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Comms Client Pro for Windows

Product Identity

Order code: 010015
              Comms Client Pro for Windows

Outline Description

Comms Client Pro (CCP) for Windows* software provides terminal emulation facilities to the agent and all airline specific printer handling. The agent can select various airline systems to work with through a single user interface.

The agents are able to enter into a dialogue with the remote host using the natural command syntax of the host system. Once completed, the agent will be able to sign out of the host manually. Multiple airline communication windows can be active at the same time. The agent selects the airline to work with by activating that particular window.

A scripting facility, called ABLE, can be used to provide user interface features. This scripting facility provides the development capability required to build or use an existing "FrontEnd" for the host services to simplify training and useage.

CCP supports devices necessary for document processing, namely Boarding Pass Printers (BPP), Bag Tag Printers (BTP), CC readers, Passport OCR readers, ATB Printers, and Document Printers. Support for the use of directly connected printers or remote printers (e.g. connected to another nearby workstation) is provided.

Comms Client Pro for Windows contains the following components:

- Sessions controller
- Macro/script editor
- Dialog box editor

Principal Features

Screen Layout

The CCP for Windows is an MDI (Multi Document Interface) application. The application frame window has a title bar, a menu bar, a toolbar, and a status line. Each airline host session is contained within the CCP application frame window. Each host session has its own window that has a title bar and status line. The Session status line indicates the communication line status, the cursor position, etc. Depending on the protocol, host session windows can be split into 2 or 4 panes, all sharing the same address.
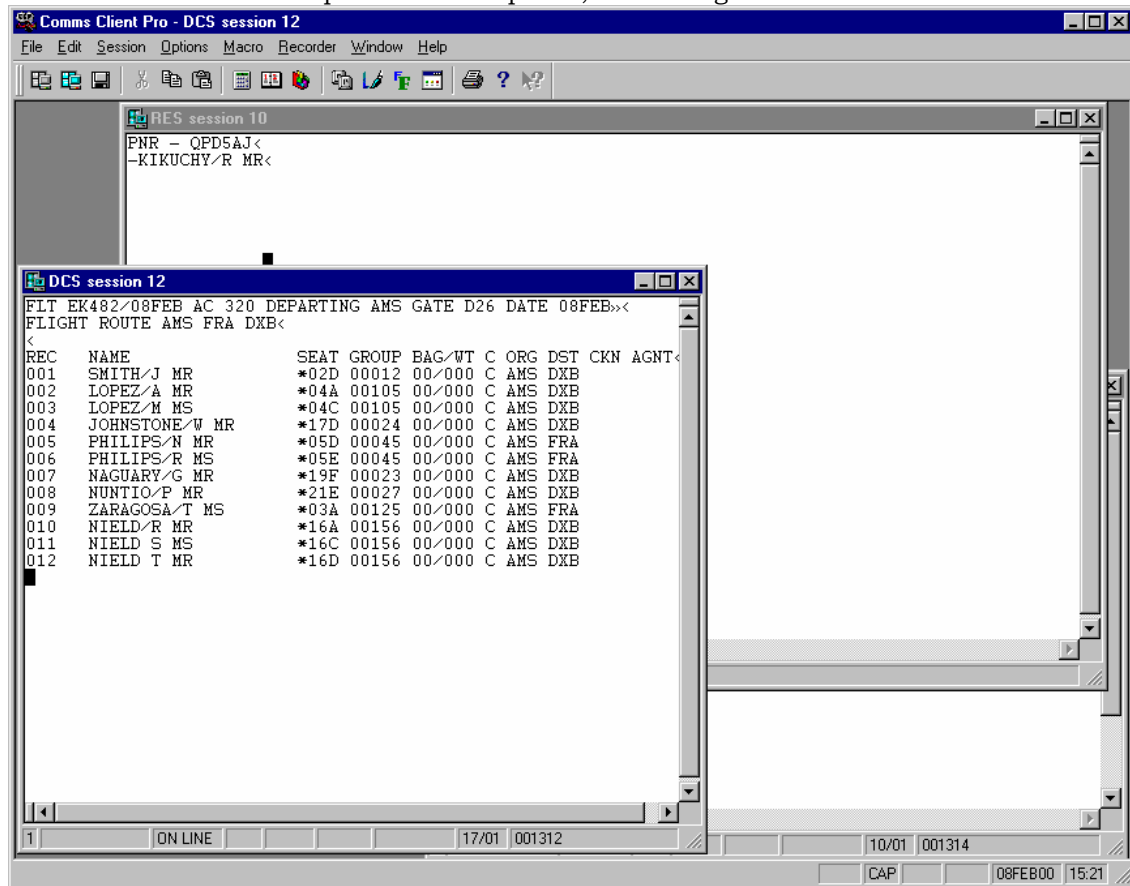

Figure 1: The main screen of the CCP for Windows application is shown with four panes open in a session window. The major screen elements are described.

Screen Menu and Button Functions

All the functionality of the CCP for Windows application is driven via the screen menu bar (and optional tool bar), which provides pull- down menu options and buttons. The normal Windows GUI type interface is provided so that each facility can be accessed through an appropriate combination of keystrokes or through the use of a mouse (if connected to the workstation).

Status Lines (Frame and Host Sessions)

As outlined above, two types of status lines are displayed on the screen: a global status line for the main window and a status line for each host session window. The frame status line contains the following information:

Help Text (short help text explaining the current selected menu command)
Cap Lock indicator
Num Lock indicator
Scroll Lock indicator

A consistent host status line format is provided which is independent of the underlying host communication protocol. It contains the following information:

Active pane number (a number between 1 and 4)

Communication line status

ON LINE	The communication line is active
NO POLL	No polls received for at least 20 sec.
NO DATA	No data activity on the communication line at all
NO DCD	No Data Carrier Detect signal from the modem
NO DSR	No Data Set Ready signal from the modem
COM 597	Connection lost with the communication server
COM 599	New connection with the server to be established

Keyboard lock

X SYSTEM	Message submitted for transmission
X WAIT	Message send to the host system, waiting for response
X NO SOM	No Start Of Message where a SOM was required

Printer status

PBUSY	Printer busy with other print request
PRINT	Printer printing
PBAD	Printer malfunctioning

Cursor position (row and column position)

UMSG indicator (set when an UMSG message is received)

PUSH RPT indicator (set when a message with an error is received)

RE-ENTER indicator (set when a RE-ENTER message is received)

Free text field (is used for general information such as the name of airline)

Host Commands (Entry and Response)

Within a host session window, commands can be entered by the check-in agent and submitted to the host. These commands can be entered as the native commands of the airline host.

ALC/CPARS Hosts (normal messages)

With ALC/CPARS host session, command entry should start after the SOM symbol (>). Pressing the ENTER key sends all the data between the SOM and the cursor (not including the cursor location) to the airline host via the appropriate communication server.

Output data from the host is transmitted back to the host session, having been checked within the communication server for transmission errors. This data is displayed according to the host control sequences embedded within the response. If a CCC error were to be detected, the PUSH RPT indicator is displayed on the session status line and is cleared when the REPEAT key is pressed.

ALC/CPARS Hosts (broadcast messages)

If the airline host or the communication network issues a broadcast message that is destined for the client workstation, the broadcast message appears at the broadcast message area at the bottom of the frame window. This message is erased when the 'Clear' key is pressed

If the airline host or the communication network issues a UMSG message, the UMSG indicator is displayed at the host status line. This indicator is cleared when the UMSG function key is pressed.

Similarly, if the airline host or the communication network issues a RE-ENTER message, the RE-ENTER indicator is displayed at the host status line. This indicator is removed when the next message in transmitted.

UTS Hosts (normal messages)

With a UTS host session, command entry should start after the SOM symbol (>) or at the home position (top left corner) on the window. Once complete, pressing the ENTER key will send all data between the SOM or the home position and the cursor, including the character at the cursor location to the airline host via the communication server.

Output data from the host is transmitted back to the host session, having been checked within the communication server for transmission errors. This data is displayed according to the host control sequences embedded within the response.

UTS Hosts (broadcast messages)

If the airline host or the communication network issues a broadcast message, which is destined for the client, the broadcast message will appear at the broadcast message are at the bottom of the window. This message is erased when the 'Clear' key is pressed

If the airline host or the communication network issues a UMSG message, then UMSG indicator is displayed at the host status line. This indicator is cleared when the UMSG function key is pressed.

Keyboard Functions

Specific keys on the keyboard have specific functions associated with them. Whilst the actual key on the keyboard is dependant on the keyboard mapping, each function whether it be common across all host protocols or specific to a particular protocol, can be given a symbolic name.

Re-mapping

A keyboard re-mapping function redefines the keyboard layout and assigns simple strings to function keys. It is also possible to assign menu functions and macro scripts to single keys. This function is provided as part of the 'Options' menu. The settings are stored in the check-in agents network server user directory, and the current settings are restored on the workstation each time the user signs on.
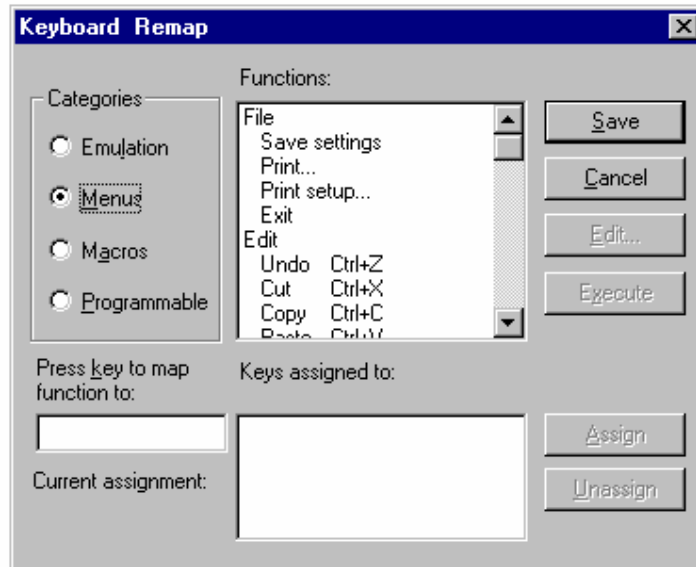
Figure 2: The Keyboard Remap dialog box is shown after the function is first enabled.

Online Help

To assist the agent, a help facility is available. It is possible to access on line help by pressing F1 to get context-sensitive help, using the the help button on the Toolbar to open the Help Contents window, using the Help menu, and by pressing the Help button in any of the dialog boxes.

Figure 3: The CCP Help facility Main Index is shown after the function is first enabled.

This help facility conforms to the standard Windows help layout by providing the following facilities: -

Contents
Shows the major components on the Main Index page.

Back
Used to backstep through the help topics that were most recently accessed.

History
A complete sequential list of every help topic viewed during the current Windows session.

Index
Contains an alphabetical list of all the Help topics.

Browse
The << >> buttons are used to access the next or previous topic in a series of related topics.

Search
The search feature is used to see a specific topic. The search feature can be accessed by selecting Search for Help on... in the Help menu or by choosing the Search button in the Help facility.

Glossary
The glossary feature is used to look up the definition of a specific term. The glossary feature can be accessed by selecting Glossary in the Help contents or by choosing the Glossary button.

Display Help While You Work
The Help window can be displayed while the application is active by selecting Always on top in the Help menu of the Help window. The Help window can be moved and/or resized if it covers a part of the application that is being worked on.

Jumping Around
The Help program will allow moving around the various help topics by "jumping". When the mouse pointer passes over a graphics area that is tied to more information, the pointer changes to a small hand. Hypertext is indicated by a different colour.

Printing A Help Topic
Any topic in the Help facility can be printed by selecting 'Print Topic' from the File menu in the Help window.

Calculator
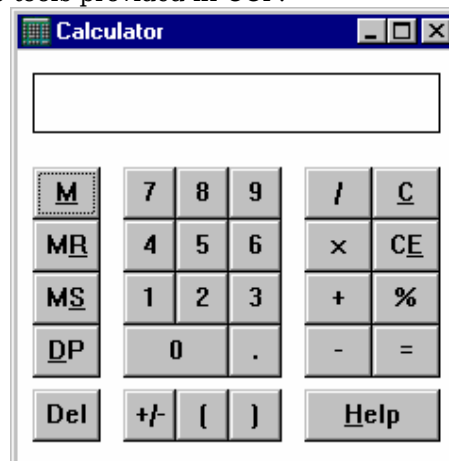The calculator is one of the tools provided in CCP.

Figure 4: The Calculator is shown after the function is first enabled.

Calendar

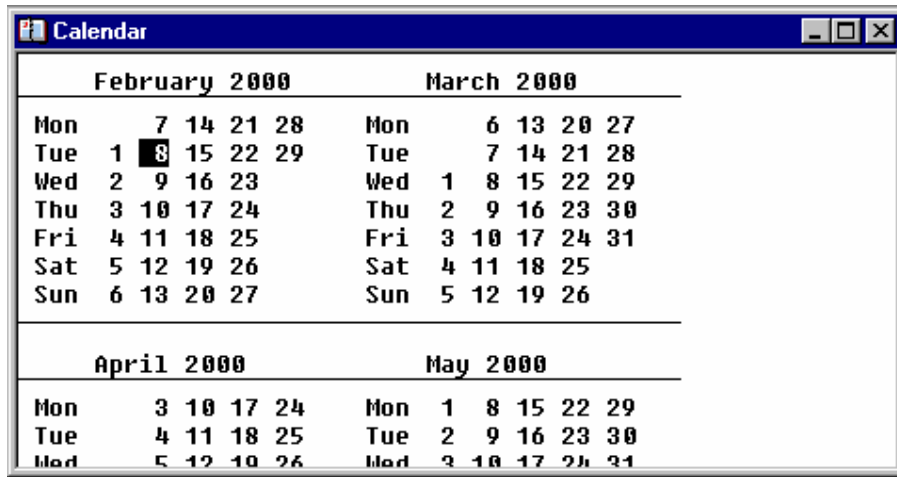The calendar is one of the tools provided in CCP.

Figure 5: The Calendar is shown after the function is first enabled.

Printer Support

Part of the agent's normal work involves the use of a variety of different printers. CCP supports a number of printer types, either connected directly to the client workstation or, by use of the printer server functionality, those connected on another client workstation (preferably one nearby).

Configuration data defines the default printer configuration for each workstation, although each check-in agent is able to select an alternative via the applications menus and toolbars.

The following printers are supported: -

Document printers
Any Windows supported printer
Baggage Tag Printers
Boarding Pass Printers
ATB Printers

The printers are driven as per request received from the airline host during the processing of check-in transactions. Whilst a locking mechanism is utilised to minimise the intermixing of different client workstation 'printouts' when a printer is being 'shared', this can only be achieved to a level of granularity allowed by the host airline printing protocols.

Script Facility

Overview

The scripting facility is compatible with Microsoft's Visual Basic and has been extended to provide the additional scripting features necessary for use within the CCP for Windows application. The core product provides a number of development components, namely an editor, script compiler, debugger and dialog editor.

CCP for Windows Configuration

Client configuration can be divided in the following sections:

Hardware dependant configuration per workstation
        Printer configuration parameters
                Printer Server Name
                Print speed
                Printer protocol
        Logical printer ID's
                First boarding pass printer
                Alternative boarding pass printer
                First baggage tag printer
                Alternative baggage tag printer

User dependant configuration (in the users own directory)
        Presentation parameters
                Font
                Window layout
        Keyboard re-map tables
        Authorisation level settings

Airline dependant configuration (in a global emulator directory)
        Session name (pool)
        Auto-run script

A configuration application is provided to create and modify each part of this client configuration.

As soon as a new user is configured the default configuration files need to be copied into the users home directory.

CCP Main Screen Functions

<u>Sessions</u>

Create a new session, open a session, and save the current session.

<u>Editing</u>

Cut, copy, and paste the current selection.

<u>Extended Services</u>

CCP extended services include the calculator, the calendar, the macro editor, access to the relevant Control Page, and access to a local printer.

<u>Utilities</u>

CCP utilities include keyboard remaping, colour selection, font selection, the help program, and context sensitive help.

ABLE Functions

<u>Macros</u>

Create a blank macro, open a macro, save current macro to disk, and save current macro to disk with a new name.

<u>Editing</u>

Copy, cut, and paste the current selection, undo, find text, find next occurrence of last text searched for, find and replace text, and invoke the Dialog Editor to edit an ABLE dialog box.

<u>Testing</u>

Check the syntax, execute, and pause the executing program, activate the debugger, set and toggle a break-point on the current line, and stop executing the current program.

<u>Debugging</u>

The ABLE debugging facility allows the user to scroll to next or previous error returned from a syntax check, step into, over, or out of the current procedure in the debugger, and stop executing the debugging session.

<u>Utilities</u>

ABLE utilities include the Console window, the Variable window, and extensive help.

Dialog Editor

<u>Dialog Box Design</u>

Create, open and save the current dialog box to disk.

<u>Editing</u>

Cut, copy, and paste the current selection and to align controls; make all controls same width and/or height; and center controls vertically and horizontally in the dialog box.

<u>Controls</u>

Select one or a group of controls, label controls that do not have a visible label, visually group controls, create option buttons, push buttons, check boxes, input areas, bitmaps, and present a list of strings.

<u>Utilities</u>

The ABLE dialog box editor utilities include the Options box, a code window, grid (toggle on and off) and extensive help text.

<u>Security</u>

Most functions can be enabled/disabled on a user basis.

<u>Error and Status Messages</u>

CCP can display the following types of message:

- *Status messages* are displayed at the status bar
- *Warnings* are shown at the status bar and may be accompanied by a short beep
- *Errors* are indicated at the status bar or in a dialogue box

Hardware and Software Prerequisites

- IBM Pentium PC or compatible
- Processing speed: 100 MHz or higher
- 4 MB RAM
- 3.5 MB Free Hard Disk space
- Windows 2000. or Windows XP
- Keyboard and Mouse
- A TCP/IP network connection to connect to the CSPNT Server or to a MATIP Server

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Travsys BV
Industrieweg 22
3738 JX Maartensdijk
The Netherlands