



qwikALERT

by Ben Robinson

version 1.4

<http://www.ben-robinson.com/software>
software@ben-robinson.com



If you like and use this widget, please consider a PayPal donation.
Click the button on the back of the widget

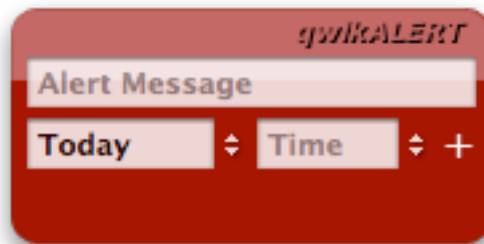
qwikALERT is freeware and provided AS IS with no warranties.
I am in no way responsible for any loss caused by failure of this software.

What is qwikALERT

qwikALERT is designed to remind you of those little things happening in the near future that you otherwise might forget. Things like, you have to return a phone call or you want to change channel so you don't miss your favourite TV program.

How it works

When you drop the qwikALERT widget onto the dashboard you will see the main window, as shown here:



For each alert you wish to receive, you need to enter 3 pieces of information:

- The message you want to see.
e.g. Call back John Smith.
- The date you want to be alerted.
- The time you want to be alerted.

The message is entered into the large box at the top of the window, this can be whatever you want it to be.

The date is entered into the smaller box on the left, this box will default with the word 'Today', meaning today's date.

The time is entered into the smaller box on the right.

How to enter dates

Dates can be entered in many different ways, if however the date you enter is not recognized by the widget, or not allowed (i.e. before today), it will return to the default value of 'Today'.

The rules for dates are as follows:

- You must enter a day and a month – the year is optional.
- The day, month and year must be separated by either a space or a /.
- The month can either be a number or a word (Jan-Dec).
- The day, month and year can be in any order, unless the day is less than 12 and the month is entered as a number, in which case, your current International system settings will be used.
- You may enter the words, Today or Tomorrow. If the date is today's date, or the following days date, these words will be used automatically.

How to enter times

Times, like dates, are also very flexible in how they can be entered. If however the time you enter is not recognized by the widget, or not allowed (i.e. before now), the time will be set to the current time.



The rules for times are as follows:

- Times can be entered either as 12 or 24 hours, use pm for times in 12 hour format passed midday.
- You only need to enter 'p' or 'a' for 'pm' and 'am'.
- If no minutes are entered, the time will be on the hour.
- Hours and minutes must be separated by either ':' or '.'



Try entering different dates and time to see what you can get away with.

Using the and buttons



Next to both the date and the time boxes there are a pair of buttons.

Clicking the  button will advance the date by one day, or the time by one minute, clicking  will do the reverse.

Using the arrow keys


As well as the  and  buttons, you can use the arrow keys on your keyboard. To do this, just select either the date or time box and press the up or down keys. Dates will go up or down by one day, times by one minute.

Advancing the time faster

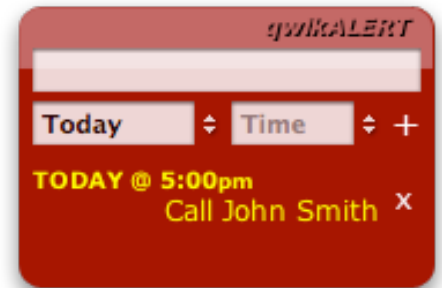
To move the time on faster hold down the \lrcorner (alt/option) key as you use the arrow keys or the  and  buttons. With each key press or click of the button, the time will advance by 15 minutes.

Create the alert


Before creating the alert it is always worth clicking away from the date or time boxes, maybe using the tab key, to ensure the date and time have been entered as you expected.

If the date and time is correct, and you have entered a message, you can create the alert by clicking the  button or by pressing enter on the keyboard.

If any of the boxes are incorrect they will flash red, otherwise, your alert will appear in the list below the input boxes, as shown.

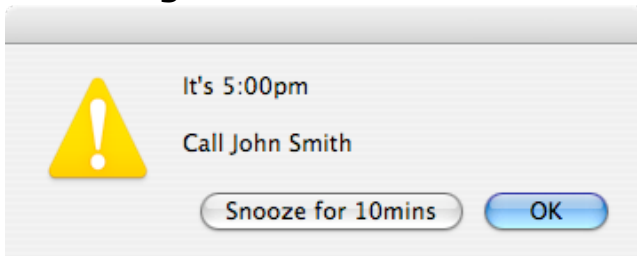


Removing an alert

If you decide you no longer need a particular alert, just click the  button alongside the alert you don't want. It will be removed immediately.

NOTE: Alerts cannot be edited, if you need to change an alert, remove it and recreate it.

Receiving the alert




When it gets to the correct date and time, a dialog will be opened, like that shown here.

Simply click [OK], the alert will close be removed from the widgets list.

Alternatively, if your not ready to receive the alert yet, click the Snooze button, the alert will be rescheduled for a new time and you will receive the alert again then.

Alert Sounds

When an alert is displayed you can choose to have an alert sound played.

To do this, flip the widget (using the  button), and choose one of the sounds from the list. The list contains all system sounds, as well as aiff files saved in ~/Library/Sounds/

You can also select "Speak Message" from the list, in this case, the message you've entered will be spoken by the computer, in the default voice (see the Speech system preference pane).

Select "No Sound" to stop alerts or voices sounding.

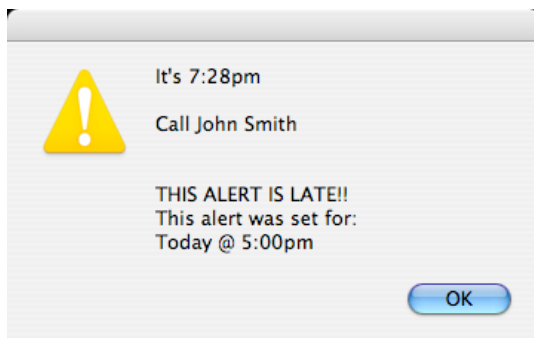
Alert Cautions

It is important to remember, **you will not get any alerts if the qwikALERT widget is not running**. This obviously includes when the computer is switched off, but will also apply if, for any reason, Dashboard (or the Dock) crashes. Dashboard widgets, including **qwikALERT**, **will not start until Dashboard is activated** (e.g. via F12) for the first time after start-up or crashes. Make sure you activate the dashboard at start-up so you don't miss any alerts!

Alerts will not wake the computer from sleep.

Late Alerts

If you miss an alert because the computer was switched off, or dashboard was not running, you will get this alert when qwikALERT starts.




The time on this, and any alert is the time the alert was opened, on late alerts you are also told the date and time you originally requested the alert for.

You cannot snooze a late alert.

You may also see this alert if you set an alert for the current date or time due to the delay in checking alerts.

Setting the Snooze time

When you receive an alert, you have the option to snooze it for a particular number of minutes (default is 10 minutes), as displayed on the button.

You can set your own amount of time for a snooze. To do this, flip the widget, by clicking the [] button and enter a new value, in minutes, into the [Snooze is for:] text box.

The value in the text box can be changed using the arrow keys on the keyboard, in the same way as setting alert dates and times.

Setting time display preferences

Within qwikALERT the default is to display all times in 12 hour format (with am or pm at the end). This can be changed to use the 24 hour format if you prefer.

Making this change only changes how times are displayed, all times can still be entered in either 12 or 24 hour format irrespective of this setting.

To change the time format used, flip the widget by clicking the [**i**] button and select the required option from the Time drop down menu.

Setting colour preferences

You can change the colours used by the widget.

To do this, simply flip the widget by clicking the [**i**] button and choosing a background and text colour from the drop down menus. Click [Done] to see the changes you have made, which will be saved.

Skin colours are dark and text colours are light, so the same colours can be used together safely – for example a yellow skin with yellow text looks quite good.

The default colours (as it was originally) for qwikALERT are red for the skin and yellow for the text. These options are shown with a * to help you reset the widget back to its default setting.

Version History

- 1.4
 - Alerts now appear over current application without activating the Finder and all its windows (many thanks to Amy Langenhorst, <http://alangenh.googlepages.com/>)
 - Removed bug for Mac OS X 10.4.7 users
- 1.3
 - Major rebuild after lost of code due to hard drive failure
 - Bug in time entry fixed (10.4.3 compatibility)
 - Option to display time in 24hr format added
 - Better selection of skin and text colours added
 - Complete redesign of backside to be clearer
- 1.2
 - Added 'Snooze' feature, with customisable length
 - Improved reliability of alert list and final message
 - Alert is now more 'naggy' with constant Finder activations
 - Allows larger range of characters in message ('"/>)
 - Removed bug where alert could be created from the backside
 - Fixed minor bug on PayPal button
 - Fixed small spelling mistake
 - Made this manual slightly more obvious on backside
- 1.1
 - Added alert sound and speech support
 - Improved user interface
 - Minor time bug fixes
- 1.0
 - First Release

Making Contact

If you have any questions, suggestions or have spotted a bug, please feel free to email me at:

software@ben-robinson.com

All of your suggestions are very welcome.

Feel free to email me even just to say your using qwikALERT

Enjoy!

Ben Robinson