

Taskbar

COLLABORATORS

	<i>TITLE :</i> Taskbar		
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REVISION HISTORY

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Chapter 1

Taskbar

1.1 Taskbar 6

Amiga TaskBar Release 6.1

Please read this document to the end,
as it contains important information.

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Introduction	: What does it do?
Features	: What features does it have?
Installation	: How to install it.
Functions	: How to do everything.
Why don't I..	: Why I didn't do certain things.
Troubleshooting	: When things go wrong.
Changes	: Changes since version 5.3.
Future	: Future plans.
History	: The story of Taskbar.
Thanks	: People involved with TaskBar.
Author	: How to contact the author.
Preferences	: Customising TaskBar.

Adding items to taskbar from installer scripts

TaskBar can

- Select windows
- Maximise windows
- Minimise windows
- Bring windows to front
- Panel windows horizontally
- Panel windows vertically
- Open on any public screen
- Launch any program
- Shrink itself TO a single button
- Minimise all windows
- Move windows off the TaskBar

Find out more about TaskBar at the TaskBar home page
<http://members.aol.com/ennals/taskbar.html>

Don't forget TO rate TaskBar6 on AmiNet

Simply send the following message to
aminet-server@wuarchive.wustl.edu

RATE util/wb/taskba61.lha 10

1.2 Introduction

Introduction!

More observant Amiga users may have noticed that Windows 95 has a nice little bar at the bottom of the screen called the Taskbar. This bar allows you to switch between active programs.

Although I prefer AmigaDos to WimpDos (Windows) I rather liked the taskbar and so I decided to write an Amiga version. I hope you like it.

TaskBar is Freeware. You may use it and distribute it freely, but if you like it, pass it on.

1.3 Features

Features!

- Completely font and screenmode sensitive
- Can open on ANY public screen
- Can maximise windows
- Can panel windows horizontally
- Can panel windows vertically
- Can minimise windows
- Preferences editor
- Add items to Start Menu from an installer script
- Uses resource tracking to close windows if it crashes
- Recognises new windows when opened
- Notifies when windows close
- Notifies when windows change their names
- Start button to launch programs
- Nameless windows given name of owner task
- Customisable number of buttons
- Configurable width or auto-sensing
- Customisable length of button strings

Many of the features of TaskBar were suggested by users.
If you have a suggestion or just want to say you like TaskBar

(always appreciated) then contact me.

1.4 Installation

Installation!

There is an installer script supplied for installing taskbar6, but if you want to install it manually here is how.

To make TaskBar start automatically.

```
> Simply copy TaskBar and TaskBar.info  
into WBStartup or wherever you want in your path,  
and then copy 'TaskBar4.prefs' into ENV: and ENVARC:
```

If you have WB2.0 you can just drag the icon into the WBStartup drawer and drag the prefs file into ENVARC: (usually in prefs)

```
> If you want to launch taskbar from user startup then add the following to  
s:User-Startup.  
cd [where taskbar is]  
run <>NIL: Taskbar
```

If you want to be able to edit TaskBar's preferences with the prefs editor (as opposed to editing the config file by hand) then you must copy TaskBarPrefs and TaskBarPrefs.info to Sys:Prefs.

If you do not do this then the 'Edit Preferences' option from TaskBar will not work.

To launch programs as if from workbench, TaskBar uses WBRUN. WBRUN is included in the TaskBar distribution.

1.5 Functions

Functions!

Amiga Taskbar can bring to front, minimise, maximise and panel any windows on the workbench screen.

TaskBar uses a set of qualifiers to manage windows. While it can take a while to learn them, it lets you work with windows very fast.

Bring to Front

```
> Simply left click on the window's button.
```

Maximise

> Click on the window's button with the right mouse button held down

Horizontally Maximise

> Click on a button with the left shift key held down.

Panel

> Click on both windows' buttons with the right mouse button held down
If you hold down the left shift key then panel will be vertical.

Minimise

> Click on a button with the right shift key held down.

Shrink or Grow TaskBar

> Click on the start button with the right mouse button held down

Select a non listed window.

> Click on Other and a button can be created for a window

Change the number of buttons.

> Select the Icon from Workbench and enter your desired number as the value for the BUTTONS tooltip. For a normal Hires or DblPal screen I recommend 4 or 6 buttons.

Force TaskBar to use button names of a preset length.

> Change the MAXCHARS tooltip. To let TaskBar make an educated guess (normal) bracket out the tooltip.

Force the width to a set value. (eg if using Autoscroll)

> Change the FIXWIDTH tooltip Bracket it out for full screen

Quit. (But why ?)

> Select the window. If you want to be sure not to click on a button, then use the right mouse button. Once the window is selected hit a key.

Launch a program.

> Click Start then select your desired program

Add a program to the start menu.

> Select TaskBar/"Edit Preferences" from the Start popup.
Click here for more info on setting prefs.

Look at the example file and you will see what I mean.

For further information about preferences read the preferences section.

1.6 troubleshooting

Troubleshooting!

Sometimes taskbar quits itself without me telling it to

> TaskBar uses a smart resource tracking system so that if it falls over (usually due to another task having a corrupt window) it closes all it's windows and libraries etc. If you know what window upset taskbar you can try adding it to the AVOID list.

(Note that this may not always work as taskbar may fall over while trying to find out if it should avoid the window)

Some programs I launch from TaskBar do not launch correctly.

- > Some programs need to be run as if from workbench. To do this you must use the shareware program WBRun. If you use Wbrun then you must put it in the CMD statement of the prefs file. eg
CMD:WBRun ProPage instead of CMD:ProPage

The text overflows from the buttons and looks messy.

- > Set the MAXCHARS tooltype to your desired name length.
The default value is only suitable for a screen width of 640 and a font of Topaz 8. If your settings are different then this tooltype MUST BE CHANGED.

Nothing appears on my buttons when I launch TaskBar from a script

- > Make sure that you cd to the TaskBar directory before launching TaskBar or it can't find it's icon.

Opening TaskBar on some screens causes a crash or other problems

- > Some badly coded programs don't like other programs opening windows on their screens. UYou will just have to not open on these screens.

When my selected program is launched from the start button, it can't find it's files.

- > Set the start item's DIR sttribute to the correct directory.

TaskBar says it can't find TaskBar.prefs.

- > Then you have to check if you got the TaskBar.prefs file in ENV: and ENVARC: or if you got something wrong with your path.

I can't select the TaskBar because I keep clicking on buttons.

- > Select it with the right mouse button.

I have MagicMenu and this stops TaskBar from sensing my right mouse button.

- > First select TaskBar with the Right Mouse Button.
Then do whatever you want to do.
MagicMenu will not interfere when TaskBar is selected.

When a window changes it's title, TaskBar doesn't notice.

- > To make TaskBar look at a window again, simply reselect it.

TaskBar misses off the first or last few characters of a window's title

- > It has to do this in order to fit it on the button.
TaskBar decides whether the start or end of the title is most important automatically.

Some windows need to be maximised twice for it to work properly.

- > This is the fault of the window owner, not taskbar.
While it is changing size it doesn't notice the message I have sent it to move to a new position.

TaskBar doesn't work properly with the new prefs file I have written.

- > If you send me the file by email I should be able to show you what you have done wrong in your prefs file.

If you have any problems not solved by this page then MAIL ME!

If you have problems then I really do want to know about them.

1.7 changes

Changes since v6

- > Bugfixes in TaskBarPrefs GUI
- > Removed harmless enforcer hit in AUTOSHIFT

Changes in v6 from v5.3

- > Preferences editor - by Guilherme Cirne
- > Start popup reorganised
- > Minimise All windows
Useful for clearing up cluttered screens.
- > Shift windows
Move or resize windows so they don't overlap with the taskbar.
- > Reload prefs
For use with preferences editor
- > Multiple screen support made more stable (thanks to Guilherme again)
Now works on more screens
- > Screen switching is faster
- > Bug in start menu that caused occasional ignorance of selections fixed
Thanks to the many people who spotted this one
- > No longer interrupts drag and drop operations when active window changes.
- > AutoFront made switchable. Default is off as AutoShift does all you need.
- > Other little tweaks and alterations

1.8 problems

Known Problems!

- > Most problems that you may experience with TaskBar are due to the owner of the window rather than taskbar. I am afraid that some applications just do not like other tasks such as TaskBar taking control over their windows and fiddling with them.
There aren't any serious problems, but some windows simply will not
-

panel or maximise properly. I am afraid that there is no way around this. Fortunately most recent programs that handle windows cleanly will work perfectly with TaskBar.

1.9 author

The Author

This Program was written by Robert Ennals.
Contact me if you find a bug, have an idea for an improvement,
or just want a chat.

Email

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It would be nice if you could inform me if you release TaskBar in a collection, publish it on a coverdisk, or review it in a magazine.

Don't be scared to mail me about anything. If you have something to say, I would like to hear it. I will *usually* send a reply to any mail I receive.

The only things I do NOT want to be mailed about are suggestions that I do things that I have stated that I have reasons for not doing, unless you have a good reason for me doing so.

Please [click here](#) before mailing me suggestions.

1.10 future

Future Updates

> If I get mail telling me that you want me to do an update then I do it, otherwise not. I'm not going to waste my time putting in a feature if nobody wants it.

All features originally proposed have now been implemented, so unless new features are suggested no new features will be added.
TaskBar has reached perfection??

If you have any other ideas then mail them to me.

1.11 history

History.

- 1 - First release
 - 2 - quick bug fix from 1.0
 - bugs fixed
 - didn't sense window closing
 - popup sometimes wouldn't close
 - crashed some machines
 - buttons updated badly
 - features added
 - none
 - 3 - First major release (Amiga Shopper)
 - bugs fixed
 - crashed if user selected no window on other popup
 - compression system caused problems
 - used to take up 300k
 - features added
 - Start button (due to popular demand)
 - MAXCHARS tooltip
 - 4 - Major update - Reviewed in several magazines
 - bugs fixed
 - Popup windows sometimes appeared in the wrong place (minor)
 - All enforcer hits fixed (thanks to my beta-testers)
 - features added
 - Multiple screens
 - Start button has multiple levels
 - Better preferences file format
 - Auto screen switching to window's screen
 - Adapts screen title (minor)
 - 5 - Usability enhancement
 - bugs fixed
 - Didn't launch properly from WbStartup
 - Little display problem on start menu
 - features added
 - Shrink feature to tidy up display
 - Windows and screens also on start
 - Can avoid windows owned by certain tasks
 - 5.3 - Minor update (released on Amiga Computing)
 - bugs fixed
 - Fixed a nasty bug created in v5 that could cause crashes
 - Could be a little slow sometimes
 - features added
 - Indentation of active window button
 - Smarter window open/close handling
 - 6 - Last release
 - bugs fixed
 - Selections in Start popup were sometimes ignored
 - TaskBar could sometimes get unstable on multiple screens
-

features added
Preferences editor - by Guilherme Cirne
Support for Preferences editor in TaskBar
Reload prefs
Start popup reorganised
Minimise all (to cleanup a full or slow screen)
Shift windows (stop windows overlapping TaskBar
AUTOSHIFT tooltype - TO automatically shift windows

6.1 - This release - Minor maintainence update

bugs fixed
Several bugs in TaskBarPrefs
Harmless enforcer hit introduced in v6
features added
Add your program to TaskBar within it's install script.

Several versions of TaskBar have appeared in the AmiNet charts :-)))

My upgrade philosophy

> More observent users may notice that in general I tend to have a lot of releases for my programs. This is because, like many other Shareware authors, I believe in continuous updates.

This means that as soon as I have implemented a new feature and am sure that is working, I make a release.

This is something that is much harder to do with comercial software.

1.12 thanks

Thanks!

> All my beta-testers, without whom this release could not have been possible. Especially the following:

Jonathon Rhys Evans
Mark Boothroyd

> Other people who were essential to the development of TaskBar.

Guilherme Cirne - For writing TaskBar prefs
and helping to debug TaskBar 6
Tommy Johansen - For putting the documentation in guide form
Damir Petkovic - For spotting the popup bug first
Paul Loustalan - For being the only person to spot the WBStartup
problem in v4. Why did nobody else tell me about this one???
Jens Andersson - For suggesting many features including the
MAXCHARS tooltype, and noticing the memory problem in v1
Christoph Guelicher, Software Project Manager of
Amiga Technologies GmbH - For many things, including FIXWIDTH
MicroSoft - For not suing me :-))

> All the people who mailed me to give support, bug fixes and preferences as to what updates I should do.

I am afraid there are simply too many of you to list.

This is by no means a conclusive list. If you helped in the development of TaskBar and I have missed you off this list unfairly then mail me.

1.13 The Start Button

The Start Button

TaskBar6 has a Start button similar to that in Windows 95.

When you click on the start button, a popup window appears with two lists. The list on the left is for the program group. The list on the right is for the programs within the selected group .

Selecting a group changes the program list to show the programs within that group.

Selecting a program executes the specified command in the manner specified in TaskBarPrefs (eg WorkBench, CLI, Script or Rexx).

There are also several control menus.

> Screens

Contains a list of open screens. Select one to go to it.

> Windows

Contains a list of open windows on the current screen (as in "other")

> TaskBar

Contains a list of special functions, including the following

Make TaskBar Small - Shrink the TaskBar to a single button.

This can also be toggled by clicking with both mouse buttons (right depressed first) on the start button.

Make TaskBar Big - Makes taskbar big again.

Minimise all windows - Useful for cleaning up a full screen.

Shift all windows - Move any windows that may cover the taskbar.

This is done automatically if AUTOSHIFT is turned on.

Edit Preferences - Start TaskBarPrefs

Reload Preferences - Reload preferences if they have changed.

Close This TaskBar - Closes the current TaskBar (as Shutdown)

Customerisation

Obviously the start menu is useless without you being able to set what should be on it. To find out how to edit the start bar go to the Preferences section.

1.14 tooltips

Tooltip preferences

BUTTONS

The number of buttons

MAXCHARS

The number of characters of text to write onto each button.

Set this if text overflows across buttons or leaves gaps.

AUTOSHIFT

Tell taskbar whether to automatically move or resize any windows that cover it. You will usually want this switched on.

AUTOFRONT

Should taskbar move itself to the front every time a new window is selected. Usually you will have this turned off, but if Taskbar starts getting hidden by other windows then you might want to turn it on. (this option can disrupt drag and drop)

FIXWIDTH

Set this to fix the bar width if you don't wish it to use the whole screen. This is useful for autoscroll screens.

STARTSMALL

Set this to YES if you want TaskBar to startup with the bar in small mode.

NB the bar still has to be generated in full mode to avoid confusing Gadtools so opening the bar *can* look a little messy.

DONOTWAIT

This is needed for TaskBar to be launched correctly from the WBstartup drawer. Do NOT remove it.

1.15 Setting TaskBar Preferences

A prefs editor has been written by Guilherme Cirne for editing prefs files. However the file format is very easy to work with and prefs files can be edited manually. [Click here for info on the file format.](#)

The prefs editor is very easy to use. Here is how you can use it do do

several things.

> Adding Items to the Start Menu

Select the group to add an item to.

Click "new" in the items list.

Enter the name of the item in the string gadget and press return to.

Select the item you just created

Select a directory, a way to run it (eg WorkBench), a command, and the arguments.

See the default items for examples of defined items.

> Adding Groups to the Start Menu

Click "new" in the groups list.

Enter the name of the new group into the string gadget and press return.

> Adding Screens to TaskBar (so it can open on them)

Select a screen from the available screen list. (it must be open)

Click on "Select".

If the screen is not currently open then you can enter it's title manually.

> Removing screens from TaskBar (eg if they don't like TaskBar)

Select a screen from the selected screens list.

Click on "Del".

> Adding tasks to the AVOID list (tasks whose windows taskbar ignores)

Select a task from the list of available tasks

Click on "Select".

> Setting tooltip options

Click on "Tooltips" to get a list of taskbars tooltips.

Click here for a list of taskbars tooltips.

The tooltip editor works the same way as that used by workbench in the information window.

Tooltips must be used to configure things like the number of buttons taskbar uses, the width of the taskbar, how many characters are displayed on each button etc.

TaskBarPrefs can also be run with arguments. This allows you to add items to TaskBar from installer scripts and from other programs.

Click here for more information on this.

1.16 Adding items to TaskBar from Installer scripts

Adding items to TaskBar from Installer scripts

TaskBarPrefs allows you to give it certain arguments when run from the CLI or an installer script to allow you to add items to the Start menu automatically.

You provide the name of the item, the dir, the command and the method of launching and TaskBarPrefs asks the user which group to put the item in or allows them to create a new one.

The arguments are as follows:

ITEM/K

The name of the item

WB/S SCRIPT/S CLI/S REXX/S

The method of launching.

Corresponds to launching the program with WBRun, Execute, Run, or Rx.

DIR/K

The home dir for the program to be launched in.

CMD/K/F

The command to launch and its attributes. This must be the last option specified, thus avoiding the need for quotes.

Example:

```
TaskBarPrefs ITEM MegaProg WB DIR MegaProg: CMD MegaProg -an_argument
```

The user would then be asked which group to put it in.

To do this in an installer script you would just enter:

```
(run "Sys:Prefs/TaskBarPrefs ITEM MegaEdit WB DIR MegaEdit: CMD MegaEdit "  
"-an_argument")
```

A future version of TaskBar will probably let you drag icons onto the TaskBar and then call TaskBarPrefs in this way with the program dropped.

1.17 Editing Preferences Manually

Editing Preferences Manually

The easiest way to edit the preferences for TaskBar is to use TaskBarPrefs (launchable from Edit Preferences in TaskBar). However, some users may prefer to edit the preference file manually. Here is how.

Note that not all preferences are found in the taskbar4.prefs file. Some options require you to edit the tooltypes.

Prefs file preferences

The prefs file is called "TaskBar4.prefs" and should be in ENV: and ENVARC:. It should have been copied there during installation.

Although this is version 5 of TaskBar it uses the same object orientated preference format as v4 so to make upgrading easier I have continued to call the file TaskBar4.prefs.

The format is object orientated and keyword based. It should be quite easy for you to get to grips with. For those who hate to edit preferences files, a prefs editor should be available quite soon.

The keywords

Start menu attributes

GROUP:name

Define a new start group of name 'name'.
This group MUST have child items.

ITEM:name

Defines an item of name 'name' within the current group.

CMD:command

Specifies the cli command to run when the item is selected
If you want to launch programs as if from workbench
then you need the CLI program WBRun.
I do not have rights to distribute this, but it is
widely available including in the archive for 'browser'.

DIR:directory

Specifies the directory to launch the program into

further options may be implemented in future, but
currently anything more should be done by running a
script file.

There is no need to include the RUN command as TaskBar
detatches launched tasks itself.

Screens

SCREEN:search string

Any screen with the specified search string in its default title
will have a TaskBar opened onto it.

If you are unsure of the default title of any open screen, simply run the supplied TellScreens program from the CLI to list the titles of all available screens. Remember that only part of this title needs to be given in the prefs file. See the standard TaskBar4.prefs file for an example.

Others

AVOID:taskname

Avoids windows owned by the Task called <taskname>.

Often this will be the same as the label given in the 'other' popup.

Due to the object orientated nature of this file format, new keywords can easily be defined later while remaining compatible with old versions.

Look at the standard preferences file (Taskbar4.prefs) if you are unsure.

1.18 why

Why I did certain things differently

I am aware that since TaskBar was released (shortly after Windows 95) there have been other attempts to do some of what TaskBar does and sometimes people ask me why I did some things differently. Well here are the answers:

Q: Why doesn't TaskBar have loads of pretty icons all over the place?

A: There are several reasons for this,

The point of TaskBar is not (as it seems with some clones) to just decorate your screen, but to make your Amiga easier and better to use. Icons do not increase functionality so I am not going to add them to TaskBar if it is at the expense of usability.

Icons on buttons waste space. if an icon is added it means that several characters aren't and that often makes the difference between an easily recognisable window name and something completely useless.

Unlike Win95 icons cannot be traced back to from a window. This means that if icons are to be added, either they will all be the same or the user would have to tell TaskBar which icon to use for every possible window title.

Unlike other, less mature clones, TaskBar can open on screens other than workbench. If icons were used, they would have to be remapped to the palette and screenmode of every screen opened on. This would give ugly icons and make TaskBar far less responsive.

Q: Why doesn't TaskBar adjust the number of buttons shown every time a new window opens or closes?

A: People who have tried clones that do this will doubtless be aware of the answer to this question already. It creates an environment that is completely unusable. On the Amiga one will often have a lot of windows open and so if a button was created for each you would have to have a lot of buttons. Once you have a fair number of windows open, each identification string gets so small that it is not clear what they represent.

Users of TaskBar seem to think that 6 or 8 (or whatever you like) buttons with clearly recognisable names is far more usable than 20 one letter names.

If you combine this with the ability to show icons on buttons you can end up with a row of identical buttons. Horrible!!

Win95 uses this method because it selects MDI master windows and there are unlikely to be many of them, but this method is completely unsuitable for the Amiga.

Q: Why doesn't TaskBar use a Win95 style popup menu for launching programs?

A: In short, because my system is quicker and easier to use.

If you launch several programs from one group then you only have to select the group once. TaskBar remembers which group you left it in.

Deep nesting of items makes it take longer to find what you want. Anything in TaskBar can be launched within two mouse clicks.

Some clones, and the Microsoft original, put program groups in a separate 'programs' group. TaskBar puts the program groups at the first stage instead making it vastly more usable.

Q: Why does TaskBar put windows on it's buttons rather than screens?

A: On the Amiga you will often have more than one program working on one screen. When you switch around what you are wanting to do is to switch between windows, not screens (which can be thought of as holders for windows) and so it is far more helpful for individual windows to be given buttons.

When a user clicks on a button for a window that is not on the current screen you are sent to that screen. Thus TaskBar effectively has screen switching on it's buttons as well as window switching. Experienced TaskBar users very rarely need to use the screen to back gadget.

1.19 dummy