Read Me

Virtual Car Version 4.1, 20 Oct 2003

The Virtual Car distribution file is a zipped file of well under 1MB, containing Virtual Car 4.1 and this Read Me file. Additional instructional materials are accessed from within Virtual Car via the "Help" menu, which links to many help documents contained on this web site. You may also visit **http://www.vcar.org/** to access these materials.

System Requirements
 • PC running any Windows 32-bit operating system (95, 98, 2000, NT 4.0, etc)
 • 640 x 480 minimum screen resolution, 16-bit color ("High color")

Optional items

In addition, you may wish to have:
 • An internet connection (to access online help from within the software)
 • A printer (to print car construction templates)

One-step Installation

Virtual Car is a single executable (.EXE) file. There is no need to run an installer or uninstaller, nor should you need administrator privileges or anything like that. Simply copy it to wherever you wish it to reside, and double-click the icon to launch the program. Drag it to the Recycle Bin if you do not want to keep it.

Other notes

Virtual Car is designed to be learnable without a reference manual. Help is provided if you look for it, in three forms:

Screen hints. Most buttons and labels provide pop-up hints when the mouse is placed over them.

Online help links. Many buttons, labels, and graphic elements also provide links to more extensive help that can be viewed with a web browser via an internet connection to the Virtual Car web site. These links are indicated by a question-mark (?) cursor that appears when the mouse is over the object.

Help Menu. For maximum flexibility and growth, Virtual Car does not use traditional help files. The Help menu provides links to a help index page and educational materials on the Virtual Car web site.

Changes from Version 4.03a

• Design Portfolio dialog has been removed.

• New binary car file format is less susceptible to corruption when transferring by FTP or email. Conversion routine provides update of old version car files.

• Some functions formerly accessible only by mouse clicks are now available from the Menu and via keyboard shortcuts.

• Power Designer mode allows exhaustive search among various combinations of wheel size, spring length, and spring width.

• Minor errors on summary printout page (axle length, y-centroid) have been corrected.

• Hole size is now printed on wheel templates.

• Other minor changes to menu organization.

Known Limitations

• If Virtual Car fails to run on your PC, the most likely cause is that there is no default printer defined on your computer. You can usually fix this even if you do not have a printer. From the Start menu, select Start -> Settings --> Printers --> Add printer.

• Under some circumstances, declining to resave a changed design that was previously loaded from a file may cause the car names in the design list to become incorrect. We are still trying to track down this bug. If you experience it, please contact us at the email address below.
• Only 16 cars can be raced at one time, including the default designs. More cars can be loaded, but they will not appear on the race.

• Using a super-thin board material causes the 3D rendering to lose some clarity. Solution: since you would probably never need to use a board this thin, avoid doing so if you want the rendering to look good.

• Choice of custom material colors will not work on some versions of Windows.

• Colors are not attractive if your display is set to 256 color mode. Since almost every computer supports high color, it is recommended that you set the display to High Color or True Color.

• If you put a heavy weight in front of the front wheel, it correctly removes all traction from the rear drive wheel, yet the car still moves. Solution: there is no good engineering reason to put heavy weights on the front, so avoid it for now.

Contact

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please send email to:

virtualcar @ vcar.org

or visit the Virtual Car Discussion Forum at:

http://www.vcar.org/forum/

Copyright

Virtual Car is freeware. It may be used and copied by end users without charge. However, it may only be distributed to end users via the virtual-car.org web site, unless written permission is granted by the author. Virtual Car is Copyright © 2001-2003 by Michael J. Safoutin.