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Multi-desktop environment

Vista Multi-Desktop

Not enough desktop? Vista and XP gives you 4 of them

Ever since Beryl was out on Linux distros, I felt a bit disappointed that the technology was not the first to appear on Windows. Having multiple desktops is definitely something every user wants to get his hands on. The crystal clear desktop and all that flexibility fits perfectly in Vista environment. And yet it took a while until something similar was to appear on Windows platforms. The start is timid, but as long as Internet exists, there are myriads of possibilities to develop the present softwares to match Beryl's nifty looks and flexibility and even surpass them. To tell you the truth, Beryl is one of the very few aspects I like in Linux as it gives you the chance to enjoy a **3D desktop** able to store different application windows on each side. Unfortunately, this technology does not seem to migrate towards Windows, but rather tends to be re-invented for Microsoft environment computers. One of the easiest to handle programs in this sense is Yod'm 3D, a very small application designed to provide you a fashionable cube effect for your desktop. The advantages are more than obvious as you get to populate the four available sides of the cube with different windows. Or, as I have seen in some cases, desktop shortcuts (many of my friends with less computer skills save everything on desktop because it is easier to reach...yeah, right!). There is absolutely nothing to install which is just great: no more hassle with evac-ing the application entries in the registry. The software comes in an archive which stores everything the program needs to run properly. The price for the vantage? Believe it or not, the application comes for free. So, it does not bloat the registry, it is free and provides a multi-desktop environment in Windows. These alone should make you download it already. The interface is too obvious to be described. All you need is prepare some wicked images to place as wide-background and wallpapers. The rest are technicalities that can be assimilated very fast. And if you are too lazy to go look for really cool pictures to put on your desktop you can use the ones that come with Yod'm 3D. Immediately after launching the executable, you will be prompted to choose the default language of the application. If you are not a French speaker, then you may want to change the default to English, Czech, Danish, German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish or any of the listed choices. Configuring the application is easier than stealing a candy from a kid. Actually, the Options window is equipped only with four tabs out of which just the first three are a bit more complicated. In order to handle the **multiple desktops** provided by Yod'm 3D you will have to set a combination of keys to rotate the cube to the right and to the left and to view it in the distance or at the normal day-to-day desktop view. Also, you can configure the application to start with Windows so that you can benefit from the multi-desktop advantage from the moment Windows loads. Perusing the four desktops is not all you can do with Yod'm 3D and **zoom options** can be used to make the appearance more striking. Thus, there are different zoom levels to be achieved on holding down the hotkey combinations or when moving the window. Getting the best view of the application's **effects** depends entirely on the hardware installed on your computer. If anti-aliasing is supported (all the new specific components on the market today support this filter) you can enable it for a smoothed view, or you can turn on hardware processing (again, if it is supported). Regarding the RAM use, Yod'm 3D makes available an option that can free up the memory when the application is not used. Of course, turning this option on results in slower response and you may not like this too much. During our testing, the program reached a maximum of almost 42MB and considering the resources needed for Vista to work with full options, I think the value shouldn't make you be concerned (42MB out of 1.5GB - 2GB is like a drop in the ocean). **CPU** on the other hand, reached a maximum value of 92%. This is again not a reason to worry as the use dropped almost instantly to 0% when

the application was not doing anything and raised rapidly when I benefited from its advantages (perusing the desktops). Display tab of the Options menu also provides you with the means of changing the **wide-screen background** (the image behind the cube). This can be practically any type of image. I have not found the specs in this sense, but trying JPEGs, BMPs and PNGs worked like a charm. To complete the visual feast offered by Yod'm 3D the developer appended the cube transparency slider. You can change the opacity of the entire cube and see through the desktops. This way, you can easily see if one of the four desktops available is empty or not. If the windows displayed on the desktops are familiar enough you can assess from a glance which applications are opened there. To make it easier for the users, rotating the desktops and switching from one to another can be achieved by holding down the activation hotkeys and use the mouse to turn to another desktop. The scroll button of the mouse comes in handy if you want to switch between different zoom levels of the cube. **The Good** Yet Another Desktop Manager 3D (Yod'm 3D) is a great step to 3D desktop environment. Its main advantages count the zero entries in the registry and the ultra ease of use in manipulating the desktops. The nifty transparency effects and the display settings for texture filter of the cube and the wide-screen background as well as the anti-aliasing options also add to the value of the application. And when all these sump up into a freeware there is absolutely no reason not to try it. The context menu of the system tray icon allows easy switch from one desktop to another and displays the applications opened on each screen. All this minimizes the effort for handling the four screens available. **The Bad** Some taskbar windows may appear on all the desktops. During our testing, we experienced this nag with Foobar and Maxthon. Also, taking the application to the next level and upping the number of desktops to six (the total number of sides of the cube) would be a great idea for future releases. While playing around with it, I felt a bit restricted by the fact that rotation works only horizontally. Maybe vertical perusing will be available when six desktops will be available. **The Truth** Great freeware that works not only on Vista (integrating perfectly in the environment), but also on XP and Windows 2000. Yod'm 3D is free and easy to use as long as there is no hotkeys conflict. In this case, the hotkeys will work only for Yod'm 3D when this is running, and for the previously assigned applications when it is closed. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*