

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions About WorldClock

Q. The hour at the top of the screen appears to be incorrect. What is wrong?

A. Probably nothing. Because of political variations in time zones, and local differences in daylight saving time, it is not possible to make one scale that is correct for all locations beneath it on the map. The hour scale at the top of the screen is only meant to be approximate, based upon idealized time zones. The hour scale is rounded down to the last whole hour number for the idealized time zone centered about the meridian line on the map below that hour number. An idealized time zone is 15° wide, extending 7.5° to either side of a meridian line on the map. As an example, Los Angeles is closest to the 120° meridian. When it is 7:49 am in Los Angeles, the hour number at the top of the map will be “7am”. Also, because some parts of the world observe daylight saving time, and some do not, and different places start and stop daylight saving time on different dates, the time may vary by an hour from the actual time in the idealized time zone. The hour display at the top of the map reflects the same daylight time setting as the home location. For accurate actual times, set one of the clocks to the location of interest. The scale at the top of the screen should only be used to get a rough idea of the time at a distant location.

Q. The distances on the clocks appear to be incorrect. For example, WorldClock shows that it is farther from Los Angeles to Rome than it is from Los Angeles to Moscow. Everybody knows Moscow is much farther east than Rome.

A. WorldClock uses great-circle routes in its calculations. The route to Moscow goes much nearer to the north pole. Moscow IS closer to Los Angeles than Rome.

Q. The directions shown on the clocks from the home location to the clock's location appear to be incorrect. For instance, the direction shown from Los Angeles to Darwin, Australia is shown as due west, 270°. How on earth can you get to the southern hemisphere by going due west?

A. Check it out on a globe with a string. If you take off from Los Angeles, flying due west, and never dip your wing to the left, never dip your wing to the right, never turning at all, you will fly to Darwin.

Q. The day of the week does not appear correctly beneath each clock. I see numbers or strange characters instead.

A. You are using a non-localized U.S. version of WorldClock with a non-U.S. version of the system software.

Q. The sunrise/sunset display shows several different kinds of twilight. What are they?

A. Civil twilight is the brightest twilight, where there is enough light to perform most outdoor activities. The sun is within 6° of the horizon. Nautical twilight is much dimmer, with the sun between 6° and 12° below the horizon. Astronomical twilight is very dim, with the sun between 12° and 18° below the horizon. During astronomical twilight, there is still enough glow in the atmosphere to interfere with astronomical observations.

Q. For some days, the moon calendar says "None Today" for moonrise or moonset. Doesn't the moon rise every day?

A. Actually, it doesn't. The moon rises approximately 50 minutes later every day, on average. This means there are about 24 hours and 50 minutes from one moonrise to the next. If the moon rises at 11:30 PM on Wednesday, for example, the next moonrise will not occur until about 12:20 AM early Friday morning.

Q. On the Moon Calendar, WorldClock says full moon is on Thursday the 25th. The calendar in my kitchen by the phone says it is on Friday the 26th. Which is correct?

A. Both could be correct. WorldClock is programmed to show the date of full moon at the computer's home location, considering daylight saving time. When commercial calendars are printed, information is generally not included about where they are localized to. For example, if you buy a commercial calendar that has been localized for New York (a common practice), and full moon occurs at 1:31 AM on Friday the 26th in New York, the time of the full moon occurrence (it is the same instant everywhere on the globe) in Los Angeles is 10:31 PM on Thursday the 25th. Even local newspapers may report the date of full moon based upon some national data that is off by one day in the newspaper's circulation area.

Q. I leave WorldClock running on my computer while I run other programs such as a word processor. My screen seems to freeze for a couple of seconds every minute, and it is driving me crazy.

A. WorldClock normally updates itself once per minute. As it does so, it hogs the processor, calculating the new sun and moon positions and recalculating where the boundary between light and dark should be. This processor use causes the effect described. This effect is most pronounced on older, slower computers, where it may take several seconds. There is a preference choice on WorldClock's preferences dialog to turn off background processing. If you turn off background processing, WorldClock will not update itself when it is behind other windows. As soon as you bring WorldClock back to the front, it will resume updating itself.

Q. WorldClock does not seem to run correctly in my Macintosh.

A. WorldClock is a desk accessory, and runs in the system heap, along with a variety of inits, extensions, screen savers, etc. Usually, the problems that have occurred in the past have been due to a conflict with one of these tidbits of other software. A good thing to try is restarting your computer while holding down the shift key until you see the "Welcome to Macintosh - Extensions Off" message. If WorldClock runs successfully with extensions off, this indicates that there is a conflict with one of the extensions that your computer loads on startup. At this writing, there are no known extensions, the latest versions of which interfere with the latest version of WorldClock. As of this writing, the insufficient feedback has been received from beta testers to determine if the program runs successfully in the new PPC 604 based Power Macintoshes, such as the 8500 and 9500.

Q. On my PowerBook, when I use the animate function on the Sundial screen, the animation slows way down after several seconds at normal speed.

A. Your PowerBook is probably set with processor speed cycling on. This feature is designed to save battery power by reducing the processor speed during periods of inactivity. You can keep the processor at full speed during animation by moving the mouse, track ball, or trackpad every few seconds during the animation.

Q. I left WorldClock operating on my PowerBook when it went to sleep. When I woke it up several hours later, WorldClock was several hours behind. Why didn't it update itself on wakeup?

A. Make sure you are using WorldClock 3.0 or later, and that you have made no changes to WorldClock's settings after opening the program and before the PowerBook goes to sleep. This latest version will update itself after sleep, as long as its settings remain unchanged.

Q. I want to edit the information about a location. How do I do it?

A. To edit the information about a location, it must first be made the home location. Select Change Settings from the WorldClock menu, then use the Home Location button if necessary to make the location to be changed the home location. Then click the Edit button. After editing, you may wish to use the Home Location button again to re-select the original home location.

Q. I have a copy of WorldClock 2.0 that I have customized with a number of new locations of special interest. How can I get them into the new version without re-entering them all?

A. WorldClock has no built-in means to do this. If you have Resedit or another resource editor and are familiar with its use, you can open both WorldClock 2.0 and WorldClock 3.0 with the resource editor, then copy the 'loc#' resource from WorldClock 2.0 to WorldClock 3.0. Also copy the 'klok' resource from 2.0 to 3.0. If asked if you want to replace resources with the same ID, click 'Yes'. Copy no other resources. I recommend you perform this operation on a copy of WorldClock 3.0, not on the original.