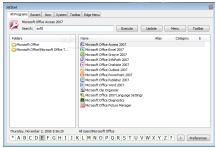


25 November 2008

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Shortcut Launcher

[Shortcut Launcher and Alternative Start Menu](#)

A program that launches start menu shortcuts

How many times did the standard Start Menu help you in finding the application you needed to run? How fast? I benefited from few such experiences because we all can agree upon one thing: the number of items from Start Menu is getting bigger every day. The more applications we run and install, the more items we add to the menu.

The application tested is called JetStart. It has been designed to help the user find and run favorite applications with less effort and strain, not only from the Start Menu items but also from other applications that can be added to its launch list. JetStart is a small tool that provides four different ways to launch any file, folder or shortcut. The user interface of JetStart consists of a search panel (the first method), a toolbar that contains different categories, where you can add the shortcuts to be launched from the standard Start Menu or other locations (the second method), a desktop edge menu that uses the mouse to reveal the items (the third method), and an additional customizable start menu that can be accessed when you hover your mouse over the Start button (the fourth method).

First things first: the Search Panel

This method makes use of keystrokes. Just type the first two or three letters and the search engine will reveal the related shortcuts. I must say that when you first do so, JetStart will index your Start Menu items and every time you install a program you will be announced by a small balloon near the system tray icon that the application can be found in the New tab. Here, you will also find a list with all the Start Menu folders and they will be sorted upon installation, which is very important. This means that the folders where you installed your last application will come up first, and the date when the products were installed will also be provided. The search panel (I called it like that but in reality, it represents the main interface of JetStart) provides a tab for recently used files. There are two directories in this tab: Recent Programs and Most Used, which may come in handy.

On the bottom of the panel you can find a list with the all the letters of the alphabet, only in All Programs tab. The user can hover the mouse over the desired letter and JetStart will display all the shortcuts that start with the letter in question. The System tab contains a few shortcuts for power management. Toolbar and Start Menu tabs are also included in this panel (they will be detailed below). For every shortcut that is indexed and can be found in All Programs tab you have numerous options to choose from. The user can send the Shortcuts to a specific category from the launch toolbar, or to edge menu, view shortcuts properties and open the corresponding folder. A feature worth mentioning is "Uninstall". If JetStart does not find an uninstall shortcut, then you will be asked to open the Add/Remove Programs.

To re-index the shortcuts you must use the Update button from the panel. But be very careful because if you have a crowded Start Menu, the operation can take a while or simply freeze your system (it happened to me).

Toolbar

This is the launch panel that comes with five default categories. You can move and arrange

them as you wish, but you cannot add new ones or rename them. These options are available in the Pro version of JetStart for which you must pay, according to the developer's webpage. To add shortcuts, the user can drag & drop over the desired category and they will be automatically stored, or use the Toolbar tab from the search panel. The developer indicates in the provided Help File that "Run All - Select this command from Tab context menu to run all programs in the current category at once". I could not find this option.

The search panel (main menu) and the toolbar are accessible using hotkeys that can be changed from the Preferences window. By default for search panel is Win key + S and for toolbar, Win key + A. From the Preferences window, the user can also select to change the Win Key behavior to show the search panel (main interface), or add JetStart to context menu. When you call the toolbar or search panel by default, it will appear in the center of your screen but JetStart provides an option to follow the mouse position. Another feature worth mentioning is that when JetStart is running, you can move, or rearrange taskbar items (that is so cool).

Edge Menu

This menu has been implemented to gain access to favorite shortcuts by using the mouse. Just point the mouse to the upper, lower, left or right edge of the desktop and a shortcut menu will appear. I must say that the delay between triggering the menu and the moment when the mouse is on the edge is a bit long. To add shortcuts to this menu, just select the edge menu from the context menu within the search panel.

Alternative Start Menu

Hover you mouse over the Start Button and the JetStart menu will appear. It contains the power management shortcuts, the items from the toolbar's categories, the latest seven programs used, Connection List and Import Start Menu command. You can disable this menu by using the within options, and also customize it by editing the file "Menu.lst" stored in the JetStart\Data folder.

The Good

JetStart has a lot to offer when it comes to launching files. It includes a search engine which finds hidden shortcuts from the Start Menu really quickly. The Uninstall and send shortcuts to Startup options are a plus. Also, the recent and used programs lists do come in handy, not to mention the edge menu and alternative Start Menu, which are simple and efficient ways to access your shortcuts.

The Bad

I've seen many features and options to choose from in order to customize and decide on the launch method that suits everybody's needs, but I haven't seen any backup option. The only backup that JetStart creates in Data folder is from the installation directory. It would have been great to set the level of the delay time until the edge menu had appeared. JetStart does not remember relative paths; thus, you will not be able to add shortcuts from portable drives.

The Truth

JetStart provides great and original ways to launch your shortcuts, all in one piece of software. There are certainly more options to be implemented but, for now, I would say it is

worth every minute you spend in customizing and adding the shortcuts you want.

Here are some snapshots of the application in action: -