

Welcome to AveDesk 1.1 Tutorial

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INTRODUCTION

What is AveDesk?

AveDesk 1.1 is the successor of AveDesk 1.0 which was launched in January 2004. It is a desktop enhancing tool that puts “desklets”, multifunctional objects that act like mini programs on your desktop, and enhance your working experience. Each desklet gives has various, unique features varying from simple shortcuts to system monitoring tools and media controllers. The only limit for its usage and expansion is the imagination of the desklet programmers.

Each desklet has numerous settings that allow user to adjust desklets to their own needs. Among these settings are: alpha level, drop shadow, colorization, gray scaling, labels, etc. Besides with these basic settings each desklets has its own specific set of settings that vary from desklet to desklet.

AveDesk is fully compatible with Object Dock docklets which means you can use your favorite ObjectDock docklets in AveDesk.

INSTALLATION

Run AveDesk.exe and follow the instructions during the install. You can choose a folder where AveDesk will be installed. (If you have downloaded a .zip file, extract its content to Program Files\AveDesk or in the folder of your choice).

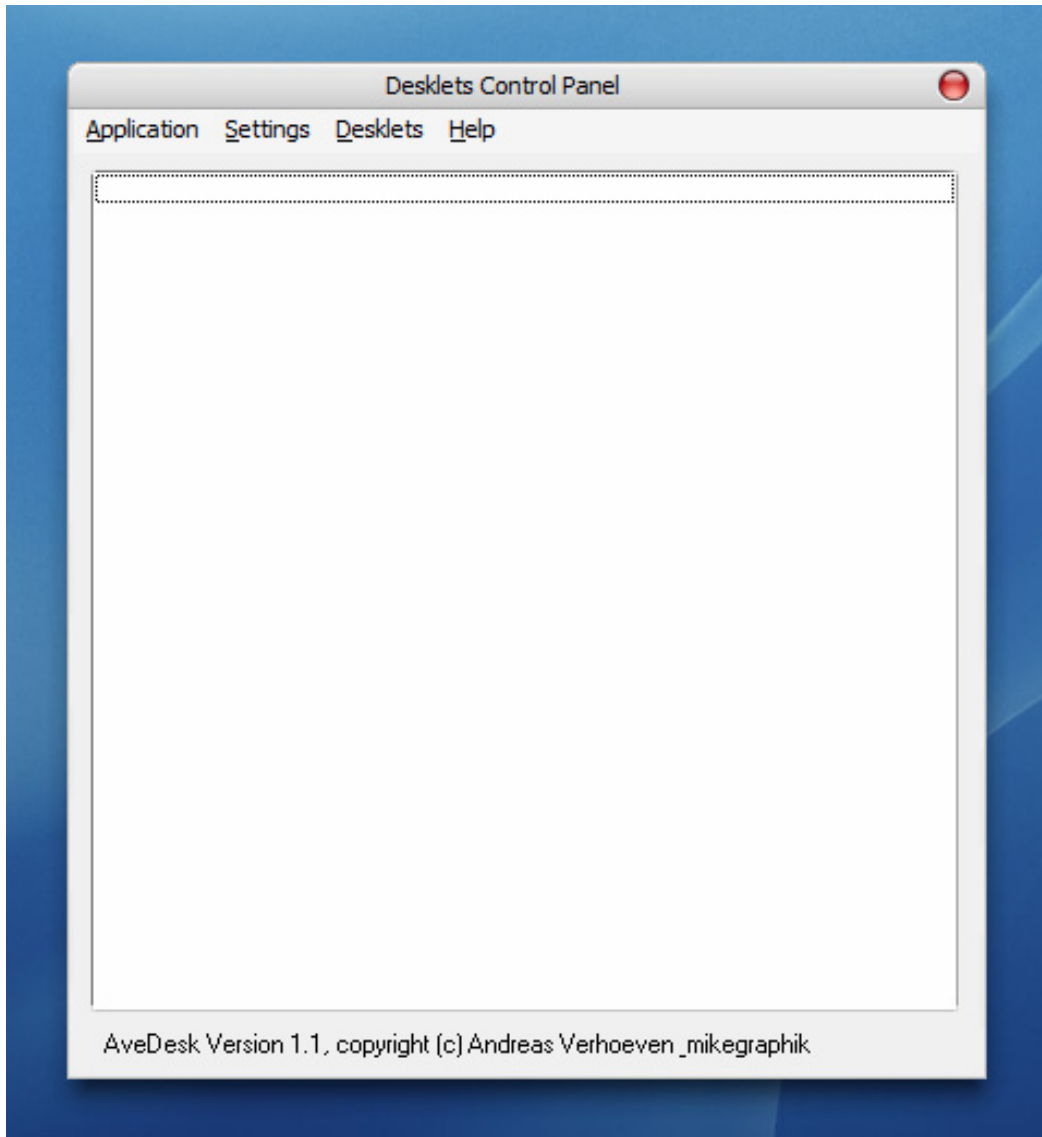
GETTING STARTED

To start AveDesk click “Start”, All programs, AveDesk and the choose AveDesk program. When you start AveDesk for the first time you will only see the icon in the system tray.



To begin adding desklets and setting up your AveDesk double click on the AveDesk icon in system tray. You will be presented with a Control Panel.

Getting acquainted with AveDesk control panel



There are 2 main areas in the control panel. The menu bar and the desklets panel. Desklets panel displays a list of currently running desklets and provides a quick access to their settings (via the double click).

AveDesk settings

In AveDesk's settings menu there are 2 options, "Default desklet properties" and "Global settings". Default desklet properties control the global settings that are applied to all newly added desklets, such as size of the desklet, style, advanced settings and more, all of which will be explained later in this tutorial. Global settings control desklet behavior, starting AveDesk on system boot, etc.

Desklets Menu

Desklets menu holds basic desklet functions such as adding, removing, duplicating, setting desklet's properties and auto-aligning. This menu can also be accessed via right click in the desklets pane.

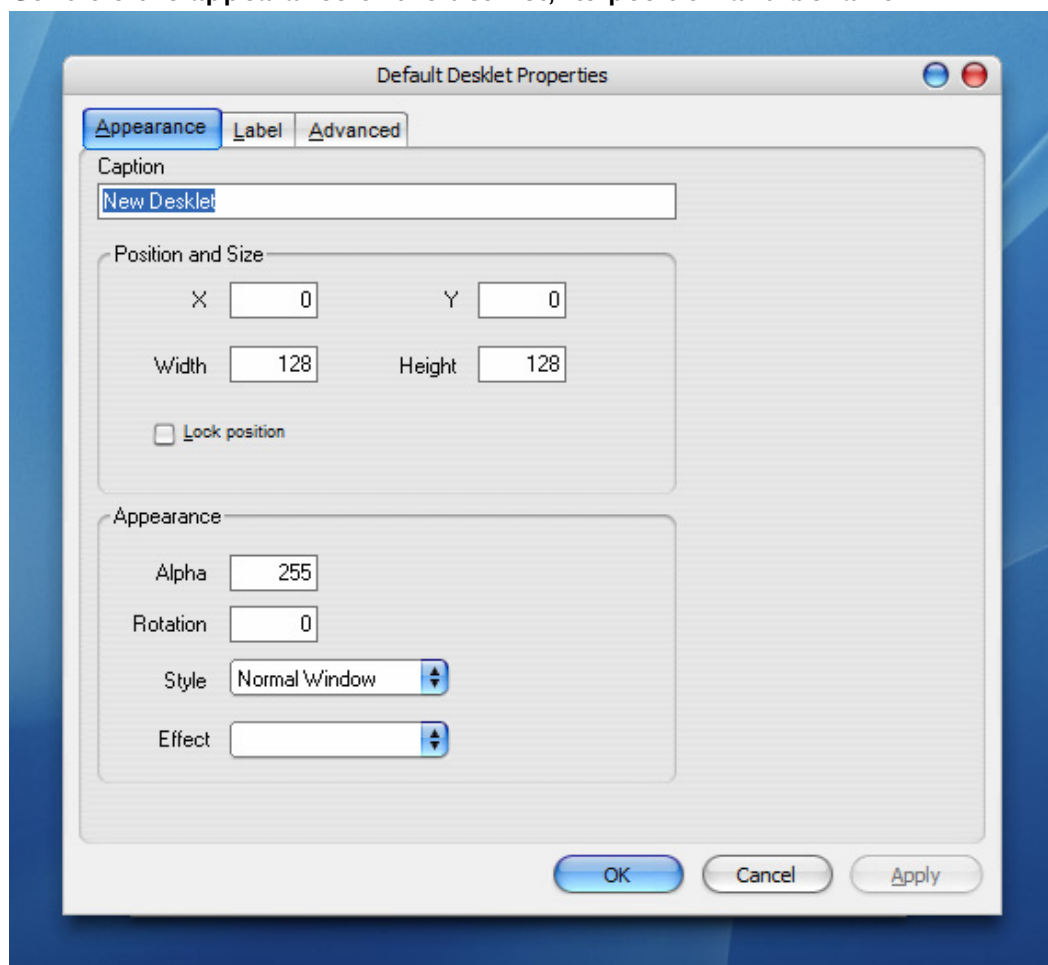
SETTING UP AVEDESK

Default desklet properties

When you launch default desklet properties you will be presented with a window with 3 different tabs. In each tab you will find settings for a separate section of each desklet. These settings apply to all newly added desklets and can be changed later for each desklet individually by right clicking the desklet (either on desktop or in AveDesk control panel's desklet list) and choosing "Desklet properties".

Appearance

Controls the appearance of the desklet, its position and behavior.



Caption – this determines the title of the newly added desklets. By default it's set to "New Desklet" but it can be set to "My Desklet" or whatever you want. This caption will appear each time when you add a new desklet.

Position and size – There are two ways of setting the position of your desklets. For large scale moving (from one side of the screen to the other) you can use dragging and for then fine-tune the position with X & Y axis settings. Default position setting determines the position where all new desklets will appear upon adding. Default setting (0, 0) means that all new desklets will appear in upper left corner of the screen.

Width and Height – These settings are control the default size of the desklets. To keep the proportions of the image as original, both W & H size must be the same. To keep aspect ratio when changing the size of W or H, mark the "Keep aspect ratio" field.

Lock position – This setting locks the desklet in place and is not recommended as a default setting. Locked desklets must be unlocked before moving.

Appearance Subsection – This part is responsible for transparency, rotation, desklet style and effects. All these settings in Default desklets properties dialog affect all desklets, and can also be set for each desklet independently later.

Alpha – Setting for transparency. It relies on a scale from 0 to 255, where 0 is fully transparent image and 255 is fully visible.

Rotation – Relies on a 360° circle pattern.

Style – This setting determines the behavior of the desklet. There are several styles available.

Normal Window – Desklets behave like normal windows.

Always on bottom – Desklet are "stuck" to desktop and are always displayed behind all other windows, icons etc.

Always on top – Opposite to always on bottom, desklets are always on top of all other windows.

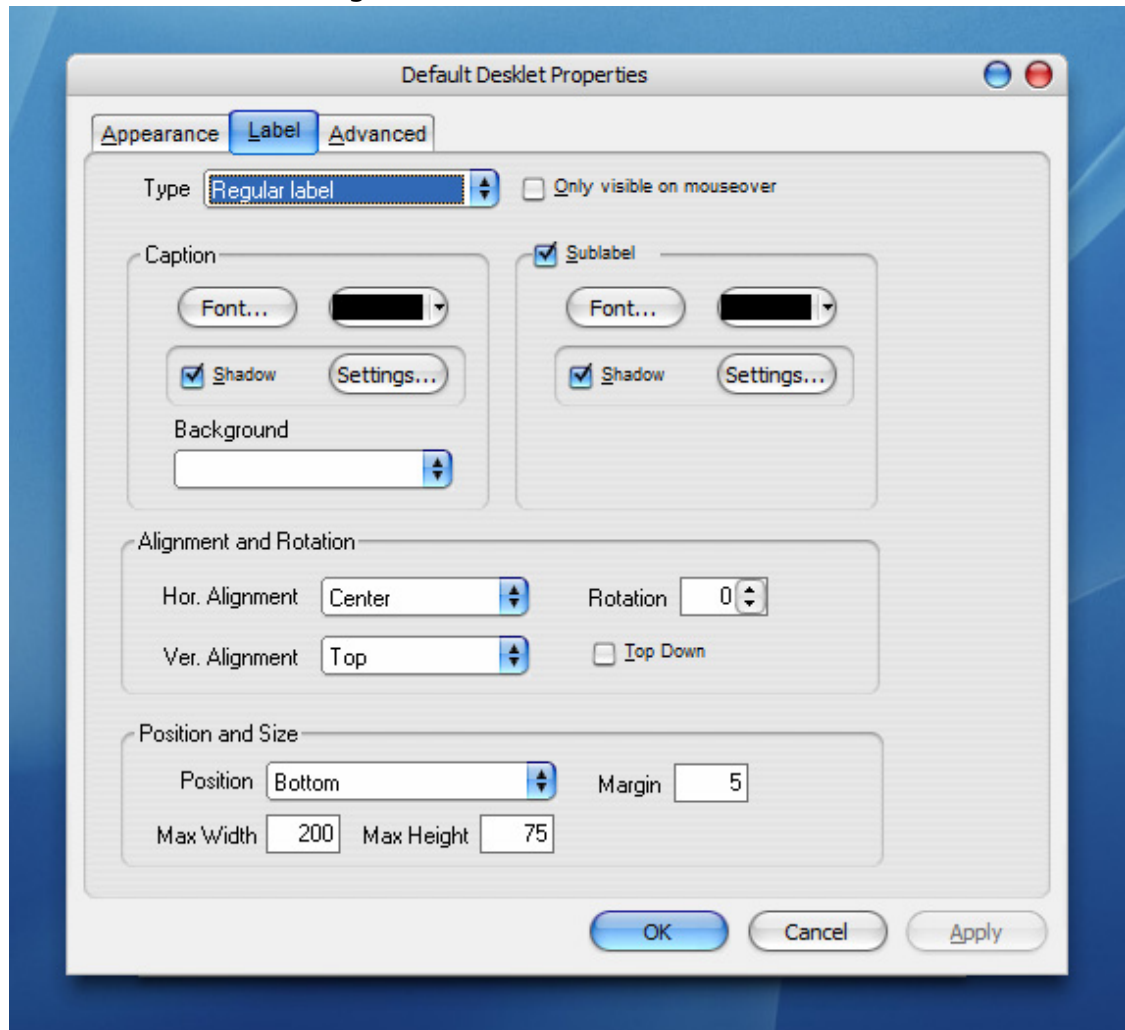
Desktop icon – Desklets behave like normal Windows icons.

Effect – Sets the default attention effect for all desklets.

Icon Preview Pane – This is where desklet image is set. Whenever you see an Icon preview pane with a 'set image' button beneath it, you can also drop an icon or a png from explorer onto the preview pane to change the desklet image.

Labels

Label tab contains settings for desklet labels and sublabels.



Type – You can choose regular label style (always showing under the desklet) or no label. If check “Only visible on mouse-over” option is checked, label will appear when a mouse cursor is hovering over the desklet.

Caption – Contains font, font color, shadow (and shadow settings) and background settings. Shadow settings (“Settings” in the Caption section) control shadow color, alpha (transparency of the shadow) and Offset. Offset controls the position of the shadow in relation to the desklet.

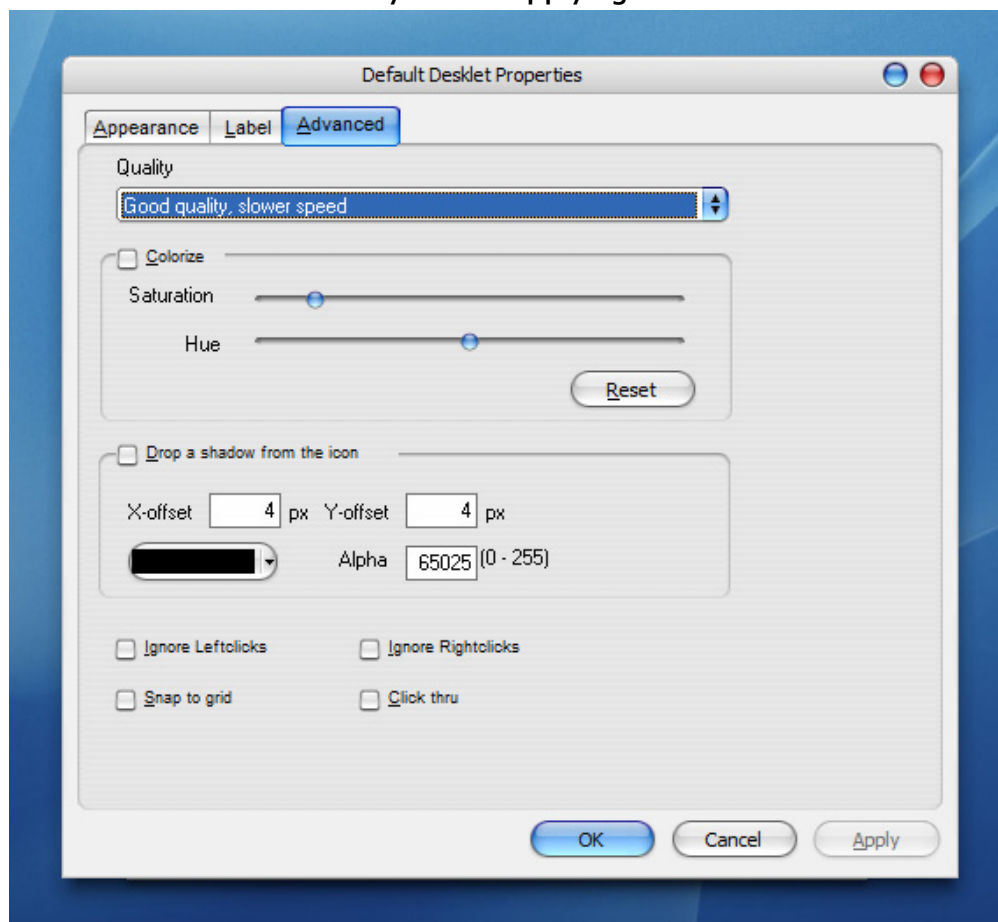
Sublabel – marking this field will enable sublabel which usually displays extra information of the desklet. These can be number of files, drive size, free space, FTP upload speed or anything else, depending on the desklet. Font and shadow settings are set in the same manner as those for normal labels.

Alignment and Rotation – This section controls the label position and depends on the Position setting. Horizontal alignment can be set to center, left and right. It aligns label to the left, center or right. Vertical alignment can be top, middle or bottom. All these are set within and dependant on Position setting.

Position and Size – Sets the label position relative to the desklet image. Can be set to bottom, top, left or right. (Ex. “Left” will put the label on the left side of the desklet image). Margin controls the distance of the label from the desklet image. So if you set it to “0” the label will be set just under the desklet image. Max width & Max height control the maximum width and height of the label.

Advanced

Advanced tab contains settings that can be CPU intensive so it`s recommended to read this section carefully before applying them.



Quality – controls the quality of the image of desklets. Default and recommended setting is “God quality, slower speed”. There is very little difference between quality settings and regular users probably won’t need “Godlike quality”.

Colorize – This is an easy way to change the image of the desklet. It enables users to change Hue and Saturation of the image. (In other words recolor the image). Dragging the hue slider will change the color of the image and saturation will change the color’s intensity.

Drop a shadow from icon lets users add shadows to their desklet images. However the shadow is not needed when it’s already added in the image itself (by the author of that icon/image). X & Y offset control the position of the shadow, alpha controls the transparency (see “Alpha” in Default Desklet Properties> Appearance section) and you can also set the color of the shadow.

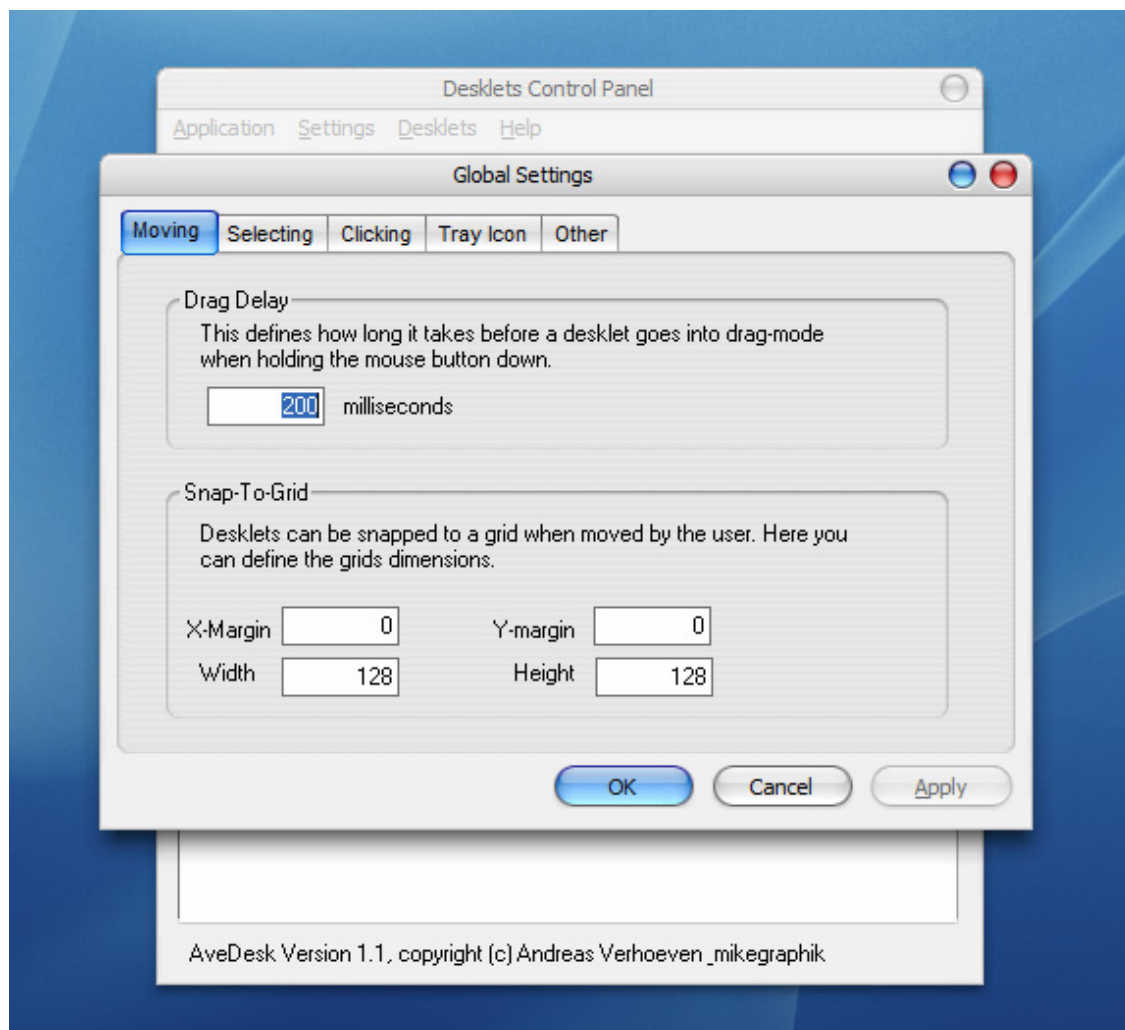
Ignore left clicks – desklets ignore left clicks

Ignore right clicks – desklets ignore right clicks

Snap to grid – snaps the desklet image to a virtual grid that is set over the desktop (See Global Settings>Moving section below, Snap-to-grid option must be set and X & Y must have value larger than 0).

Click through – desklets won’t respond to clicks and act like a part of the wallpaper. Not recommended to shortcut, drives, folders and all other desklets that require interaction, useful for system monitoring desklets.

Global Settings



Moving

This section controls how the desklets are moved, sets the drag delay and the Snap-to-grid option.

Drag delay defines how long does it take for a desklet to go into drag-mode (when it is being moved by clicking on it and holding the mouse button, then dragging it to the desired position).

Snap-to-grid - this option puts a virtual grid over your desktop that enables desklets to “snap” to it. This is useful if you want your desklets to align on desktop. X margin marks height where the grid begins (counting from upper part of the screen), Y margin marks the width, starting from the left side of the screen.

Width and height are dimensions of the grid fields (imagine them as squares) where desklets will snap to.

NOTE: Snap to grid will apply ONLY on those desklets where “Snap to grid” option is enabled in desklet’s Advanced tab (see Advanced Tab in “Default desklet options” above)

“**Selecting**” **tab** enables/disables the hover selection; it also holds the custom setting for hover selection delay in milliseconds.

“**Clicking**” **tab** gives you an option to choose if desklets will react to single click or a double click.

“**Tray Icon**” **tab** contains settings for AveDesk’s tray icon. Icon can be enabled or disabled. If icon is enabled you can choose a custom icon for AveDesk in system tray.

Under “**Other**” **tab** you can set AveDesk to start on system boot and to ask for confirmation on irreversible actions, such as emptying the Recycle Bin desklet.

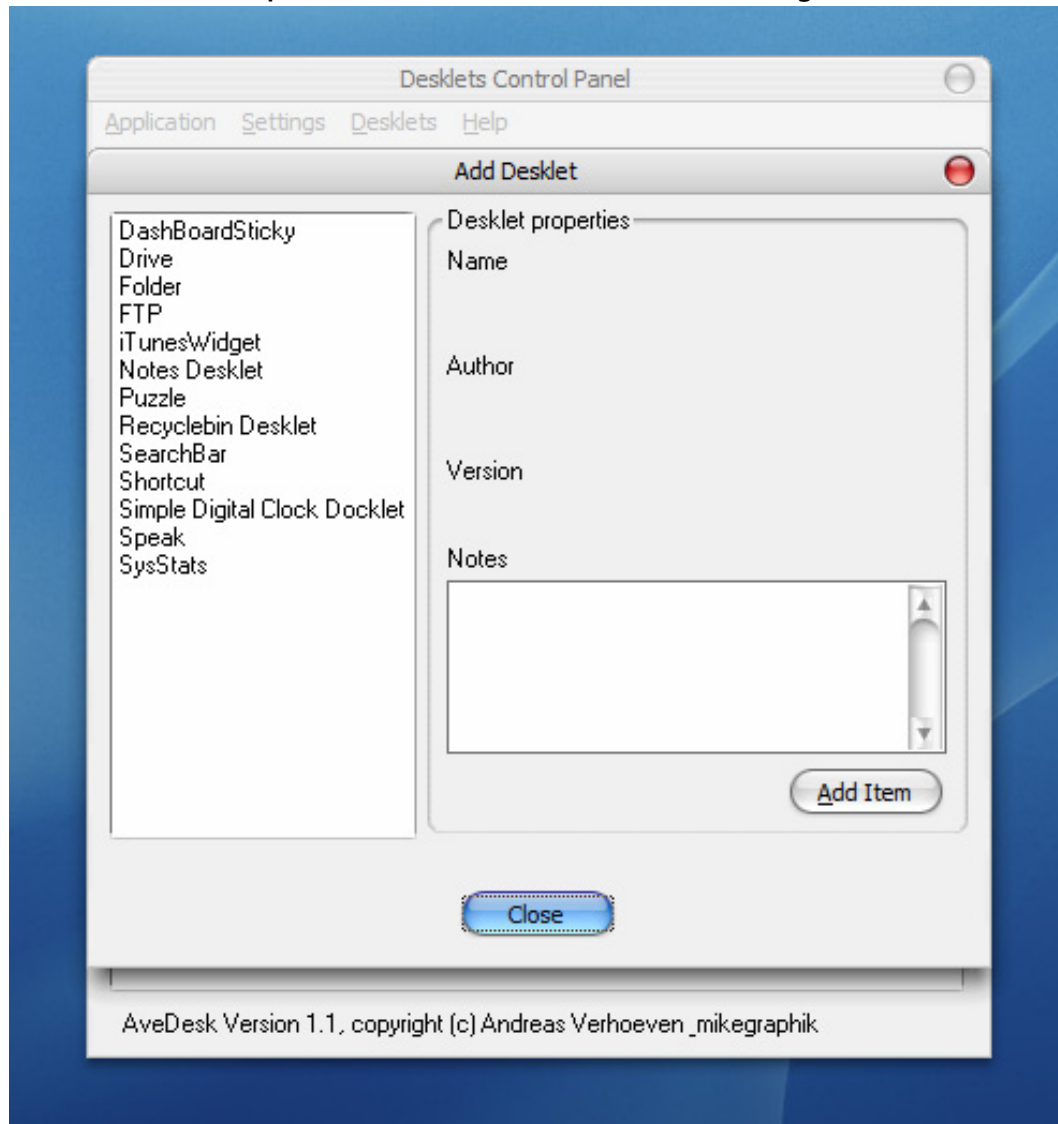
INSTALLING DESKLETS and EFFECTS

AveDesk desklets can be found at www.avedesk.com, www.aqua-soft.org, or www.dockex.com. Desklets are usually stored inside a .zip or .rar container. To extract them use either Windows’ default zip utility or WinZip (for .zip files) or WinRAR for .rar files. After you extract the files desklets should be put to AveDesk\Desklets folder. Effects should be put to AveDesk\Effects.

ADDING and REMOVING DESKLETS

Adding desklets

There are two ways to add/apply a desklet. First one is via the “Desklets” menu by choosing “Add desklet” and second one is by right clicking on an empty space in the desklets panel and choosing “Add desklet” from the drop down menu. You will be presented with the “Add desklet” dialog.



In the panel on the left side is the list of all of the desklets that reside in AveDesk\Desklets folder. On the right side are desklet properties, including the desklet name, author, version and a short description of desklet’s function.

Desklets are added either by double clicking the desklet in the left panel, or by marking it with a single click and pressing the “Add item” button.

Removing desklets

Desklets can be removed either from the control panel or from desktop. In each case right click the desklet (or desklet image if removing from desktop) and choose “Remove Desklet” from the popup menu.

Other desklet actions

Right clicking on the desklet brings up a popup menu that can hold either a standard desklet menu or a desklet specific menu. Standard desklet menu gives a quick way of locking the desklet, showing/hiding the sublabel, duplicating the desklet and removing it. It also has points to Desklet properties and the AveDesk control Panel. Duplicating the desklet creates an identical copy with all the settings of the parent desklet.

***TIP:** To get a quick access to the properties of a desklet, press CONTROL + left click a desklet.*

DEFAULT DESKLETS

AveDesk installation comes with several default desklets.

Drives

Drives desklet is responsible for representing drives as your AveDesk desklets and is used ONLY for drives. Besides the basic desklet options (described in previous chapters), Drives desklet contains few specific options. First of them is label format. This tab lets you choose the information that is being displayed by the sublabel and its format. Format is set by entering the preset sublabel strings. User can choose to display number of files (by entering %f in the field), number of directories (%d), total drive size (%t) (drive size is automatically adjusted depending on the drive size), free space size (%s) ((drive size is automatically adjusted depending on the free space size), percentage of the free space for the drive (%p) (NOTE if you enter only %p, you will see just the percentage of free space without the % mark. To display the % symbol next to the free space percentage meter, enter %p%%). To add a new line to the sublabel use %# string. The new line will appear under the first one.

In “**Label format**” tab you can also set your desklet to display drive name that appears in My Computer and add drive letter before the caption in the Label.

“**Images**” tab gives an option to set a drag-n-drop image for Drives desklet.

This image will appear when a file is dragged over/in the desklet.

The “**Drive**” tab lets users choose the drive and hide the desklet when the drive is not mounted/present in the system.

***TIP:** Use “Hide when drive is not mounted option” to have a CD/DVD icon popping up on your Desktop when media is inserted/disappearing when it's ejected from the drive.*

***TIP:** If you drag a file to a drive desklet, it will make a copy of it in the drive that desklet is pointing to. If you want to move a file, hold the shift key while dragging.*

Folder

Similar to drives desklet, folder desklet represents folders. The “**Label format**” tab holds the setting for information that is being displayed by the sublabel and its format. Format is set by entering the preset sublabel strings. User can choose to display number of files (by entering %f in the field), number of directories (%d), size of folder in bytes (%s) (size is automatically adjusted depending on the folder size). To add a new line to the sublabel use “%#” string (without quotes). The new line will appear under the first one. You can also set folder to automatically update desklet label to folder name.

“**Images tab**” sets the drag-n-drop image for the Folder desklet. This image will appear when a file is dragged over/in the desklet. In “**Folder tab**” user sets which folder the desklet points to.

Shortcut

Shortcut desklet is similar to drives and folder desklets. Shortcut’s “**Label format**” tab contains a set of advanced commands and other label settings. You can manually set the format of the shortcut label (using the provided strings (each string has an explanation). Shortcut desklet has more label strings than drives and folder desklets. You can set to view artist and album info (for mp3 files) or picture dimensions and file size (for images) among others. When you setup a sublabel format you can save it, load presets or save your current one as the default for other shortcut desklets. Desklet can be also set to automatically load the preset that matches file extension (this option is enabled as a default) and automatically update the desklet’s label to the filename.

“**Shortcut tab**” holds the settings for the file desklet is pointing to. Here users choose a file desklet is pointing to, add extra parameters, choose a start folder and the way shortcut is executed (in normal, maximized or minimized window). Extra parameters are used when shortcut is pointing to an exe file and parameters are used to start a program with a command line (parameter).

Recycle Bin is designed to be an advanced replacement for Windows' default recycle bin.

Label can be set to display number of files in the bin (%n), size of the recycle bin (%s) (size is displayed in bytes but is automatically adjusted depending on its size).

In the images tab you can set the images for 2 states of recycle bin desklet and one for a special action. You can set the images for empty, full and eject actions. Eject image is used when a CD drive from My Computer window or a Drives desklet (pointing to a CD drive) is dragged (shift + dragged for the CD Drives desklet) to the recycle bin desklet. This action (after confirming the deletion confirmation, (don't worry it won't delete anything)) will eject your CD from the drive (just like on a Macintosh)

Other options are enabling/disabling the confirmation dialog when deleting the files and to deleting files directly, without putting them in the bin first (this action is irreversible and not recommended for non advanced users, you CAN NOT get your files back if you enable it)

Notes

This desklet is useful for saving small snippets of text as sort of stickies for your desktop. In "**Notes Text**" tab you can enter text you want to store, set font properties, add a drop shadow to text, rotate it and set font color.

If text is larger than the space in Notes desklet it can scroll on mouse over. To use this option, "Enable scrolling on mouse over" in the "**Scrolling**" tab must be marked. Speed and smoothness of the scrolling and "set the text to return to the begging when the mouse moves away from the desklet" can be also used. Bounding rectangle defines the space where text is written. It is based on a 192x192 scale and is used to fine tune the text position in relations to the desklets image.

Speak

Speak desklet is a fun desklet that can also help visually impaired persons. When text is dragged into it (from Internet Explorer or a Word document for example) it reads the text using a synthesized voice and at the same time displays the currently read word. You can set color, font and transparency of the displayed text, along with text bounds (similar to those in the Notes desklet). In text-to-speech tab users can choose the "voice" that is reading the text and reading rate and volume.

FTP Desklet

This desklet is one of the biggest add-ons to AveDesk and has proven a real time saver to both regular users and professionals. FTP desklet adds a "drop box" to your desktop. When a file is dragged to it, it's automatically uploaded to an FTP server previously set in desklet's options.

When upload is complete users can get the link for the uploaded file by right clicking the drop box and choosing that file from the “Links” menu. Also a different server can be chosen from the presets list in the “Presets” menu. (These server settings sets are called presets)

Setting the FTP desklet

Name: Enter the name for that server (for example “Server 1” (without the quotes))

Server: this is where server’s FTP address is entered you enter. Note that this address must NOT start with ftp:// (a proper example: <ftp.serveraddress>)

Port: if you’re unsure what this means leave this setting unchanged.

Username: this is the username which is used to login to this server.

Password: password to your server

If any kind of Firewall is used (either Windows’ built in or a third party one), “Passive mode” should be marked.

Directory: This is where all uploaded files will be put on the server. If this field is left empty all files will be uploaded to the root directory.

The path of the directory is relative to the FTP address and should contain just the path to the directory (example: “/directory1”, without the quotes).

Link format defines how the links for the uploaded files will be fetched. One example is <http://serveraddress/directory1/{file}> (note that <ftp.serveraddress> has changed to <http://serveraddress>).

You choose link format using {server}, {username}, {password}, {port} and {file} strings.

One of the biggest advantages of FTP desklet is that you can have several presets for a single FTP droplet. Once you set everything for a server you can save it as a preset with a simple push of a button. You can have as many presets as you want and load them by right clicking on the desklet and choosing one of the presets from the “Presets” menu. (you can make one preset for your work server, one for your personal and so on) (All presets are store in AveDesk\Desklet\FTP\Presets)

In “**Other Options**” tab you can enable “Show extended error information in pop up window” option.

In case that FTP desklet fails to upload the file, if this option is enabled, it will pop up a window with a detailed explanation of the error. If you are having problems with setting up the FTP desklet please include the error description, otherwise we will not be able to help you properly.

“Skin” tab lets you choose a skin for the FTP droplet or edit the skin by yourself by using the “Skin editing mode”. You can download skins at www.aqua-soft.org. Downloaded skins should be put in AveDesk\Desklets\FTP\Skins.

For skins and desklets, please visit www.avedesk.com, www.aqua-soft.org, or www.dockex.com.

ABOUT THIS TUTORIAL

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Many thanks to my great friend Ave for continuing his work on AveDesk and for putting up with my requests and complaints.