

The Great Time Clock, Version 2.12
by
Jim Blaich

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The two files that must be contained in the distribution media are:

Greattme.exe	77,663	02/18/93	4:40pm
Greattme.hlp	152,166	02/18/93	4:43pm
Greattme.wri	26,368	02/18/93	

The two files may be distributed in any compressed form as long as the decompression utility is widely accessible to the end user.

CREDITS

I wish to acknowledge credit to the authors of the book "Visual Basic How-To", by Robert Arnson, Daniel Rosen, Mitchell Waite, and Jonathan Zuck, published by The Waite Group. Also, I would like to thank those of you who have cared to send me information about problems with the program and suggestions to future enhancements.

INSTALLATION

To install this program, copy the executable file into any subdirectory. You need not include the directory in your path. You will need to have a copy of the VBRUN100.DLL installed on your machine and it should reside in your path or in the same directory as the executable.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the program is as follows: First, it is meant only to be a clock that floats on top (pops up over) any window that is placed over it. In essence, it is a stay on top clock. Secondly, the clock can be significantly configured. For example, clock colors can be changed as well as some limited time formats. One can move the clock around the screen and then seat the clock in place. If you have the clock load automatically with Windows it will be there whenever you need it. Changes to fonts and point sizes can be made. Alarms give the clock some added functionality. Setting the system time eliminates the need to exit to DOS or to run the control panel to set the time.

NOTE: This program was written in Visual Basic for Windows and requires the VBRUN100.DLL for it to function properly.

USING THE GREAT TIME CLOCK

About

To bring up the "About" box you simply "double click" on the clock face or depress the "Alt-A" keysequences.

Preferences

To bring up the "Preferences" dialog box simply click the "Right" mouse button anywhere on the clock face or by depressing the "Alt-P" key sequences.

Moving the Clock

To move the clock click on the clock face once. This will bring up a window handle. You may drag the clock around the screen by grabbing the window handle. Click once more to seat the clock. Moving the clock can also be accomplished by bring up the preferences dialog box and selecting the button to move the clock.

Selecting Time Format

Time format selection is chosen by selecting/checking the three check boxes

that pertain to formatting (located in the preferences dialog). The first says to display the clock in 24 hour format (military time). If the check box is checked then it will display a 24 hour clock. If it is unchecked it will display in AM/PM format. The second is to select whether the seconds are to be displayed. It functions the same way as the 24 hour clock selection. The third check box pertains to whether the date is displayed in a more "english like" format (for example, "(Sat) September 19, 1992" will be displayed instead of the less english like date of "09/19/92.")

Turning On/Off Seconds Display

When selecting this option it means the clock will display seconds in the clock face. The inverse is true if this is deselected.

Turning On/Off Date Display

When selecting this option it means that the date will display in the clock face. The inverse is true if this is deselected.

Turning On/Off Bold Display

When selecting this option it means that the clock display will be bold or unbold.

Moving the clock (through the Preferences Dialog Box)

When you click on the button labeled "Move Clock" you will be presented with a window handle to allow you to grab and move the clock. At the same time the button "Move Clock" will change to "Seat Clock". Use "Seat Clock" to indicate you are done moving it. You may disregard this button "Seat Clock" because when you quit the clock will automatically "seat" itself. If you select "Seat Clock" the window handle will disappear.

Stay On Top

Means that if you check this box the clock will stay on top of all windows. If unchecked, this option will tell the clock to continue to operate but will not pop up over any other windows.

Selecting Fonts

You can select from any of the fonts in your system to display in the clock face. I do have a couple of words of advise. Don't expect every font to show up perfectly. Some of the fonts are not very attractive and probably shouldn't be considered as an option. (Personally, I've chosen to stay with the default font with my system.) The default font is "Helv" or "MS Sans Serif."

Selecting Point Sizes

You can select from several point sizes. This process is quite simple; you click on the point size drop down list box and select the point size you desire from those listed. Be aware that the clock face will resize to the right, and portions of the clock face may be moved off the screen. You should select preferences and move the clock to a better screen location.

Change Colors

When you select to change from the default colors (black background and white face) you may select from any of the colors available on your Windows session. Use the Red/Green/Blue horizontal scroll bars to select colors. The clock's attributes will automatically change when you manipulate these scroll bars. You can select optionally to change the foreground color and the background colors.

Ending The Great Time Clock

Select end the clock program simply select the "End" button. If you desire to end the clock and not bring up the "Preferences" dialog box simply press the Alt key and click either the right or left mouse button, or you can type "Alt-Q" while the clock is the foreground application.

When you are finished making your preferential changes you can then select "Ok" to close the "Preferences" dialog box and go back to work with your other applications. If you choose "Cancel" you will simply go back to your session (presumably without any changes in effect.) When choosing "Exit" the clock will close and all preferential changes will be saved. The next time the clock is opened the clock will appear exactly where it was, in the exact condition it was, when it was closed.

The saved settings will be saved to a section within your Win.ini file. These settings are updated everytime you close the clock. If you are running the clock for the first time the clock will use some defaults that were programmed into it. The location of the clock will be 15 pixels down from the top and 15 pixels from the left most region of your screen. The clock face will be black and the clock text will be white. Since the program was written in Visual Basic for Windows you will need the vbrun100.dll to make the clock work. Most people can download this file from any BBS that is local to them. If there are any problems/bug reports with the clock you can leave me a message on a BBS that is local to me, Windows On-Line, in Danville, CA, at (510) 736-8343.

Good luck and have a great time.

Jim Blaich

Development History

Known Bugs in version 1.0

There are only a couple known bugs in this version of the program. One of the bugs is that the "Cancel" button does not undo any preferential changes. The second known bug is that sometimes the values of the colors are not displayed in their text boxes upon launching the program.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 1.0 to version 1.01

Bug Fixes

The "Cancel" button bug has been fixed. You can now click on cancel and all options will revert back to before you brought up the preferences dialog.

The color values are now displayed in their text boxes upon launching the program.

The clock text will now center properly in the clock display.

The About dialog box distribution text can no longer be altered. The text could be overwritten but upon depressing the "OK" button the text would revert back to the original distribution notice. Now this doesn't happen.

Preferences and About dialogs now center themselves on the screen upon program load.

One can now press Alt-P to bring up the Preferences dialog box and one can press Alt-A to bring up the About dialog box.

One can now press ALT AND CLICK THE LEFT MOUSE BUTTON on the clock face to quickly close (quit) the clock. The quickest way out for those who don't want to open preferences then choose "End".

When the color value text is selected it sets the focus of the form to appropriate scroll bar for modification of the sub color component.

When you choose to "Seat Clock" the Preferences dialog does not disappear.

The "Exit" button has been changed to "End".

The tab order between form controls has been set to be more consistent.

Other known problems

I know of at least one other problem with the program. The problem has to do with running Windows in any resolution that displays 16 colors or less. If you are selecting colors most of the programs colors are not prime colors (they are dithered). Since I developed the program on a display at a resolution of 800x600x32,768 I did not experience the problem until I got to work and found that the colors were messed up. The only consolation I can offer is that the program will work with non-dithered colors but one is limited on the total combination of colors available.

Some of the keystrokes don't work, particularly with the Red/Green/Blue horizontal scroll bars. Another keystroke related problem exists with moving the clock on the screen. Once the preferences dialog has been brought up, by typing "Alt-P" or by depressing the right mouse button, you cannot move the clock on the screen, that is, unless you have a mouse.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 1.01 to version 1.1

Bug Fixes

None that were reported were fixed. A 3d look was requested and implemented.

Updates

The following updates have been added to the clock program in this release:

The addition of the date in the clock display.

3d effect applied to dialog boxes

Future Updates

Future updates I hope will come regularly. I do have plans for a couple of other program based upon the same concept as the stay on top clock. All changes that will be implemented will be user selectable, that is they will be optional. Below is a list of the following changes that I intend to make to this program:

Beep on the hour/half-hour/quarter-hour.

The ability to select fonts.

Color cycling - make the clock much more attractive to allow you to cycle through colors. If this takes too much system resources or memory I will not include this feature.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 1.1 to version 1.22

Bug Fixes

Fixed the forecolor problem in the color value text display boxes.

Cleared up some redundant code.

Fixed the version number that was incorrectly reported in the "About" dialog box.

Optimized code elsewhere in the program.

Fixed the clock face size problems. Now you shouldn't see a border on the lower right

and right portion of the clock face.

Updates

The addition of the option to display different typefaces in the clock display.

The addition of the option to choose from several point sizes in the clock display.

The addition of the option to bold/unbold the clock display.

Beep every 15 minutes.

Future Updates

Future updates, I hope, will come regularly. I do have plans for a couple of other programs based upon the same concept as the stay on top clock. All changes that will be implemented will be user selectable, that is they will be optional. Below is a list of the following changes that I intend to make to this program:

Set alarms (8 maximum) - store the time of the alarm and a short message.

Set system time from the clock.

Add more shortcuts available from the clock face.

Display old alarm times and their associated messages.

Add some system information display.

Add a raised/recessed selection check box to give the clock dialog boxes a more configurable flavor.

Add user-configurable number of beeps for the alarms.

Give the messages dialog box a flashing title bar to grab your attention.

Add the ability to save alarms for future dates.

Add support for .wav files to be played back as the alarm sound.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 1.22 to version 2.01

Bug Fixes

More shortcut keys are now in place.

The clock resize feature is now implemented correctly.

A raised look can now optionally be selected.

Redundant code has been removed. Routines that were duplicated through different

modules have been placed in global modules and better implemented. The code was also optimized.

Version Enhancements

You can change the system time from the clock. This makes sense since right now the only way to change the clock in windows is through the control panel. It seems more appropriate that the time be changed via a floating clock.

8 alarms can now be set. A word of warning though, the alarms you set are only available after the current time. I do intend to fix the problem.

Users can now select the number of beeps for the alarms. Although this is implemented in a funny way it works. I will put it in a more appropriate place.

A message box is now available so you can view the past alarms. Just in case you forget.

A bit of system information is also available. I know just about every other program in the world provides this feature. The only thing I have to say about it is that my clock is always quickly available. You don't have to run a separate program that displays this information. I don't provide much of the usual information, but I do provide you with free memory and what mode you are running windows in and the windows directory that windows is running from and some information about the screen and printer displays.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 2.01 to version 2.10

Bug Fixes

The copyright and date found in the About dialog box has been corrected.

Enhancements

The most major change was in the method used to keep the clock on top of the other windows. Instead of using a timer even to bring the clock to the top of all windows I've utilized a Windows API function call that keeps the window on top all the time. The old method would check every second to see if the clock was on top and to bring it to the top if it wasn't.

By issuing a single click on the clock face a window handle is presented with the title of "Drag and Drop". Grab the title and move the clock. It's that simple. To reset the clock issue another single click on the clock face. This procedure is easier execute than going through the preferences dialog box. The preferences dialog box procedure remains unaltered.

Known Bugs in Version 2.10

When double-clicking the clock face to bring up the "About" box the "Drag and Drop" window title is presented. You can ignore this. I will find a fix for it in the next release. To make the "Drag and Drop" window handle disappear click on the clock face once again.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 2.10 to version 2.11

Bugs Fixes

The Stay On Top feature was not enabled. That is now fixed.

Double Click no longer brings up the about. If you wish to bring up the about box type Alt-A while the clock face has the focus.

Cleaned up some more code and implemented some new routines to better create the 3D effect.

Other Notes

I'm pretty sure I won't implement the color cycling feature. I looked at it and it seems to be impractical. Don't be surprised if it shows up though, for if there is a way I will implement it, it's just I don't have any idea yet on how. A **standard disclaimer notice** has been added to the beginning of this document.

Updates to Great Time Clock from version 2.11 to version 2.12

Bug Fixes

None that I know of.

Updates

Added "Help" system.

Updated the "About" dialog to represent 1993 copyright.

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