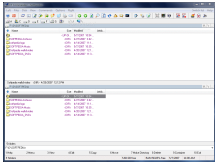


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EF Commander main application window

[File and Folder Manipulation](#)

Comprehensive tool for file management

For lots of users, managing computer files is a matter of two choices: Windows Explorer or Total Commander. Some of the advanced users are employing the former solution despite the enriched options TC makes available.

And yet, despite the belief that there are no better file managers except for the above mentioned two, there are some applications worthy of your attention that do the same job and sometimes perform even better.

EF Commander 5.86 comes as a replacing solution for the two. The application can be used by both beginners and advanced users with the same effect. This multi-featured software is available at a price of \$35 and the trial version's only limitations are an awful nag screen and a 30 days limited trial period.

The simple looks injected in the application are not at all giving a hint at what is under the hood. It looks like a regular two-paned file manager designed to give you a minimal management of your files, when in fact, EF Commander is intended to do more than just that.

The menu bar contains management options for both the left pane and the right one. So even if you do not have the right panel selected, you can customize the way the files are displayed (tree, list, details, thumbnails), sort them (by name, by extension) etc., without clicking it once.

The high level of customization available in EF Commander allows you to change the way it looks, the menus displayed in the toolbar, add some of your own menus as external commands (and organize them with separators and the whole deal), change the way the application looks and create color profiles that can be initiated in a second, change the font of the program etc.

The multitude of options and features is just amazing and just by taking a look at the Files menu you will get a grip on what you are using: multi-rename tool, e-mailing options, CD/DVD burning, split/join function, archiving/unarchiving, CRC Checksums creator, HEX editing etc.

EF Commander's all-in-one feature extends to provide you a FTP manager. The utility works just fine and I must say that it moves pretty well. For checking the reachability of a host, there is the PING tool incorporated in Commands menu. Using this network tool resulted in no response.

However, despite these minor issues (PING can be used directly from Vista and there are plenty of free FTP managers on the market) EF Commander comes with lots of features that extend over file managing and can be applied on processes. The Command menu lets you kill the running processes without too much effort. This little utility is displayed as a context menu as soon as it is invoked. You will have access only to the application processes (those available in the taskbar), except for EF Commander.

More system-related functions include shutdown and summoning the screensaver. These act as shortcuts to the corresponding options of the system.

Options menu gives you the chance to change every aspect related to EF Commander. If there is something you do not like, here's where you can change it. The application allows you to customize the toolbar, set the font of the program, define the color profiles, configure the entire application or create your own menus to be accessed upon pressing the F2 key.

The program is highly customizable and the user can mold it to fulfill his/her own needs. The internal audio player is a feature rarely met in other file managers. The properties are worthy of a professional audio player. The supported files include FLAC, OGG, WMA or WAV. Futile to say that the more ordinary audio formats like MP3 are supported. However, be sure that the necessary metadata is appended to the file as otherwise they will not be playable. The interesting thing about the EF Commander and its audio player is that restarting the application will result in the player resuming the file play and it'll start automatically.

The burn option provided in the application is dependent on having Nero installed. In order to be able to write and erase CD/DVD disc, EF Commander needs NeroAPI. As this file is copyrighted, the developer could not include the file in the file manager.

At the bottom of the application window the most commonly used options when it comes to file managing are displayed. Thus you have the name of the function and its assigned shortcut (menu - F2, view - F3, edit - F4, copy - F5, move - F6, make directory - F7, delete - F8, container - F9 and exit – F10). There is no doubt that the shortcut keys displayed there are the Fs of the keyboard. For more options, keep Ctrl or Shift pressed and you will have access to more functions, like turning on/off the view of one of the panels, split/join the files, encode, rename etc.

The functionality of the application covers everything in what concerns file manipulation, from the simple operations like move, copy, delete, rename to splitting and joining them, emailing them from EF Commander by automatically launching your default email client. File comparing and folder synchronization, killing the taskbar applications, built-in audio player, directory listing, they are all available in the software.

Not to mention the file compression possibilities that include 11 different compression formats (ZIP, 7-ZIP, BZIP2, CAB, GZIP, LHA, SQX, TAR, TBZ, TGZ and ZOO), all of them being built in the software, requiring no external help. Also, the customization reaches the highest levels as you can add plugins, create your own menu, define the color profiles etc.

The Good

The application is an extraordinary asset to the advanced users while beginners will easily find their way among all the functions and options.

The audio player featured here is absolutely fantastic. It supports both lossy and lossless formats and the quality of the rendered sound is better than many audio players out there.

The response time when it comes to calculating is amazing. Most file managers take a lot longer to make a simple directory size check, but in EF Commander the result is almost on the spot.

For a secure erase you can enable the wiper/shredder so that recovering the files will turn into a more difficult job.

The Bad

During our testing, the PING tool refused to comply to my request and returned the "no response" message. Opening the help menu from the software results in an error. However, going in the application folder and launching the help file from there works just fine.

Selecting the files and folders is easy, the difficulty intervenes when it comes to de-selecting some files or folders. In order to do this, you will have to go up one folder and return to the location, this time selecting the right files from the start.

The Truth

The nag screen in the trial version is definitely doing its job, as the prompting is persistent and ruthless. However, buying the full version will eliminate it. The support for the program is quick and the reported problems will not remain unsolved (the developer releases about 10 updates/year).

The 30 days trial period allows full testing of the program and only the nag screen will disturb you.

Here are some snapshots of the application in action: