Time Spent

produced by Ronnie Nelson
2005 ©, Fried Games

'Time Spent' is a program written to give an estimate on what you spend your time. If you feel there is not enough hours in the day or if you are struggling to allocate enough time to your various projects, this application may help you to get the important task done without wasting time on less important tasks. There is no need for complicated schedules or diaries to help you manage your time, simply run 'Time Spent' and be guided to be more effective. It also provides you with data on changes in your time management as you continue to use the application. Thank you for trying out this unique program.

Introduction

Using the 'Time Spent' application is very simple and you can accurately monitor every minute of your day. To start, run the application. A few default fields are present which you can remove if necessary. To allocate time to an event just click on the radio-button for that item and continue with that event. The program will automatically add each minute you spent on this event. For example: if you want to read email, click the ''email' radio-button. After you are done select the radio-button for the next task you will do. The data will be stored for each event and presented as a bar chart. You can also look at the data for previous days and the total time spent on each event. Note that the graph will update every minute and that you therefore need to wait at least one minute before any changes will be apparent.

Adding/Removing items

To add an item click on 'Items' and select 'Add Item' and add the name of the event want to monitor. If you want to remove an item, click on 'Items', select 'Delete Item', and select the item that you want to remove.
If you remove an item, the data for that item are lost for the current day. However if it was present on previous days, the data for all the items on that day will be saved.
Please note that, nothing to monitor, will be selected after an item is added or removed.
Although you can add an unlimited number of items it may be better to keep it less than 40. After 40 the data on the graphs may become difficult to read.

Editing Time

You can also add or remove time from an item manually. This may be necessary if something urgent happens, like a meeting, and you need to go without changing the program to monitor the event. To rectify this click on 'Edit Time', select 'Deduct from Item', select the item and type in the number of minutes you need to remove

from it. To manually allocate time to something else click on 'Edit Time', select 'Add Time to Item', select the item you want to add time to and type the number of minutes you want to add.

Graphs

There is a bar chart on the screen showing how your time was allocated. There are settings to see the data from other dates, in total or as a percentage. The default graph is the data for the current day in minutes. To see it in percentage click on 'Graph' select 'Today' and then 'Percentage'. To see the cumulative time since you started to use the program select 'Total' on the 'Graph' dropdown button and select either 'Value' or 'Percentage'.

You can also draw graphs for previous days. Select the 'Choose Date' option on the 'Graph' drop down button. A window will open with a calendar. Simply select the date and the format (percentage or minute values) for the data you want to see and click 'Ok'. If there is no data available for a specific date, an information box will notify you and no new graph will be drawn.

Printing and saving Graphs

You can also print or save any of the graphs that are on screen. Firstly select the graph as you would normally do, either the current date, total time data or a selected date and the format of the graph. Then right click on the graph or click on the 'Graph' drop down button and select 'Print Graph' or 'Save Graph'. If you selected to print the graph will be printed in landscape format to the printer you select. If you selected to save you will be asked to give a name for the file. The file created will be a bitmap picture (*.bmp).

Switches

On the screen there is a label: 'Switches Today'. The value given indicates the number of times that you switched events today. High values at the end of the day show that you are constantly changing what you are doing while low values indicate that you start something and work constantly at it without being interrupted much. If you select data form previous days the number of times you switched between items are indicated in the title.

Helpful Tips

Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of this application.

-Don't turn it off. The application is very low on system resources and you should always leave it on in the background. It will also work if it is minimized.

-Load in the startup folder. To help you remember to select an event as you start your day load the application in the startup folder. The application will automatically start when your computer is turned on. (Don't worry if you forget to close the program when logging off, the data is stored every minute and you will therefore not lose any).

-Avoid using spaces in item_names. It is not imperative but it will help you if you want to analyze the data in other programs (see additional information) not to use spaces in the item names. Some programs have difficulty importing files if there are spaces between names and may see it as separate columns. Rather use the underscore '_' as a separator. E.g. use 'Class_prep' rather than 'Class prep'

Registration

If you want to use the program for longer than 3 days you need to register it. Do so by going to:

 www.friedgames.com/timespent.htm

The cost of the game is $ 9.99 USD. Before payment you will need to obtain the registration code by running the game. Please make sure that the game worked on the computer for which you are going to get the registration key. Once payment is made the registration key will be sent to your email address immediately.

For more information contact me at: friedgames@gmail.com

Additional information

The output of the data can also be analyzed in other stats programs. To do this open the 'Completedata.txc' file in notepad and save it as a *.txt file. Please **DO NOT** edit any of the *.txc files as this may cause the program to stop functioning and you will need to get a new copy (and a new registration key).

When saved as a *.txt file you can open it or import it into various other programs, such as Excel or R, as a delimited text file (the data is colon-delimited). Note the following about the data layout: the first column is the Julian-date, the second is the item and the third is the time for that item on that date. You can therefore compare data for the same item from different dates to see if there were changes. You can also work out the average time spent on an item or see if there is a lot of variation between different day's data. The types of analysis are unlimited.

You can also use the program to manage your time in a pro-active way. For example, say you have four subjects to study. Estimate the time needed for each and start the program. Keep to the time and switch over to the next when the time is reach for any given subject.

More time can be deducted from an item than what is present. When this happens the graph will show a negative value for that item. You can also use this characteristic to manage your time more pro-actively. Remove the time you think you need to spend on each task (given that all start at zero). Switch tasks when the one you are busy with reaches zero again.

Adaptations of this program can be used to manage the time staff-members worked and applicable remuneration. Or many other business orientated task management. Email me to obtain quotes for personalized programs of this kind (or any other program needed).

For any other information on this application mail me at: friedgames@gmail.com