



Predator DNC/Desktop™ v3.2 – What's New

Latest features and benefits in v3.2



Before Installing v3.2

Microsoft Internet Explorer v5.x or later is required to be installed before installing Predator DNC v3.2. To simplify this requirement, we have included IE v5.5 as part of the installation processes.

NOTE: Existing customers who have both DNC v3.1 and MDC v1.1 or v1.2 must upgrade both products to DNC v3.2 and MDC v1.3.

Backup everything; especially your PXP or PSF file. Running v3.2 will upgrade the files from v3.1 to v3.2 and it will no longer be compatible with v3.1. Predator DNC will always be forwards compatible.

Why v3.2?

By design, this release was intended to be a maintenance release to v3.1. Along the way we ended up adding several new features and improvements. Details of the major new features are explained though out this document.

Installing v3.2

One of the biggest changes is a new installation process based on Microsoft's Install Services. This technology was introduced in Windows 2000. If you are running Windows 95, 98 or NT v4.0, and Microsoft's Install Services has never been installed, v3.2 will do this automatically at the very beginning. This will require a re-boot prior to completing the installation of Predator DNC.

By default installation occurs in the \program files\predator software\dnc 3.2\ directory. If you were running v3.1 or earlier, please un-install it prior to installing v3.2.

NOTE: We have dropped supporting floppy drive or diskette based installs. All installations must be performed from a CD, CDR, CDRW or DVD drive.

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Network Installations of v3.2

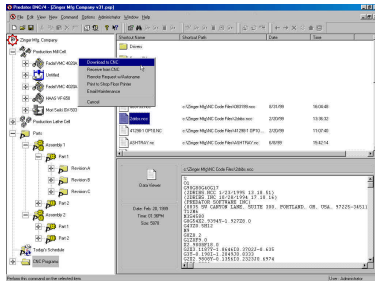
Another major installation improvement has been made with network installations. By committing to store the product installation on a server, users will enjoy automatic healing of all critical files upon running Predator DNC. For example, a user accidentally deletes pdnc.exe. Under normal circumstances he would be down and the software would fail to run. With v3.2 when the user double clicks the desktop shortcut all critical files are checked and if necessary restored from the network server and the software begins to run automatically.

The easiest way to perform a network installation is to step through the following:

1. Copy the contents of the \dnc directory on the CD to a \setup\dnc 3.2\ or similar directory.
2. Run the setup.exe from the \setup\dnc 3.2\ directory.

NOTE: Should any automatic healing be necessary, Predator DNC will be able to automatically extract the necessary files from the appropriate cab files stored in the \setup\dnc 3.2\ directory. If you install from a CD, Predator DNC will be forced to prompt for the CD.

Predator DNC



What's New in v3.2?

Improved! HTML based Online Help

Updated HTML help reflects the improvements made in Predator DNC 3.2. In addition, several DNC objects and completely new online help.

Improved! Installation

An improved installation and uninstall process is now included with Predator DNC v3.2. Redundant installation options are automatically skipped with new software detection methods. In addition, the Predator Editor is now provided as an installation option. Finally, the uninstall process for Predator DNC has been improved so that it does not disturb other Predator applications.

New! Multiple File Selection

Multiple files can now be selected from the shop floor dialogs using Windows standard SHIFT and CTRL key selection. The order of the selected files is the order the files will be sent to the CNC.

New! PPM Object for Microsoft SQL Server

A new PPM or parametric part manufacturing object for Microsoft SQL server is now available with Predator DNC. In addition the PPM objects for Access and Oracle have been improved. This new design requires Predator Travelers v1.3 and it simplifies overall PPM use. Refer to what's new in Predator Travelers v1.3 for additional details on the new PPM features.

New! MDC Object for Microsoft SQL Server

A new MDC or manufacturing data collection object for Microsoft SQL server is now available with Predator DNC. In addition the MDC objects for Access and Oracle have been improved. This new design requires Predator MDC v1.3 and it dramatically simplifies MDC configuration and implementation. Refer to what's new in Predator MDC v1.3 for additional details on the new MDC features.

New! MDC Objects for Dripfeeding

Three new MDC objects for dripfeeding have been added. Each of the three objects support either Microsoft Access, SQL Server or Oracle. These objects can be added to a send to CNC command to automatically record cycle time within Predator MDC as the length time for the dripfeed process. This provides another software solution to monitor CNC machines without requiring hardware or PLCs.

New! Custom MDC Objects

Three new MDC objects for recording custom data collection events have been added. Each of the three objects support either Microsoft Access, SQL Server or Oracle. These objects can be added to a remote start command to automatically record custom events within Predator MDC.

NOTE: V1.3 of Predator MDC does not provide extensive reports and charts of custom data collection events. Custom reports or charts may be required to leverage the power of custom data collection events.

New! Regex Command Object

A very powerful regular expression object has been added to Predator DNC. Entire books on regular expressions are available from numerous sources. In a nutshell, regular expressions take the concept of searching and replacing to the power of using a programming language without the complexities of learning C++, VB or Java. By integrating regular expressions within Predator's command objects, automation of many tasks can be simplified for the machinist. For example, a machinist requests a download of JOB123.NC with the new regex command object this one request can be expanded to print the tool list for JOB123, plot the drawing for JOB123 and request the material for JOB123 with a single remote request. Using the new Regex Command objects the additional commands are created from the single remote request. The regex command object can also be used in many MDC applications as well.

New! Regex Remote Request Object

This new object is designed to expand and build upon the concept of sequences within X_Net. This very powerful object has a different syntax than sequences but provides a greater degree of flexibility, more CNC compatibility and a standardized syntax. This object is typically used with CNC controls that don't support editing of comments or when complex directory structures must be used with limited CNC keyboards.

New! Start All

A new Start All feature has been added to the Command menu. It will automatically start every machine in Remote mode. It compliments the Cancel All menu pick and simplifies the process of starting every machine in remote mode manually.

Improved! Heidenhain DNC Object

An updated Heidenhain DNC object provides greater compatibility with newer Heidenhain CNC controls. In addition, a bug fix for dripfeeding to certain Heidenhain models in FE mode has been fixed. This object includes integrated support for remote request and is designed to run stand-alone.

Improved! Clean Code Object

Several improvements to Clean Code provide greater compatibility with more CNC controls. Finally, Clean Code has been improved to work with Predator MDC.

Improved! Remote Request Object

Remote Request has been re-designed for greater hardware compatibility, 24x7x365 reliability and wildcard support. One of the new features of the new design is to allow hubs to be turned off and on while Predator DNC remains in Remote mode. This improvement provides greater system uptimes with intermittent network connections. In addition, this new design improves remote canceling of commands, regardless of the underlining hardware. Wildcard support has been added to remote requests with Predator DNC automatically returning the first available match. Finally, the new design also fixes an intermittent bug with multiple Flex/N hubs under Windows 2000.

Improved! Sub Directory Searching

Sub directory searching has been improved with support for wildcards within the default directory. This improvement can make a dramatic speed difference when searching through thousands of sub directories.

Improved! COM Port HSM Object

The COM Port HSM object has been updated for greater hardware compatibility, improved remote request operation, and improved character delay. Character delays performance with 1-20 millisecond is now more accurate across a greater range of hardware. This subtle design improvement provides smoother dripfeeding operation for numerous CNC controls. Fixed a bug with receiving data with the DNCxpress hardware under Windows 2000.

Improved! Predator Editor v5.2

Predator DNC v3.2 now includes an updated Predator Editor v5.2. Additional details on v5.2 of the Predator Editor are available in the What's New document or online help.

Improved! CNC Program and Text File Viewing

CNC program and text file viewing has been improved with special characters being displayed as square blocks. Due to customer requests we have remove the debug display from shop floor mode.

Improved! Fanuc Cassette Object

The Fanuc cassette object has been improved with support for additional commands. A bug fix with certain characters within filenames has also been fixed. This object includes integrated support for remote request and is designed to run stand-alone.

Improved! Okuma B Object

The Okuma B object has been improved with support for remote canceling. This object includes integrated support for remote request and is designed to run stand-alone.

Improved! Remote Autaname Object

Remote Autaname has been improved with new support for special characters within the search string. For example \13\10O can now be used to specify the first O word within a block of CNC code.

Improved! Fagor Object

A re-designed Fagor object has been added with support for every known Fagor CNC model. This object includes integrated support for remote request and is designed to run stand-alone.

Improved! Default File Extensions

Default file extensions have been improved with an automatic priority style searching when multiple default file extensions are used with remote request. Predator DNC automatically searches for the appropriate files based on the order that multiple default file extensions are specified. For example, the default extensions are .NC;.TXT;.BAK when the machinist request JOB123, Predator DNC will first try and find JOB123.NC then JOB123.TXT and finally JOB123.BAK as soon as it finds a match it will begin sending the file.

Improved! Object Manager

The object manager has been improved with better buttons and improved listings of available objects.

Improved! File and Sub Program Object

Sub program support has been enhanced with a new option to automatically lookup every sub program referenced within a main program and automatically append the appropriate external sub programs to the main program. This object supports manual communications and remote request. For example, a machinist remotely requests program O1234 and within this main program four sub programs are called. Predator DNC will automatically lookup the four subs on the PC and append them to the end of the main program prior to downloading it to the CNC. This is done without modifying the main or sub programs on the PC.

Improved! DNC Restart

V3.2 of Predator DNC is now case insensitive for the search string.

Improved! Zinger Example PXP

Updated Zinger example PXP for v3.2 of Predator DNC is now included.

Improved! Sample Machines

V3.2 of Predator DNC now includes several updated sample machines.

Bug Fix! Send Translate Object

Fixed a bug with the send translate object when it was used in combination with the file and sub program object.

Bug Fix! Status Bar

Fixed a bug in the status bar so the appropriate Administrator or Shop floor mode is correctly displayed in the lower right hand corner.

Bug Fix! Drag and Drop

Fixed a rare drag and drop bug.

For more information

For the latest information on Predator DNC or Predator Desktop, check our web site at <http://www.mis-group.com>