ICONICS – Troubleshooting Issues using Microsoft Steps Recorder

APPLICATION NOTE

October 2015

Description: Guide to using the Steps Recorder to quickly identify problems and reduce time spent with technical support.

Introduction

Solving problems for a remote user can be very difficult if you can't actually see what's happening on the remote system. The Steps Recorder (or "Problem Steps Recorder", as it is sometimes called) is a feature that enables users to record their interactions with an application and provide a detailed screen-by-screen view with accompanying information. This tool can help technical support address your issues quickly and more accurately. Steps Recorder is not available in operating systems earlier than Windows 7 or Windows Server 2008 R2.

Steps Recorder is a recording application you can use to record any input you make to your machine (mouse clicks and keyboard presses) along with screenshots of every step. After recording the steps, Steps Recorder generates an HTML slideshow of all your actions, complete with a description of the steps taken. You can view the report as is, as a slideshow, or even dig into the raw XML to expose greater detail, like the coordinates of the mouse during a particular step.

This tool is great for developers and technical support so they can see what an end user is doing without requiring them to be present during the event.

Using the Steps Recorder

To open the Steps Recorder, follow the steps below:

1. Click on the "Start" button
2. In the search dialog type "psr" and press "Enter". This will open a new toolbar that appears on the desktop as shown in Figure 1.

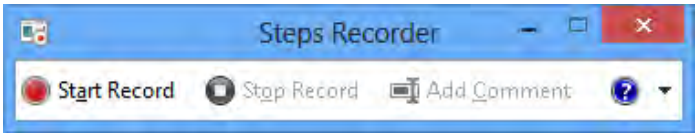

Figure 1 - Steps Recorder

3. Click "Start Record" to begin recording, then walk through the steps to reproduce the issue or behavior you want to report.
4. During the recording you can click on the "Add Comment" button to focus attention on something. Screenshots are only taken when mouse clicks occur or when using this "Add Comment" feature, therefore, use the "Add Comment" button when you want to take a picture of something that doesn't necessarily need a mouse click.
5. When you are done reproducing the issue, click the "Stop Record" button on the toolbar.
6. You will be asked to pick a name and a location for a zip file. This is the file that contains the steps and screenshots that you took while recording.

   NOTE: ICONICS blocks zip files attached to emails. If you want to email the zip file, please change the extension to .zzz before sending it to us.

7. Email the output file to technical support or whoever is helping you with your problem.

   NOTE: Sometimes the files generated by Steps Recorder are too large to email. If this is the case you can ask technical support for instructions on using the FTP site.

8. By default, Steps Recorder will record only 25 screenshots, but this can be changed. Click on the small down-arrow next to the help icon, and then select Settings

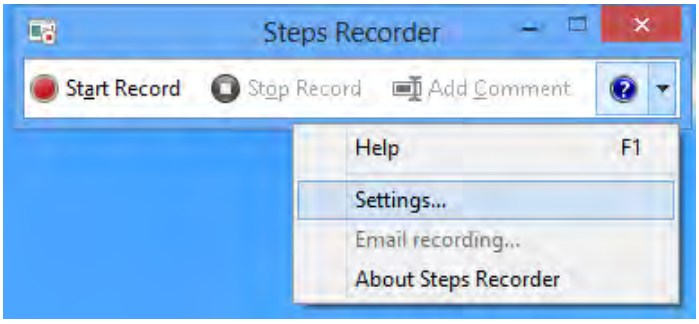

Figure 2 - Step Recorder Settings Option

9. In the Settings dialog, you can change the "Number of recent screen capture to store" as you wish.
10. The recorded file is saved in the zipped folder with a .MHTML extension. This extension can be opened in a web browser to view the screenshots and other data.