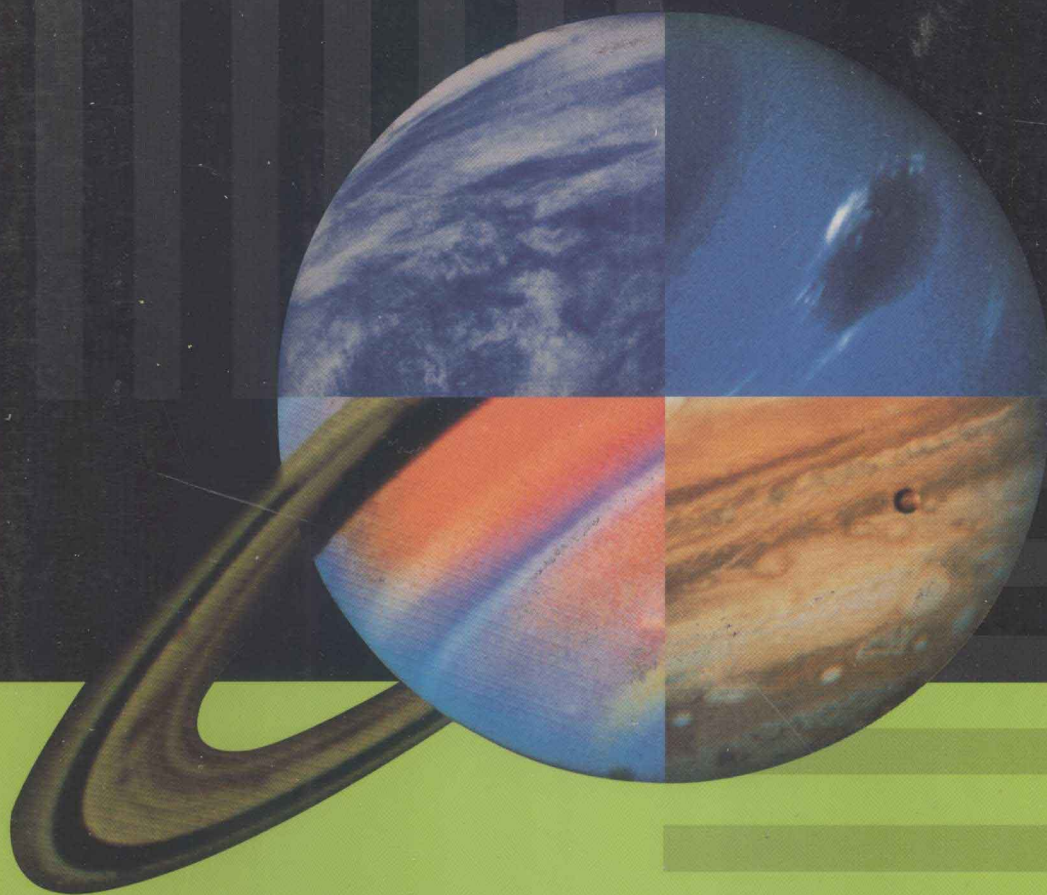


Common Desktop Environment 1.0



Application Builder User's Guide

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Common Desktop Environment 1.0 Application Builder User's Guide

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Preface

This manual introduces the Application Builder (referred to throughout this document as App Builder) and shows you how best to use it. See “Overview of the App Builder Process” on page 4 for a summary description.

Who Should Use This Book

This user’s guide is for anyone who wants to build or prototype a user interface with App Builder. Because you can easily create and modify user interfaces without writing any code using App Builder, it is a powerful tool for programmers and non-programmers—including user interface designers and project managers.

How This Book Is Organized

Chapter 1, “Getting Started,” includes an annotated picture of the App Builder primary window, an overview of the process of building an application, and instructions for starting App Builder.

Chapter 2, “Managing Projects and Modules,” explains how to create, open, save, and close projects and modules, and how to hide and show modules.

Chapter 3, “Laying Out a User Interface,” explains how to drag and drop objects from the object palettes, how to edit interface objects, and how to align and distribute control objects in the interface.

Chapter 4, “Editing Properties of Interface Objects,” explains how to edit object properties in the Revolving Property Editor.

Chapter 5, “Creating and Editing Panes, Menus, and Messages,” explains how to create and edit pane objects, menus, and message dialog boxes.

Chapter 6, “Adding Functionality to the Interface,” explains how to create on-item help, how to create functional connections between objects, and how to establish drag and drop and application framework behavior.

Chapter 7, “Grouping and Attaching Objects,” explains how to group control objects and how to attach objects to each other for dynamic resize behavior.

Chapter 8, “Testing Menus, Help, and Connections,” explains how to change to test mode for testing certain App Builder functions.

Chapter 9, “Generating Code and Building an Application,” describes the Code Generator and explains how to generate code, make your application, and run it.

Appendix A, “App Builder Windows and Dialog Boxes,” describes the primary window, including its object palettes, and other App Builder windows, including the Project Organizer, the Module Browser, and the Code Generator.

Appendix B, “Revolving Property Editor,” describes the Revolving Property Editor in general and each of the individual property editors specifically.

What Typographic Changes and Symbols Mean

The following table describes the typefaces and symbols used in this book.

Table P-1 Typographic Conventions

Typeface or Symbol	Meaning	Example
Monospace	The names of commands, files, and directories; on-screen computer output	Edit your <code>.login</code> file. Use <code>ls -a</code> to list all files. % You have mail.
<i>Italic</i>	Command-line placeholder: replace with a real name or value	To delete a file, type <code>rm filename</code> .
<i>Italic</i>	Book titles, new words or terms, or words to be emphasized	Read Chapter 6 in <i>User's Guide</i> . These are called <i>class</i> options. You <i>must</i> be root to do this.

Code samples are included in boxes and may display the following:

%	UNIX C shell prompt	%
\$	UNIX Bourne and Korn shell prompt	\$
#	Superuser prompt, all shells	#

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Getting Started



App Builder is a development tool that makes designing, creating, and prototyping a user interface easier. App Builder gives you the freedom to create and try user interfaces without writing any code. Because you can create and modify an interface easily, you'll find that you can spend more time designing and testing, the surest route to better user interfaces.

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Application Builder Primary Window

The Application Builder primary window, shown below, is the starting point for creating a user interface. See “App Builder Primary Window” on page 116, for a detailed description of the primary window.

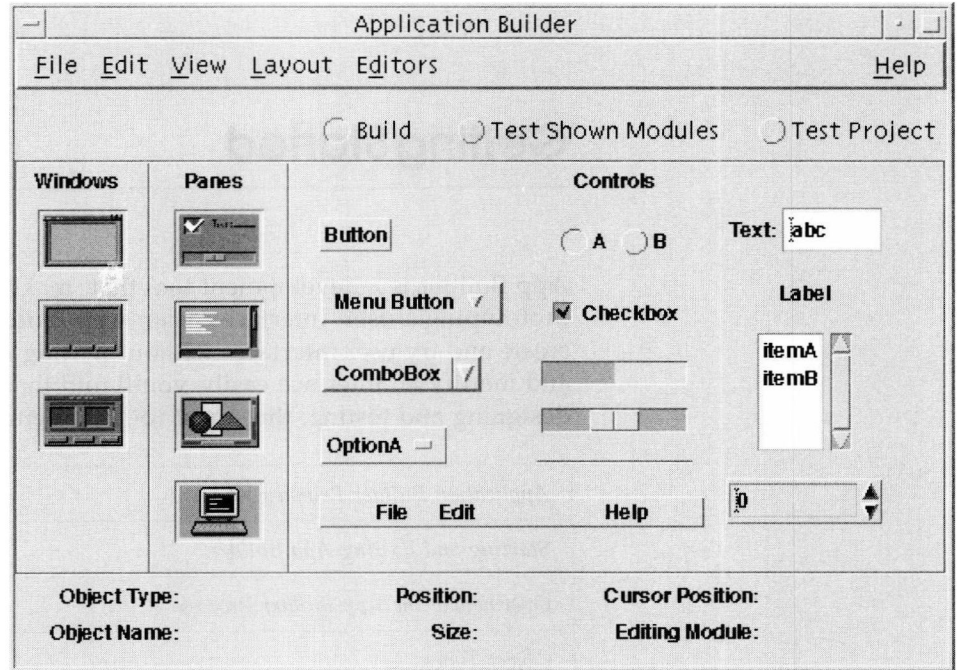


Figure 1-1 Application Builder primary window

The basic method for creating an App Builder user interface is to *drag and drop* objects from the App Builder primary window onto the workspace or onto other App Builder objects. See Chapter 3, “Laying Out a User Interface,” for details.

Starting and Exiting App Builder

▼ To Open App Builder from an Icon



- ◆ If App Builder has previously been open and the App Builder icon is on the workspace, double-click the icon to open App Builder.
- ◆ If App Builder is installed on the Front Panel, click the App Builder icon in the Personal Applications subpanel to open App Builder.

To install App Builder on the Front Panel, see “To Put an Application Icon in the Front Panel” in the Application Manager help volume for instructions.

▼ To Start App Builder from the Command Line

The command to run App Builder is `dtbuilder`. Do the following to start App Builder from the command line:

- ◆ Type `dtbuilder`

If `dtbuilder` is in your path, App Builder will start. If it is not in your path, you will need to type the full path name (which, by default, is `/usr/dt/bin/dtbuilder`) or change to the folder where `dtbuilder` is located before typing `dtbuilder`.

▼ To Exit App Builder

- ◆ Choose Exit from the File menu of the App Builder primary window to quit App Builder.

If you have not saved all changes, a message dialog box will be displayed, giving you the opportunity to discard the changes and continue the exit process or to cancel the exit process and continue running App Builder. Click Discard Changes if you do not want to save them. Click Cancel if you do not want to discard your changes; you could then save your changes and exit.

Overview of the App Builder Process

The basic process of building and maintaining a user interface with App Builder is simple and straightforward. There are many variations on this formula, but the process is similar for any application.

1. Start App Builder. See “Starting and Exiting App Builder” on page 3.
2. Open a new project and a new module. See “Creating, Opening, and Saving Projects” on page 7.
3. Drag and drop windows (main windows and custom dialogs) to the workspace, creating a new module for each window, in most cases. See “Dragging and Dropping Palette Objects” on page 22.
4. Drag and drop panes onto main windows or custom dialogs. See “Dragging and Dropping Palette Objects” on page 22.
5. Drag and drop controls (buttons, choice objects, text fields, for example) onto control panes. See “Dragging and Dropping Palette Objects” on page 22.
6. Create pane objects, menus, and message dialogs. See Chapter 5, “Creating and Editing Panes, Menus, and Messages.”
7. Create help dialogs. See “Creating Help and Help Connections” on page 67.
8. Edit the properties of interface objects. See Chapter 4, “Editing Properties of Interface Objects.”
9. Make functional connections between objects in the user interface. See Chapter 6, “Adding Functionality to the Interface.”
10. Go into test mode to test menus, help, and connections. See Chapter 8, “Testing Menus, Help, and Connections.”
11. Display the Code Generator to generate code and make the user interface. See Chapter 9, “Generating Code and Building an Application.”
12. Add user code to the code generated by App Builder. See “Adding User Code to Generated Code” on page 112.
13. Debug the code, make and run the application.
14. Repeat the process to modify and maintain the user interface.

Object Types

There are three basic types of objects on the primary window: windows, panes, and controls. See “App Builder Primary Window” on page 116,” for descriptions of each of the objects.

The windows in App Builder are:

- Main window
- Custom dialog
- File selection dialog

The panes in App Builder are:

- Control pane
- Text pane
- Draw area pane
- Term pane

The controls in App Builder are:

- Button
- Check box (Choice object)
- Combo box
- Gauge
- Label
- List (scrolling list)
- Menu bar*
- Menu button
- Option menu (Choice object)
- Radio box (Choice object)
- Scale
- Separator
- Spin box
- Text Field

Note – *The menu bar is not a control, but it is on the Controls palette. It can only be dropped on a main window.
