can be set or dragged to any position.

Keep to Front

When this box is checked the VDT, or any of its child windows, cannot be covered by other windows. An exception to this is any other window with the keep to front attribute set.

Note: When any window is MAXIMIZED the VDT and all its associated child windows, including MINMAN will **not** keep to the front. This is to allow the user to work full screen without the VDT tools from getting in the way. This feature also applies to screen savers.

Activate Top Window on Move

If this box is selected, when changing viewports, the active window will change to one located completely within the new viewport. If the box is not checked the last active window will not change. This is a method of reducing mouse clicks. If not used you will always have to activate a window in the new viewport before using it.

If this feature is enabled the software will activate the first window that it finds which has all four corners in the new viewport.

Run Minman

Allows you to run with or without MINMAN. Changing the setting for feature will require the VDT to be restarted before it can take effect.

Floating Titles

When using the MINMAN, if the bar above the ICONs is pointed to by the mouse, the title of the ICON directly below will be displayed in the VDT status window. With this box checked another window directly above the ICONs will appear, when the gray bar is pointed to, which will also display the title information. This window allows you to place the VDT away from the MINMAN without having to change your eye focus back and forth across the screen.

Changing the setting for feature will require the VDT to be restarted before it can take effect.

Window Attributes Dialog Box

Important: Before calling this dialog box, you must activate the window that you wish to apply attributes to. This can be achieved by using the mouse to click on the window title bar. The active window will be shown on the VDT with a RED border.

Keep Window to Front

Set Sticky Attribute

Save Location

Save Size

Start in Invocation Viewport

Start Minimized

Postfix Numbers

Window Name

Class Name

Config by Name

Config by Class

Not Configured

Window Alias

Invoke on Startup

Allow Multiple

NOTE: Config by Class or Config by Name must be selected to make the attributes stick.

Keep Window to Front

Selecting this attribute will prevent the window from being covered by another window.

Postfix Numbers

Postfix can be used to automatically add numbers to the end of a window name. If you execute an application, like a remote terminal window for example, multiple times concurrently, then it might be nice to tell them apart. If the generic name is "TERM" then by using this feature the first one will be "TERM #1". The second window will automatically be renamed to "TERM #2".

Try this with calc.exe: Execute calc.exe from the Windows directory. Make it active. Bring up the Floating Control Menu, and select Set Windows Params. Choose Postfix Numbers and Config by Name. Then click on the save button and exit the dialog box. For this feature to take affect you need to close calc.exe then restart it. Start it multiple times and you will see that the titles have numbers at the end and the numbers will increment.

Wanna be real tricky?

Wanna be real tricky?

Use Postfix Numbers with Window Alias. By setting an alias and configuring the window under the aliased name, you can have each successive invocation of the same window configured differently.

1. First configure a window with an alias and Postfix Numbers
2. close the window and restart so postfix takes affect
3. change the location or other attributes for the current invocation
4. save it by name
5. repeat for each different window

Using these features you can have VDT set up your desktop the same way every time automatically!

Window Alias

You can have VDT rename any window automatically when it is started by using the window alias setting. Simply enter the desired new name into the Window Alias edit box and save the configuration. The name will then be changed automatically every time the window is created.

Wanna be real tricky?

Set Sticky Attribute

Selecting this attribute will make the window follow the active viewport. So the window will always appear in the active viewport. Try this with VGM!

Save Location

Save the current upper left corner coordinates of the window. The next time a window with the same window name or class (depending on the chosen criteria) appears, the coordinate will be applied. This causes the location to be saved. This can be used to start an application in any of the ports on (or across) the desktop.

Save Size

Save the current size of the window. The next time a window with the same window name or class (depending on the chosen criteria) appears, the coordinate will be applied. This causes the size of the window to be saved.

Start in Invocation Viewport

This forces the "Save Location

" or the windows default coordinates to be applied to the current viewport. This is useful for utilities, like notepad, to always appear in the current viewport whenever it is invoked. NOTE: The coordinates are also applied to apps which are de-minimized. That is, if an application is ICONIC, and is restored, then it will be restored to the current screen (default) if the "Start in current Screen" property is set. If this property is not set the window will be placed in the viewport in which it was previously iconized.

Start Minimized

This option causes VDT to minimize the window when is first detected. This can happen when the new window is created or when the VDT is started and first recognizes the window. Minimized windows are handed to MINMAN for control, if MINMAN is enabled.

Invoke on Startup

This Item allows you configure the Application associated with this window to be started the next time VDT is started. This powerful feature allows you to set up your desktop automatically, the same way, every time that the VDT is started. If VDT is used to replace PROGMAN then just bringing up Windows will cause VDT to start. This can also be accomplished by dragging the VDT icon into the PROGMAN startup group.

Window Name

This static text box contains the name of the window. This is what appears in the title bar for windows which have them.

Class Name

This static text box indicates the class name of the window which is selected. Every window on the system belongs to a class.

Config by Name

Any chosen parameters can be associated to the window name or class name by choosing "config by name" or "config by class", and clicking on the "OK" button. Then the next time an application is invoked which has the window or class name previously chosen, the selected attributes will be applied to that window. Keep in mind that the attributes are selected for a window. If an application has more than one window, different attributed may be selected for each.

Config by Class

Any chosen parameters can be associated to the window name or class name by choosing "config by name" or "config by class", and clicking on the "Save Attributes" button. Then the next time an application is invoked which has the window or class name previously chosen, the selected attributes will be applied to that window. Keep in mind that the attributes are selected for a window. If an application has more than one window, different attributes may be selected for each.

Not Configured

Selecting Not Configured allows you to de-configure windows which have previously been configured. It is also the default setting for all windows until they have been configured.

Allow Multiple

The Allow Multiple check box will allow or prevent the VDT from starting multiple copies of an application that is placed in the startup list. The VDT may be started after an application that is in the VDT startup list is already running. When the VDT starts up it checks the startup list and then checks if each application in the list is currently running on the system. If the Allow multiple property for a given application is checked, then the VDT will start another one otherwise it will not.

