

## **dcstools Ini Editor**

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# dcTools Ini Editor

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## **Publisher**

*Rich Habedank*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Part I Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1 What's New in this Release.....	5
2 Warranty & License Agreement.....	6
<b>Part II Installation &amp; Updating</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Part III Using dcsTools Ini Editor</b>	<b>10</b>
1 Opening Files.....	10
2 Editing Values.....	11
3 Saving Files.....	12
<b>Part IV Reference</b>	<b>14</b>
1 Command-Line Switches.....	14
2 Ini File Structure Information.....	14
3 Using Data Navigators.....	16
<b>Part V Known Issues and Limitations</b>	<b>18</b>
1 INI File Comments.....	18
2 Open File Dialog Location.....	19
<b>Part VI Contacting dcsTools.com</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>22</b>

# Introduction

**Part**



**dcstools Ini Editor** is an application for viewing and editing of traditional ini (initialization) files. These files are most often used to store a software program's settings. Registration information, default file locations and application characteristics are common examples of information stored in ini files.

**dcstools Ini Editor** was created to make navigating and understanding the hierarchy of ini files easier. Each section is displayed, with its associated key values shown as children of the section. Sections and keys can be sorted for ease in finding particular items. Key values can be shown or hidden on-demand, making it easier to locate a particular section of an ini file.

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C-R Media  
8494 Saratoga Lane  
Eden Prairie, MN 55347  
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## **1.1 What's New in this Release**

This section documents changes and enhancements to dcsTools Ini Editor by version number.

### **Version 1.2.1.20 - 05/07/2010**

1. **Enhancement.** Application icons for dcsTools Ini Editor have been updated.
2. **Enhancement.** dcsTools Ini Editor now includes a custom icon used in displaying associated files in Windows Explorer when ini files are registered during installation.

### **Version 1.2.0.15 - 04/29/2010**

1. **Enhancement.** dcsTools Ini Editor is now aware of multiple monitor host systems and properly saves and restores its position on the correct monitor.
2. **Enhancement.** dcsTools Ini Editor now reports the host operating system in more detail and has been updated to reflect the release of Windows 7.
3. **Enhancement.** dcsTools Ini Editor can now be associated with ini files, enabling the opening of a

file from Windows file explorer. See the topic on [Command-Line Switches](#) for additional information.

4. **Enhancement.** When an item is too long to fit within the display, the text is now displayed as a hint when the mouse is positioned over the item.
5. **Enhancement.** XStudio hot button files (\*.btn) can now be filtered in the Open File dialog.
6. **Change.** When tool bars are docked on the left or right sides of the main dialog, the button captions are no longer rotated.
7. **Change.** If a recently-used file is selected from the drop-down list and no longer exists, you are prompted to optionally remove the entry.

#### **Version 1.1.1.11 - 10/15/2007**

1. **Change.** Toolbar settings are now stored in a separate file instead of the dcsTools Ini Editor preferences file for ease in maintenance.
2. **Enhancement.** The display of data navigators can now be toggled from the main menu, using the menu item **View | Data Navigator**.
3. **Enhancement.** Most INI file comments are now retained after editing. See the topic on [Known Issues & Limitations](#) for more details.

#### **Version 1.1.0.10 - 07/21/2007**

1. **Enhancement.** Changes have been made to make editing more intuitive, including adding the ability to display custom data navigators on-demand. Use the pop-up menu to show or hide the data navigators.

#### **Version 1.0.0.6 - 09/22/2006**

1. Initial public release of dcsTools Ini Editor.

## **1.2 Warranty & License Agreement**

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# Installation & Updating

**Part**



The installation program provides step-by-step instructions on every screen displayed during the installation. Follow the instructions on each screen to install this software.

### ***Before you install***

1. Close all other programs, including any anti-virus programs.
2. If you are installing on Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP or Windows Vista, log on to your computer with administrator privileges.

### ***To install from a CD***

1. Insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive. The installation program should start automatically. If it does not start, locate your CD-ROM drive in Windows Explorer and double-click in the SETUP.EXE program.
2. Follow the instructions on each screen to install the software.

### ***To install from a downloaded file***

1. After you have downloaded the installation program to your computer, locate the setup program in the folder to which you downloaded the file. If you downloaded the dcsTools Utilities package, the file name will be **dcsToolsUtilsSetup.exe**, if you downloaded just the dcsTools Ini Editor, the file name will be **IniViewerSetup.exe**. Double-click on the setup program to begin installation.
2. Follow the instructions on each screen to install the software.

### ***Updating the software***

1. If you have downloaded or otherwise received a revision, the process for updating the software is virtually identical to the initial installation. Make sure that the update is installed in the original installation folder, which is the default.



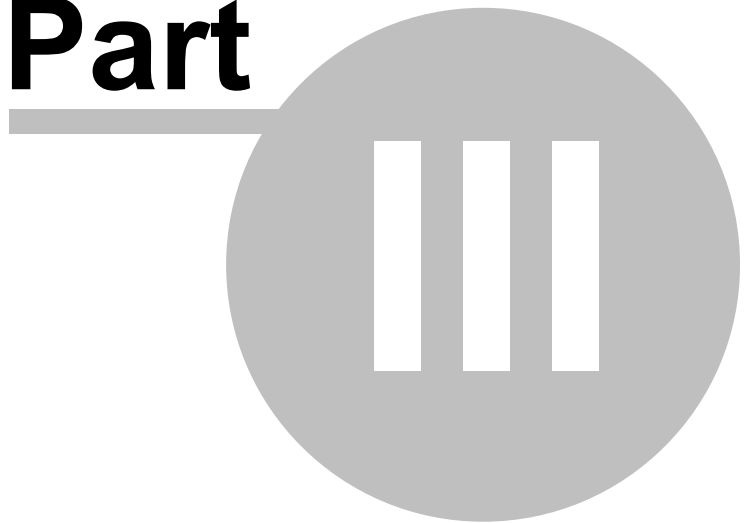
You must have administrator privileges to perform an update when running on Windows NT, 2000 Pro, XP or Vista.

### ***To Uninstall the software***

To remove this software from your PC, select the Control Panel applet Add/Remove Programs. Select **dcsTools Utilities** and click on the **[Remove]** button. Follow the prompts to uninstall the software.

# Using dcsTools Ini Editor

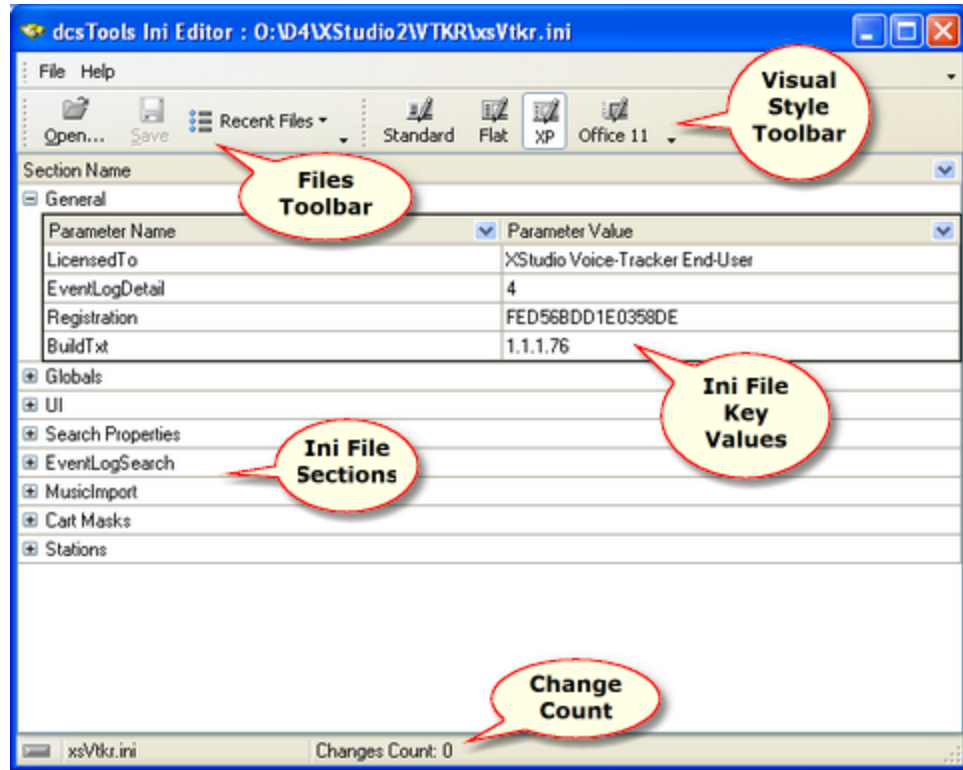
**Part**



This section covers day-to-day usage of dcsTools Ini Editor. Once you have installed the software, launch dcsTools Ini Editor, either from a desktop shortcut or from the Programs menu. There is nothing to configure to get started.

To open an ini file, click on the **File | Open** menu item or the [**Open**] button. A dialog is displayed, allowing you to choose the file you wish to examine or modify.

### The dcsTools Ini Editor User Interface



dcsTools Ini Editor Main Display

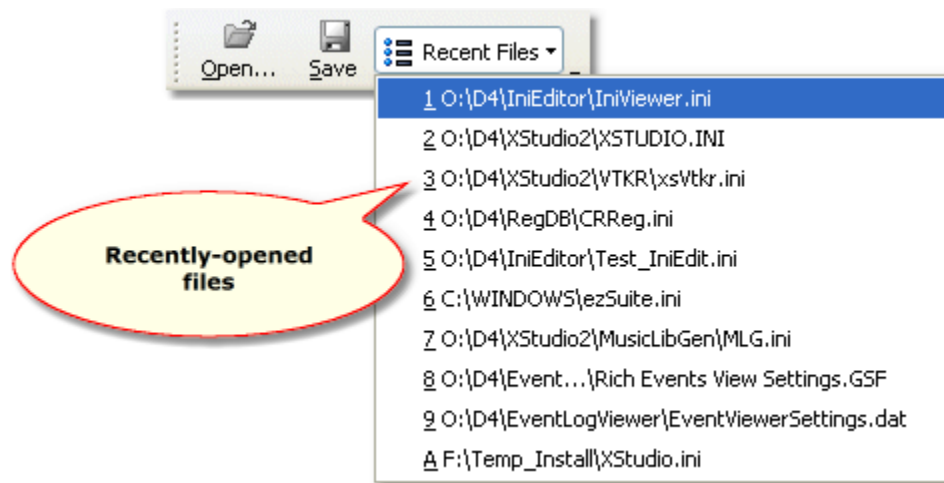
The main display consists of the main menu, tool bars for common tasks and the data display table. The tool bars can be moved around on the display and even floated off the display, if desired. Tool bar positions are saved on program exit and restored the next time dcsTools Ini Editor is launched.

## 3.1 Opening Files

To open an ini file, use either the main menu item **File | Open** or click on the toolbar [**Open...**] button, as shown.



A dialog is displayed for navigating to the correct folder and selecting the file to open. As each file is opened, it is added to the "Recent Files" list. The last 10 files opened are kept in the list and any one of them can later be re-opened by clicking on the [**Recent Files**] button and selecting the file from the list, as shown.



As a default, only files with an extension of ".ini" are displayed in the file open dialog. However, you can choose to display all files by changing the dialog's file type filter.

dcsTools Ini Editor can be used only with ini-style files - that is, files that contain section headings in the format **[SectionName]** and key/value pairs in the format **KeyName=Value**. While you may be able to open files of other types, they should not be edited or saved as results are at best unpredictable.

## 3.2 Editing Values

When editing an ini file with dcsTools Ini Editor, it's important to note that when the file is opened, it is kept entirely in system memory and all changes are made to the in-memory copy of the file. Changes are only permanent when you explicitly save the edited file. This provides some flexibility in the sense that changes are only saved when you decide the changed information is OK.

To edit any value, either a section name or key/value item, select the item to be edited and press the [**F2**] key or [**Double-Click**] on the item.



If you have the data navigator displayed (checked), you can use the toolbar buttons to begin editing, add or delete items. See the topic on [Using Data Navigators](#) for more information.

As changes are made, the application status bar is updated to reflect the count of changes made. The status LED is **red** when changes have been made, as a quick indicator the file has been edited.

### Deleting Items

To delete a section or value, select the row to be deleted and press the [**Del**] key. You will be prompted to confirm the deletion. After confirming the deletion, the change counter and LED on the status bar are updated.



If you delete a **section**, all key/value pairs associated with that section are also deleted. There is no undo for this operation, other than reloading the file.

### ***Adding Items***

To add a section or key, select the location where you want to add the item and press the **[Ins]** key. Enter the information as needed. When you move off the newly-inserted row, the changes are posted to the in-memory copy of the ini file and the status bar is updated accordingly.

To cancel an insert, touch the **[Esc]** key or use the [data navigator](#) **[Cancel Edit]** button.

### ***Placing Comments in an INI File***

While less common today, INI files may have comments embedded in them. Comments are essentially user notes that may describe the purpose of a particular key or section - or may represent what amounts to disabling a key (making it invisible to the application using the INI file).

By convention, comments in an INI file begin with a semicolon ( ; ). The characters "**REM**" are also used on occasion. These comment prefixes are used to prevent the user from manually editing an INI file and inadvertently creating a key/value pair that is recognized by the application that uses the file.

You can insert or edit comments with some limitations and side effects. See the section on [Known Issues & Limitations](#) for information on where to place comments.

## **3.3 Saving Files**

When edits are complete, save the INI file using the main menu item **File | Save** or use the toolbar **[Save]** button. The file is saved and the status bar LED and change count are updated appropriately.



You can save a file to another name and/or location by using the main menu item **File | Save As..** option. In this case, the original file is left intact and the edited file is saved under a new name and location of your choosing. This is useful for making backup copies of preferences files.

# Reference

**Part**



This section contains more detailed background information on a number of key subjects that will help you to gain a better understanding of how dcsTools Ini Editor works.

Studying these sections is not absolutely essential but it will make it much easier for you to use dcsTools Ini Editor more efficiently and effectively.

## 4.1 Command-Line Switches

dcsTools Ini Editor provides command-line switches to add functionality for users. This section documents available switches and their usage. Switches can be entered in any order and are not case-sensitive. To add a command-line switch, modify the dcsTools Ini Editor shortcut or open a command window (DOS prompt) and enter the application name (IniViewer.exe) followed by a space. Add the switch (as documented below), separating each switch with a space.

### Available Command-Line Switches

<u>Switch</u>	<u>Usage</u>
/F	Used to specify a file to be opened when dcsTools Ini Editor is launched. This switch is also used when associating a file type with dcsTools Ini Editor so the file can be opened within the operating system's file view.



You must have a space between the end of the executable (program) name and the first command-line switch. When entering a file name that contains spaces, the file name must be wrapped in quotes, for example:

```
/F"C:\Program Files\ My Program\My IniFile.ini"
```

## 4.2 Ini File Structure Information

For those who might be unfamiliar with the INI file origins and structure, this sections covers some basics of what INI files are and how they are constructed.

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**Note:** Portions from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

---

### Definition

An initialization file, or INI file, is a configuration file that contains configuration data for Microsoft Windows based applications.

Starting with Windows 95, the INI file format was superseded but not entirely replaced by a registry database in Microsoft operating systems. Recently, XML became a popular choice for encoding configuration, as well as other kinds of data for many applications, but INI format is still in widespread use.

Although made popular by Windows, INI files can be used on any system thanks to its flexibility. It allows a program to store configuration data, which can then be easily parsed and changed.

### File Format

A typical INI file might look like this:

```
[Section1]
; some comment on section1
var1=abc
var2=451
[Section2]
; another comment
var1=123
var2=dfg
```

## **Format**

The elements of the INI file format:

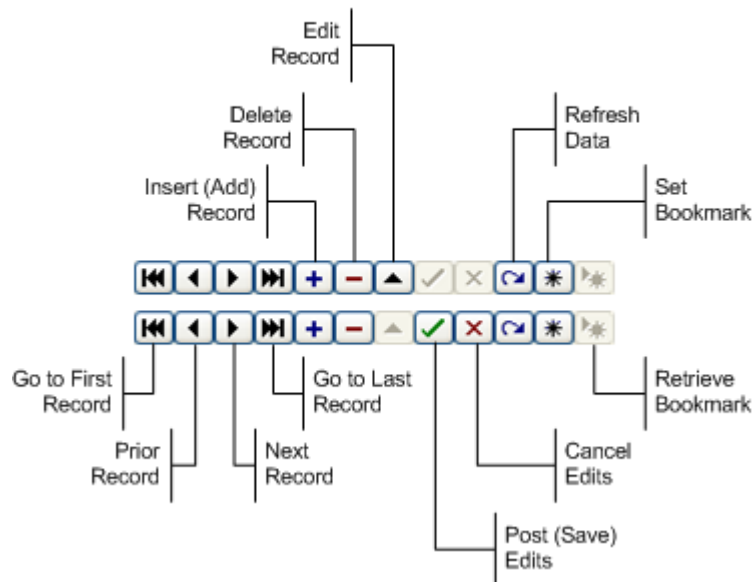
- **Sections:** Section declarations start with '[' and end with ']' as in [Section1] and [Section2] above.
- **Parameters:** The "var1 = abc" above is an example of a parameter. Parameters are made up of a **key** ('var1'), equals sign ('='), and a **value** ('abc'). For this reason, they are also known as key/value pairs or simply items.
- **Comments:** All the lines starting with a semicolon(';') are assumed to be comments, and are ignored. For additional information on comments and how dcsTools Ini Editor handles them, see the topic on [Known Issues & Limitations](#).

## 4.3 Using Data Navigators

dcsTools Ini Editor optionally makes use of so-called "data navigators". Essentially, a data navigator is an organized set of buttons that provides an easy-to-use interface for navigating around in displayed data. In addition to navigation, navigators include buttons to add (insert), edit, & delete items.

Two example navigators are shown here – there are two because the "state" (availability) of buttons will vary depending on the current task. For instance, if you are at the beginning of a file, the navigator buttons for moving backwards through the file are disabled – at least, until you move away from the beginning of the file.

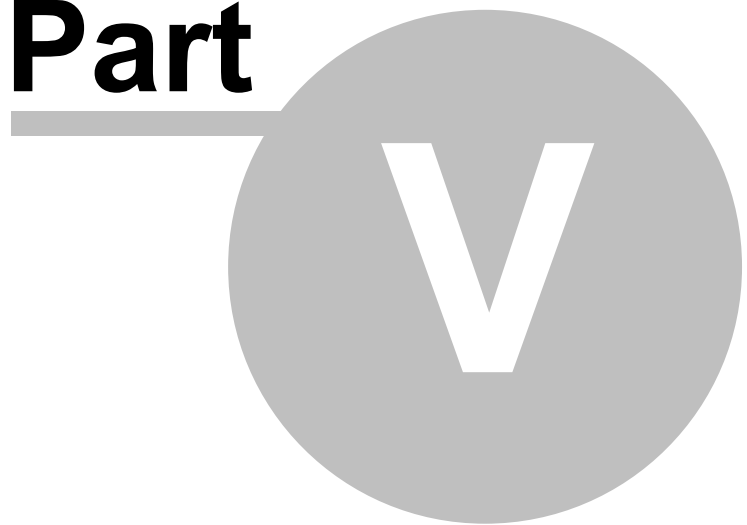
Data Navigator Button Map



Depending the area of dcsTools Ini Editor you're working in, some of the navigator buttons depicted are not visible – because the functionality they provide is not allowed.

# Known Issues and Limitations

**Part**



This section documents any known issues or limitations of dcsTools Ini Editor. dcsTools Ini Editor has been designed to be as trouble-free as possible and has been thoroughly tested. However, not every usage scenario can be anticipated. This section is intended as a starting point diagnosing and solving problems, but should not be viewed as an all-encompassing source of problem resolution.

If the difficulty you're experiencing is not covered here, contact the dealer who provided you with dcsTools Ini Editor first. Alternatively, you can contact dcsTools.com - see the topic on [technical support](#).

## Application Bugs or Errors

Bugs and errors generally fall into one of two categories - a bug, which is the application not doing something as you might have predicted it would, or; an error, which is the failure of the application to run or perform a specific task altogether.

If you find a bug, report it. Every effort is made to ensure dcsTools Ini Editor performs as expected, but there may be circumstances that were not predicted in the development of the software. See the section on [Technical Support](#) for information on reporting a bug.

If you encounter an error, you will get an error message indicating a severe failure and dcsTools Ini Editor may terminate. Provisions are made to "catch" such errors and log the error information to a file in the dcsTools Ini Editor application directory. The filename is **IniViewer.exe.Elif**. Again, report any application errors you encounter. You may be asked to send the appropriate log file for analysis.

## 5.1 INI File Comments

By design, dcsTools Ini Editor will strip out some comments that may have been placed in an INI file that is being edited. Comments, if visible **and edited**, will also be affected. The example shown documents these limitations.

**Items that appear BEFORE the FIRST section in an INI file are REMOVED**

```

; A comment that appears BEFORE a section
REM Another comment that appears BEFORE a section
[Section XXX]
; This comment will be retained
REM This comment will be retained
Key=Value
Key=Value
; This comment has been edited =
; This comment not edited

[Section YYY]
Key=Value
Key=Value

```

**Items that appear AFTER the FIRST section in an INI file are RETAINED**

**Edited comments contain a trailing "=" sign**



If you wish to document manual changes made to an ini file, you may wish to consider creating a new unique section (i.e. [MyNotes]) and placing notes in this section as key/value pairs representing a note title and the note text itself. In this way, the notes will be organized together and are not likely to be

removed by any application.

## 5.2 Open File Dialog Location

On certain operating systems with multiple monitors, the dialog that appears when opening a file is placed on the wrong monitor. This problem is not unique to dcsTools Ini Editor and has no ill effects other than being annoying.

We hope to be able to correct this issue in a future release of dcsTools Ini Editor.

**Contacting dcsTools.com**

**Part**



**VI**

If you need to contact dcsTools.com, you can do so using one of the following methods. We are here to help, so do not hesitate to communicate with us when needed.

### ***Mailing Address***

C-R Media  
8494 Saratoga Lane  
Eden Prairie, MN 55347  
USA

### ***Telephone Information***

Sales and Technical Support can be reached from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, U.S Central Time.

Voice: 952-949-9450

FAX: 952-949-9448

### ***Email Information***

To contact us via email, use our [on-line contact form](#). If you wish to use a standard email client, send correspondence to: [rich@c-rmedia.com](mailto:rich@c-rmedia.com).

### ***Technical Support***

To contact technical support for our products, use the telephone numbers or email information provided above. You can also send an [on-line product-specific email](#).

### ***Web Site***

Visit our web site for information on product updates and other products we offer.

<http://www.dcsTools.com>

# Index

## - C -

Change Log 5  
Contacting dcsTools.com  
    Mailing Address 21  
    Sales 21  
    Tech Support 21  
    Web Site 21  
Copyrights 5

## - D -

Data Navigator 16  
dcsTools.com  
    Address 21  
    Email Address 21  
    Telephone Numbers 21

## - E -

Editing a File 11

## - F -

Files  
    Editing 11  
    File Structure 14  
    Opening 10  
    Saving 12

## - I -

INI File Comments 18  
INI File Structure 14  
Installing 8  
Introduction 5

## - K -

Known Issues 18

## - L -

License Agreement 6  
Limitations 18

## - N -

Navigator, Data 16

## - O -

Open a File 10  
Overview 5

## - R -

Reference Section 14

## - S -

Saving a File 12

## - T -

Trademarks  
    apt-X 5  
    DCS 5  
    Maestro 5  
    Windows 5

## - U -

Uninstalling 8  
Updating 8  
Using dcsTools Ini Editor 10

## - W -

Warranty 6  
What's New 5

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