

Desktop Icon Manager 2.0.2 (G.J. Parker, ©1998-2011)

This version only works for Mac OS 10.4 and later. For pre Mac OS 10.x systems, please use Desktop Icon Manager v1.3.1 (in folder 'for Mac OS 7.x-9.x'). There are no versions that work for Mac OS 10.0 through 10.3.x (don't blame me, ask Apple).

Introduction:

Desktop Icon Manager (DIM) is an AppleScript Studio Application which saves and restores the icon positions on the Desktop. There are applications and other scripts that do the same thing, so why is this one different?

DIM doesn't get confused when you store the icon positions at one screen resolution and then restore them at a different screen resolution. In other words, if an icon is at the bottom right corner of the display when the icon positions are stored then that icon will always be placed at the bottom right corner regardless of the screen resolution. There's only one application that I know of which does that, but they want money to do it. Other applications/scripts allow you to save multiple icon positions at different screen resolutions. That's fine if you want to adjust your icon positions for each screen resolution you use. My question is why? You got a Mac sitting in front of you, let her do it.

Requirements:

Obviously, since this is an AppleScript, you need AppleScript installed on your computer. From what I read, this was a standard part of Mac OS X. Due to bugs in AppleScript, you will need to be running Mac OS 10.4 or later. For those of you running pre Mac OS 10.x, DIM 1.3.1 will work fine (see folder 'for Mac OS 7.x-9.x').

Files:

The following files should be in this distribution, if not you have a tampered distribution:

README	- this file
DIM 2.0.2	- executable
xcode files.zip	- archived source code for DIM 2.0 (for the curious)
AppleScript DIM	- a 'pure' AppleScript application (see FAQ below)
for Mac OS 7.x-9.x	- for pre Mac OS 10.x systems

First time use:

DIM can be placed anywhere on your system. Leaving it on the Desktop is useful, but you can hide it in Applications or what have you. If you want your Desktop to be cleaned up on start up/ restart, it can be specified as a Login Item in your user Account as a nice way to have the application run automatically.

For best results, change your screen resolution to your standard resolution and adjust all the Desktop icons to your preferred locations. Then just double click (or drag and drop anything onto) the 'DIM 2.0.2' icon. A window similar to below will appear:



(ok, perhaps you don't have 418 icons, but now you know why I wrote DIM...). DIM has already memorized all the Desktop icon names, their positions and the screen resolution and has written this information to the file ~/Library/Preferences/com.parker9.DIM_2.0.plist. If you check "Select to Automatically Restore Icon Positions and Quit when run" then the next time you run DIM, it will simply Restore the icon positions and exit. You can quit DIM (you do not need to leave it open or running), either close the window or select Quit from the menu.

After the first time use:

Depending on whether you selected Automatic Restore or not, DIM will behave differently when you run it.

1) If you did *not* select to Automatically Restore, you will see the same window as above. By pressing the "Memorize Icon Positions" button, the Desktop icon names and positions will be updated in the preferences file. Previous stored information is lost. If, instead, "Restore Icon Positions" button is pressed, then all the icon positions (if they still exist!) are restored to their original positions. If the screen resolution has changed since the last "Memorize Icon Positions" or original running of DIM, the icon positions are relatively scaled in the new screen resolution. If there are new icons on the Desktop, they are left where they are. Again, this procedure may take a few seconds, but it's not like you can't do something else as it finishes its task. Of course, you can always select to Automatically Restore when DIM is run in the future.

2) If Automatic Restore was selected, then DIM simply restores the icon positions on the Desktop without asking and quits automatically (wonderful if DIM is specified as a Login Item).

3) By dragging and dropping anything onto DIM (regardless if Automatic Restore is selected or not), you get the same window as above. This allows you to reconfigure DIM. That is, to update the icon database (pressing the "Memorize Icon Positions" button), Restore the icon positions or to select or deselect Automatic Restore.

Tricks:

After the first time use, specifying DIM as a Login Item will adjust the icon positions after the Finder starts up. Make sure it is the last one in the list though, to ensure the Desktop has everything on it when it runs.

You can place DIM in the Application folder and so each user can use it for their own Desktop top. DIM will not be confused about which Desktop it's using since all the information is stored in separate files (i.e. ~/Library/Preferences/com.parker9.DIM_2.0.plist).

Known Problems/Bugs:

If there are two (or more) items on the Desktop with identical names, DIM might get confused and place these items on top of each other (or not). The easiest work around is to avoid having multiple icons with the same name. Leading or trailing spaces would achieve this.

Multiple monitors are *technically* not supported. I haven't been able to extensively test what DIM will do, since I only use one monitor. However, I have reports from (100s of) users that claim it works just fine with two or more monitors. I will point out that problems may occur if (i) you change the arrangement/orientation of the monitors between a "Memorize Icon Positions" and a "Restore Icon Positions" clicks or (ii) if you change the one or more screen resolutions between a "Memorize Icon Positions" and a "Restore Icon Positions" clicks. Worst case scenario here is that some icons may be placed outside of either monitors' viewing area. If this is a case, in the Finder's View menu, simply select Clean Up and all the icons will reappear, most likely in places you don't like, but at least you can rearrange them.

FAQ:

0) *This doesn't work on Mac OS 10.0.x through 10.3.x!* Yeah, you're right. It doesn't. Why, you ask? Don't know, ask Apple. I wrote the original DIM script on Mac 7.x and it worked until Mac OS 10.0 came out. Then, suddenly, it worked (w/ a few minor tweaks) on Mac OS 10.4. So, like I said, ask Apple.

1) *DIM 2.0.x doesn't seem to be working correctly, what's going on?* Strange, it's been working fine for me and many others. First, you are running Mac OS 10.4 or later, right? If so, try deleting the file ~/Library/Preferences/com.parker9.DIM_2.0.plist (the '~' means your home directory) and try again. If that doesn't fix it, try downloading again, perhaps you got a bad download. If you still are having problems, you can drop an email at DIM@parker9.com with as much detail as you can about the problem. Please include Mac OS version you're using.

2) *Can DIM 2.0.x be modified to clean up windows other than the Desktop?* Yes, AppleScript can do this, in fact it's pretty easy. I wouldn't find this useful (I'm constantly in list mode), but by opening up 'DIM 2.0.2.xcodeproj' in the archive 'xcode files.zip' (you will have to the Developer Tools installed), you're 90% done!

3) *Instead of icons, can DIM 2.0.x place windows at saved locations?* Yes, AppleScript can open and close Finder windows and place them anywhere on (or off) the Desktop. See 2) above.

4) *What files do I need to run DIM 2.0.x?* Only the application 'DIM 2.0' is needed. This README file and all other files/folders are only for informational purposes.

5) *I want to uninstall DIM 2.0.x, what do I do?* Uninstalling DIM 2.0 is done by simply dragging DIM 2.0.x.app to the Trash. DIM also created a file in your home directory at ~/Library/Perferences/com.parker9.DIM_2.0.plist which you can either delete or leave.

6) *This all fine, but I really liked the original version of DIM which was a simple AppleScript, not an AppleScript Studio application. Where do I get that?* Gee, funny you ask. Take a look at the folder 'AppleScript DIM' and you have DIM 2.0, but as a simple AppleScript. I must warn you, though, it's not as pretty but the side benefit is you don't get a ~/Library/Preferences/com.parker9.DIM_2.0.plist file either.

7) *You young ones- always doing something new! I'm using MacOS 7.x through 9.x, what can I do?* Well, it's your lucky day! Take a look at the folder 'for Mac OS 7.x-9.x' and you will find DIM 1.3.1 which will work fine for you.

8) *Does DIM work on a MacIntel machine?* Well, the beauty of using Xcode is that I selected Universal application, so, yeah, it works.

9) *Hey, I want to send you money for such a cool thing, how can I do that?* Really, you do? I'm sure my wife would like it, but I don't really expect it. You could drop me an email (DIM@parker9.com) thanking me and urging me to allow you to donate to me, though.

10) *Hey, this is cool. Where can I learn more about AppleScript? or How can I do xxx in AppleScript?* Well, a good place to start for reference material and great links for learning is direct from the horse's mouth: www.apple.com/applescript/. I'm always interested in new ideas, too.

11) *What's the deal with the DIM 2.0.x icon?* You're free to replace it. If you do the latter, send it to me (DIM@parker9.com) and I might use it (w/ full credit to you, of course).

Warning/Disclaimer/License:

Using this script won't make you more attractive or get you rich. It may even do something horrible to your Mac, though I definitely hope not. Regardless, I haven't even tried to make it robust with error checking. So, for instance, if you run out of disk space while it's running, I don't have a clue what it will do. Hopefully just complain and quit. I do know nothing in the script itself will hurt your Mac, but as you know- garbage in is garbage out.

Don't be alarmed about dragging something onto DIM. DIM will not alter the object in anyway. It is simply a trick to tell DIM that you may want to update the icon position database.

I wrote this for my personal use. I find it useful, perhaps there's another one who does too. It's free and you can give the distribution (i.e. as you got it) to anyone you want. You can't sell it, though. And if you modify the script and don't give me credit for the original, you're simply evil.

Contact:

Like everyone else these days, I have a website at www.parker9.com and the page concerning this program is at www.parker9.com/script.html. Furthermore, email can be sent to DIM@parker9.com.

Version History:

--- 18 June 2011, v2.0.2- DIM use to set the Finder's "Arrange by:" to "none". It will now leave it alone unless it must change it (e.g. if your screen resolution changed). Also correctly did the icon correctly, according to Apple. Minor changes in this documentation.

--- 19 March 2010, v2.0.1- Nothing other than recompile to work for 32bit Intel and PPC (still good all the way back to Mac OS 10.4).

--- 30 October 2005, v2.0- Finally Apple has fixed AppleScript on Mac OS X, starting with Tiger (10.4), so that DIM once again works! Since I'm curious, I 'rewrote' DIM as an AppleScript Studio Application (for those of you who are purists, and want to use a 'pure' AppleScript application, it can be found in the 'AppleScript DIM' folder). As it turns out, there doesn't appear to be a way to save data within an AppleScript Studio Application (like there is in a 'pure' AppleScript application) and so the file ~/Library/Preferences/com.parker9.DIM_2.0.plist is created when DIM 2.0 is run. The data in this file is: name of all icons on the Desktop, their positions, the size of the Desktop and a flag to decide if DIM should simply Restore the Desktop icon positions and quit or not.

--- 7 January 2000, v1.3.1- MacOS 9 got picky about the view setting for the Desktop window. This broke DIM's restore capability if Icon Arrangement in the View Options... wasn't set to None. This fix toggles that setting if 1) the version of MacOS is greater than 8.6 and 2) the Icon Arrangement is not set to None. After restoring the icon positions, the setting is reset to the original. The original work around (selecting 'None') was suggested by Chuck Ahrens. Both Valerio Garzo and Stéphane Madrau (again!) suggested script changes. Brian Eggleston was gracious to test/debug the script. Since I'm currently at MacOS 8.6, this fix won't have been possible without the help from our fellow Mac users!

--- 17 May 1999, v1.3- Due to enough requests, made it so that the script can be set up so it doesn't always ask what to do. You can have it default just to Restore the icon positions when either DIM is double-clicked or when run (e.g. in the Startup Items folder).

--- 27 Nov. 1998, v1.2- Made the script a droplet. After the first time use, double-clicking the script will simply Restore the icon positions w/o asking for confirmation. Dragging any item onto the script will present a dialog asking for requested action (see below). Never released to general public.

--- 22 April 1998, v1.1- Speed of script was dramatically improved, mostly due to the useful discussions with Stéphane Madrau. Functionality has not changed.

--- 14 April 1998, v1.0- Original release (of slow script).