

CALIBRA - The Clock Module

Introduction

The CALIBRA package consists of two modules, called Clock and Clock Editor. The Clock Editor (registered users only) is designed to enhance the usability and enjoyment of the Clock module by allowing you to modify existing clocks and even create your own.

The Clock is very easy to use, and is fully scalable. That is, the clock fits the window regardless of the window's size, with all the details reproduced as closely as your computer's display will allow.

A useful feature of this clock is its ability to regularly reset the system clock, to keep it more accurate. This time correction feature is very easy to use, and is explained fully below, under **Settings | SetTime**.

Another feature of this clock is its ability to function as a screen saver. After the first time you run the Clock, a file called *calibra.que* is created. This file contains the names of all clocks that come with CALIBRA. When the screen saver operates, each clock in turn is displayed, covering the entire screen. You can change *calibra.que* with any text editor, and so make your own clock queue. Of course, every name must correspond to a valid clock.

The Menu Items

The menu items are explained in detail below.

File | New Clock

This menu item brings up the standard file dialog box so that you can select a new clock to run. Just double click on a clock name e.g. *starry.clk* to load it into Clock and see it work.

File | Exit

This will exit you from the Clock module. Any settings that you have changed will still be in effect when you start Clock again.

Settings | Set Time

Selecting this menu item brings up a dialog box with separate input boxes for hours, minutes, seconds plus 2 'radio' buttons for am and pm. Simply type in the required values, click on 'am' or 'pm' if necessary and press <Enter> to set the time.

A good idea is to set the time 10 seconds or so ahead of your reference time (your watch for example) then press the *OK* button just before the two times coincide.

If you press *Cancel*, the system clock is unchanged.

This is how the time correction feature of CALIBRA works:

If you set the time more than once during a particular day (or if it has been 28 days or more since you last set it), time correction is disabled. In other words, CALIBRA will just display the time and make no attempt to keep it accurate.

If you set the time more than 1 day and less than 28 days after you previously set it, time correction is calibrated and enabled. This means that the program makes an adjustment to the system time when CALIBRA is started up for the first time on any given day.

It doesn't matter if you run and close down CALIBRA several times a day, or if you do not run CALIBRA at all for several days, it is smart enough to take account of this when resetting the system time.

Sounds complicated? All you really have to remember is to set the clock once, wait a few days, and then set it again. That's all there is to it!

Settings | Set Alarm

CALIBRA has a basic alarm facility. The dialog box that comes up allows you to

- turn the alarm on or off by clicking the appropriate 'radio' button.
- set the time of the alarm, just like setting the time in Settings | Set Time.
- set the number of beeps and the time interval between them.

If no alarm seems to sound, check the Windows Control Panel, and double click on the *Sound* icon. The *Enable System Sounds* check box should be set. In any case, the title bar of Clock (if visible) will flash on and off after the alarm has triggered.

If you have a sound card installed in your computer, you can associate a .wav file with the system event *Default Beep* to make the alarm make a more interesting sound.

Settings | Second Hand

Selecting this menu item will place a tick (check) beside it and start displaying a moving second hand on the face of the clock. Selecting the menu item again will remove the tick and remove the second hand.

Animated vector graphics such as a moving second hand are fairly heavy on system resources, so on some systems a rectangular area will flicker each time the hand moves.

Four things affect this:

- i) processor speed (the faster the better)
- ii) math co-processor (helps do the calculations quicker)
- ii) a lower screen resolution (VGA will be better than SVGA)
- iii) a graphics accelerator card (redraws the screen quicker).

Settings | Title Bar

This menu item removes and puts back the title bar and menu. If the title bar and menu are removed, the window frame remains so the clock can still be resized.

To put back the title bar and menu, you simply click anywhere inside the window.

Settings | Always on Top

This menu item sets whether or not the clock window stays above all other windows, all the time.

If the menu item is ticked (checked), the clock window can only be obscured by its own dialog boxes (or perhaps another clock program!).

Otherwise, the clock window behaves like an ordinary window, being partly or completely hidden depending which other windows are being used.

Settings | US Date

This menu item determines the format of the date displayed below the icon when Clock is minimized. If ticked (checked), the date is in the form mm/dd/yyyy otherwise it is dd/mm/yyyy.

Settings | 24 Hour Time

This menu item determines whether or not the 24 hour time format is used for setting the system time and setting the alarm. If ticked (checked), the 24 hour format is used.

Settings | Screen Saver

This menu item brings up a dialog box in which you can set the screen saver parameters. By typing a number in the **Delay** edit box, you can set the number of minutes of inactivity before the screen saver starts. Typing in a value of 0 turns the screen saver off i.e. it will never start. Typing a number in the **Change time** edit box will set how long each clock in the clock queue will be displayed, in seconds.

Help | Hints and Tips

This menu item starts the Write word processor and loads it with this file.

Help | Readme

This menu item starts NotePad and loads it with vendinfo.diz. This type of file is part of the new VENDINFO standard in shareware, which takes the place of a number of other files such as readme.doc, vendor.doc etc.

Help | REGISTER

This menu item starts Write with a file which contains easy instructions for registering CALIBRA.

About CALIBRA

This menu item brings up a small dialog box with the version number, a copyright notice and the name of the author. The author's electronic addresses are also listed i.e.

CompuServe and InterNet.

Clock Files

CALIBRA gives you considerable freedom to use various clock files, both for the clock and screensaving functions. To avoid trouble, there are a number of points to keep in mind:

- 1) All *.clk* files must reside in the same directory that contains *calibra.exe*.
- 2) The screensaver file *calibra.que* must contain at least one clock name.
- 3) Every clock name that appears in *calibra.que* must correspond to a clock file in the CALIBRA directory. For example, the clock name *chess* corresponds to the filename *chess.clk*. This includes clock files that you create yourself with the Clock Editor.
- 4) In *calibra.que*, there must be one clock name per line, with no blank lines or extra characters.

If there is a problem, you can always delete *calib.dat* and *calibra.que*. Then, the next time you run CALIBRA, it will re-create the *calibra.que* file using all the *.clk* filenames it can find in the CALIBRA directory. (In V1.4, this will not include *.clk* files you create yourself).