TaskTracker 1.0d

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The Task List

Current Task:
```
Sample of a new task.
─────────────────────────
Sample of a new task.
Task with elapsed time
Long Task Run
EXTREMELY long task run.
Fifth Task
More Information...
```
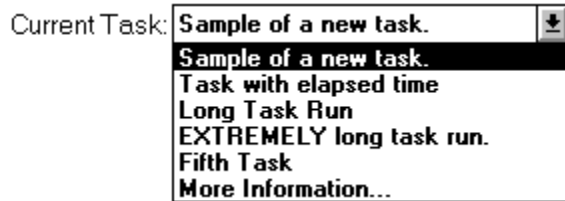
The Task List is a dropdown listbox which contains the names of all tasks in your project. The name of the active task is normally displayed, but clicking on the down arrow 'drops down' the full list of tasks.

To change active tasks, you can use one of several methods:

Keyboard: Use the up or down arrow keys to change to the next or previous task when the task list has the <u>focus</u>.   You can also key the first letter of the task description and the active task will change to the first task starting with that letter.   Keying the key again will find the next task starting with that letter, and so on.

Mouse: Click on the down arrow to display the full task list.   Click on the name of the new task and TaskTracker will switch to that task.   If there are more task names than will fit on the list, use the <u>scroll bar</u> to scroll up and down on the list.

To edit or change the task name, click on the Edit <u>N</u>ame button.

See Also: <u>Task Controls</u>

Task Description Window

The Task Description window contains notes on each task, and can be dynamically edited at any time.   Task description information is saved in your Project File and is retained when you spawn your project to a new one.

The Task Description Window works just like any Windows editor, allowing you to edit, select, cut, paste and delete text.   You can also import text from other Windows applications via the clipboard by cutting from the other application and pasting into the Task Description Window.

Some formatting can be established in the Task Description Window; you can key ENTER to start a new paragraph, and CTRL+TAB will insert a tab character.   That formatting will be retained when you output your project.   NewLine characters are converted to || when you save your project to file, and converted back when loaded.

NOTE: If your task descriptions are fairly lengthy, you might prefer Microsoft **Word** as an output program since long project descriptions can be difficult to format in Microsoft **Excel**.

See Also: Running a Report

Task Controls

Task Controls

Start Timer	Add Task	Edit Name
Reset Time	Delete Task	Edit Time
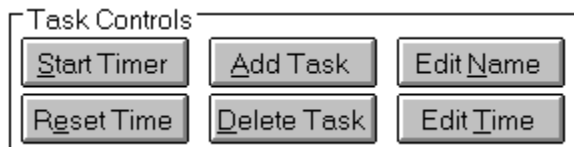
Task Controls are the buttons on the face of TaskTracker that allow you to manipulate your tasks and the data in them.   Only the Add Task Button is enabled when there are no tasks in the list.
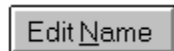
Start Timer   **Start Timer Button:**   Starts the timer.   When the timer is running, this button becomes the Stop Timer Button.

Add Task   **Add Task Button:**   Adds a new task at the current position.   A dialog box will prompt you for the name of the new task.

Delete Task   **Delete Task Button:**   Deletes the current task.

Edit Name   **Edit Name Button:**   Edit or change the Task Name for the current task. The task name is limited in length; any lengthy notes about the current task should be kept in the Task Description Window.
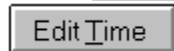
Edit Time   **Edit Time Button:**   Allows you to enter a new elapsed time for the current task.   If the Timer is running and Autostart is enabled, the timer will resume running from the new time entered.
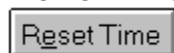
Reset Time   **Reset Time Button:**   Resets the time to 00:00:00 for the current task.   If the Timer is running and Autostart is enabled, the timer will start again from zero.

File Operations

File Open:	To load a <u>project file</u> from disk, click <u>F</u>ile <u>O</u>pen and select the directory or drive desired; then double-click the filename desired. The project file selected will be loaded into TaskTracker.
File Save:	<u>F</u>ile <u>S</u>ave saves the current project to disk.
File Save As:	<u>F</u>ile <u>S</u>ave <u>A</u>s saves the current project to a different file. The new filename then becomes the active one.
File New:	<u>F</u>ile <u>N</u>ew clears all information, creating a new project. If you haven't saved your current project to disk, you will be prompted to do so.
File Spawn:	<u>F</u>ile <u>Spawn</u> resets all task times to 00:00:00, then saves all task information to a new file.
File Merge:	<u>F</u>ile <u>Merging</u> adds tasks from another project file to the end of the task list in the current project.
File Exit:	<u>F</u>ile <u>E</u>xit shuts down TaskTracker. If you haven't saved your current project to disk, you will be prompted to do so.

Running a Report

Reports cannot be printed by TaskTracker; instead, TaskTracker allows you to export data from the current task into another Windows program for data manipulation, formatting and printing.   The output program can be specified in the Options menu; the default is Microsoft **Write**.

To run a report, click Run Report from the main menu bar or use the Ctrl+R accelerator key combination.   TaskTracker will then launch the program you specified and send your project data to it.

Write, Word and **Excel** provide the best formatting and printing capabilities, and are recommended for report output.   TaskTracker can actively work with these programs to help you format your output.

In **Microsoft Word**, the output is automatically formatted into a table, complete with time totals for the project.

In **Microsoft Excel,** the columns are automatically formatted to best fit width.   If this formatting is inappropriate, you can undo it by keying ALT+BACKSPACE.

In **Microsoft Write**, the output is formatted as tab-delimited text, with indented paragraphs for easier reading.   The heading line is bolded.

In any other selected application (for example, **NotePad, WordPerfect** or **Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows**) a Project report will only be 'pasted' in from the clipboard in tab-delimited format.   It is up to the user to utilize the features of that program to format the data.

See Also: Specifying the Report Output Program

Running a Windows "Applet"

TaskTracker offers quick access to Windows "Applets" from the Run menu.   If Microsoft **Word** or **Excel** are specified as the default output program, that program will also appear on the menu.

If you specified a report output program, TaskTracker should already know how to find and run the program.   (If you've moved the program since you last specified the Output Program, specify it again with the new location.)

If you have not specified a report output program, TaskTracker uses Write to output reports and assumes it is in your Windows directory or in your path.

To run a Windows Applet, click Run on the menu bar.   The programs TaskTracker can run for you will drop down in a submenu.   Clicking a program name will launch that program.

You can also specify a command line parameter for the Applet.   Click Run Command Lines and choose the Applet you wish to modify.   Enter the full drive, path and filename of the file you want the Applet to load, or type 'clear' to clear the command line parameter.   The change will be reflected in the Run menu.

NOTE: When you run only one Applet, closing that program will return you TaskTracker.   If you run more than one program, or more than one instance of a program, closing the *newest* program will return you to TaskTracker.   Closing any other program will return the focus to the program which had it prior to the closed program.

Configuration Options

Specifying the Report Output Program

Setting The AutoStart Function

Setting Confirm Actions

Setting Maximum Tasks

Setting the AutoSave Interval

Setting the Default File Extension

Setting the AutoSave Interval

To set the AutoSave Interval, click Options Autosave Interval from the menu bar.   A dialog box will prompt you for the number of minutes TaskTracker should wait between AutoSaves.

Projects must be saved to file before AutoSave can be enabled.   When TaskTracker is minimized and the timer is running, the icon changes to an hourglass to indicate an AutoSave.   When the TaskTracker window is normal or maximized, the mouse icon changes to an hourglass.

NOTE: If a DOS application is running in **Standard Mode**, Windows operations are frozen. If a DOS application is running full screen in **386 Enhanced Mode**, Windows receives only a fraction of the timeslices it normally does.   TaskTracker's ability to correctly AutoSave your data cannot be guaranteed while Windows is in either of these modes.

For this reason it's a good idea to return to the Windows environment from time to time so TaskTracker can correctly update the current task time and perform an AutoSave if one is due.

Setting the AutoStart Function

Under normal operation, TaskTracker's timer automatically stops when you move to a new task.   If Timer AutoStart is enabled, the timer will automatically start timing the task you move to.

To enable or disable Timer Autostart, click Options Timer AutoStart from the menu bar.   A check mark by that menu option tells you that Timer AutoStart is enabled.

NOTE: If Timer AutoStart is enabled and the Timer is running, TaskTracker will automatically start the Timer after you edit or reset a task time, or when you create a new task.

Specifying the Report Program

Reports cannot be printed by TaskTracker; instead, TaskTracker allows you to export data from the current task into another Windows program for data manipulation, formatting and printing.   The output program can be specified in the Options menu; the default is Microsoft **Write**.

To specify the output program, click Options Output Program.   A dialog box will prompt you to select the desired output program from a list box of choices.   If you choose Excel, Word, Write or Notepad, a dialog box will then prompt you to enter the path where that program can be found.   If you select the "Other..." option, you will be prompted to enter the full path and filename where the program is located.

See Also: Running a Report

Setting the Default File Extension

You can change the default file extension for project files sought for or created by TaskTracker.   This can help you organize project files by file extension and simplify finding and loading them.

To change the default file extension, click Options File Extension from the menu bar.   A dialog box will prompt you for the new default file extension; enter a period and the file extension desired.

Changing the default file extension does not prevent TaskTracker from reading Project Files created with other extensions, provided they were created by TaskTracker.

This procedure also updates WIN.INI so that the File Manager will recognize project files by their file extensions.   Clicking on a .TSK file from within the File Manager or using the File Run command from the Program Manager will cause Windows to launch TaskTracker, which then loads the file.

NOTE: The default file extension you set must be between one and three letters long. TaskTracker will not accept a null file extension.

Setting Maximum Tasks

When you first run TaskTracker, you are limited to having 100 tasks in a project.   You can increase this number to accommodate a larger project, or decrease it to reduce the amount of memory TaskTracker uses.   This is done by changing the Maximum Tasks.

To change the maximum number of tasks TaskTracker can load, click Options Maximum Tasks from the menu bar and enter an integer greater than zero in the dialog box..   You *must* restart TaskTracker for this change to take effect.

If you try to load a project file which contains more than the maximum number of tasks, TaskTracker will generate an error message.   This is not a fatal error condition, but if you save the current project data you will overwrite the original project file, losing tasks that were not loaded.

To correct this situation, clear the project by clicking File New (don't save the project!) and set Maximum Tasks to a higher number.   Then shut down and restart TaskTracker and try to load the project again.   Repeat this process until Maximum Tasks is set high enough to accommodate the project.

Setting Confirm Actions

Clicking Options Confirm Actions tells TaskTracker whether or not to ask for confirmation when you click the Delete Task button or the Reset Time button.   A check next to the menu option indicates whether this is enabled or not.

Registration and Technical Support

Users of TaskTracker can receive product support via **CompuServe**, **BIX**, **Prodigy** or the **InterNet**.   Bug reports are also welcome.   Use the following user ids...

CompuServe: 70413,3405
BIX: bseymour
Prodigy: BGGX24A
InterNet: bseymour@well.sf.ca.us

Naturally, registered users will get first priority, but **Marquette Computer Consultants will also answer questions from users still evaluating this program,** since the quality of technical support is an integral part of TaskTracker.

To register your copy of TaskTracker, send your name and mailing address along with your program's serial number and **$15.00** check or money order to:

Barry Seymour
Marquette Computer Consultants
22 Sirard Lane
San Rafael, CA 94901-1066

If you are a member of one of the above-mentioned online services, include your user id and/or InterNet address as well for faster receipt of your registry number.   Users without online services will receive their registry number via U.S. Mail.

Thank you for supporting the shareware concept!

Glossary

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AutoSave

TaskTracker can be set to automatically save the project to file at specified time intervals, even when the program is minimized.   If your system crashes, your accumulated time will still have been saved to disk.   The maximum Autosave interval is 59 minutes; setting it to ZERO disables AutoSaving.

Autosave is disabled if there are no tasks in the project, if the project has not yet been given a filename or if the timer is not running.

NOTE: If a DOS application is running full screen in **Standard Mode**, Windows operations are frozen.   If a DOS application is running full screen in **386 Enhanced Mode**, Windows receives only a fraction of the timeslices it normally does.   If you're running in either of these modes, TaskTracker's ability to correctly AutoSave your data cannot be guaranteed.

For this reason it's a good idea to return to Windows from time to time when running TaskTracker.   If you're timing your work in a full screen DOS application and an AutoSave is past due, TaskTracker will automatically save your file to disk upon your return to the Windows environment.

AutoSave Interval

The autosave interval is the time (in minutes) between AutoSaves.   Minimum is one minute, maximum is 59 minutes.   If the AutoSave Interval is set to 0, AutoSaving will be disabled.

Setting the autosave interval tells TaskTracker to automatically save your data at intervals you specify while the timer is running.   If your system crashes, you'll still have up-to-date elapsed time information for each task in your project.

NOTE: AutoSaving can not be guaranteed when running a full-screen DOS application. For this reason it's a good idea to return to Windows from time to time so TaskTracker can compute your task time and perform an AutoSave if one is due.

See Also: AutoSave

AutoStart

AutoStart enables the timer to automatically start timing a task when you switch to it.   If the timer is running and AutoStart is enabled, timing will also automatically start after editing or resetting the time or after creating a new task.

Icon Light

The 'Icon Light' indicates the status of the timer when TaskTracker is minimized.

If the icon light is red the timer is <u>stopped</u>.

If the icon light is green, the timer is <u>running</u>.

If an AutoSave occurs while TaskTracker is minimized, the icon briefly changes to an hourglass.

When TaskTracker is minimized and the timer is running, the elapsed time for the current task is displayed under the program icon.

Output Program

The output program is the means by which TaskTracker allows you to format and print a report on your project.

TaskTracker can send project data to any other Windows program you specify. In addition, TaskTracker offers automatic output formatting for Microsoft **Word**, Microsoft **Excel** and Microsoft **Write**.

Project Files

Project Files are text files created by TaskTracker which contain data on your projects.   A Project File contains every task name, task time and task description in your project, along with the number of the task which was active when the project was last saved.   Project Files can be edited with Notepad or any text editor.

Project File Merging

Project Merging appends data from another project file to the end of the task list in the current project.

NOTE: After a File Merge the current project is considered a new project with no filename. Also, projects with duplicate names are still considered separate tasks and must be combined manually if they relate to the same task.

Project File Spawning

A Project file is spawned when it is copied to a new file with task names and descriptions intact, and all times reset to 00:00:00.   This feature is useful for projects that need to be reported on periodically; you can retain the task names and notes but clear out all task times at the start of each new reporting period.

Timer

The Timer is the heart of the TaskTracker system.   When the timer is started, TaskTracker begins accumulating elapsed time on the current task.   The Timer controls both the display of elapsed time for the task and the computer's system time on the TaskTracker form.

The timer may occasionally appear to "skip" a second.   This indicates *correct* functioning of the timer, since actual elapsed time is being tracked, even though Windows may be heavily loaded with tasks.

When TaskTracker is minimized and the timer is running, the elapsed time for the current task is updated every minute under the program icon.

NOTE: When running a DOS application full screen in **Standard Mode**, all Windows operations are frozen.   When running a DOS application full screen in **386 Enhanced Mode**, Windows receives only a small fraction of the timeslices it normally does.   As a result the either Timer updates erratically (386 mode) or not at all (Standard Mode).   This is a limitation of Windows, not of TaskTracker.

As soon as you return to Windows or switch to a Windows program, the Timer will update itself with the correct elapsed time.   If AutoSave is enabled and an AutoSave is due, TaskTracker will perform one at that time.

Task

Tasks make up a project file.   Each task has three parts; the Task Name, the Task Description and the Task Time.   All three can be edited, and TaskTracker provides a button to reset task time to 00:00:00 as well.   Tasks can be easily added or deleted as your project changes, and other project files containing other tasks can be merged into the current project as well.

Windows 'Applets'

Windows 'Applets' are the programs which are included with Microsoft Windows 3.0.   They include **NotePad, Write, File Manager, Calendar, CardFile, Terminal** and the **Control Panel**.

TASKTRAK.INI

TASKTRAK.INI is a text file which contains information on TaskTracker's default operating parameters.   It also contains your program's serial number as generated when you first ran it.   If you register your copy of TaskTracker, your registry number will also be contained here.

Be sure you make a backup copy of this file after you register.   If you accidentally delete TASKTRAK.INI, TaskTracker will REGENERATE a new serial number and you will have to re-register your program!

If you keep your serial number and registry number written down, you may edit TASKTRAK.INI with Notepad or any other text editor and re-enter the numbers there to restore your registry if it's lost or deleted.

Focus

The currently active control has the focus.   To give a control the focus, click on it with the mouse or key the tab key until the desired control is highlighted.   Using the keyboard, the focus can only be changed from the task list to the task description window.

ScrollBar

The ScrollBar is a means to move around in a listbox or textbox that isn't large enough to display all of its contents.   If a control has a scrollbar, it means there is more undisplayed information outside the current display area.

Task Description Window

The Task Description Window is a miniature text processor which contains notes on each task.   Text in the Task Description Window can be edited at any time, and can contain separate paragraphs or tabs.   Task description information is saved in your Project File and is retained when you spawn your project to a new one.

Text in the Task Description Window may be cut (SHIFT+DEL), or copied (CTRL+INS) and pasted {SHIFT+INS) to other Windows applications.

WIN.INI

WIN.INI is one of the files Windows reads when loading; many configuration parameters are stored there.

When you change your default file extension, TaskTracker modifies information regarding file associations in the [Extensions] section of WIN.INI.   This enables the File Manager to recognize TaskTracker files by their file extensions.   If you click on a project file from the File Manager or run it from the Program Manager's File Run option, Windows will launch TaskTracker and load the project file.

NOTE: Each change in the default file extension is *added* to WIN.INI; none are removed. If you change your default file extension often, a larger number of entries will accumulate under the [Extensions] section of WIN.INI.   To remove obsolete entries from time to time, you may wish to use Notepad or some other text editor, or you may use PC Magazine's PROGSET.EXE program.

See Also: Setting the Default File Extension

Tab-Delimited Format

TaskTracker 'pastes' report data to the currently specified output program using *tab-delimited* text.   Each column, or 'field' item is separated by a tab; each row, or 'record' item is separated by a carriage return/line feed. Windows applications which work with text can recognize this format, and have routines which make formatting it easier.

In programs directly supported by TaskTracker, output formatting is performed automatically.   For example, TaskTracker tells **Word** to automatically convert tab-delimited text into a table, while **Excel** automatically inserts tab-delimited text into separate cells. TaskTracker works with **Write** to format tab-delimited text with hanging paragraphs to make the report more readable.   (**Notepad** has no such formatting capability, but does receive output data in tab-delimited text format.)

NOTE: Other programs have such options as well, but the user must implement them manually.   Automatic output formatting is not directly supported by TaskTracker in these programs.

Quick Start

To load the sample task file SAMPLE.TSK and experiment with it....
Click File Open and select SAMPLE.TSK from the file listbox.
Select the active task.
Click the Start Timer button to begin timing the task.

To create a new project...
If a project is loaded, click File New.   When prompted, save the current project if you wish.
Click the Add Task button.   When the dialog box appears, enter a name for the task.
Repeat this process for each task you wish to create.
Click File Save or File Save As to give the new project a filename and save it.
  Click the Start Timer button to begin timing the task.

To enable automatic saving of your data (AutoSave)...
Click Options AutoSave Interval and enter a number between 1 and 59 in the dialog box.   To disable AutoSaving, enter zero.   If your project has not been given a filename and saved, AutoSaving will not operate.

To generate a report...
The default output program is Microsoft **Write**.   If you wish to select another program for use for report output, click Options Output Program and select the program desired for your reports.   If you select Write, Winword, Excel or Notepad, enter the PATH where the program is located in the dialog box.   If you select another program, enter the full PATH and FILENAME of the program in the dialog box.
  Next, click Run Report (or Ctrl+R).   If the timer is running it will stop.   TaskTracker will launch your chosen program and insert report data into it from your current project.   If you chose Write, Winword or Excel as your output program, TaskTracker will tell your report program how to format the report.

To save a project file, click File Save.