Neon Softworks' Clock of Doom

User's Guide

Clock of Doom , Version 1.00
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Loran W. Richardson
Neon Softworks
7083 Fairways Drive
Longmont, CO 80503-8873
(303) 939-9743
CIS# 70441,3037

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Introduction
Neon Softworks' Clock of Doom (also known as COD) is a clock that has the unusual characteristic of not telling the time. Instead, it tells how much the U.S. military has spent so far this year on a second by second basis. Or it will tell you how many acres of the world's irreplaceable forest are being destroyed while you are staring at the clock. If that's not to your liking, tell it to display the U.S. federal budget deficit. Watch the deficit grow before your eyes! Still not impressed? Display the barrels of oil being used by automobiles this year and watch the total grow by staggering numbers as you sip a cup of coffee. Too depressed now? OK, have it display something more uplifting. Something like the number of miles ridden on bicycles so far this year. Or make up your own clock. Whatever suits your mood, Clock of Doom will display it.

Packing List
The following file list identifies the files that should be included in the COD100.ZIP file:
ZIP
        CLKODOOM.EXE   COD executable file
        CLKODOOM.INI   COD initialization file
        CLKODOOM.WRI   This file

Installation
Clock of Doom can be installed anywhere, though it is recommended that you create a subdirectory off of your Windows directory. To install it, just extract CLKODOOM.EXE and CLKODOOM.INI from COD100.ZIP and copy them to the desired directory. Please note that COD does not require it's directory be in your PATH statement. However, if it is not, in your path, you must supply the path on the RUN command in Program Manager.

Using Clock of Doom
You can run COD from the Windows Program Manager 'File/Run' command or add it to one of your Program Manager groups. If you want it start every time you run Windows, you can add it to your RUN= line in WIN.INI or your StartUp group in Program Manager.

The first time you start COD, the initial clock should be Pentagon which displays the Pentagon's spending for the year. (At the time this was written, that is about 105 billion dollars in 3½ months time!) The clock should appear in the lower right hand corner of your screen.

To access the Clock of Doom menus, either click on the System Menu (the little bar in the top left corner of COD) or click the right mouse button anywhere in the COD window. The System Menu contains the COD Setup and About menu selections in addition to the normal System Menu commands like Switch To and Move. Right clicking brings up the COD application menu which contains the same Setup and About selections as the System menu as well as an Exit selection. If you are fortunate enough to have a three button mouse, (and everyone should have one) pressing the middle mouse button anywhere in the COD window will allow you to bypass the menus and go straight to the Setup dialog box.

To change the clock that is displayed, select Setup using any of the methods described above. The Clock of Doom Setup dialog box will appear. This dialog box lists the clocks that are available for display and allows changing some COD parameters that affect how Clock of Doom is displayed.

Scroll through the list of clocks and highlight the desired clock. While scrolling, the Description text box will show the first 35 or so characters of the description that will appear above the clock display. This is an aid to help determine which clock is chosen, since there may be many clocks with similar titles. Once a clock has been selected, double click on the selection or click OK to leave the dialog and display the clock.

There are two other parameters that can be set from the Setup dialog. These are: Restore Position and Keep on Top. When checked, the restore position checkbox causes the COD window position to be saved in ClkODoom.INI. If you do not like the default position of COD, you should check this box so that you will not have to reposition the COD window every time you start it.

The Keep Clock on Top check box will cause COD to remain on top of other windows, even when it is not the active window. This allows you to view COD while working in other applications that would normally hide it. This parameter is also saved in ClkODoom.INI so that you do not have to recheck it the next time COD is activated. This parameter has a side effect that you may or may not find desirable. When set to Keep Clock on Top, COD stays visible even when screen savers like After Dark are running.

Adding a New Clock
To add a new clock to Clock of Doom, follow the instructions above to select the Setup dialog box. From Setup, click the Add... button to display the Add dialog box. This box has 5 parameters. The first parameter is the title of the clock. Enter any title that is descriptive enough to let you find the clock in the Setup list box but is 10 or less characters long. Note that if you enter the name of an existing clock here, you will overwrite that clock.

The second parameter is the description. This is the string that will be displayed in the top half of the Clock of Doom display. You can enter anything you like here. The maximum title length is 100 characters. However, if your string has many wide characters, (like m or w) they may not all display on the face of COD. If this happens, you should use the Modify dialog box to shorten the description.

The third parameter in the Add dialog is the initial value of the clock at the beginning of the calendar year. If there is no initial value, enter 0. See the examples at the end of this section.

The fourth parameter is the increment value of your clock. This is the number of units that are added each time the display is updated. Again, see the examples below.

The final parameter is the update rate. This is how often the increment occurs. The default value is every second but you may also choose minutes, hours or days.

Example Clocks

1)   In this first example, the settings for the default Pentagon clock are described. To follow this example you may want to select the Pentagon clock from the Setup dialog and then click Modify... to see the settings. First, notice that the title of this clock is '*Pentagon*' and the description was entered as '*1992 Pentagon Spending in Dollars*'. Now for the slightly more difficult parts. From newspapers or magazines, we find that the 1992 Pentagon budget is 350 billion dollars for 1992. That's 350,000,000,000 dollars. (This is not an exact number of course. No one really knows how much the Pentagon spends.) Since they had not spent any 1992 money as of 12:00:01 AM of January 1st, 1992, the Initial Value of the clock is 0. To find the Increment we first divide 350 billion by 365, the number of days in a year. (COD ignores leap years and such since most clocks will contain statistical data which will probably not be 100% accurate.) This would give us $958,904,109.59 per day. We could enter this number and check the Day button for the Update Rate. But this is a large number. Let's divide it by 24, the number of hours per day. This gives us $39,954,337.90 per hour! Still a huge number. Lets divide by 60, the number of minutes per hour. This leaves $665,905.63 per minute. We can go further and divide by 60 again. Now we get $11,098.43 per second. Whew! Round this to the nearest dollar and that is what is entered in the Increment box. Since this is dollars per second, the Second button is pushed in the Update Rate box.

2)   This example uses data from The 1992 World Almanac and Book of Facts. In 1990, the FBI reported that there were 14,475,600 crimes of all types committed in the U.S. Since that is the most recent data, we will just assume it to be true for 1992 as well. Dividing by 365 gives 39,659.18 crimes per day. Dividing by 24 gives 1,652.47 crimes per hour. Dividing by 60 gives 27.54 crimes per minute. Round this up to 28 crimes per minute. To add this clock, enter a suitable title and description, enter 0 for the initial value and 28 for the increment and click Minute for the update rate.

3)   World population at the end of 1991 was 5,402,260,000 and is expected to grow by about 69,260,000 people in 1992. Divide by 365 and get 189,753 new people per day. Divide by 24 and get 7906 people per hour. Divide by 60 and get 132 people per minute. Again divide by 60 and get 2.2 people per second. This has to be rounded to 2 people per second. To add this clock, enter a suitable title and description. Then enter 5402260000 for the initial value. Enter 2 for the increment and click the Second button OR enter 132 for initial value and click the Minute button for Update Rate. Either way will give OK results but the 132 people per minute setting is more accurate by 12 people per minute. However, the 2 people per second rate is much more dramatic looking.

Limitations
At present, Clock of Doom has a limit of 4096 characters for the clock information kept in the clkodoom.ini file. That is an estimated 50 different clocks, depending on how long the clock descriptions are. If this is too few, let us know.

Because of the way that Windows implements timers, there is no gaurantee that a clock will be updated every second. If you are running a task that consumes a large amount of CPU time, there is a possibility that several timer ticks in a row will not even be sent to COD. In such a case, the COD display will not always reflect the true value of what is displayed.   There are ways around this, but they generally consume too much of Windows time and would tend to slow down your other applications. Besides, most of the COD displays are general and represent an average over time of an estimated value. However, COD will correct itself every five minutes. If Windows has neglected to send some timer ticks to COD, the COD display will make a bigger jump than it normally does. Don't worry about it. It happens only once every five minutes and is a perfectly normal occurance.

Windows 3.1 has a limit of 32 timers that way be run at one time. This means that at most, 32 instances of COD may be run at one time. You will probably not get that many if any other timers or clocks are being run.

If you have more than a few COD clocks running at one time, you will notice that your system is slowing down. Each clock uses some of Windows system resources and time. There are 2 ways around the problem. Either close some of the COD clocks or other applications or buy a faster CPU.

How to Register and License the Applications

With the exceptions listed below, Neon Softworks' COD, may be considered freeware. This means that you are free to use COD without restriction and without payment of fees of any sort. You may also distribute COD as long as it is distributed intact. i.e. all files in the original COD100.ZIP file. However, should your conscience bother you after seeing COD in operation, donations of five dollars or more will be gladly accepted. Half of all donations will be given to The Nature Conservancy to help support biodiversity. (The other half will probably be spent on Compuserve, answering questions about this program.) Please send all donations to Neon Softworks at the address on the first page of this document.

Exceptions to the Freeware Policy

If you are a United States citizen and will be of voting age by November 4, 1992 and answer *yes* to any of the following questions, COD is **_not_** freeware and use of COD requires that you register the product by mailing your check for $10.00 to

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Half of all registration fees will be given to The Nature Conservancy.

a) Are you a registered Republican?

b) Did you vote for Ronald Reagan or George Bush in the 1980, 1984 or 1988 Presidential election?

c) Are you considering voting for George Bush in the 1992 Presidential election?

d) Do you favor restricting abortion rights?

e) Do you favor the enactment of laws which would restrict the abilities of gays or lesbians to file job or housing discrimination claims based on their sexual preferences?

f) Do you support indescriminate logging of old growth forest areas?

g) Do you spell potato with an 'e' as in potatoe?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are required to register and pay for your use of COD.

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In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni.