Blink Blank! Help

About Blink Blank!

Blink Blank! is a screen blanker with a new twist. It's useful. Instead of filling your screen with airborne kitchen appliances, Blink Blank! actually puts your PC to work while you are gone. When you invoke Blink Blank!, you are given the opportunity to display a message on your PC during the time you are away.

Through a series of intuitive menus you can build and store up to 99 common messages. When it's time to go to a meeting (or whatever) simply bring up Blink Blank! and choose a message to display with a couple of mouse clicks. Here's the fun part. While you are away, if someone comes to see you and wants to leave a message for you, all they have to do is press the spacebar on your PC and start typing. Blink Blank! can hold up to 5 messages (of any length) and will display them when you return. You can even print your messages and they are automatically time-stamped!

Of course, after watching all those other fancy exploding screen blankers, one might wish for SOME colorful effects. Not to worry. Blink Blank! allows you to customize the appearance of your screen by allowing you to choose the background and foreground colors, and the font for the message.

Written in Visual Basic. Requires VBRUN100.DLL in the current directory or your path.

Max Burgstahler, 831 Jefferson Dr., Decatur IL, 62521   (Compuserve 72341,671).

Custom Messages

At the top of the main screen, Blink Blank! provides a text box into which you can type a custom message up to 30 characters long. This should be used for those messages which you may never use again, and as such, you do not wish to add to your Miscellaneous Messages <u>list box</u>.

If you start Blink Blank! with any command line argument, it will immediately begin flashing that command line parameter as a message when invoked. A use for this feature might be to set up a Blink Blank! group item   in which you have several Blink Blank! icons. Each icon could have a different name and command line representing 4 or 5 of your most common messages. Clicking on the appropriate icon would then allow you to bypass the main screen for commonly used messages.

To use the Custom Message feature from the main screen:

Type a message into this text box and either press <enter> or click the Use Custom <u>button</u>.

Miscellaneous Messages

Blink Blank! allows you to store up to 99 commonly used messages in the Miscellaneous Messages list box. An Add button allows you to add any messages you like up to 30 characters long. Messages are displayed in alphabetical order. Any message can be edited by highlighting it and clicking on the Edit button. Clicking the Delete button will delete the highlighted message.

In conjunction with a Miscellaneous Message, you may specify a time at which you will return. This is accomplished by selecting hours and minutes from the appropriate list box. You may choose to omit the return time by deselecting the Use Return Time check box provided.

To use the Miscellaneous Messages feature from the main screen:

Click on the desired message and return time and then click on Go Somewhere Else...
Or: Choose return time and double click on the desired message.

Lunch Messages

Blink Blank! allows you to choose the five most common times that you return from lunch and have them displayed on the main window as <u>radio buttons</u>.

The five lunch times may be changed by selecting Lunch from the Preferences menu. This dialog box asks you to choose the five times and provides instant visual feedback as to how the options will appear on the main screen. To the right of the example radio buttons are another set of radio buttons which can be used to select which lunch time will be selected as the default when Blink Blank! is started.

To use the Lunch Messages feature from the main screen:

Click on the appropriate return time and click on Go to Lunch.

Leaving a Message

While Blink Blank! is flashing its message, any visitors to your office may leave a note by pressing the spacebar and typing their message.   The dialog box which appears indicates to your visitor the number of messages which may be left. Blink Blank! can hold up to five messages for you.

Visitors to your office no longer have to search around on your desk for a yellow sticky pad or a pen. This also has the added benefit of saving paper (as long as you don't print the messages).

When the visitor is done they can either press Enter or click on Ok. Blink Blank! resumes flashing its message.

Retrieving your Messages

When you return to your office, you will want to check for any messages that may have been left. When you enter your password, Blink Blank! checks your mailbox for messages. Any messages left are automatically displayed. You are given the option of printing any or all of the messages you have received. In the interest of saving paper and trees, you should only print your messages when **absolutely necessary**. (There, my conscience feels better...)

When you are finished viewing and printing, click on Done.

List Box

A data field commonly used in Windows to present a list of information in such a way that the user can scroll through it with a mouse.

Button

A rectangular, "three-dimensional" Windows object which is clicked with a mouse to execute an action of some sort.

Using your Password

Blink Blank! uses a password to gain entry to your PC while it is flashing the selected message. When you return to your office, press the <ESC> key, and then type your password into the dialog box presented. The password is obscured as you type it in.

The password is not case sensitive (i.e., password = Password = PASSWORD).

The first time you use Blink Blank!, the default password is "password".

The password can be set by choosing Password from the Preferences Menu. The password must be **at least 3 and not more than 8** characters or numbers. The password is not obscured as you set it   to ensure that it is entered as intended. You cannot enter spaces for a password.

The password is encrypted and stored in BB.INI. It is important that this entry not be tampered with.

Radio Buttons

A screen input control which allows you to choose one option among other mutually exclusive options. When one button in a group is clicked, the others are unselected, thus the name.

Check Box

A screen input control which allows you to toggle its state ON or OFF. Unlike the radio button, check boxes do not necessarily imply mutually exclusive options.

Setting Display Options

Blink Blank! allows you to take complete control of how the flashing message is displayed on your PC screen. By choosing Display from the Preferences menu, you can set the foreground color, background color, and font. Your selections are indicated in a sample display.

The Display Options screen also give you the choice of whether or not you want Blink Blank! to be minimized after you type in your password. This comes in handy for those who want to keep Blink Blank! as a standard icon on their desktop. When you return to your office and enter your password, Blink Blank! will automatically shrink to an icon. This feature is turned on or off by selecting or deselecting the Minimize After Message check box on the Display Options screen.

Release Notes

Version 1.0 released January 1, 1992.

Look for Version 2.0 sometime in the summer of 1992 (if I can get my kids to quit playing Captain Comic long enough...)

Version 1.1 released March 1, 1992

Kids done with Captain Comic - but now spend a lot of time with Microsoft Bookshelf for Windows. They let me use the computer long enough to fix a few bugs in Blink Blank!