

all about attoClock-

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Wednesday, September 22, 1993

attoClock- 1.3

The way-tiny, minuscule, little clock program.

ATTENTION

Please take note of my new Internet address.

What it is

attoClock is a very small application (7566 bytes) for System 7 that displays a digital clock in a small window. It has intentionally few features. It displays the hour and minute, respecting the time format you have set in your control panels.

It doesn't display seconds or the date or ring chimes or display movies or pictures or animations. Just the time.

The motivation for creating attoClock was that I like having a clock on my screen, but I don't want to give up a lot of memory or disk space for the function. I could use the Alarm Clock desk accessory, but it has a larger window, and, if placed at the bottom of the screen, must be moved to access its extra functions. Also, I distrust the extensions and control panels that put a clock in the menu bar. Even with the best efforts of the authors, conflicts among complex extensions occur. A small application that obeys Apple's programming guidelines is the least obtrusive way to provide a simple function like this.

To keep attoClock as small as possible, it supports System 7 (including 7.0.1 and 7.1 and presumably future versions) only. It will silently quit if it is launched under earlier systems.

The name is taken from the metric-system prefix atto-, which means one quintillionth (10⁻¹⁸). That's very small, but it should not be confused with an attaBoy, which is a small word of praise.

Installation

attoClock may be placed anywhere on your hard disc or floppy disk (!). A particularly good place for it is in the Startup Items folder within your System folder. Placing it or its alias there will cause the program to open whenever you start your system. If you used a previous version of attoClock, you need to throw its preferences file away if you want it to have its new icon. This step is optional.

Other features

Drag the small window by clicking and dragging anywhere inside it. attoClock will remember where you place the window and open it there on subsequent usage. I like to put my clock in the lower right hand corner of my screen, just below the Trash icon. If you really, really want attoClock to tell you the date and

seconds, choose "About attoClock" from the Apple menu. To change the way attoClock displays the time, use the General control panel (Date & Time is the control panel to use for System 7.1). Your changes will be visible when the minute next changes.

If attoClock runs out of memory or receives an AppleEvent that it doesn't understand, it will notify you. For a memory problem, it will also quit. It understands only the "quit" AppleEvent. attoClock brings the Finder to the front, but if the Finder launches other applications in the Startup Items folder, then one of them will come to the front instead.

To turn Unplugged-VCR mode on or off, choose the Unplugged VCR command in the File menu. This mode dishonors the evil genius who decided that 1) VCRs should not have battery backup for their clocks, 2) that a flashing 12:00 AM was a good way to indicate that the power had been off (how about a steady 88:88 instead?), and 3) that the human interface for setting the clock on a VCR should be cryptic, opaque, and onerous.

Limitations and requirements

attoClock uses features that at present are available only in System 7 (this includes 7.0, 7.0.1, and 7.1). It should work on any Macintosh computer that runs System 7. If it doesn't, let me know. attoClock has been briefly tested on a Macintosh II running System 7.0.1, and a Macintosh IICx and a PowerBook 100 running System 7.1.

If what you have on the Clipboard leaves under about 60 bytes free in attoClock's memory partition, it will fail and crash with a system error. This is an inherent limitation of the Macintosh operating system and programs cannot work around it. You can avoid this occurrence by putting attoClock or its alias into your Startup Items folder (within the System folder). Then attoClock will launch when your Macintosh starts up and nothing is on the Clipboard.

Distribution and disclaimer

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~ attoClock may be distributed only unmodified and only if accompanied by this document.

Ñ If you like and use attoClock, send me a fax or e-mail and tell me.

In consideration of the fact that attoClock is a freebie, the author disclaims all responsibility for the program's failure. If it ever fails, let me know the circumstances of the failure by e-mail or fax, and I might fix it if I have the time.

That we need disclaimers on free software proves that we live in a sick society.

Version history

1.3 Added Unplugged-VCR mode and a specific type and creator for attoClock and its preferences file. Most of the increased size of the application is due to the icons, not the addition of Unplugged-VCR mode. The application uses no more memory than it ever did.

1.2.5 Narrowed the range of vulnerability to the Clipboard to about 60 bytes.

1.2.4 Changed resource and code to prevent the window's brief appearance in its default location before moving to the user-specified location. Released generally.

1.2.3 Set the 'Get Front Clicks' bit so that the window can be moved in a single action even when attoClock is in the background. Not publicized.

1.2.2 Changed from ReleaseResource to DisposeHandle to dispose of the menu bar block returned by GetNewMBar. Not publicized as an update because the bug's only consequence seems to be the loss of a few bytes.

1.2.1 Moved call that brings the Finder to the front from EventLoop() to the handler of the open-application AppleEvent. Added (mostly for thoroughness) code to check for the presence of the Process Manager before using the Process Manager to bring the Finder to the front. Not publicized as an update because no version of the System Software has the features checked for in version 1.2 while lacking the Process Manager.

1.2 Completely redesigned memory management. AppleEvent-awareness added. Right-justification of time in window added. Brings Finder to the front rather than remaining the active application at launch time.

1.1.2 Enabled formatting unreadable diskettes. Not released.

1.1.1 Removed needless Edit menu. Not released.

1.1 Added date to about box. Not released.

1.0.1 Changed file permission from Write to Read in the preferences reading function. Also added time to about box and setting the cursor to the arrow on activate events. Not released.

1.0 Initial release.

Acknowledgements

Ñ Tim Dierks <absurd@apple.com> helped with information about

the memory manager.

Ñ Russell E. Owen <owen@astro.washington.edu> suggested formatting the time right-justified.

Ñ Sarah Pradt <sp29@cornell.edu > suggested bringing the Finder to the front.

Ñ Bob Lougheed <lougheed@qmserv.eric.edu> helped with testing.

Ñ Someone wrote me suggesting adding a specific icon to attoClock, but somehow that person's message vanished from my files. If that person will write again, I will amend this acknowledgement.

Ñ My friend Tony Cuevas suggested Unplugged-VCR mode.

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