

Is there a better Windows Console Window? [closed]

Asked 16 years, 3 months ago Modified 7 years, 10 months ago

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316

votes



As it currently stands, this question is not a good fit for our Q&A format. We expect answers to be supported by facts, references, or expertise, but this question will likely solicit debate, arguments, polling, or extended discussion. If you feel that this question can be improved and possibly reopened, [visit the help center](#) for guidance.

Closed 12 years ago.



Locked. This question and its answers are [locked](#) because the question is off-topic but has historical significance. It is not currently accepting new answers or interactions.

I find working on the command line in Windows frustrating, primarily because the console window is wretched to use compared to terminal applications on linux and OS X such as "rxvt", "xterm", or "Terminal". Major complaints:

1. No standard copy/paste. You have to turn on "mark" mode and it's only available from a multi-level popup triggered by the (small) left hand corner button. Then

copy and paste need to be invoked from the same menu

2. You can't arbitrarily resize the window by dragging, you need to set a preference (back to the multi-level popup) each time you want to resize a window
3. You can only make the window so big before horizontal scroll bars enter the picture. Horizontal scroll bars suck.
4. With the cmd.exe shell, you can't navigate to folders with \\netpath notation (UNC?), you need to map a network drive. This sucks when working on multiple machines that are going to have different drives mapped

Are there any tricks or applications, (paid or otherwise), that address these issue?

windows

command-line

console

terminal

command-line-interface

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edited Mar 13, 2013 at 9:47



AJ.

13.7k ● 21 ● 53 ● 63

asked Sep 13, 2008 at 22:33



Alana Storm

166k ● 95 ● 415 ● 618

-
- 10 @Wedge: on a unix system, the command shell is (nowadays) `bash` and the terminal application is `xterm` or `gnome-terminal` or... so I hardly can perceive them as being essentially the same. – [tzot](#) Oct 10, 2008 at 9:48
-
- 2 Like what TZQTZIOY said, it's actually the other way around. Windows has its 'terminal window' and its shell in one executable, `cmd.exe`. Unix-like operating systems have a separate program for the shell (usually `bash`, `dash`, `sh`, `csh`, `ksh`, `zsh`, I could go on but I won't) and the terminal emulator (`gnome-terminal`, `konsole`, `xterm`, etc.) – [Delan Azabani](#) Oct 12, 2010 at 7:49
-
- 5 @Delan: Not true at all. The "cmd.exe" application is a command shell, equivalent to bash or others. The "console window" is built into Windows, and has special properties. You can use alternative command shells, such as PowerShell, 4NT, or even command.com if you like. – [Mark](#) Jan 3, 2011 at 19:05
-
- 10 It's surprising (and disturbing for what is generally an extremely knowledgeable native population) how many people don't know the difference between the command shell (`cmd`, `command.com`, `powershell`, `4nt`, `bash`, what have you) and the console-type window provided by Windows. – [Mark](#) Jan 3, 2011 at 19:17
-
- 2 See also [this SuperUser question about replacing the Windows console](#) (despite what its title may lead you to think). – [JdeBP](#) May 27, 2011 at 9:27
-

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15 Answers

Sorted by:

Highest score (default)



290

votes



Sorry for the self-promotion, I'm the author of another Console Emulator, not mentioned here.

[ConEmu](#) is opensource console emulator with tabs, which represents multiple consoles and simple GUI applications as one customizable GUI window.

Initially, the program was designed to work with [Far Manager](#) (my favorite shell replacement - file and archive management, command history and completion, powerful editor). But ConEmu can be used with any other console application or simple GUI tools (like PuTTY for example). ConEmu is a live project, open to suggestions.

A brief excerpt from the long list of options:

- Latest versions of ConEmu may set up itself as [default terminal for Windows](#)
- Use any font installed in the system, or copied to a folder of the program (ttf, otf, fon, bdf)
- Run selected tabs as Administrator (Vista+) or as selected user
- Windows 7 Jump lists and Progress on taskbar
- Integration with [DosBox](#) (useful in 64bit systems to run DOS applications)
- Smooth resize, maximized and fullscreen window modes
- Scrollbar initially hidden, may be revealed by mouseover or checkbox in settings

- Optional settings (e.g. palette) for selected applications
- User friendly text and block selection (from keyboard or mouse), copy, paste, text search in console
- ANSI X3.64 and Xterm 256 color

Far Manager users will acquire shell style drag-n-drop, thumbnails and tiles in panles, tabs for editors and viewers, true colors and font styles (italic/bold/underline).

PS. Far Manager supports UNC paths (\\server\share\...)

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edited Mar 20, 2017 at 10:18



Community Bot

1 • 1

answered Jun 5, 2012 at 20:32



Maximus

10.8k ● 8 ● 48 ● 66

24 +1 for ConEmu. Just discovered it today and have been hugely impressed so far. Have used Console2 up until today but this looks like it will be my new console of choice.

– [Xanthalas](#) Jun 6, 2012 at 11:33

19 As a long-time user of Console 2, I switched to ConEmu recently and have not looked back. This is so much better than anything that has come before it almost defies belief. Plus is is being rapidly developed (thanks Maximus!) with juicy new features appearing often enough to make it feel exciting. If you've not tried this, do it now. I have no hesitation in recommending it as the best console emulator on Windows. – [Charles Roper](#) Jun 7, 2012 at 13:08 ✎

- 8 Another +1 from a new user. This is a console for developers, by developers. It seems like every time I think "well, it would be nice if it did _____", there's an option for it. Major thanks for fixing such a broken console experience in Windows!
– [drharris](#) Jun 19, 2012 at 13:51

Does ConEmu support SGR (underline, blinking, etc) ANSI codes? I wasn't able to get it work with initial testing. Maybe I'm overlooking something. – [EdGruberman](#) Jan 14, 2013 at 23:06

Traditionally for dos/windows some SGR codes like underline or blinking are threatened as "intensity" for text/background. Underline/bold/italic ara available for xterm-256color mode.
– [Maximus](#) Jan 15, 2013 at 7:19

99 Try [Console 2](#).

votes



Console is a Windows console window enhancement. Console features include: multiple tabs, text editor-like text selection, different background types, alpha and color-key transparency, configurable font, different window styles

Share

edited Jan 16, 2012 at 4:56



user166390

answered Sep 13, 2008 at 22:36



[Greg Hewgill](#)

990k ● 191 ● 1.2k ● 1.3k

I'm using Vista and Console 2 (and 1.5) crashes very often.
– [klew](#) Mar 29, 2009 at 21:21

2 This works very well for me under 64-bit XP. Using it with both cmd.exe and Cygwin bash. – [Marius](#) Jan 11, 2010 at 21:21

2 do you know how i can make console open at a directory that i right click at? in win7, you can shift-right-click on a directory, and select 'open commandline here', but it doesnt seem possible to change that program to console2. – [Chii](#) Sep 2, 2010 at 12:41

3 @Chii: That's certainly possible to do (Git for Windows, for example, has a "Git Bash here" right click option). I'm not sure how to do it exactly, but that would be a great question for [superuser.com](#). – [Greg Hewgill](#) Sep 2, 2010 at 19:09

35 [Take Command](#). This one has been around for a long time (formerly 4DOS). I used this on Windows NT 3.5 (!) and loved it.

votes



[Cygwin](#) lets you run X on Windows, so you can fire up `xterm` or whatever terminal app you prefer, and also get the benefit of using a UNIX shell.

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edited Oct 2, 2013 at 18:00

answered Sep 13, 2008 at 22:37



[Apocalisp](#)

35k ● 8 ● 108 ● 158

12 I'm not looking for a different shell interpreter, it's the application itself I loath. Cygwin suffers the same problems and I got the impression somewhere that Windows PowerShell does as well. Is that impression wrong? – [Alana Storm](#) Sep 13, 2008 at 22:45

1 Just reread my response, any loathing was directed at windows, and not you for being helpful :) – [Alana Storm](#) Sep 13, 2008 at 23:05

3 @Wedge: By "command shell host" I assume you mean "console window". Console windows are a special type of window. It's got nothing to do with cmd.exe or PowerShell or anything else. – [Mark](#) Jan 3, 2011 at 19:08

4 @Alan: it's not the application you don't like. The "application" here is "cmd.exe", "powershell.exe", or "bash.exe" or whatever. What you don't like is the console window provided by Windows. Completely different thing. Re: your answer, "Take Command" replaces your console window, while PowerShell is a command interpreter. They do completely different things. – [Mark](#) Jan 3, 2011 at 19:15

1 @jsplaine I totally agree! Windows needs to provide something better out of the box. That default command prompt window is embarrassing. I really want a decent port of guake on windows. – [Ryan R.](#) Jan 16, 2014 at 18:43

16
votes



1. Turn on quickedit mode (but selection is still rectangular instead of line-wrapped)

2. Resizing by dragging works for me

3. You can change the buffer size which will impact when scrollbars appear

4. pushd \\server\share

Even with those, cmd.exe isn't a great console. See all the other replies and the earlier stackoverflow questions on the same subject. The "Console" project from sourceforge looks pretty good.

Share

edited Dec 28, 2010 at 19:23

answered Sep 14, 2008 at 1:28



[Adam Mitz](#)

6,033 ● 1 ● 30 ● 28

2 Resizing beyond 80 characters doesn't work. – [Jared Updike](#)
Dec 22, 2010 at 19:47

2 I stand corrected: you have to pre-re-size the window by editing the shortcut to Cmd.exe or Git Bash or whatnot. That and Quick Edit mode seems to rectify a lot of my issues with the built-in Windows terminal. – [Jared Updike](#) Dec 22, 2010 at 20:36

1 +1 for pushd. That's gonna save me some time! – [P Daddy](#) Feb 26, 2011 at 20:21

8

[Console](#)

votes



From documentation:

NOTE: Console is NOT a shell. Therefore, it does not implement shell features like command-line completion, syntax coloring, command history, etc.

Console is simply a nice-looking front end for a shell of your choice (cmd.exe, 4NT, bash, etc.) Other command-line utilities can also be used as 'shells' by Console.

As a programming shell one can use [ipython](#).

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edited Sep 13, 2008 at 23:09

answered Sep 13, 2008 at 22:43



[jfs](#)

413k ● 205 ● 1k ● 1.7k

7

votes



I've had these issues too for years on Windows, but I recently found this project: [Console](#)

It still requires "mark mode" for copy/paste, but at least it's available from a right-click contextual menu (so you don't need to move the mouse to the top left and then move it again to the text you want to select)

UNC paths are not supported by cmd.exe but they are supported by PowerShell. (Console can be configured to use any shell, including cmd.exe and PowerShell)

Share

answered Sep 13, 2008 at 22:42



[ckarras](#)

5,016 ● 2 ● 36 ● 37

7

I use [Cygwin](#) inside the [Poderosa](#) terminal emulator.

votes



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edited Jan 28, 2017 at 19:37



Undo ♦

25.7k ● 38 ● 112 ● 131

answered Sep 13, 2008 at 23:36



Dan Dyer

54.4k ● 19 ● 135 ● 166

5

I personally use Mintty. Therefore I use Cygwin (because that's the only shell it supports, as far as I know).

votes



BTW There is another question: [better command for Windows?](#) I found.



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edited May 23, 2017 at 11:47



Community Bot

1 ● 1

answered Dec 13, 2011 at 16:51



Anish Gupta

2,226 ● 2 ● 23 ● 37

mintty is absolutely terrific. It even supports X-style copy and paste on mouse highlight and middle mouse button.

– [dotancohen](#) Nov 10, 2013 at 8:28

3

I think you will love PowerCMD which you can work 4 command windows at the same time. Also, you can use

votes



many extra commands inside the PowerCMD. [PowerCMD](#)



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answered Feb 14, 2011 at 12:35



[Oğuz Çelikdemir](#)

4,980 ● 4 ● 31 ● 57

3

votes

There is a small program **mo.exe** on github that solves the first three issues: <https://github.com/boolship/Mo>



It runs in normal DOS console window, Git Bash on Windows, etc.



update:

That link is now deprecated, use:

<https://github.com/boolship/MoDi>

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edited Jun 20, 2020 at 9:12



[Community Bot](#)

1 ● 1

answered Oct 17, 2011 at 21:09



[mhthomas42](#)

61 ● 2

3

votes

Use **Gow.exe** .. This will make your **DOS-Prompt** as **Linux terminal...**



else



Use **ZOC.exe**...its Trial-period terminal...

else

Install **Git** .. it gives a bash-console from where u can use unix commands, partially

Share

edited Feb 18, 2014 at 6:17

answered May 27, 2011 at 8:56



Priya

1,554 ● 1 ● 14 ● 33

2

votes



I'm using Terminals for remote connection via Telnet, RDC, SSH, ... Combines most used protocols in one program.

URL: <http://www.codeplex.com/Terminals>



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answered Sep 13, 2008 at 23:24



Anheledir

4,377 ● 7 ● 34 ● 34

2 Why not use Putty?

votes



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answered Oct 10, 2008 at 1:10



Joe Ramsey

[PuTTYCyg](#) is looking for a maintainer. Also see [the PuTTY maintainer's remarks on PuTTY hosting a Windows command prompt.](#) – [patrickmdnet](#) Feb 20, 2012 at 19:27

2 I use rxvt from cygwin. It behaves very much like an xterm.

votes



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answered Aug 24, 2010 at 17:04



Tim

29 ● 1

2 Take a look at [Take Command](#).

votes



Take Command is a comprehensive interactive GUI and command line environment that makes using the Windows command prompt and creating batch files easy and far more powerful.

(Take Command is, however, "not free".)

Share

edited Jan 16, 2012 at 4:56



user166390

answered Sep 13, 2008 at 22:37



Lasse V. Karlsen

391k ● 106 ● 646 ● 844

I use take command a lot. It does copy/paste, drag-resize, etc.

– [piCookie](#) Sep 17, 2008 at 16:16
