

Read Me

Virtual Car Version 4.0.3, 23 Nov 2001

The Virtual Car distribution file is a zipped file of well under 500K containing Virtual Car 4.0.3 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.virtual-car.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.

Design Portfolio

Every time you run Virtual Car, you will be asked to specify a Design Portfolio with which to work (or create a new portfolio if it is the first time you have launched it). The Design Portfolio is a file (of type .vcdp) that records a history of the performance of the various designs you create and how you created them. The history is viewable by selecting from the History menu. Individual car designs are saved in separate files that will be saved in the same directory in which you created the Design Portfolio. You can work with only one Design Portfolio each time the program is launched.

Ongoing Development

Please check back frequently for updates by clicking on the **About** box or the **Download** menu from within Virtual Car.

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.

Known Limitations

All software has minor bugs that are known and are on the list to be fixed. These are the ones we know of, and their suggested workarounds where applicable:

- 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 will 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 or comments, please send email to virtualcar@virtual-car.org.

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