

CheapBeep™

A SysBeep Replacement Control Panel Device

v1.0a

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Welcome!

Here is an amusing way to add variety and personality to your Macintosh. Now you can easily choose several sounds to be randomly selected from as a replacement for the old SysBeep.

CheapBeep is a Control Panel device file for System 4.1 and later. These systems have a Control Panel desk accessory which can open files of type 'cdev' and allow them to display information and accept commands through the Control Panel window.

Installation

To enable CheapBeep, move it into your system folder. Also, at least one folder with one or more uncompressed MacNifty™ created SoundCap™ files in it must be copied into the system folder as well. That's all!

Remember, your system folder will contain (in addition to old stuff):

1. CheapBeep.
2. one or more folders, each with one or more sound files in it.

Operation

Once installed, bring up the Control Panel desk accessory. You should see the CheapBeep icon in the list of icons in the left of the window. If you don't, re-check your installation steps. If there is no list of icons at all, you do not have a correct version of the system. You can get the correct version from your friendly Apple dealer or a BBS.

Next, click on the CheapBeep icon. The right side of the window will change to a display of the CheapBeep title, some buttons, two lists, and some status indicators. The On/Off buttons determine whether CheapBeep is enabled. The buttons labeled 1-4 determine at what rate to play the sounds. The first list displays all the highest level folders within the system folder. Select a folder which has the sounds you want.

Once a folder has been selected, the second list will display all of the SoundCap™ files in that folder. Select by clicking, shift-clicking, click and drag, etc., the sounds you want. You can hear the selected sounds by pressing 'Enter'. If they sound too slow, select a lower number from the rate buttons. If they sound too fast, select a larger number. If some sounds are correct, but others are not, the sounds must need different rates and you will have to change your selection so that the sounds all use the same rate. If the On/Off control is on, the total memory used is displayed at the bottom left of the window. The maximum memory that can be used is displayed to the right.

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When you are satisfied with the selections, make sure CheapBeep is on and close the Control Panel. If an alert comes up, telling you of a problem with how much memory is used, try again, using less memory. Now, restart your Macintosh.

To quickly try the new 'beeps' out, select Page Setup from the File menu of the Finder and click outside of the modal dialog box.

Notes

CheapBeep started as my desire to have a feature similar to the 'Sound' Control Panel device for the Macintosh II on my Macintosh Plus. My friend Ken Butler suggested the multiple-file/random-selection concept and that was enough to get me fired up and write it. Jim Freidlander of Apple Tech Support also suggested maintaining user interface guidelines by having the text of the radio buttons sensitive to mouse-downs. Not all the other devices do this.

One area that may not be as bullet-proof as possible is the memory used limit. The maximum memory available value displayed is an arbitrary number that is stored as a STR# resource ID #1 in CheapBeep. If you want to change it, you may, but be careful. If too much memory is used by the sounds, the System will crash at boot-up ID=33.

To fix the problem:

1. boot with a floppy that has a System and Finder.
2. move CheapBeep out of the System Folder.
3. re-boot.
4. move CheapBeep back into the System Folder.
5. reselect the sounds, using less memory this time.
6. re-boot.

Now, concerning enhancements, the first thing I am going to do is add code to read compressed SoundCap files and the new SoundWave files. The compressed files require less disk space, and compressed and SoundWave files carry the rate information within them. I might add 'snd ' resource capability, but that entails all kinds of interface changes and hassles with how to move them around.