

## [Why Windows hasn't multiple desktops? \(http://www.sandon.it/node/17\)](http://www.sandon.it/node/17)

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If there is something I always liked in Linux desktop managers is their multi-desktop feature out of the box. A user can have more than one desktop, and have a set of application running in each of them. A simple keystroke switch among desktops. Currently I am working on a new release of our flagship application, and it's undergoing important changes - I have several different tools open at the same time - my Delphi IDE, AQTime, SQLDeveloper, PowerDesigner, Oracle documentation, a VM to run some test, some libraries help files that does not work within the help system used by BDS2006, Explorer, WinCVS, DebugView, Process Explorer and the usual "productivity tools" like Skype and Outlook. Coordinating all these applications on a single desktop - even on a dual monitor - is getting cumbersome - a lot of Alt + Tab to get to the right app, and so on. Switching desktop instead of switching application is a far better way to work when each desktop hosts the applications for a given task, i.e. all those needed to work on Oracle. Windows has built-in support for multiple desktops, but for reasons unknown to me, it was never exploited. MS has released a powertoy for XP, but it is extremely slow and I wonder if it exploits the API - I have to check. Asking friends and searching on the web, I found two nice tools, [IBDesk \(http://www.ibdesk.com\)](http://www.ibdesk.com) [update April 2008; this link no longer works], and [Dexpot \(http://www.dexpot.de\)](http://www.dexpot.de) (there are others, anyway). I like IBDesk because it exploits the native desktop API and is very fast and stable. It's feature set is somewhat small, for example it does not allow to move applications among desktop because the Windows API does not support it. But it supports desktop with different resolutions - a very nice way to test apps or allow each application to run at the resolution it works best (and your eyes support...) Dexpot has more features, and adds a useful menu to the windows system one. I didn't check, but I guess it's been implemented without the native desktop API - it should play some trick within a single desktop to "virtualize" it. Anyway, I really wish multiple desktops were implemented by Windows itself - I find them much more useful than "glass windows" and other eye candies that were implemented in Vista.

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