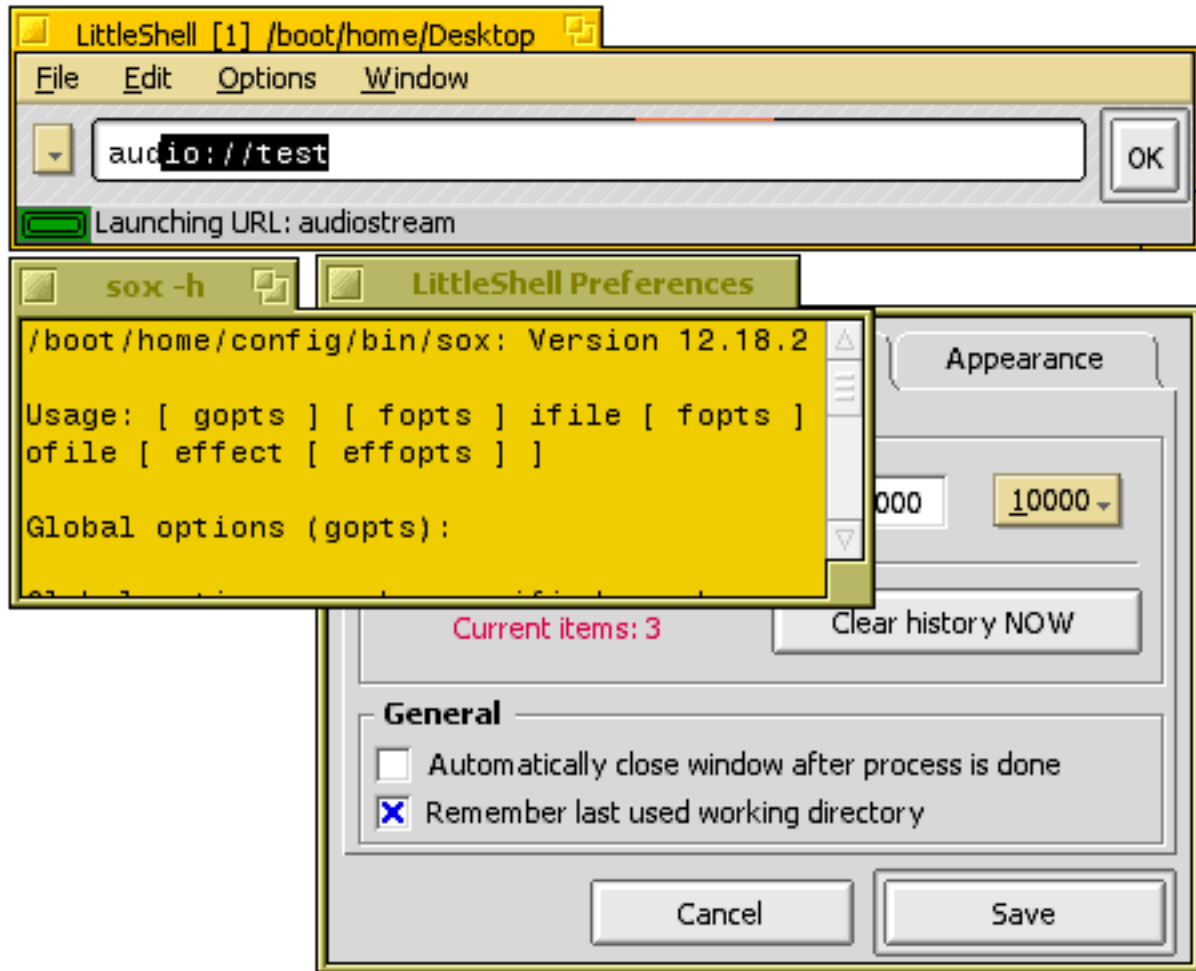


# LittleShell manual



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by Ove Peter  
ovepeter@gmx.de

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# Introduction

Little Shell is a LauncherApp with intelligent features like Autocomplete, synchronized command history, integration with Tracker (works without it too), etc. So it's something like a "light Terminal" - it doesn't have all the functionality of a real Terminal but adds other useful features.

If you find yourself using the same commands in Terminal again and again or like to keep a list of frequently used URL's, files and folders, using LittleShell will probably be comfortable because of the Autocomplete feature.

Basically you just input a command into the textbox, and hit enter to execute. Inputted may be console commands, filenames, directories or URL-alike special actions.

Some of the features of LittleShell are:

- Doesn't occupy much space on your desk.
- Start shell commands similar to the Terminal, optionally with Stdout and Stderr display.
- Launch URL's (http(s), www, ftp, email, news, rtsp, telnet, audio, beshare) with the preferred program.
- Open directories as Tracker windows.
- Automatic Work directory switching, can optionally be saved for next start.
- Launch files with their preferred program, works without a running Tracker too.
- Keeps a configurable history of all inputted commands.  
It is kept in sync for all open windows.
- History is accessible through a menu, Up / Down Cursor-Keys, and Autocomplete (like in a Browser).
- Integration with Tracker through Tracker add-on, Drag'n Drop and other interfaces.
- Status is always shown with Text and Color codes.
- Tool Tip Help, uses BubbleHelper class by Marco Nelissen.
- User-selectable window modes.
- Experimental (alpha state) screensaver module.
- PPC and x86 BeOS R5 version.

## Installation

Unzip, then move some files:

LittleShell-S is the Tracker add-on and has to be moved to  
"/boot/home/config/add-ons/Tracker"

ShellSaver is a ScreenSaver and has to be moved to  
"/boot/home/config/add-ons/Screen Savers"

LittleShell is the main app, and can be put anywhere on your boot volume. Just make sure that you never have more than one LittleShell binary on your system, as this will screw up things (e.g. the Tracker add-on).

BeOS PPC (Apple Macintosh) users will need to unzip beos\_ppc.zip to get the right executables.

The app was compiled and tested on BeOS R5.03 only.

## Supported commands

- any shell command except interactive ones which require stdin
- filepaths
- directory paths
- cd (switching of work directory)
- dir:// (force is a directory path)
- url:// (force open in browser)
- audio:// (=audiostream, for audiofiles just give filename)
- http://
- https://
- www.
- mailto:
- ftp://
- ftp.
- news://
- rtsp://
- telnet://
- beshare://
- dir://

All URL's, files, etc will open in the preferred program for that filetype, as set in BeOS' filetypes database.

Example: "www.planetmir.de" will launch the preferred browser with the given URL.

## History and Autocomplete

History is a list of all commands the user executed. You can choose how many to save and delete the whole list in the Preferences window. LittleShell will display the last used command when started. If a new command is exactly the same as one already in the history, it will not be added twice, but moved to the top of the list.

*History is kept in sync for all open windows. This means, when you execute a command in one window, other open LittleShell windows will automatically add that to their current history too!*

You have access to the history in four ways:

- Last used command inserted by pressing ALT+L
- Menu left to the CommandBar
- Up / Down cursor keys
- Autocomplete

Autocomplete here doesn't mean TAB-autocomplete like in Terminal (sorry, you don't have that), but rather Autocomplete from History like in a Browser.

***After your third keypress, LittleShell will "guess" what you're trying to type, and suggest a recently used command from the history. If it's not the correct one, just continue typing or press the Backspace key on your keyboard.***

This feature is an essential aspect of LittleShell and I'm sure you'll become quite used to it after a while. You have instant access to a list of frequently used commands, URL's, etc this way.

Example: type "www" and it will suggest the last Web URL you launched.

## Files

Giving just a filename will launch the file with the preferred application set in BeOS' filetypes database, e.g. Text in StyledEdit. It works without a running Tracker too. If Deskbar runs, its Recent list will be updated with the files you launch in LittleShell. If the filename has special characters in between (like Space), just don't type them - LittleShell will automatically add quotes to it. Limitation: only one filename at once may be given.

You have several ways to "insert" files in the CommandBar:

- OpenFile dialog like in a normal app
- Dropping files on the main window (several modifier keys available)
- Using the Tracker add-on
- Typing the path by hand

When dropping files, there are several modifier keys available:

- Drop + SHIFT means strip off path from filename
- Drop + LEFT\_CTRL appends filenames at the end of command
- Drop + COMMAND\_KEY prepends filenames at start of command
- SHIFT can be combined with LEFT\_CTRL and COMMAND\_KEY
- COMMAND\_KEY is normally ALT in BeOS

Of course you can use every shell command to operate on files after inserting them. This way you can work on hundreds of files at once, e.g. from a Tracker query.

You can use "~" as a shortcut for "/boot/home", just like in Terminal.

You don't need to give the full pathname to a file, if it's in the current work directory. See the next chapter.

## Directories

Use of directories is very similar to file usage. If you type or insert a directory with the methods described above in Chapter Files and press ENTER, it will be opened in a Tracker window. The trigger "dir://" followed by a path will force LittleShell to recognize the path you typed in as a directory, but you need not to use it: just the path will do. If the path has special characters in between (like Space), just don't type them - LittleShell will automatically add quotes to it. Limitations: only one directory at once may be opened.

Additionally, the **work directory** of LittleShell will be changed when opening a directory or inserting a file or directory like described above in File Chapter. The work directory is the same concept as in Terminal: it is the directory where the actions of commands take place, so to speak. If, for example, you type "ls" you will see the contents of that directory.

LittleShell will start in the last used work directory if you checked that option in the Preferences window. You may also choose to display the current work directory in the window title.

Changing a directory also works like in Terminal: "cd /beos" will change directory to that. Only "cd" will reset to "/boot/home".

Examples - please type and press ENTER:

/

cd

cd ~/config/; ls documentation

dir:///beos/foo

## Preferences window

All changes you make in the global Preferences window will be instantly applied to all open Shell Windows. Use button will leave global Preferences without saving, Save button saves.

The options you can select in each Shell window's Option menu apply only for the active Shell Window. New Shell windows will clone settings of the existing one, and save their settings on exit.

Most of the options should be self-explanatory, so I will only elaborate on the ones that may need clarification:

- \* Automatically append "&" to shell commands

This will start shell commands as background processes. If you've ever used "&" in the Terminal, you'll know what it is. If chosen, stdout is still visible, but you will not be able to see a correct exit status of commands, LittleShell will always report an exit code of 0 (=good) when that option is on. So it is recommended to leave it off.

- \* Maximum history items

You may enter any positive number in the textfield here. So big values like 100000 are also possible.

- \* Clear history NOW button

As indicated, will really clear the history instantly, forever, without pressing Save.

- \* Stay On Top

Shell windows will float above all other windows. Also, it will be displayed in all workspaces. Floating windows deregister from the Deskbar, so that there will be no entry for it. When using the keyboard shortcut for minimize ALT-M, Stay On Top is automatically switched off for that window.

## Tracker add-on

Rightclick-->AddOns-->LittleShell (or keyboard shortcut) in a Tracker window will invoke LittleShell's Tracker add-on. If you selected files in Tracker, it starts the main app with the files path inserted into the CommandBar. If you selected an directory, LittleShell will change its work directory to that. It's a very useful method to start LittleShell!

## ShellSaver Screensaver

A screensaver which will execute a given shell command. So, for example, enter "fortune" and you'll get the output onscreen as soon as the screensaver starts. The options should be self-explanatory.

Just be aware that this is alpha-quality software! I never made this into a stable final version. It can crash the screensaver preferences app, and worse, it could lead to a system crash.

So be sure that you test your command in a state where you don't loose anything. If it works in the test, it will likely always work. At least it does for me, that's why I included ShellSaver.

## Further Hints

You can see environment variables with "printenv".

Doubleclicking the application icon again to get a new window is possible.

You can grab the main window with the mouse (click-and-hold) to drag it around. This is useful for the window modes where you don't have a title bar.

The normal Cut, Copy, Paste, SelectAll and Undo typing keyboard-shortcuts can be used on the inputted text, as well as Pos1 / End keys and mouse-methods like selecting text in an editor and dropping that into the LittleShell Command box (or vice versa).

Status messages are shown in the little status view, the color indicator left to it means:

Yellow = Waiting for next action

Green = successful operation or shell command returned 0

Red = an error occurred

If a shell command didn't have stdout output, no stdout window will be opened.

## Thank you...

Be Inc. for BeOS - it was fun while it lasted and has taught me a lot!

The Haiku team for all their work on Haiku.

Syn.Terra for lots of great suggestions, first beta testing, code help and the Lingua source code.

Werner Freytag for his useful code help, suggestions, and the cool Window-Move-On-Mouse-Hold code

Marco Nelissen for the BubbleHelper class

The guys on BeDevTalk

You for trying my application and reading this long text. ;-)

## License

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