Talking Clock

Talking Clock both displays the time of day and announces it at user-specified intervals.   In addition, you can set appointment alarms.   Talking Clock can read the appointments from Talking Calendar.

Setting Chimes

Talking Clock can announce the time or play a chime or media element at a user-specified interval.

The chime settings specify which sound is played for the chime, and how frequently the chime is played.

Setting	Function
Chime	Determines which sound will be played. "The time is," "Big Ben," and "cuckoo" are built-in sounds, while with "custom chime" you must specify the media element to be played, using the Sound... button.
Say time	If checked, the time will be said after the chime is played
Say date	If checked, the date will be said after the chime (but before the time, if this item is checked) is played
No chime	If checked, no chime sounds will be played. This disables Talking Clock's chime function.
Chime interval	This setting determines how often, in minutes, the chime will be played. For example, for an interval of 12, the chime will be played 12, 24, 36, and 48 minutes past the hour, each hour.

Note: If you want the time (or date) played, but don't want any other sound to play, choose the "Custom chime" option and select (none) as the media element to be played.

Setting Alarms

Talking Clock lets you enter your appointments and be reminded with an announcement, a launched application, or a sound or video of your choice.

The following topics describe how to set and configure alarms:

Using Appointment Books
Creating New Appointments
Editing Appointments
Deleting Appointments

Note that you can use the Talking Calendar to organize your appointments as well.

When you first load Talking Clock each morning (such as by using the Autoload feature), it will announce all appointments for the day.   This serves as a helpful reminder of what you have planned for the day.

An alarm dialog will appear to announce alarms as well.   You can then choose to put off the alarm, much like a snooze button on a clock radio.   You can specify, using Settings, both the amount of time prior to an appointment the alarm will go off and the default time to put off alarms.

Note: Alarms that are put off are not remembered once you exit Talking Clock. Put off alarms also do not appear in the appointment list in the Alarm dialog.

When you are done editing your appointment book, press OK to save changes or Cancel to cancel them.

Using Appointment Books

An appointment book is a file which contains your appointments.   If different users use the same machine, they may each want a separate appointment book.   With Talking Clock you can maintain separate appointment books, and copy appointments between them.   You can also import any alarms you may have created in the Talking Clock as appointments.

Creating New Appointment Books
Opening Appointment Books
Saving Appointment Books
Holidays

Creating Appointment Books

You can create a new <u>appointment book</u> by choosing New from the File menu n the Alarm dialog.   If you've made changes to the currently loaded appointment book, you'll be prompted to save it first.   A new appointment book has no appointments defined.

Opening Appointment Books

To open an existing appointment book, choose Open... from the File menu in the Alarm dialog   As above, if you've made changes to the currently loaded appointment book, you will be asked to save changes first. The title of the Alarm dialog reflects the currently loaded appointment book.

Saving Appointment Books

To save the currently loaded <u>appointment book</u>, choose Save from the File menu in the Alarm dialog.   If you haven't given it a name yet, you'll be prompted to give it a name and to specify where to save it.

If you'd like to save an appointment book under a new name, choose Save As...   You'll be prompted to supply a name and specify the directory to save the appointment book under.   If you choose the name of an existing appointment book, it will be overwritten with the appointments you're saving.   For this reason, you'll be asked for confirmation if you choose an existing name.   This option will not remove or alter the appointment book with the currently loaded appointment book's previous name.

The Save As... option allows you to choose Appointment Book or Holiday file as the file type.   See <u>Holidays</u> for details on Holiday files.

The Save As.... option also allows you to make the appointment book the default appointment book.   The default appointment book is automatically loaded when Talking Clock is loaded.   This default applies to Talking Calendar as well.

Holidays

Although Talking Clock comes with a standard set of holidays that are automatically announced the first time Talking Clock is loaded during a day, you can modify the holiday file.

Holiday files are intended for appointments that rarely change but are important.   In addition to the usual holidays, you may want to add birthdays or anniversaries to the holiday file.

The holidays are by default stored in TCAL.HOL, but you can change this.   You can open the holiday file like any standard appointment book.   Just choose Holiday file as the file type.   You'll be in holiday mode, and instead of having the standard appointment types, you'll have types for various holidays.   Holidays are created just like standard appointments.   When you're finished, use the Save As option to save the holidays.   You can save the file under a different name--and if you check the Make Default button, this file will become the default holiday file for Talking Calendar and Talking Clock.

The same holiday file is used by Talking Clock and Talking Calendar.

Creating New Appointments

To create a new appointment, click on the New... button.   This will display the Appointment dialog.   By default, the new appointment will be for the day shown in the Alarms dialog, but you can change this in the Appointment dialog.

You can also create a new appointment by selecting an empty time slot and choosing Edit..., or by double-clicking on it.

You can specify the following settings when you create or edit an appointment:

Setting	Function
Message	The message will be displayed when the appointment is listed. Also, when the alarm is announced, this message will be displayed. If you have the speech synthesis module installed, the message will be read as well when the appointment is announced. The message can be anything you want which describes the appointment, such as "Meet with Joe."
Frequency	Determines how often the alarm will be announced. You can choose once-only, daily, weekly, weekdays, weekends, monthly, or yearly.
Type	Determines the type of appointment. This setting determines how the appointment is announced, and which icon represents it in Talking Calendar.
Date	Determines what day or days the appointment is on. Depending on the frequency, not all day options be selectable. For instance, for a monthly appointment only the day of the month can be selected. The other date settings are ignored.
Time	Determines the time of day the appointment is. If the appointment doesn't have a specific time (such as a birthday or holiday), you may use any time. You can adjust the time by sliding the slider or clicking on the arrows on either side of it.
Duration	Determines how long an appointment is. Use the slider to change this. The display is in hours:minutes format.
Action	Determines what Talking Clock does when it announces the alarm. "Announce only" will announce the appointment's type and time. "Play media element" allows you to specify a sound or video to be played. "Run program" allows you to run any Windows application when the appointment's time arrives. Press the Sound... or Program... button to change the sound or application, respectively.

When you've selected all the appointment attributes, press OK to keep them or Cancel to abandon any changes you've made.

Editing Appointments

To edit an appointment, select the appointment from the list in the Alarms dialog and press Edit....   This will display the Appointment dialog.   You can change the settings as described in Creating New Appointments.

You can also edit an appointment by double-clicking on the appointment.

Deleting Appointments

To delete an appointment, select it from the list in the Alarms dialog and press the Delete button.   Once an appointment is deleted it cannot be retrieved.

Saying the Time

The Say Time button lets you make Talking Clock tell the time whenever you want.   If you want the time told to you on a regular basis, specify a <u>Chime</u> and choose the "Say time" option.

Saying the Date

The Say Date button lets you make Talking Clock tell the time whenever you want.   If you want the date told to you on a regular basis, specify a <u>Chime</u> and choose the "Say date" option.

Saying Your Schedule

The Say Schedule button lets you review today's schedule.

Changing Preferences

The Preferences dialog allows you to customize certain aspects of Talking Clock for your uses.

Setting	Effect
Put off alarms...	Specifies how many minutes, by default, alarms will be put off. You will be able to override this setting when the alarm is announced.
Announce alarms...	Specifies how many minutes before an alarm's time it will be announced. This is useful if you want "advance warning" for appointments.
Repeat alarms...	If checked, all the alarms set to go off on the current day will be announced each time Talking Clock loads. Normally, they are announced only the first time Talking Clock loads on a given day.
Check old alarms...	If checked, Talking Clock will remind you of alarms that were set to go off before the morning of the current day. Normally, Talking Clock reminds you of alarms for the current day only. This setting's effect will be noticed most if you don't run Talking Clock for several days, then load it.
Hot key...	Specifies which key (or mouse action) will cause Talking Clock to say the time. The hot key will work no matter which Windows application you are using. Any key or mouse button, modified by holding down shift, control, or alt, can be used as the hot key, except Tab, Shift-Tab, Enter, Escape, and Backspace. To specify the hot key, activate the hot key control using Tab or the mouse, then press the key or mouse button you want the hot key to be. To specify no hot key, press Backspace.
Voice setup	Lets you choose which voice Talking Clock uses to announce alarms in Talking Clock.
Face setup	Lets you choose which animated face Talking Clock uses to announce alarms in Talking Clock. You can choose No Face with this option if you do not want an animated face.
Autoload/Don't load	Turns autoloading on and off. If on, Talking Clock will load whenever you start Windows.
Time Display Formats	These settings allow you to specify how the time will be displayed by Talking Clock when it is an icon and when it is shown normally. Select a format from the lists, or type in your own. See Time Display Formats for information on the format "pictures."
Normal Icon	If this option is selected, Talking Clock's icon will have a caption beneath it, like most Windows icons. Normally, Talking Clock doesn't display this caption.
Fonts and Effects	This button lets you change the font, size, style, and color for the currently-shown window state. The example shows what the selected font and format will look like. The normal and minimized options are entirely separate.

Time Display Formats

You can specify a custom date and time format used in Talking Clock by entering a format string.   To specify these formats, you create time and date "pictures," similar to formatting strings in Microsoft Excel. An example of a formatted time will appear.   See <u>Time Format Examples</u> for examples of different time formats.

The following are characters that can appear in time and date pictures:

Characters	Effect
h	Hour (12-hour format)
hh	Hour with preceding zero
H	Hour (24-hour format)
HH	Hour (24) with preceding zero
m	Minutes, if after an hour, w/o zero. Otherwise, the month in numerical form (4/11/92)
mm	Month (04,11/92)
mmm	Month (Jan,., Feb.)
mmmm	Month (January, February)
d	Day (03, 14)
dd	Day (3, 14)
ddd	Weekday (Mon., Tue.)
dddd	Weekday (Monday, Tuesday)
yy	Year (92)
yyyy	Year (1992)
a	a or p
aa	am or pm
_	Line break. This can be used to put different parts of the time or date on different lines.

Note that a, m's, and d's can be capitalized to cause the resulting string to be captialized.

Other characters in the format string, such as : or -, can be used between these special date and time strings.   If you'd like to have a special character appear, precede it with a backslash (\).   To include a backslash, include two backslashes (\\).

Time Format Examples

All these examples show how various time and date format strings show August 9, 1992 at 3:09pm:

Format String	Resulting Display
h:mm aa	3:09 pm
HHmm	1509
m/d/yy	8/9/92
mm/dd/y	08/09/92
mmm d, yyyy	Aug. 9, 1992
dd MMMM yy	09 AUGUST 92
mmmm d, yyyy h:mm a	August 9, 1992 3:09 p
\D\a\y: d/m/y	Day: 8/9/92
\Hour: h:mm	Hour: 3:09
mmmm d, yyyy_h:mm a	August 9, 1992 3:09 p

Changing Other Preferences

In addition to the settings available through the Settings... dialog, additional settings can be selected from the Talking Clock system menu.

Setting	Effect
Always on Top	Talking Clock's window always appear above other windows. This is useful to keep the time always visible.
Hide controls	Hides the four buttons in Talking Clock's main window, as well as Talking Clock's caption (title) bar. When they are hidden, you can still access their functionality by using their keyboard equivalents. Or, you can select the Hide controls option again to bring them back into view. Once the controls are hidden, you can restore them by double-clicking on Talking Clock. When the controls are hidden, you can move Talking Clock by clicking anywhere on it and dragging it around. *Note:* You can click on the time area of Talking Clock with the right mouse button, or double-click with the left mouse button, to turn Hide Controls on and off.

Appointment Book

A file which contains appointments.   You can have multiple appointment books on one machine--for instance, one for each user, or one for different types of appointments.

Media Element

A media element is any multimedia file, such as a sound file (waveform or MIDI), a video clip (such as AVI), or a Windows bitmap.   If you have the speech synthesis module, text files are also treated as media elements--they will be read by the synthesis engine whern played.   Talking Clock in general allows any type of media element to be specified when you can choose a media element for a chime or appointment.