

tempobblue

Listening to the beat of your life

Time keeping application by bigcoolblue – www.bigcoolblue.com

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This is the user manual for tempobblue personal edition 1.01

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www.bigcoolblue.com

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia.

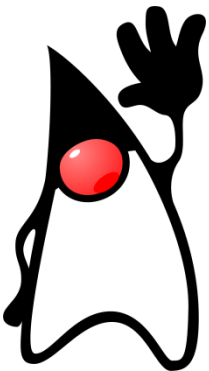


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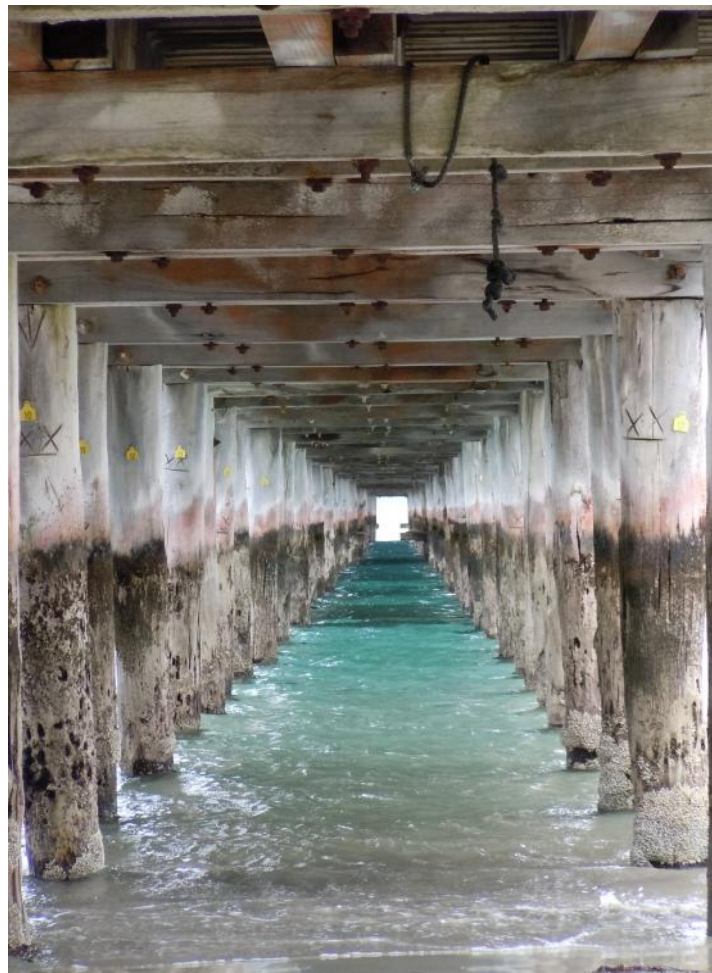
Overview

tempoblue is an application that helps you keep track of how you are spending your time.

tempoblue lets you create a list of activities. When you start working on an activity, simply click on the activity name and tempoblue will start keeping track of the time you spend on that activity.

The rationale behind tempoblue is that time recording is never an exact science. Invariably you will end up spending time working on something that doesn't have a formal booking code or which is unexpected, or you may simply forget to record the start of a new activity. tempoblue is designed to give you the best chance of getting as close to the truth as possible, but then lets you do whatever you need to do to arrive at your formal time keeping record.

tempoblue has French and Spanish language versions. The language will be set depending on the locale of your computer. The default language is English.



Flinders Pier

Getting and installing tempobblue

To download tempobblue, go to www.bigcoolblue.com and navigate your way to the download page. You will be able to download tempobblue in the form of a .jar file - a Java ARchive file. A .jar file will run like an executable file, so long as you have a Java runtime environment installed on your computer - most computers do have Java installed. If you download tempobblue and for some reason it doesn't work, go to www.java.com and download Java.

To install tempobblue, follow these simple instructions:

1. Create a directory in which to store the .jar file. The simplest thing to do is to create a directory called "tempobblue" in the place where your other executable programs are stored. For example, on Windows PCs this would be in the "Program Files" directory.

2. Go to www.bigcoolblue.com to access the tempobblue .jar file. Follow the prompts and save the file in the directory you created in step 1.

3. Create a shortcut icon so that tempobblue is easy to start. Again, on Windows systems this is as simple as right clicking on the .jar file, creating a shortcut, and then dragging that shortcut to the desktop or a menu bar.

Tip: If you put the shortcut in the "Startup" menu, then tempobblue will open every time you start your computer. If you're serious about recording what you do, that is probably a good idea.



The menu at Northway Downs

Interface overview

Figure 1 below shows the tempobblue interface.

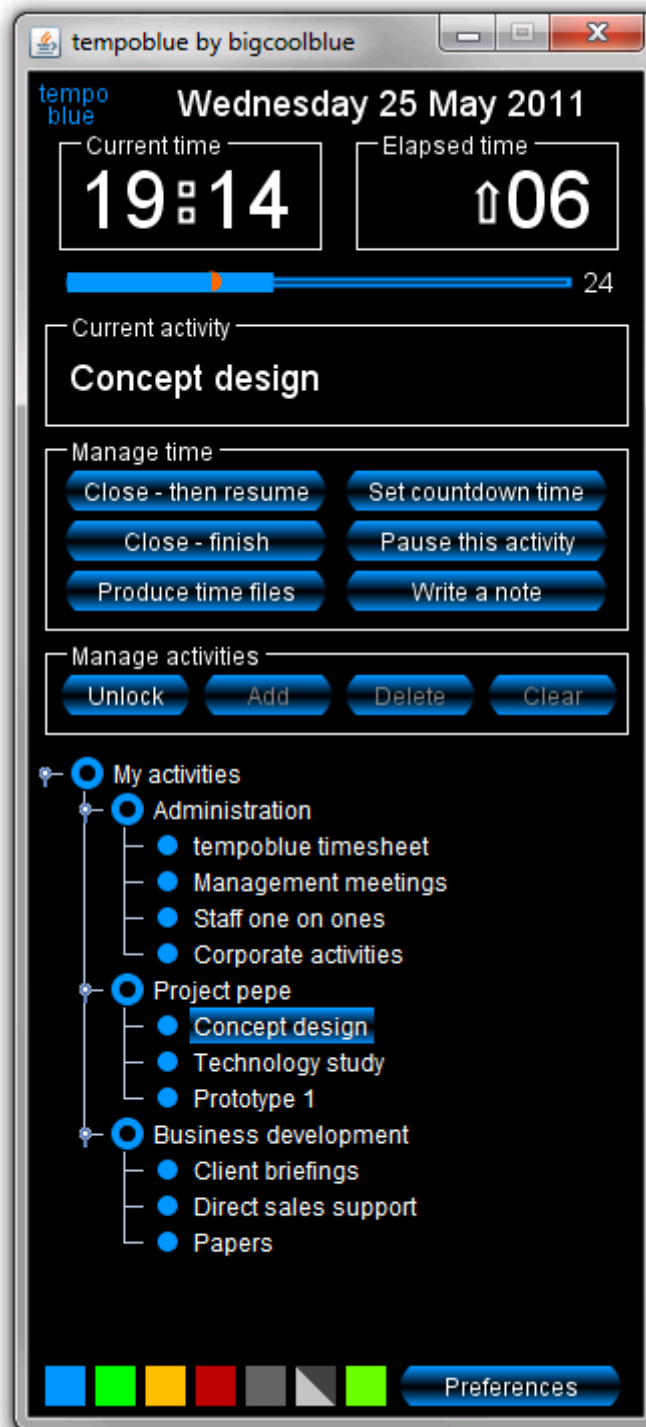


Figure 1 – the tempobblue interface

At the top of the display is the current day and date. Beneath that and to the left is the current time display – **Current time**. To the right is the display that has two purposes. Its primary purpose is to display the time spent on the current activity – the **Elapsed time**. In this mode the flashing arrow in the centre of the display points upwards. The second purpose of the display is to show the countdown time – **Count down time**. In this mode the flashing arrow points downwards.

Beneath these time displays is the seconds bar. This simply shows the seconds of the **Current time**. The ball on the seconds bar indicates when, within the minute, an activity was selected.

Beneath the seconds bar is the **Current activity** window. This displays the name of the currently selected activity. If nothing is selected, tempoblue will display the phrase "Welcome to tempoblue".

Beneath the **Current activity** display are the **Manage time** buttons:

The **Close – then resume** button closes tempoblue but leaves the last selected activity selected – you have closed tempoblue and possibly turned off your computer, but are still engaged in that activity. An example of this may be when you are travelling from one place to a meeting.

The **Close – finish** button closes tempoblue and also closes the last selected activity. This is the button to press at the end of the day when work is finished.

The **Produce time files** button creates the various time files with all the data recorded by tempoblue up to that point in time for the current week. The files are put into the directory selected by you under **Preferences**.

The **Set countdown time** button opens up another simple screen that lets you specify and set a countdown time. Clicking the **Set** on this new screen sets the countdown time and starts the countdown.

The **Pause this activity** button simply stops the elapsed time count against the current activity. It represents time that isn't recorded against anything.

The **Write a note** button opens up another simple screen that lets you write a short note. This note is saved as part of the time data and can be used to help adjust your activity timings in a final spreadsheet.

Beneath the **Manage time** display are the **Manage activities** buttons and the activity tree. The tree has two modes of operation:

1. Selection mode when an item in the tree can be selected as the current activity,
2. Edit mode when items can be added to the tree, deleted from the tree, or have their name changed.

In Selection mode, the **Add**, **Delete** and **Clear** buttons are greyed out. The label of the leftmost button is **Unlock**. Clicking on the **Unlock** button activates the other three buttons and puts the tree into Edit mode.

Beneath the activity tree are the colour and user preferences buttons. The first five buttons from the left let you select one of the five standard tempoblue colours. The sixth button inverts black and white. The seventh button is a random colour button. Clicking on this button means that every time tempoblue is started the colour of the interface will change.

Clicking on the **Preferences** button opens another simple screen. This lets you input a name for yourself – this is used on the timesheets produced by tempoblue. It also lets you specify which of the four time file types you want tempoblue to produce and where they should be stored.

Setting user preferences

Once you have installed tempoblue, you should set your preferences. You can change the appearance of tempoblue and tell it what kind of time files you want, and where to put them.

To change the appearance of tempoblue, simply click on one of the colour buttons at the very bottom of the tempoblue interface. Starting from the left, the first five buttons set the colour scheme – blue, green, gold, crimson and grey. The sixth button inverts black and white. The last button is another colour button – the colour changes every time tempoblue is started. Figures 2 and 3 are examples of using the colour buttons.

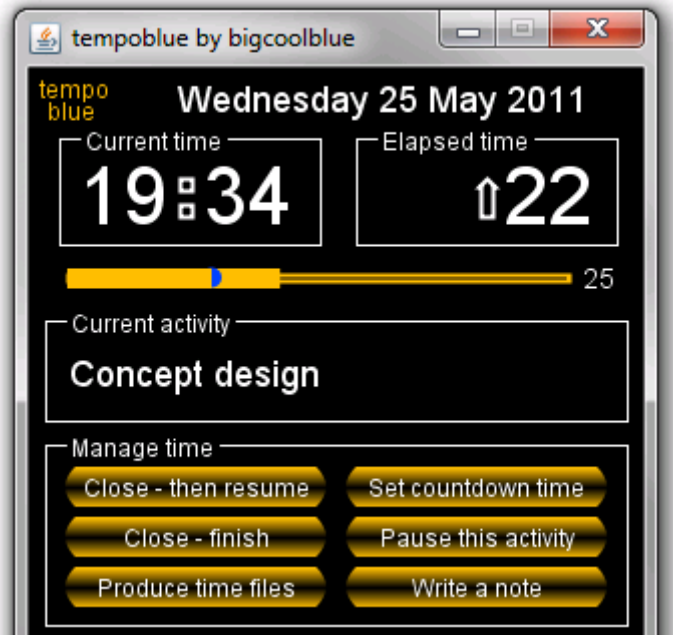


Figure 2 – the classic gold scheme.

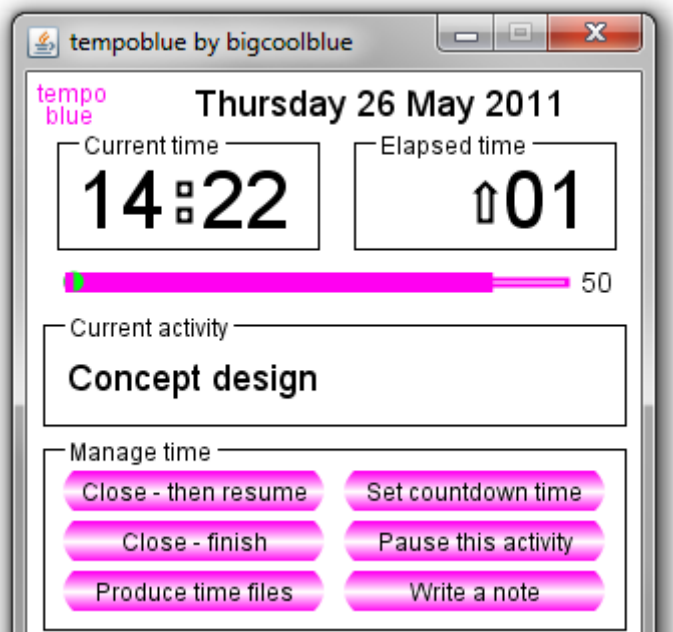


Figure 3 – tempoblue in a rather shocking pink.

Click on the Preferences button at the bottom right of the tempoblue interface, and the user preferences interface will open as shown in figure 4 below.

At the top of the interface is a text box. The name you enter here will be included in the timesheet files produced by tempoblue.

The next set of four buttons let you specify which files should be produced. Clicking on a button turns file production on or off.

The Basic Activity List is a list of all activities recorded by tempoblue for the given time period. Each line of the file contains the activity name, the start date time of the activity, the end date time of the activity and the duration of the activity in milliseconds. This file is a comma separated values (csv) file that you will be able to open using your spreadsheet application, or a word processor.

The Sorted Activity List is the same as the Basic Activity List except that the activities are sorted based on activity name.

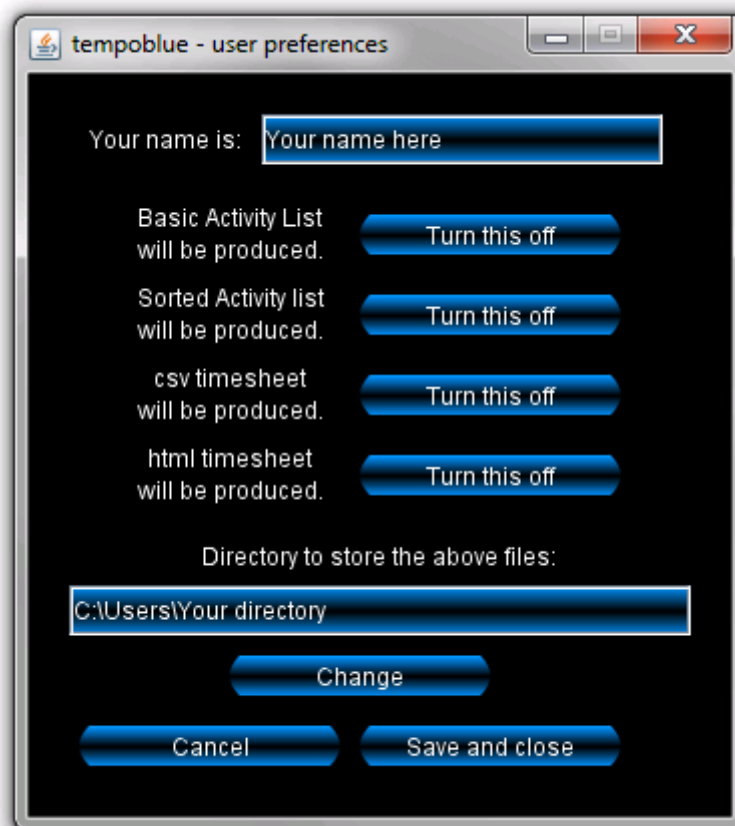


Figure 4 – the tempoblue user preferences interface

The csv timesheet is the main file produced by tempoblue. It is the weekly timesheet recording your activities in csv format. You can open this file in your spreadsheet application, make any adjustments to figures and formatting and then print for, or send to, whoever needs to see it.

The basic and sorted activity lists, and the csv timesheet also contain all the notes you have written and saved.

The html timesheet contains the same information as the csv timesheet, except that it is html format and comes with a style sheet that makes it printer ready. If you feel that you do not need to adjust figures within the sheet, then the html timesheet will be quicker to print. If you feel confident editing html, you can change the figures within the timesheet. If you feel confident editing css files, you can edit the timesheet.css file to change fonts and colours.

The next text field shows the directory path in which to store the time files. To select or change a directory path, click on the **Change** button and then use the directory selector interface to select your preferred location. Don't be surprised by the look of this interface – it is standard Java “Metal” look and feel as opposed to the custom interface look and feel of tempoblue.

To save your preferences and close the interface, click on the **Save and close** button. To close the interface and discard any changes, click on the **Cancel** button.



The Pinot Noir vines at Main Ridge Estate

Creating activities

When you open tempoblu for the first time, the activities tree will look like that in figure 5 below.



Figure 5 – the activities tree

The root of the tree is present and labeled “My activities”. The **Add**, **Delete** and **Clear** buttons are greyed out and inactive. The **Unlock** button is active. In this state the only activity you can select is “My activities”.

To add activities to the tree, click on the **Unlock** button. The **Add**, **Delete** and **Clear** buttons become active as shown in figure 6 below.



Figure 6 – Active Add, Delete and Clear buttons

To start adding activities, click on “My activities” to select it – it will be highlighted. Then click on the **Add** button. A new activity will be presented. Triple click this activity and then you can type in your name for the activity as shown in Figure 7 below.

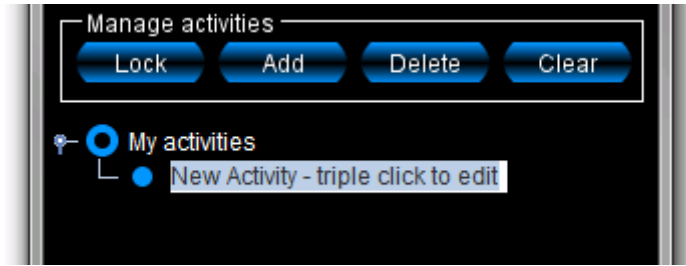


Figure 7 – the newly added activity, clicked three times and ready to be edited.

Once you have entered the name you want for your activity, press the return key.

While the activity tree is unlocked, you can add activities and create different levels and groupings of activities. In figure 8 below, the activity “tempobblue timesheet” has been added as a sub-activity to the “Administration” activity.

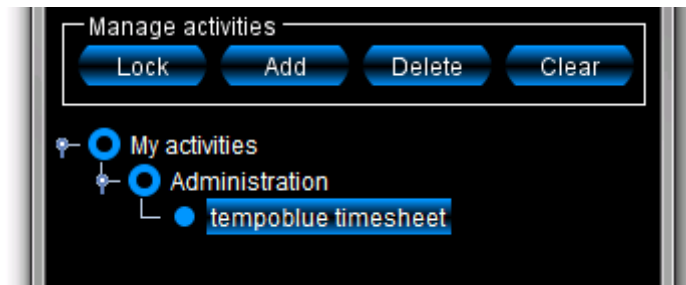


Figure 8 – creating a sub-activity

A note about the tree icons - In figure 9 below, there is a large open circle next to “My Activities”. This indicates that “My Activities” has sub-activities associated with it, but that those sub-activities have been expanded so that they are all visible. The sub-activities are “Administration” and “Project pepe”.

The large filled circle next to “Administration” indicates that this activity does have sub-activities, but these have not been expanded and so are not visible at this time. To expand or collapse sub-activities, click on the little control on the connecting lines to the left of the circle. Finally the small filled circle next to “Project pepe” indicates that there are no sub-activities associated with this activity.

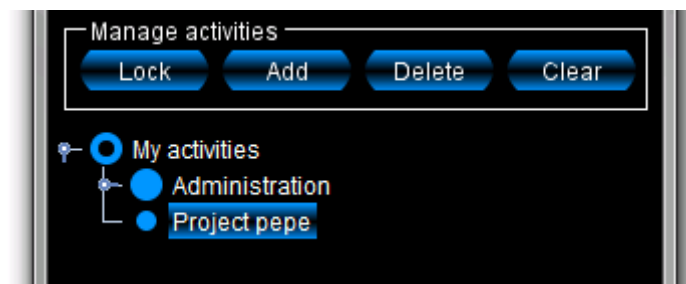


Figure 9 – tree icons

If you have a sub-activity selected and then hide it using the expand-collapse control, tempobblue will automatically select the parent activity as the current activity.

Planning note – when creating your activities, think about the way you want to report your time. The main structure of your activities might be based around project names, and then a series of sub-activities associated with each project e.g. specification, design etc.. Rather than project, it may be based on client names. Alternatively, your primary activity structure might be based on the function you do such as Investigations, Debt reversals, Outbound calls etc. Be guided by the way you want to report your time. You can change the structure at any time, but for the sake of consistency it is good to get it mostly right from the beginning. If your work is very task orientated, the activity list is effectively your "to do" list – and you can use it in that way by regularly adding and deleting activities.



Barrel legend

Recording activities

Once you are happy with your activity tree and have locked it, you can start using tempobblue to record the time you spend on those activities. To start recording, simply click on the name of the activity:

- The activity will be highlighted in the activity tree,
- The elapsed time will go to zero and start counting up,
- The name of the activity will appear in the **Current activity** box

Figure 10 below shows the activity “Concept design” has been selected, and has been for six minutes.

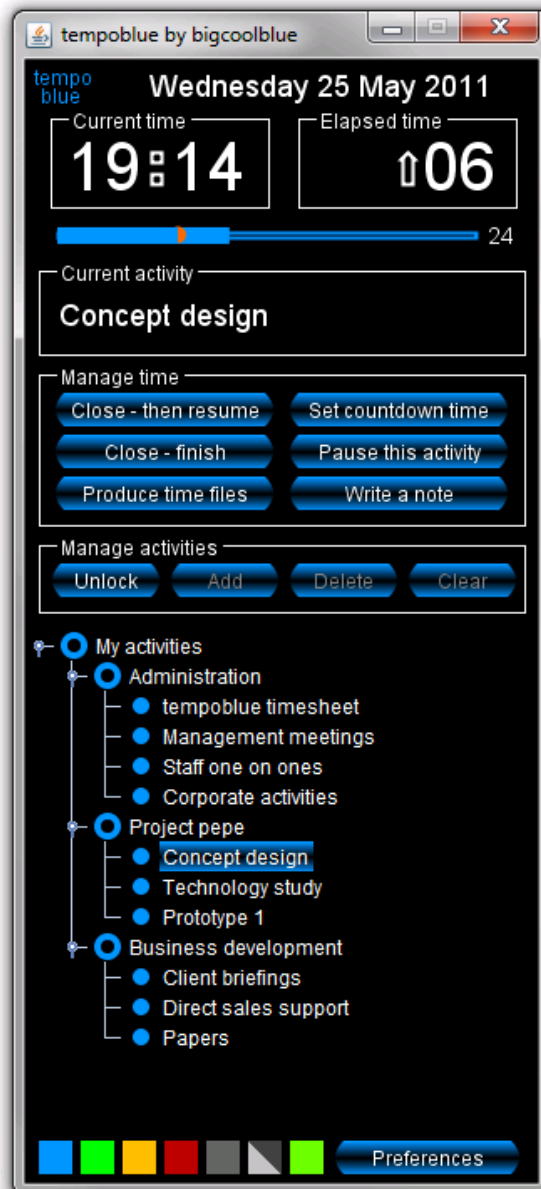


Figure 10 – “Concept design” activity selected

When you have finished one activity and want to start another, simply click on the name of the new activity. tempobblue will start recording time against the new activity – it’s as simple as that.

Pausing an activity

There may be occasions when you want to “pause” an activity. Pausing means that the activity remains selected, but time recording against that activity is effectively halted. This can be useful if you have to break away from a task to answer a personal phone call or something else you consider to be “non work related”.

Figure 11 below shows tempoblue with the “Concept design” task selected.

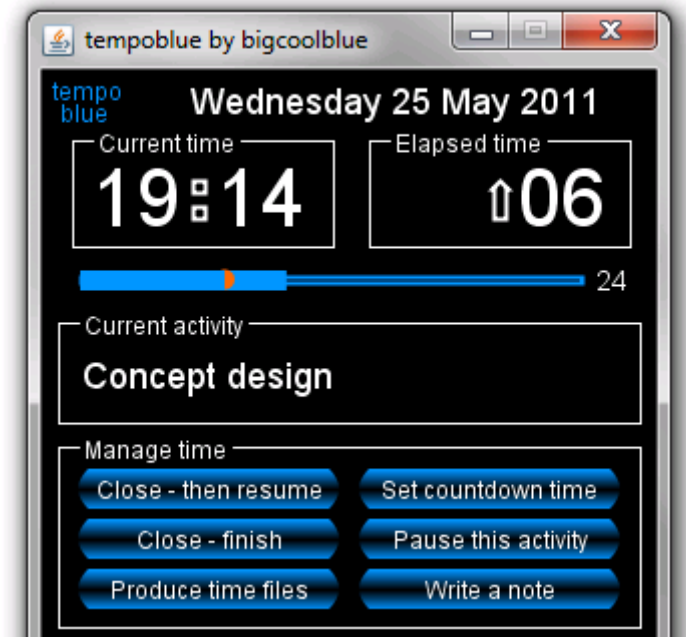


Figure 11 – tempoblue with the “Concept design” task selected and un-paused

To pause this activity, click on the **Pause this activity** button. The flashing arrow in the **Elapsed time** box stops flashing and the elapsed time itself is frozen. The legend on the button now reads **Resume this activity** as shown in figure 12 below. To un-pause the activity, click on the **Resume this activity** button.

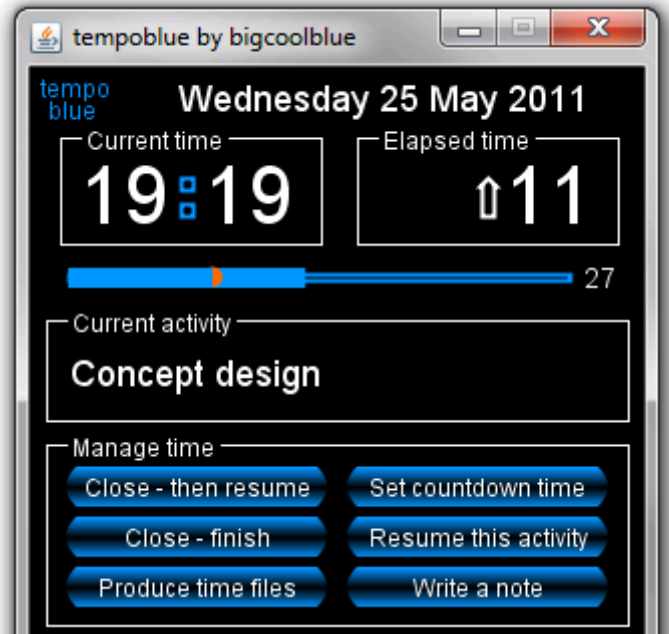


Figure 12 – tempoblue with the “Concept design” task paused

Note that the up arrow cursor is white while the Current time colon is blue. A paused activity is the only time this colour difference will occur.



The Vale cellar door

Countdown time

tempobluе provides a simple tool to help you manage your time – a countdown timer. This is useful for situations where you want to spend a set amount of time doing a particular activity. To set the countdown timer, click on the **Set countdown time** button. The countdown screen will open as shown in figure 13 below.

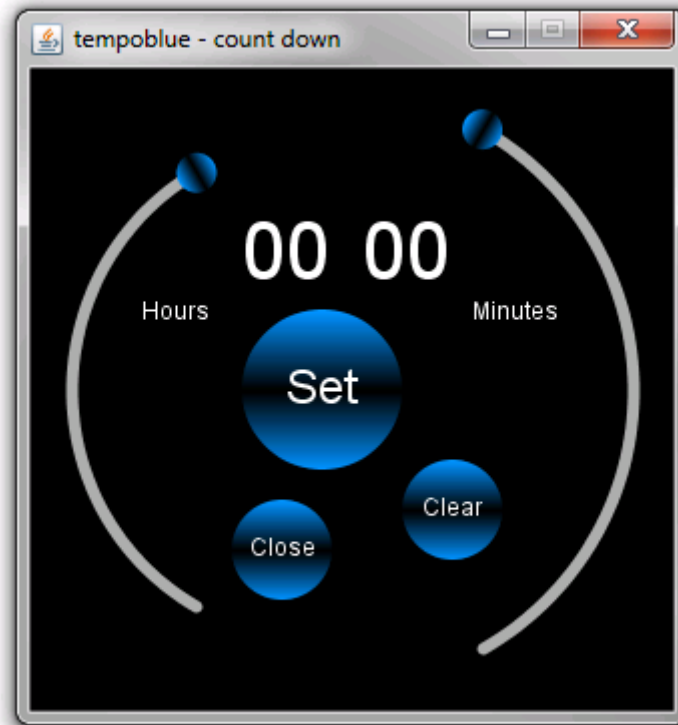


Figure 13 – the tempobluе countdown screen

The gray curves on the screen are sliders that let you set the countdown time – the left curve for hours, the right curve for minutes. To set a time, place your mouse over the slider ball, press the mouse button down and hold, then drag the ball till the required time is shown on the display. The hours slider will let you set a time between 0 and 23 hours. The minutes slider will let you set a time between 0 and 59 minutes. In figure 14 below, a time of 1 hour 15 minutes has been selected.



Figure 14 – the tempoblue countdown screen with a time set

To set this countdown time in tempoblue, simply click on the big **Set** button. The tempoblue display will look like that shown in figure 15.

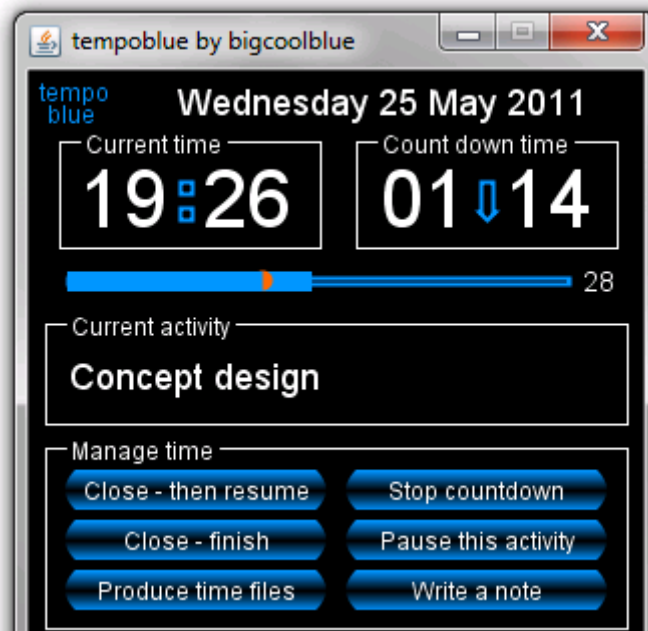


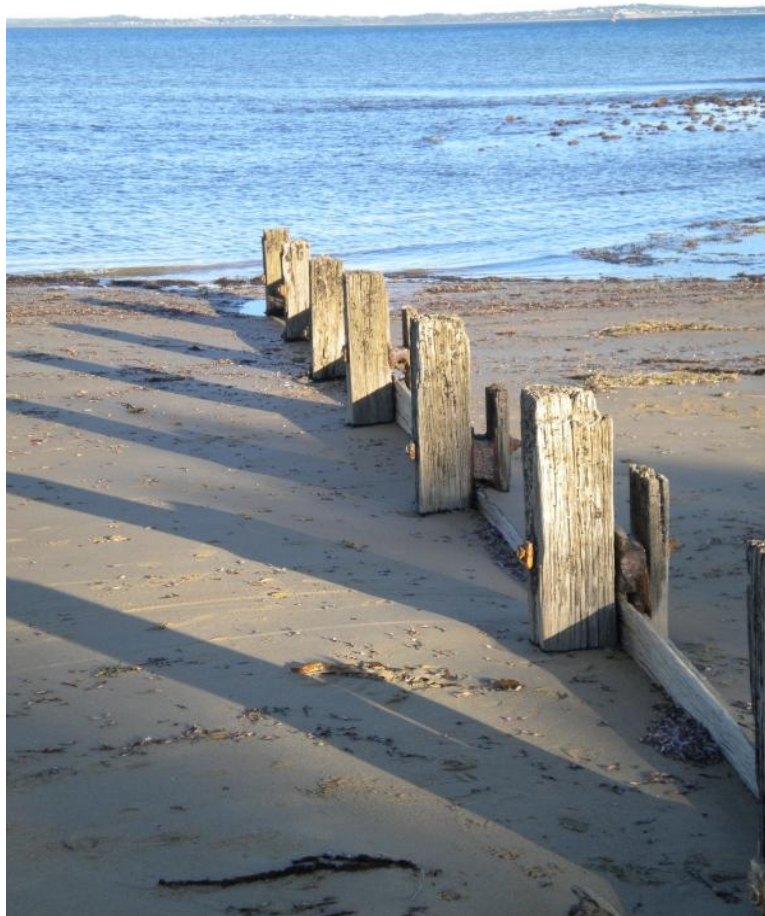
Figure 15 – the tempoblue interface with a countdown time set

Note that:

- the Elapsed time box has now become the **Count down time** box and displays the time remaining,
- the flashing cursor arrow in the Count down time box is now pointing down indicating time counting down,
- the **Set countdown time** button now reads **Stop countdown**.

When the time has counted down to zero, tempoblue will play you a tune to alert you. If you want to hear the tune, make sure sound is turned on and the volume is correct on your computer. The box, cursor and button revert to their original meaning. The countdown time doesn't affect the actual elapsed time associated with the selected activity.

To stop the countdown time at any time, simply click on the **Stop countdown** button.



An old groyne at Balnarring beach

Writing a note

Occasionally you may forget to change your activity within tempobluе, or you might want to make a note of some event. tempobluе lets you write a note which gets recorded along with your activities. You can use these notes later to adjust a timesheet, or simply to have a record of the event.

To write a note, click on the **Write a note** button. The notes interface is displayed as shown in figure 16 below.

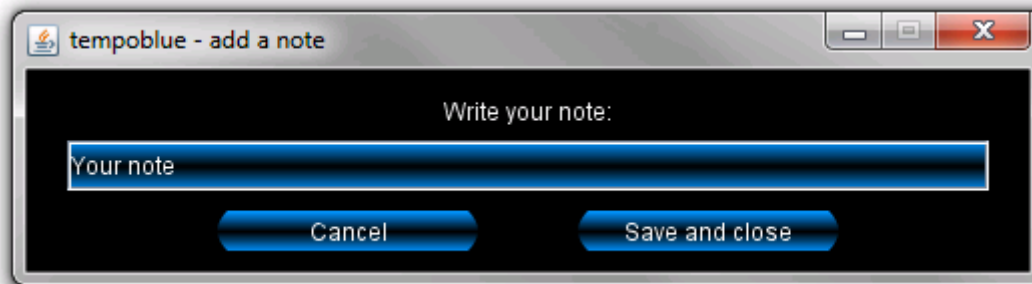


Figure 16 – the tempobluе notes interface

To write a note simply type in the text box. Clicking on the Cancel button closes the interface and does not save the typed text. Clicking on the **Save and close** button closes the interface and does save the typed text.

Note - currently tempobluе will remember the text of the last note you typed in any given tempobluе session, and display it back to you when you next open the interface. This is done simply to prompt you about the last note you wrote on the basis that that may be useful for you.



The City of Melbourne

Time files

Time files are produced in two ways:

1. By clicking on the “Produce time files” button, or
2. Automatically by tempoblu at the start of a new week.

Using the “Produce time files” button will create files that contain data starting at midnight on the previous Friday up to the time the button was clicked.

If you close tempoblu on a Friday night, and open it again on Monday morning, it will automatically produce time files for all activities up to midnight on the Friday when you first select a new activity. It effectively draws a line under the week, closing it off, starting the data collection process afresh for the new week.

tempoblu can produce four types of file as described previously:

1. basic activity list,
2. sorted activity list,
3. csv timesheet,
4. html timesheet.

The file names are of the following form:

```
tbBAL_20110428_123236.csv
tbSAL_20110428_123236.csv
tbTS_20110428_123236.csv
tbTS_20110428_123236.htm
```

The meaning of the filename prefixes are as follows:

tbBAL = tempoblu basic activity list

tbSAL = tempoblu sorted activity list

tbTS = tempoblu timesheet

The numbers after the prefix are a time date stamp indicating when the file was produced. For example, `tbSAL_20110428_123236.csv` is a sorted activity list file created on 28-April-2011 at 12:32 hrs (and 36 seconds).

The Basic Activity List is a list of all activities recorded by tempoblu for the given time period. Each line of the file contains the activity name, the start date time of the activity, the end date time of the activity and the duration of the activity in milliseconds. This file is a comma separated values (csv) file that you will be able to open using your spreadsheet application, or a word processor. Figure 17 below shows a basic activity list opened using a spreadsheet application.

The list of activities in chronological order.

The date-time the activity started.

The date-time the activity finished.

The duration of the activity in milliseconds.

	A	B	C	D
1	Administration: Corporate Activities	Wednesday 25 May 2011 08:41:00	Wednesday 25 May 2011 09:25:00	2640000
2	Administration: Management meetings	Wednesday 25 May 2011 09:25:00	Wednesday 25 May 2011 10:32:00	4020000
3	Project pepe: Concept design	Wednesday 25 May 2011 10:32:00	Wednesday 25 May 2011 12:54:00	8520000
4	Project pepe: Technology study	Wednesday 25 May 2011 12:54:00	Wednesday 25 May 2011 16:02:00	11280000
5	Business development: Direct sales support	Wednesday 25 May 2011 16:02:00	Wednesday 25 May 2011 18:15:00	7980000
6	Administration: Corporate Activities	Thursday 26 May 2011 09:02:00	Thursday 26 May 2011 10:16:00	4440000
7	Project pepe: Prototype 1	Thursday 26 May 2011 10:16:00	Thursday 26 May 2011 11:42:00	5160000
8	Project pepe: Technology study	Thursday 26 May 2011 11:42:00	Thursday 26 May 2011 16:22:00	16080000
9	Administration: Staff one on ones	Thursday 26 May 2011 16:22:00	Thursday 26 May 2011 16:42:00	1200000
10	Administration: Corporate Activities	Thursday 26 May 2011 16:42:00	Not recorded	0
11				
12	Notes			
13	Wednesday 25 May 2011 09:07:00	Phone call from John about the new equipment arriving		
14	Wednesday 25 May 2011 11:41:00	Came up with the new "radial concept"		
15	Wednesday 25 May 2011 14:31:00	Missed a 30 minute stint of "Corporate activities"		
16	Thursday 26 May 2011 09:41:00	Great success at the Bordeaux office		
17	Thursday 26 May 2011 16:54:00	John not happy about the move to Hastings		

The date-time a note was recorded.

The text of a note.

Figure 17 – the tempoblu basic activity list

The Sorted Activity List is the same as the Basic Activity List except that the activities are sorted based on activity name.

The csv timesheet is the main file produced by tempobblue. It is the weekly timesheet recording your activities in csv format. You can open this file in your spreadsheet application, make any adjustments to figures and formatting and then print or send to whoever needs to see it. An example is shown in figure 18 below.

The list of activities sorted by name.

The activity records organised by day.

Activity	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Totals
Administration: Management meetings					01:07			01:07
Administration: Staff one on ones						00:20		00:20
Administration: Corporate Activities					00:44	01:14		01:58
Project pepe: Concept design					02:22			02:22
Project pepe: Technology study					03:08	04:40		07:48
Project pepe: Prototype 1						01:26		01:26
Business development: Direct sales support					02:13			02:13
Totals	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00	09:34	07:40	00:00	17:14

Created by tempobblue v1.0 from bigcoolblue Thursday 26 May 2011 16:52:00

Approvals

Work record of:

Name: Signature:

Authorised by : Signature:

Name: Signature:

Notes

Wednesday 25 May 2011 09:07:00

Wednesday 25 May 2011 11:41:00

Wednesday 25 May 2011 14:31:00

Thursday 26 May 2011 09:41:00

Thursday 26 May 2011 16:54:00

Phone call from John about the new equipment arriving

Came up with the new "radial concept"

Missed a 30 minute stint of "Corporate activities"

Great success at the Bordeaux office

John not happy about the move to Hastings

The section for approvals.

The date-time a note was recorded.

The text of a note.

Figure 18 – the tempobblue csv timesheet

The html timesheet contains the same information as the csv timesheet, except that it is html format and comes with a style sheet that makes it printer ready. If you feel that you do not need to adjust figures within the sheet, then the html timesheet will be quicker to print. If you feel confident editing html, you can change the figures within the timesheet. If you feel confident editing css files, you can edit the timesheet.css file to change fonts and colours.

Timesheet for Rupert Brown for the week ending Friday 27 May 2011

Activity	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Totals
Administration: Management meetings	0	0	0	0	01:07	0	0	01:07
Administration: Staff one on ones	0	0	0	0	0	00:20	0	00:20
Administration: Corporate Activities	0	0	0	0	00:44	01:14	0	01:58
Project pepe: Concept design	0	0	0	0	02:22	0	0	02:22
Project pepe: Technology study	0	0	0	0	03:08	04:40	0	07:48
Project pepe: Prototype 1	0	0	0	0	0	01:26	0	01:26
Business development: Direct Sales Support	0	0	0	0	02:13	0	0	02:13
Totals	0	0	0	0	09:34	07:40	0	17:14

Created by tempoblue v1.0 from bigcoolblue Friday 27 May 2011 23:59:59

Approvals

Work record of

Name:

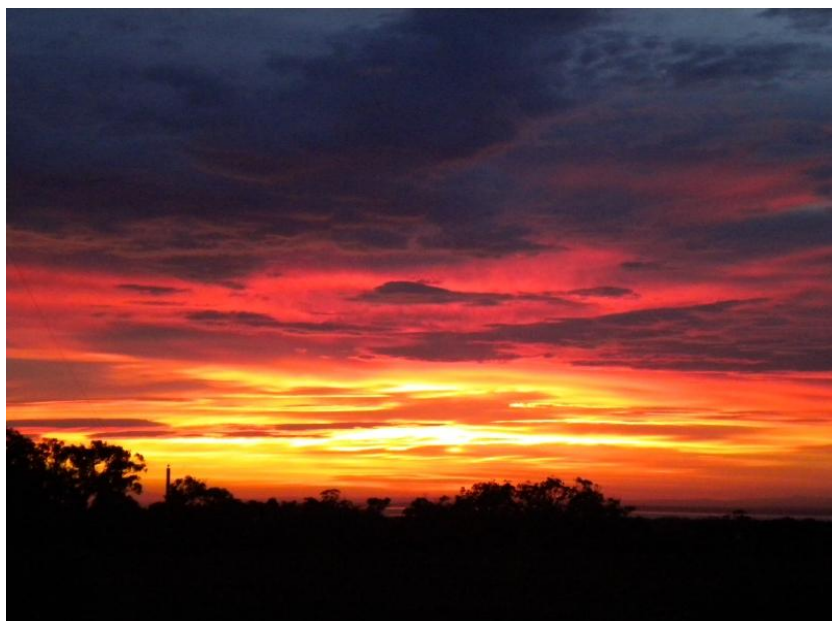
Signature:

Authorised by

Name:

Signature:

Figure 19 – the tempoblue html timesheet



Dawn on the Peninsula

tempoblue files and what you can do with them

After you have used tempoblue for the first time, have a look in the directory where you have put the .jar file. You will notice that tempoblue has produced a few new files. This section explains what these files are, and what, if anything, you can do with them.

Activities.xml – this is a .xml file (eXtensible Markup Language) that contains all the data you have entered in tempoblue’s activity tree. You can open this file in an editor and see the structure and the data. If you understand how XML works, you can edit the file directly to change your activities – although note that if you break the syntax, tempoblue may not be able to read it, and you’ll have to recreate the file using tempoblue.

If you’re working in a team, and want the team to have common activities, you can create one file and send it to the other members of the team. Saving the file in the same place as the tempoblue .jar file means, that when they start tempoblue, they will all be working with the same set of activities. Obviously each individual can subsequently alter or add to the file, but at least you will all be starting from the same point.

You can use the **Clear** button to completely remove your activities list. If you do this and realize you actually need that list of activities, don’t worry – the data has been retained by tempoblue in another file. Looking in the directory there will now be a file with a name that looks like this:

Activities_20110527_095122.xml

tempoblue has saved your activities in this file – which, as the name suggests, was created on 27th May 2011 at 9:51am. To recover your activities, delete the existing (and now empty) Activities.xml file and simply rename the new file Activities.xml. When you start tempoblue again, your activities should be restored.

preferences.ser – this is a .ser file (Java serialized) that contains the data describing your user preferences. It’s a very small, simple file, and if anything happens to it, the easiest thing to do is simply to open tempoblue, select your preferences and close tempoblue. The application will recreate the file for you. .ser files cannot be edited manually. If you open the file in an editor, it will look like gobbledygook.

tbAL_Current.ser and **tbNL_Current.ser** – two more serialized files. tbAL_Current is the record of all you activities for the current week. tbNL_Current.ser is the record of all the notes you’ve written this week. Every week the “Current” files are saved with the standard date format e.g.:

tbAL_20110527_095122.ser

tbNL_20110527_095122.ser

and a new pair of files is created to store information for the new week.

If you ever need to recreate your activity lists or timesheets for a specific week, you can do so if you have kept the tbAL and tbNL files. The process is as follows:

1. Close tempoblue.
2. Save your current tbAL_Current.ser and tbNL_Current.ser files – put them in another directory.
3. Make copies of the tbAL and tbNL files from the week you want to recreate, and rename those copies tbAL_Current.ser and tbNL_Current.ser.
4. Start tempoblue and click on the **Produce time files** button. Your newly created activity lists and timesheets should have appeared in your time files directory.
5. Close tempoblue.
6. Copy back your original tbAL_Current.ser and tbNL_Current.ser files, overwriting the new ones you created.



Job done. Hope you enjoy using tempoblue!