



What is Electronic Mom?

Tired of forgetting special events? Had to make more than a few late birthday calls? Can't remember a thing without Mom reminding you? Well worry no more! Electronic Mom (EMom) is a program to act as a 'Mom away from home'. Just enter your 'special events' and EMom does the rest!

All of the other 'reminder' programs for Windows that I found were geared toward the workplace. You had to specify not only an event date, but an event time. And the advance notice was often limited to hours, not days. How could I be expected to get that birthday card out with three hours notice? I needed three weeks!! I also didn't like the idea of having a program constantly running in the background, taking up system resources. So I wrote EMom.

With EMom, you enter an message, a date and an advance notice. For example, you might enter "Matt's birthday", January 11, 14 days advance notice. Save the event and forget about it. Fourteen days before January 11, your computer would kindly remind you about Matt's birthday. That's it.

EMom is shareware. To use EMom beyond 31 days, I ask that you register your copy by sending \$10 to the address at the bottom of this document. Please support shareware.

Using EMom

EMom is based on the idea of 'events.' These events each have characteristics that define how and when they are presented to the user. Each event consists of a message, a date, number of days of advance notice, and a flag to tell whether advance notice is on or off. More about this flag later.

EMom actually consists of two programs: EMOM.EXE and EMOMLU.EXE. EMOM.EXE is where you enter, delete and modify your events. EMOMLU.EXE is the program that parses the event file created by EMOM.EXE and does the actual reminding. (I put EMOMLU.EXE on the 'run =' line of my WIN.INI file to execute it every time I turn my computer on.) First I'll talk about EMOM.EXE.

EMOM.EXE

When EMOM.EXE is run a title screen will come up to keep you entertained while the events are loaded. This is where I'll warn you: this process takes a long time (around 10 seconds on my 20MHz 386). The EMOM.EXE program is written in Visual Basic, which allowed for a very friendly (and stylish) user interface. Unfortunately, VB is very slow in starting. I have chosen to load all the windows EMom uses into memory at start time to speed program execution during use. So the delay occurs when you start EMOM.EXE, not while you use it. (EMOMLU.EXE is only one, simple window, therefor this program is written in the much faster Borland C++.)

After the title window clears, the main window will be showing. This is where the user can review events that are already entered. Below the current date at the top of the window is a list box titled "Coming up...". This is where the range of dates to view events is selected. The choices are: Today, Tomorrow, This Week, This Month, and User Date Range... These settings allow for viewing 0, 1, 7, 31, and variable days from now, respectively. The range for User Date Range is set in the dialog box brought up when 'Enter user start and stop dates..' is selected under the 'E-Mom!' menu. One way to display all events is to set the start date one day after the stop date. By the way, the start date is assumed to be in the current year.

If an event, such as a meeting, will not be used again because it is a one-time event, it must be manually deleted. (EMom assumes all events occur annually.) To delete an event, select 'Delete Entry' from the 'File' menu. If a valid event is selected in the list box, that event will be deleted (after confirmation, of course.)

For a listing of events of interest, the events list can be printed using the 'Print...' command under the 'File' menu. The user is given the choice of having all of the events printed, or just those currently shown in the main window.

When a new event must be entered, a second window must be brought up. To enter a new event, select 'New entry/Find entry..' from the 'E-Mom!' menu. (This can also be accomplished by double clicking on the current date displayed at the top of the window.) This will bring up the event entry window, which will be discussed shortly.

An event can be modified from the main window by highlighting that event in the window and selecting 'Change Selected Entry..' from the 'E-Mom!' menu. (this can also be accomplished by double-clicking on that event.) This will also bring up the event entry window, this time

with the selected event loaded.

The event entry window consists of three major fields: the event date, the advance notice, and the event message. The event date and event message are self explanatory. The advance notice is variable per event between 0 and 31 days. There is a check box to flag the event's advance notice as on or off. This is particularly useful for birthdays. If, for example, after receiving a 14 day advance notice about Matt's birthday, you send him a card, advance notice could be turned off for that event. Then EMom would not remind you of his birthday, until the day of his birthday. That way you will be reminded to call on that day.

If you cannot remember the exact date or the message of an event , there is a search facility built into EMom. This facility is accessed from the event entry window. These options can be selected under the 'File' menu. The 'Find item by message' option requires the search string to be entered in the event message field. The 'Find item by date' selection will find all events with the date currently displayed in the event entry window.

If an existing event is modified, the user has an option of saving that event as a new event (leaving the old, modified event unchanged), or saving the changes over the old event.

The 'Edit' menu allows copying and pasting to and from the message field.

EMOMLU.EXE

As mentioned above, EMOMLU parses the event file created by EMOM.EXE and displays the events. When EMOMLU.EXE is run, a '?' icon will be displayed while the program is looking through the dates. If no events qualify, the program ends. If there are some upcoming events, however, the icon changes to an exclamation point and the events are displayed in a list box.

After perusing the upcoming events, the program can be terminated by clicking on the OK button. If one of the events is selected and the 'Run with current selection...' button is pressed, the EMOM.EXE program is run with the selected event displayed in the event entry window.

Liscensing Agreement

EMom was a lot of fun to create and I really believe it fills a gap in the Windows shareware area. If you feel the same way, I ask that you send \$10 to support the shareware philosophy. The software you have now is in no way crippled and is in fact the same software you will use when you register. Registering will allow you to continue to use the software beyond 31 days and will entitle you to all future versions of the program. (The next version will hopefully be written entirely in C++ for speed purposes.) You will not receive anything extra by registering, beyond my sincere gratitude; you will just be supporting the shareware philosophy. Please consider registering EMom. Thanks.

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Any suggestions, criticisms, or compliments are welcome and encouraged. All comments I receive will be genuinly considered for future versions.

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