

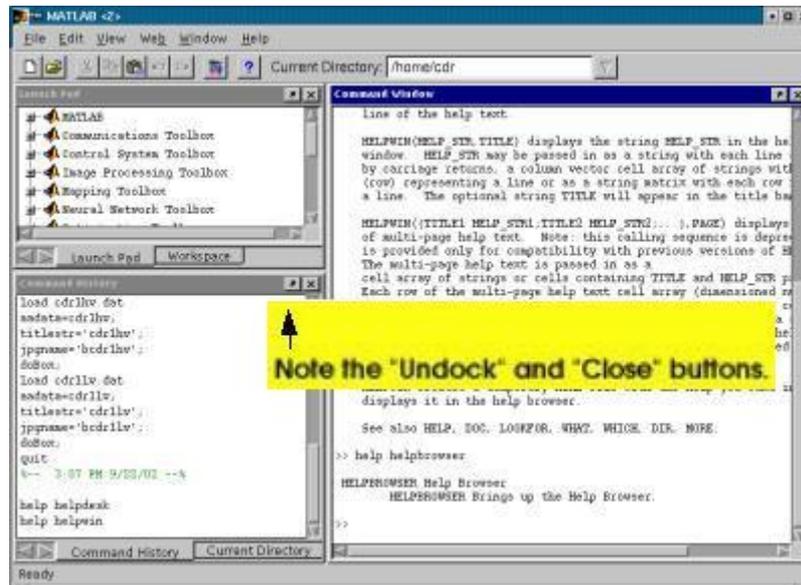
Process Control/Chau: Web Support

New Features in MATLAB (Version 6.x; Release 12.1)

We provide here hints to features in newer versions of MATLAB that cannot be covered in the MATLAB Sessions of the text. We shall keep the explanations brief, and in a way the pointers here serve as a bridge to the MATLAB on-line help, which is excellently and thoroughly written. Maybe too thorough for a beginner; so we keep things simple here. Once you get going, the MATLAB on-line help is what you should rely on.

User Interface (the MATLAB Desktop)

To the untrained eye, it can look busy and intimidating. A tiny version is shown here:



Q: What are those panels on the MATLAB desktop?

A: There are really five of them. The main one that we cannot do without is the big Command Window on the right. On the left, we see two split-level panels, each one having a tab at the bottom.

On the upper left, the subpanels provide the:

- Launch Pad -- Mainly for quick access to Help and specific toolboxes.
- Workspace -- List of variables that are available in the Command Window; essentially the results of the "whos" command.

On the lower left, the subpanels provide the:

- Command history -- We can drag-and-drop old commands into the Command Window. Use "Shift-click" to select more than one command, and "Control-click" for multiple commands that are not contiguous to each other.
- Current Directory -- We find this the most useful tool when we first launch MATLAB. This subpanel allows us to change the working directory to wherever we store our M-files easily.

Q: Can I make the look less cluttered?

A: Yes. On the upper right corners of the subpanels are two little buttons. The little curve arrow "undock" the panel, meaning popping the panel out to its own little window. The little "x" will close the subpanel entirely. Of course, don't do that to the main Command Window. (Once you are well into a project, the Command Window may very well be the only one that you need.)

Q: Can I get the default "look" back?

A: Yes. Options to change the "look and feel" and to get the default desktop layout back can be found under the View pull-down menu.

Help!

All under the Help pull-down menu. The key is to choose the MATLAB Help entry. (It launches the help browser, really with the `helpbrowser` command. This new command replaces the `helpwin` and `helpdesk` commands in older versions.) Keep the browser open all the time while you are learning MATLAB.

This HTML-based Help Browser is extremely nice. You may immediately see the "MATLAB Desktop" link. Click on that and you should get a big image (unlike our tiny one above) with lots of arrows and legends.

M-file Editor (for Unix/Linux)

Release 12.1 ported the nice color-coded Windows editor to Unix/Linux too, but one word of caution: on Unix/Linux, the keystroke equivalent commands (for cut/copy/paste etc.) are totally different from what we consider as the "norm." So we either have to memorize a new set of commands or have to put up with point-and-click all the time.