

30 November 2007

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[Manage the Items from Your Start Menu and Not Only](#) *Start Menu Scanner*

If you are the type of user that likes testing many applications in quest for the "right ones for you" then you surely have one "loaded" start-up menu. If you get to the point where even you don't know how many applications are installed on your system or much worse, where and in what location the ones you really need are, then you must consider looking for a tool that can help you organize your start-up menu. The applications that you install don't always create folders with the same name in Program Files or Start-up directory, but with the producer's name or company for example, and in this situation you might get confused if you're searching among tens of folders. Unless you are a fan of crowded desktops you need to organize all the shortcuts in some way so you can open them easily. Here is where launchers come in action. Launchers are a type of application that lets you open files, folders, URL's, in a convenient and organized way. There are many ways that a launcher can open your files (using predefined keywords, icons, hotkeys or just simple path). Launchy was designed to open your files by matching the words you are typing in the search box with the application shortcut and it can link not only shortcuts but also files, folder paths or URL's. It is equipped with a great scanning feature that can be used to scan the Start-up Menu directory for shortcuts. Launchy will build an index with all the shortcuts and when you want to open a certain program it will search the index and match the search string with the shortcut name. More than that, Launchy will try to match your word starting with the first letter. It has a nice interface that comes with many skins to choose from. I have tested the application on Windows XP as well as on Vista and it runs on both, but on the Launchy webpage the producer provides a method to make it work on Windows 2000 too. After you install Launchy, if you have a tool that detects the programs that register themselves as start-up objects, you'll notice that it will start with Windows (it is important if you decide to use only this launcher, but I personally have a big problem with applications that register by default as start-up objects). It will run silent on background and you can call it to foreground by pressing the ALT+Space key combination (comes by default). But if you prefer using another combination because of the window menu conflict (ALT key is assigned for window menu) you can simply change it and select a new one. The algorithm that Launchy is based upon is meant to match the word in the search box to the file, shortcut, URL name that was indexed. So I started my tests. Launchy can scan the start-up for applications but can also scan other folders too. You can add directories that you want to scan and enter to scan not only for **.EXE** or **.INK** but also other extensions. (Images: **.JPG**, **.BMP**, music files: **.MP3**, **.WAV**). I've created a new directory Softpedia and put in some image files, audio files and applications. First you must add the directory to the list. By default Launchy comes with three directories, two for start-up locations and one with System Utilities such as Control Panel, My Documents, Music, Picture or System Shutdown, Reboot, Logoff. After you add the directory you must specify the extensions that you want Launchy to scan for (you have to do this for every folder you add). In the Directories window of Launchy you can also add general extension types that apply for all folders. The extension syntax must be e.g. **".EXE"**, this way only. If you would like to index all the files from a specified folder you must enter **".*"** or the folder itself **".directory"**. For all the examples Launchy did the job. What I have discovered during the test was that if you enter let's say the word „mail" as string search it will show a list of not so accurate results, meaning that it has a certain search algorithm that it follows (known by the producer I think and not random), but if you select an item from that list, the next time you will enter the same search string the first position will be occupied by the item that you have selected

before. Can we set some sort of relevance for items or search words? No. Depending on the previous search situation, the string words will be different. It would be much easier to start a new search with an empty box. Situation: I want to search for Softpedia.exe application and I enter the word "soft". After a split second Launchy shows a list with all the words from the index that start with or contain this word. So far so good. I select the item I want and Launchy hides on background. If I want to start a new search, I call Launchy to foreground to enter the new search string, but the search box is not empty. It has the previous word. Starting a new search is better. Although it was designed to open URL addresses too, every time I enter let's say Google, or Wiki I get an error page saying "**Windows cannot find Google.Weby. Make sure you typed the name correctly, and then try again**". Launchy incorporates a set of plug-ins (Calcy, Controly, Explory, Foxy, Runny, Weby) that contain the Weby plug-in. It cannot be configured within Launchy so I presume that it is a coding error. Runny plug-in can be configured to run customized commands with arguments. You can create new commands defined by keywords and add an executable path. To open a URL address you will need to simply enter the address and Launchy will open the webpage in default browser. One thing that is really annoying is that it will "force" open the webpage. Situation: if your default web-browser is one that supports more tabs and in the last session you have saved a few important tabs that you can open later you can say goodbye to them (happened to me). It will overwrite the ones you saved with the search URL address, and that is not good. I have noticed during the tests that it does not support "run" commands like "**cmd, dxdiag, ping**" which are very useful to this kind of tools. But it does have an internal calculator that you can use if you enable the Calcy plug-in. Launchy also has the possibility to run from a portable device by checking the "Portable Mode" option. When you do this, Launchy will move the index database file to the root directory so that you can copy or move Launchy to your portable device and run it from there. **The Good** It does the job when it comes to scanning the start-up menu for the selected extensions, and it remembers the word relevance when you search the same word. Great interface and lots of skins to choose from. **The Bad** The error window must be fixed and also the "force URL". Adding new and improved features, or a bundle of plug-ins to select from that can improve the way Launchy works, or other miscellaneous tools that can be used with Launchy can raise the interest upon users. **The Truth** Although I did encounter some errors when testing the software, I must say that in some situations it did respond positively. The application scans the start-up directories and the one you added to index, but if we look over the big picture many features that it provides do not work. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*