

# **WINSMALL: HOW TO CREATE MULTIPLE SPECIAL PURPOSE WINDOWS CONFIGURATIONS**

**By Robert Helmer**

**WINSMALL is not a program, but rather a method to reorganize and copy certain Windows components. It allows the user to create and run, as needed, any number of specific Windows start-up configurations (without losing access to the whole Windows program).**

**WINSMALL grew out of my wish to be able to run a program from the DOS prompt that would start and run Windows applications outside of the Windows environment.**

**With such a program, if I were outside Windows and I needed, for example, to move files around or format a floppy, I could quickly pull up File Manager, I wouldn't have to wait for the rest of my Windows Start Up Group applications to slowly begin, and I wouldn't have to go the additional step of using my Windows shell to pull up the one program I needed.**

**After looking at any number of shareware programs, I came to the conclusion none were available that would do what I wanted. Disappointed, I then moved to my second choice, and tried to find a program which would allow me to choose and start from the DOS prompt any particular configuration of Windows for which I had a specific need at the time. For example, the configuration in which I had set File Manager as the single start-up program or shell.**

**The programs I found still didn't answer my purpose. I looked at WINRUN, but stripped down, speedier start-ups were not possible, nor were fully different configurations from my primary Windows start-up, because what WINRUN does is run full scale Windows, and simply makes a single application (which it causes to open) the first window up during the start-up routine.**

**In other words, WINRUN cannot set a whole new group of programs as the opening configuration, nor can it exclude from opening those programs I've set to run in full scale Windows at start-up, but that I don't necessarily always want to run (or wait for).**

**I also gave WINLIGHT a test run. This is a very fine program if you want portable Windows, since it allows the user to copy the essential elements of the Windows program and to run it on whatever PC is available at the moment. But it can't serve the need for multiple configurations very efficiently, since each of the multiple start-up configurations would require a full copy of WINLITE on the hard drive, and each copy of WINLITE is a fat three megabytes.**

**So, still not finding what I wanted, but following the lead of WINLITE, I began experimenting with stripped down versions of Windows, and what my experiments turned up is what I will call WINSMALL: it's not a program, but rather a technique for reorganizing and copying Windows components which makes available and runs any number of specific Windows start-up configurations (without losing access to the whole Windows program). Further, the method is economical (relative to other alternatives), since each configuration takes up less than fifty kilobytes on the user's hard disk.**

**The potential WINSMALL configurations which**

can be created are limited only by the imagination and the space on the user's hard drive. These are some possibilities:

**Multiple Shells:** Each configuration will have its own shell program, and your choice for each configuration will depend on your purpose for the configuration. Of course, Program Manager will probably be your choice for full scale Windows, but File Manager would suit those times when you want to do hard disk housekeeping. Other possibilities include any number of commercial or shareware menu products. For example, you could use BACKMENU if you want an invisible, no-trouble shell, or DASHBOARD if you have a need for virtual screens.

**Task Oriented Start-Ups:** You can task-orient your start-ups so that the programs associated with a particular task start up under a given configuration. For example, you might want the Windows calculator, calendar and a financial manager to start together. Another possibility along these lines is to begin several troubleshooting utilities together.

**Fast Starting:** if you wish to start Windows quickly sometimes, one of your configurations can be a stripped down version, with only a shell, and no start-up programs at all. In some sense, all of your configurations will be stripped-down, since each will be fine tuned to fit your particular purpose in creating it. Each configuration can be thought of as a kind of single purpose tool, the start-up applications composed of those programs which contribute to performance of the single purpose.

If you think you would find any of the above

**useful, you need WINSMALL. But that's enough hype; it's time to get to the mechanics. Actually, "mechanics" is too strong a word. Creating WINSMALL is as simple as copying a few files in Windows. Here are the steps:**

**First, start Windows, and then go to File Manager. Pull down the File menu, and create a new subdirectory on your C drive root directory. Call it WINSMALL. (Do this by inserting C:\WINSMALL in the box asking you for a name of the directory to be created.)**

**Second, still using the File menu, copy WIN.COM from your Windows directory into WINSMALL. Be careful to copy it; don't move it from your Windows directory or else your full-dress Windows program will be left without an essential element.**

**Third, in the same manner, copy all of the "ini" files from your Windows directory into the new directory. "Ini" files are those with the file extension .INI after their names. Once again, be sure to copy the files from Windows; don't move them from Windows.**

**Fourth, once again using the File menu, rename the WIN.COM file in the new directory. Call it what you will, but something like XWIN.COM is easy to remember.**

**Fifth, exit Windows.**

**Sixth, at the Dos prompt, change to the new directory like this:**

```
C:>cd WINSMALL
```

**This will result in the following command line:**

```
C:\WINSMALL>
```

**Seventh, at this command line, type the name you have given to the copied WIN.COM, like this:**

```
C:\WINSMALL>XWIN
```

**If you now hit Enter, this will start your new Windows configuration. However, don't hit Enter yet. If you are going to wish to run DOS applications in your new configuration, you must run the new configuration as "standard mode" Windows. You do this by adding /S after the XWIN.COM command, like this:**

```
C:WINSMALL>XWIN /S
```

**For added speed at start-up, you will probably wish to make the program skip the initial Windows advertisement, so also run the colon switch after the standard mode switch:**

```
C:WINSMALL>XWIN /S :
```

**Winsmall will initially come up looking identical to your full dress Windows program. However, you are now able to change the configuration in the new directory. The first thing to do is pull up control panel and change the colors so you will always know which Windows configuration you have started. Don't let the effects of this on your full scale Windows program worry you. There will be no effects. As long as you**

have started the program by executing XWIN (instead of WIN), only the WINSMALL control panel configuration will be changed.

The next thing you may wish to do is change the shell program for the new configuration. You do this by first pulling up the SYSTEM.INI file, either through Notepad or SYSEDIT.EXE, a hidden program in your Windows System directory, When you execute SYSEDIT.EXE in WINSMALL, the INI files will show as the WINSMALL INI files, so your full dress Windows INI files will not be affected.

When you pull up SYSTEM.INI, the shell line will initially read as follows:

**SHELL=PROGMAN.EXE**

Now you should delete PROGMAN.EXE from the shell line. In PROGMAN.EXE's place, add the shell of your choice. For example:

**SHELL=BACKMENU.EXE**

One thing you cannot do in WINSMALL, without affecting your full scale Windows program, is change the Program Manager Groups. If you delete programs from, for example, the Accessories Group, they will also be deleted in your full scale Windows.

In addition, even though you may execute programs by double clicking on the appropriate icons in the Program Manager Groups in WINSMALL, the Start Up Group window icons will not start their applications when you start WINSMALL. Instead, to create start up configurations, you must insert the program names in the copy of the WIN.INI file contained in your WINSMALL directory. You can pull up WIN.INI just as you pulled up SYSYEM.INI, through

**Notepad or through SYSEDIT.EXE in your Windows SYSTEM directory. The new start-up programs will go on the RUN or LOAD lines, and you will place them there just as you changed the shell line in SYSTEM.INI. For example, the RUN line looks like this:**

**RUN=**

**You will make it look something like this (don't forget to leave a space between each program name):**

**RUN=CLOCK.EXE CALCULATOR.EXE**

**As previously stated above, although you may have changed the configuration to something other than that of your full scale Windows program, the entire Windows program is available to you in each of your multiple configurations, either from your PROGRAM MANAGER icons, or from whatever menu is available in the new configuration. If you use FILE MANAGER as a shell, the rest of your programs are available by double clicking on the appropriate executable files.**

**Now you're well on the way to multiple configurations in Windows. You can make as many WINSMALL configurations as you wish (but be sure each has a different directory name, and a differently named WIN.COM copy in it, as well as the full complement of INI files), and then you can customize each one in any way you wish. You may wish to add WINSMALL to the path statement in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file so that you can access it without having to change to the WINSMALL directory each time you use it.**

**Whenever you wish to start a specific Windows configuration, you can now go to the directory containing that configuration (or if the directory is in**

**your path statement, you need not even change directories), and start the WIN.COM copy, using as your command whatever you have renamed the WIN.COM copy representing the particular configuration you want.**

**That's it, pretty easy too, as these things go. I certainly have made a lot of use of my multiple configurations, especially for quick start-ups. If you care to, drop me a line telling me how you've used WINSMALL, or any additional refinements or limitations you've come up with.**

**You can reach me by addressing your letters as follows:**

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**By the way, the text in this file is Copyright, 1993, by Robert Helmer (but you can distribute it as you will, as long as you don't change it, and as long as you send me a copy of any mass media distributions). I hope you enjoy Winsmall; however, I can assume no liability for any problems the program may cause; consider it an experiment. After all, I'm not a programmer, just a software nut. (Also, I'm still looking for a program which will start, for example, File Manager outside of the Windows environment; please let me know if you've seen or heard of one.)**