

EasiCompare Requirements – February 2009

EasiCompare does command line comparisons of files to see if their contents are the same. It is supplied as a standalone executable that the user can run from the command line. The user specifies two filenames and EasiCompare opens them and reports to the user whether they are the same or not. Key features are:

1. Comparison results must be accurate.
2. Any file type can be compared.
3. Can compare large files.
4. Comparisons are quick.

It should be suitable for use by users without extensive training and its use should be intuitive and its operation self explanatory to the user – if something goes wrong they should understand why. It is required that:

1. High quality error messages are given to the user if there are problems.
2. Always explains what is happening, does not go silent or crash.
3. Has help to enable a user to know how to use it.

It should also be possible to use EC as a command in scripts to allow comparison of sets of files. The program returns the result of the comparison to the calling script to enable it to act on the results of the comparison. When used like this the user can specify that output of results and error messages is turned off and that EC should operate in a silent mode.

In addition to this EasiCompare Lite, or EC-Lite, functionality future enhanced versions of EasiCompare will add:

1. Ability to drive comparison from list if comparisons to be done.
2. Comparison of lots of files with a single master file.
3. Specification of search paths for files so users only have to give filenames.
4. An enhanced command line experience allowing users to compare files based on an existing comparison context that defines defaults and entering a command that adds missing parameters and overrides.
5. Unattended background server operation including time triggered comparison and comparison based on the detection of updates to the files being monitored.

Key values of EC are that:

1. User can trust it and depend on it and so it MUST NOT crash or give wrong results.
2. Flexibility users should not find that they cannot do a comparison they want to do because of some limitation of EasiCompare.

Uses of EC include (a) detecting that two files are identical, (b) checking that deployments have copied files around correctly without change, (c) detecting that a file has actually been changed when it has been updated and (d) use in testing to establish whether sets of files have been updated.