

KeyNote

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A keyboard preferences setting utility for Windows 3.0

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If you're not too new to Windows, you've probably used the Control Panel Keyboard Settings (hereafter referred to as simply "Control Panel"). It works well enough for varying the keyboard repeat rate (how quickly a key held down repeats), however conspicuously absent is a control to set the delay time (how long until the key begins to repeat). It took me about two minutes of typing in Windows to realize that the keyboard was not set up the way I preferred. So, I'd start "DOS Prompt" and run a utility to set the keyboard to my liking, then return to Windows. This was alright until I started using Windows more and more, both at work and at home, after which it became a nuisance.

So, out of necessity and for fun, I wrote KeyNote. KeyNote gives you all the amenities of the Control Panel (a slider for repeat rate, plus a "test" area to try out your setting), plus the all-important delay time setting (another slider). After setting your keyboard preferences, you may elect to save these new settings (by pressing the "OK" button, double-clicking on the System Menu box, or choosing "Close" from the System Menu), or use these new settings for this session only (by pressing the "Cancel" button).

After you have gotten comfortable with KeyNote, you may wish to take advantage of its special "set only" mode. In this mode, KeyNote will simply retrieve your saved settings and tell the keyboard about them; the program window will never appear. There are two ways to accomplish this. One way is to add a switch to the command line. The switch is -s, and may be used in the File/Properties dialog (in the "Command Line" edit box) or right when you start Windows from the DOS prompt, e.g. win \windows\keynote.exe -s. Another (and I think better) way to accomplish the same thing is to tell KeyNote to load, but not run. You can do this by choosing File/Run from the Program Manager and checking the "Run minimized" box (a bit of a hassle), or by adding KeyNote to the load= line in the win.ini file. This last way is my favorite. By going this route, your keyboard preferences are set as Windows initializes, and you're ready to go straight to work. You never even have to bring up KeyNote, unless you wish to change settings later.

There is only one known anomaly in using KeyNote, which actually has nothing to do with the program. Windows keeps a variable called "KeyboardSpeed" in the win.ini file. When you use the Control Panel, this is where your setting is saved. Windows reads this setting during initialization and sets the speed to it, and then sets delay to a setting which corresponds to a delay time of 1 (second position from the left on the slider) in KeyNote. Somehow, the Control Panel remembers the "KeyboardSpeed" variable *as it was at initialization*. So, even though KeyNote uses the same variable in win.ini to keep its repeat rate setting, the Control Panel never re-reads win.ini to see if the number changed. Therefore, if you use the Control Panel to set the repeat rate after you have already used KeyNote, the Control Panel will report the repeat rate as it was at start up, not necessarily what you set it to be in KeyNote. Avoid the problem by not using the Control Panel for this purpose.

Keynote is written in Borland C++ 2.0. I would like to thank my colleagues Dave Brumbaugh and Dave Tipton for help with program ideas and testing. If you have any comments or questions about KeyNote, you may contact me by mail or on CompuServe.

I hope you find KeyNote useful. This program is copyrighted, but free. When passing it around, please leave the .ZIP file intact, which includes the program and this document.

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