Tasker User's Guide
Version 3.0

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Thank you for your interest in Tasker! We've worked hard to get Tasker to perform the way that we think it should, and we hope that it increases your productivity.

Tasker is SHAREWARE, which means that you can try it for free for a period of 30 days.   If you use this software after the evaluation period, a registration fee of $19.95 is required or you must remove it from your computer.   The registration key will permanently unlock your copy of Tasker, and you will receive future updates for FREE.   Thank you very much for your support which allows us to continue enhancing this product!   We are sure that Tasker will save you much more than its cost in time savings.

There are two ways to purchase Tasker: ("*register*" and "*purchase*" mean the same thing in the shareware industry)

Option #1): Go to the Tasker website at http://www.vista-software.com/tasker.htm and register online with a credit card using PayPal   (the PayPal service is free and secure).   You will receive a temporary registration key immediately to unlock Tasker, and a permanent registration key will be emailed to you within a few days.   At the Vista website there are volume discount options for corporations.

Option #2): Send a check for 19.95 US Dollars payable to:

> Vista Software, Inc.
> PO Box 93055
> Phoenix, AZ   85070
> USA

Your registration number will be emailed to you.   Please send us a notification email when you mail the check so that Vista Software can add you to the registered users' database.

By registering Tasker, you will receive the following benefits:

- You will receive an instant Registration Key via email that will permanently unlock your copy of Tasker
- No more "Please Register" reminder screens will appear
- You will automatically receive future updates of Tasker and all bug fixes for FREE – a significant value, since Vista Software adds new features to Tasker on a regular basis
- Vista Software will notify you of new Tasker versions (but never any spam/promotional emails)
- You are ensuring that we can keep enhancing Tasker for the future versions
- You will feel good because you are doing the right thing and supporting the shareware "try before you buy" concept

Getting Started with Tasker

The purpose of Tasker is to make your computer automatically do your work for you.   This will allow you to do things that are tedious or time-consuming without actually doing them yourself. Computers are great for doing mundane tasks without complaining, and Tasker capitalizes on that ability.   Tasker accomplishes this goal by employing three methods:

1) Tasker can record computer actions and play them back

2) Tasker watches for special keys or text abbreviations as a signal to do something (such as automatically type for you)

3) Tasker can run script files to automate using direct commands

Of these three methods, #1 is the easiest and is demonstrated below.   Method #2 is very useful while typing documents, and after trying it, you will probably always want to have it activated.   The final method #3 is the most powerful application of Tasker and allows you to automate complex tasks and create substantial solutions for many computer jobs.   To begin using Tasker, you only need to see the basics in action with a short example.

Vista Software is confident that Tasker accomplishes computer task automation more easily and with a cleaner interface than any other macro program. If you have been using computers long enough, you may remember a program called "Recorder" that was included with Microsoft Windows version 3.1. Tasker operates under the same concept.

Here's a step-by-step guide for the basics of Tasker:

1) Launch your other programs that you want to use ahead of time, such as Microsoft Word or Excel

2) Press the blue Record button on the Tasker toolbar:

3) Do what you want with the mouse and keyboard for a few seconds

4) Stop recording by pressing the red Stop button on the toolbar:

5) Replay what you did with the green Play button:

To stop the playback before it finishes, press the Control and Escape keys at the same time (this special keyboard combination immediately interrupts all playback and recording). The Control + Alt + Delete combination also stops a playback.

Obtaining Technical Support

There are lots of methods for obtaining help for using Tasker, and the references grow everyday with more user contributions.

The following options are currently available for obtaining Tasker help:

1) User's Guide (this file)

Provides general information that concerns all Tasker users and does not contain anything that is too technical. Most users should find answers to their basic questions in this help file. It is in standard Windows .HLP (Help) format.

2) The Tasker website at www.vista-software.com/tasker.htm

This site can provide basic information about Tasker, including downloads, registration, the current production version number, and user reviews

3) "Help For This Screen"

*Located on the **Help** menu, this feature provides context-sensitive help for the screen that you are currently using in Tasker. It describes every control or option that is available on the visible screen and why you would need to use it.*

4) Script Reference

Contains documentation for the Tasker Script commands. Using Tasker script is a very productive way to use Tasker and this file contains detailed descriptions and many examples that you can use. This file is in HTML format.

5) Revision History

This file lists all the feature changes that have occurred during the development of Tasker. It is useful for seeing what changes have transpired since the last version, or how long something has been included in Tasker. Not every little thing gets into this file, since it is updated when time permits, but it is fairly comprehensive. This file is in HTML format.

6) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Displays a list of the most common questions that users have when using Tasker. Questions like "Why does Tasker seem to play too slowly/too fast?" or "How can I press Ctrl+S with Tasker script?" are answered here. This document is regularly updated, and is available on the web at www.vista-software.com/taskerfaq.htm. This file is in HTML format.

7) Legal Agreement

Contains the license agreement that you agreed to when installing Tasker. It answers legal questions concerning the use of Tasker.

8) The "About Tasker" Dialog Box

Displays detailed information concerning the current version of Tasker that is installed on your PC.   It also shows the registration information, build date/time, copyright information, and hotlinks to Vista Software websites and support emails.

9) Tech Support Email

This is the most common method of technical support for questions that you can't find answers to in the documentation listed above.   Vista Software usually answers within 24 hours.   Please provide a detailed description of your problem when sending questions.

Hey – where are the tech support phone numbers??

Sorry, but there is no direct phone line that you can call for technical support.   With a sales price of only 20 dollars, it is not possible to have a dedicated phone support staff.   We promise that we will answer your emails as soon as possible (usually the same day, sometimes in a matter of hours).   We do understand what it's like to not be able to directly call a vendor, but be assured we are committed to the Tasker product.   Vista Software is primarily a consulting firm, and we usually can't be interrupted while working with clients (they don't like that).   Of course, you could hire us to work with you on your next project, and then you can call us whenever you want to...

Script Overview

The Tasker Script Reference is not included with this document.   For a detailed reference on Tasker Scripts, please see the Script Reference which can be found in the Help Menu.   It is also available at http://www.vista-software.com/taskerscript.htm.

In addition to its recording capability, Tasker includes a very basic scripting language. *"Script"* is a text document that is comprised of code commands which Tasker understands. Typically, Notepad is used to create and edit script files.   Any editor that can save in the Text Only format will work.   Tasker Script is very easy to learn and use, since it includes only five keywords:

CLICK
GOTO
START
TYPE
WAIT

Tasker is primarily a mouse and keyboard recorder which does not rely on a complex programming language, and script commands are meant to supplement your recordings. However, you may find that most tasks can be completed with simple script commands. You can write a script for anything that you can type on your keyboard, including any movement key (such as arrow keys) or any combination of keys (such as "Ctrl + V", "Alt + F", or "Shift + Ctrl + Left").

A typical script file will look like the one below.   To try this script, copy the text below and then paste it into Notepad.   Save the Notepad file as **"C:\Test.tsx"** (include the quotes) and then open and run "C:\Test.tsx" in Tasker.

```
; Launch the Notepad application
START notepad.exe

; Give Notepad a couple of seconds to appear
WAIT 2 seconds

; Switch to the Notepad application
GOTO Untitled - Notepad

; Press some keys and pause so the user can read it
TYPE Here is text that is being typed by Tasker {newline}{newline}Bye!
WAIT 2 seconds

; Show the File menu by using special characters (Alt + F)
TYPE {altdown}
TYPE f
TYPE {altup}
WAIT 2 seconds

; Show the System menu by clicking in the window corner
CLICK 10, 10
```

You can also save a recording as a .TSX Tasker Editable Text File (see the "Save As Type" option in the <u>File Save</u> As prompt).

Why would you use Tasker Scripts instead of just recording your actions? Sometimes it is easier to write a few lines of code rather than trying to get a perfect recording. In addition, a script file allows you to play back the commands back regardless of the computer's configuration (such as window placement), and even share the same script with other users. This capability makes scripts better than regular recordings for teams (such as software testing projects). Finally, it is far easier to change a script file rather than re-record all of you actions for a lengthy process.

To programmatically control loops and playback speed with your scripts, please refer to the <u>Command Line Parameters</u> topic.

As mentioned above, the Tasker Script Reference is not included with this document.   For a detailed reference on Tasker Scripts, please see the Script Reference which can be found in the <u>Help Menu – Advanced Help</u>.   It is also available at http://www.vista-software.com/taskerscript.htm.

Command Line Parameters

Tasker Files (recordings and script files) accept command line parameters.   This feature allows you to run each file with unique settings instead of using the global options from the Tasker Playback screen.   There are three settings that can be controlled: **Speed**, **Repeats**, and **Continuous**.   A description of each of these settings can be found in the Playback Tab help page.

Once these settings are used for running the Tasker File, they are not saved.   In other words, they will not apply to Tasker the next time that it starts up.
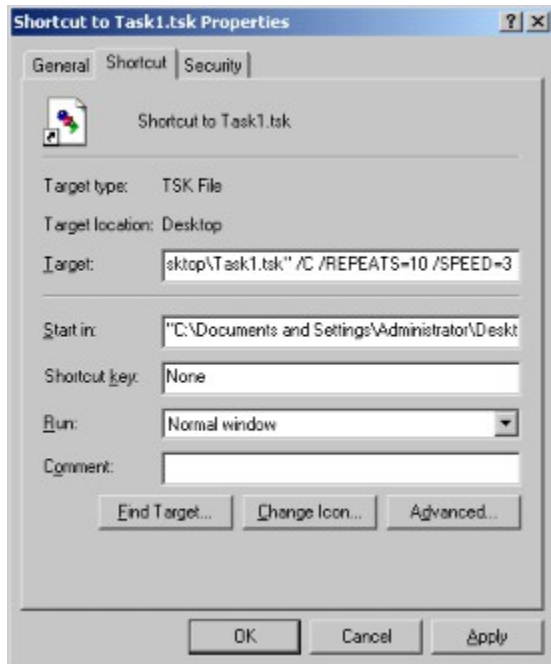
To customize the playback settings for a Tasker File, follow the instructions below:

NOTE: This feature is intended for advanced users only!

1) Create a shortcut to your file by creating a link to it on your desktop (or whatever folder you want it in)

2) Right mouse click on the Tasker File's icon and choose Properties.   You should see a screen similar to the one below:

3) As displayed in the screen image above, add "**/C**" as the first parameter, then add any parameters that you wish to customize after the filename.   You can add **/SPEED, /REPEATS,** and **/CONTINUOUS**.   Each of these settings expects a number to follow it.

The **/C** parameter is required and must be the first parameter.
The **/SPEED** options are: 1=Slow;   2=Normal;   3=Fast;   4=As Fast As Possible.
The **/ REPEATS** options are any positive whole integer
The **/CONTINUOUS** is a Boolean value expecting either a 1 or a 0

For a description of each of these settings, please refer to the Playback Tab help page.

The sample screen above shows a file called Task1.tsk that will run with the speed set to Fast, and it will loop for 10 times.

4) Run the file by double-clicking it, and it should run with your new settings.   The Tasker program itself will be unaffected by these settings.   You cannot use command line parameters to start Tasker with new settings – that must be done in the Playback Tab itself.

Playback Tab

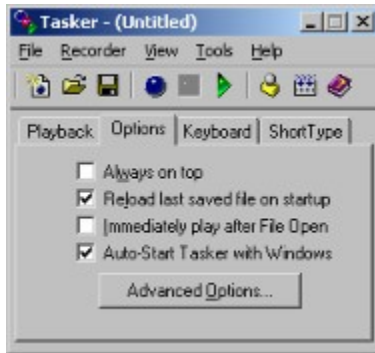| Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Playback Speed	Adjusts the speed that the recording plays at. The options are:
	Slow: Plays at 25% of the original recorded speed
	Normal: Plays at the same speed that it was recorded
	Fast: Plays at 15x of the original recorded speed
	As Fast As Possible: Plays as fast as your computer will take the commands
	The factors that are listed above can be modified in the <u>Advanced Options screen</u>. This allows you to set the Slow speed to play at something different than 25%, for example, 50%.
	Be cautious of the **As Fast As Possible** option, since it may not give your actions enough time to play back before the next one begins. This could be a problem if you are starting programs or switching between applications. It is better to test recordings at the **Normal** speed first, then move up to **Fast**, and finally **As Fast As Possible** once you are sure that the computer can handle it.
Repeat	Allows the playback to loop a certain number of times. The acceptable values are 1 – 2 billion. While looping your recording, the number of completed playbacks will display in the title bar of Tasker ("*2 of 3 done for C:\MyTask.tsx…*").
	You can use the up/down arrows to the right of the Repeat box to change the number without typing in the box.
Continuous	Indicates that the playback will not stop until you press "**Control + Escape**" (preferred) or "**Ctrl + Alt + Del**". If this option is checked, the **Repeat** value is grayed out and ignored, even if it lists a value. Use this setting with caution by testing a recording a few times before allowing it to run **Continuous**.

Options Tab

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Always on Top	Makes the Tasker window always visible and above all other windows. If you start another program, the Tasker window will remain above it. This feature is useful for keeping Tasker visible while recording. Changing this features immediately alters Tasker's visibility, in other words, you do not need to restart Tasker for the change to take effect. This setting is helpful when combined with the View – Show Tab Interface setting in the <u>View Menu</u>. This setting has no effect when Tasker is only running in the <u>System Tray</u>.
Reload last saved file on startup	This option tells Tasker to load the last file that opened in its previous session. If you used a file called "MyEmail.TSX" and then shut Tasker down, when you start it again it will reload "MyEmail.TSX" (but will not run it until you press **Play** or enable the "**Immediately...**" option listed next).
Immediately play after File Open	This will automatically press the **Play** button when you open a file through the **File Open** menu command. Use this setting with care, since you may not want all files to instantly play when they are opened. However, this feature can be productive when you use it to automatically and quickly run files that are in your **Recent File List**.
Auto-Start Tasker with Windows	When this feature is selected, Tasker will launch itself each time you login to Windows. This preference is useful because you do not have to manually start Tasker each time you turn on your PC. This feature is especially helpful when you choose the **Tray Icon** option on the **Keyboard Tab**.
Advanced Options...	This button brings up the **Advanced Options** screen where you can modify additional settings for Tasker. You should only use this feature if you are an advanced user of Tasker, since changing some of these settings may adversely affect your computer's performance.

Keyboard Tab

The **Keyboard Mappings** and **ShortType** features allow you to use the keyboard to launch macros, create new recordings, and automatically type for you.   These capabilities make Tasker an extremely powerful tool for automating work on your computer.

Keyboard Mappings are commonly used to start and stop recordings while working in other programs.   For example, you might map "Ctrl + Shift + R" to start a recording, "Break" to stop recording, and "F5" to play.   While typing in a program such as Word, you could press Ctrl + Shift + R and begin recording, and press Break to stop.   Then you press F5 and your recording will play back - all without ever switching to the Tasker window.   This gives you the power to have the same macro key combinations work in every program you use.

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Keys	Identifies what the special keyboard combination is that will be mapped to an action. To select a new keyboard combination, click with the mouse in the field, then press keys on your keyboard. When you type, the key names should appear in the field. For example, if you type Control, then Shift, then "R", a display similar to the image above will appear. You can type keys one at a time: press and release Control, then press and release Shift, and they will still appear as "Ctrl + Shift". However, when typing these keys after they are mapped, you need to actually hold each one down as the next one is typed. Also be cautious of choosing special Windows combinations, for example, **"Alt + F4"** is a special combination for closing a program, and **"Ctrl + C"** is used for copying to the clipboard in Windows. If you map these combinations, they will not be passed to Windows for processing once the action assigned to them is started.
	You can save multiple key combinations for a single action. This means you can have Ctrl + F6 and Ctrl + F7 both mapped to Start Recording.
Action	Selects the event that you want to perform when the keyboard combination is typed. There are three basic types of commands: Tasker **recording controls**, **commands requiring text**, and **replacement** commands.

The **Tasker recording controls** are functions that control Tasker functions such as Start Recording, Stop Recording, and Playback.   They work the same as the toolbar recording buttons in Tasker.   See the Recorder Menu for additional information.

The **replacement** commands are single keys that are recorded normally, but are substituted during playback for something else.   Thus, they function as a **placeholder**.   For example, you might press the F8 key during recording, but for playback you can mark the F8 key to be a signal to type a random number (instead of pressing the F8 key).   This feature is useful for entering dynamic data during playback, such as when you are creating unique records in a database.   It is the only way to generate dynamic entries during a playback without writing a Tasker Script file.   Another interesting advantage is the ability to change the replace option as many times as you wish after the recording is made – you could change from a random number to a playback loop number without re-recording the placeholder signal key.

Text Field

The **commands requiring text** (such as "Type the text", "Launch the Program", and "Play the recorded file") are able to automatically type something or launch a program.   They use the text that you enter in the large box at the bottom of the screen.   Depending on which option you chose, some mapping commands either type what you entered or start the program that you listed.   To run a program or recording, it is helpful to include the entire path for the file, such as "C:\Program Files\ Some Application\RunThis.exe".   This field can contain multiple lines and is limited to 256 characters.

Activate

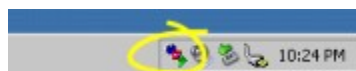This on/off checkbox manages Tasker's ability to watch for the special key combinations that you entered in the Keys field. *NOTE:* **Keyboard Mappings and ShortType entries are both enabled or disabled by this switch.   To use Mappings or ShortTypes, this option must be checked.**

If the Activate service causes any problems on your computer, you should disable it by unchecking this option.

NOTE: **If you are Recording or doing a Playback, the keyboard services (Mappings and ShortType) will not work and will be temporarily disabled until the recording is completed.   This is by design.**   This means that you cannot put a ShortType abbreviation in the Text field for a Keyboard Mapping.

Tray Icon

The Tray Icon feature allows Tasker to run as an invisible "service" in the Windows system tray.   In this mode, the Tasker window will not be visible, but you can still use Keyboard Mappings and ShortTypes (if **Activate** is checked) and Tasker will execute them.

The advantage of this feature is that you will not need to switch to the Tasker window to run recordings, and its window will not take up any screen space.   For example, once you set Start Recording, Stop Recording, and Playback mappings, you can work in Microsoft Word and start recordings and playbacks on-the-fly with Tasker, and you never have to leave your Word document.

Button   This button **adds** the Key and Action mapping record from the fields on the screen.   If any information is missing, Tasker will prompt you to complete the mapping before adding it.   If a mapping already exists for the key combination that you chose, Tasker will verify that you want to overwrite the old one with a new mapping.   This has the same effect as a **modify** feature.

Button   This button **deletes** the Key and Action mapping record that is listed in the fields on the screen.   There is no verification that before the record is deleted.   Also, there is no "undelete" capability.

Button   This button displays   additional help for using Keyboard Mappings and ShortType (this help file).

ShortType Tab

The **Keyboard Mappings** and **ShortType** features allow you to use the keyboard to launch macros, create new recordings, and automatically type for you.   These capabilities make Tasker an extremely powerful tool for automating work on your computer.
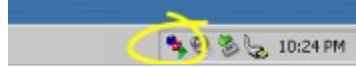
The **ShortType** feature is used to help you type more quickly by replacing a character sequence with longer text.   For example, if you type the word "Sincerely" many times each day, it would be more efficient to simply type "xsig" and have the computer type "Sincerely".   Since "xsig" is not normally used while typing, it is a good choice for a shortcut abbreviation sequence.

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Replace	Identifies what the special text will signal Tasker to automatically type alternate text. Be careful not to choose a Replace text that is commonly typed. For example, do not choose to replace "si" with "Sincerely" since the letters "si" occur in many other words (like "since"). "xsi" or "1si" would be better choices. **The Replace abbreviation is limited to seven (7) characters, and can only contain lowercase letters (a-z), numbers (0-9), or spaces (' ').** For the current version of Tasker, a maximum of 64 ShortTypes can be saved (it would be difficult to remember more abbreviations than that).
Replace…with	Indicates the text that you want Tasker to type once the **Replace** text is entered. Tasker will completely remove the text from the Replace entry and type this text string. This text can be any character and contain multiple lines. The text is limited to 256 characters.
Activate	This on/off checkbox manages Tasker's ability to watch for the special key combinations that you entered in the Keys field. *NOTE:* **Keyboard Mappings and ShortType entries are both enabled or disabled by this switch. To use Mappings or ShortTypes, this option must be checked.**
	If the Activate service causes any problems on your computer, you should disable it by unchecking this option.
	NOTE: **If you are Recording or doing a Playback, the**

keyboard services (Mappings and ShortType) will not work and will be temporarily disabled until the recording is completed.   This is by design. This means that you cannot put a ShortType abbreviation in the Text field for a Keyboard Mapping.

Tray Icon   The Tray Icon feature allows Tasker to run as an invisible "service" in the system tray.   In this mode, the Tasker window will not be visible, but you can still use Keyboard Mappings and ShortTypes (if **Activate** is checked) and Tasker will execute them.

The advantage of this feature is that you will not need to switch to the Tasker window to run recordings, and its window will not take up any screen space.   For example, once you set Start Recording, Stop Recording, and Playback mappings, you can work in Microsoft Word and start recordings and playbacks on-the-fly with Tasker, and you never have to leave your Word document.

 Button   This button **adds** the ShortType record from the fields on the screen.   If any information is missing, Tasker will prompt you to complete the ShortType before adding it. If a ShortType already exists for the Replace text that you chose, Tasker will verify that you want to overwrite the old ShortType with a new one.   This has the same effect as a **modify** feature.

 Button   This button **deletes** the ShortType record that is listed in the fields on the screen.   There is no verification that before the record is deleted.   Also, there is no "undelete" capability.

 Button   This button displays additional help for using Keyboard Mappings and ShortType (this help file).

Advanced Options - Behavior
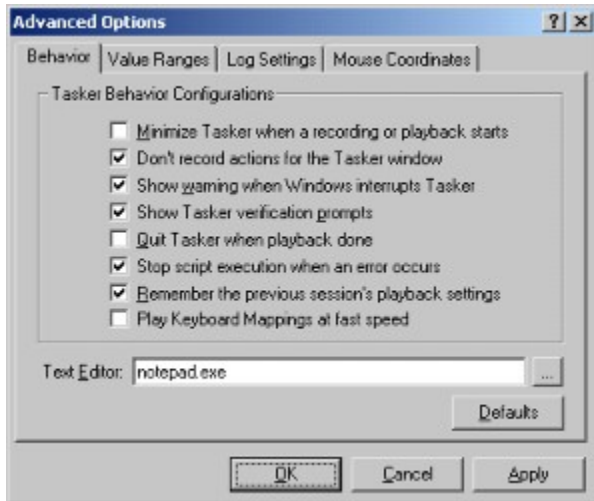
The **Advanced Options** screen allows you to change many features of Tasker that control its behavior and performance.   Only users who are experienced with Tasker should attempt to change these settings.   Some of the options, such as Log Settings, can negatively affect your computer's performance and should not normally be modified.

The screen picture above shows the screen with the normal settings.   The normal settings can be chosen with the **Defaults** button.

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Minimize Tasker when recording starts	When this option is selected, the Tasker main window minimizes as soon as you press the record or play button. This permits you to start recording without the Tasker window getting in the way. As soon as you stop recording by clicking on the Tasker minimized icon or by pressing the key that you have mapped to Stop Recording (See **Keyboard Mappings**), the Tasker window will automatically restore itself to its previous position on the screen. This option has no effect if you have the **Tray Icon** option enabled.
Don't record actions for the Tasker window	Indicates that the mouse clicks, key presses, etc, that occur in Tasker while you are recording will be ignored. Normally, you want this leave this checked for ON otherwise the mouse clicks for Tasker may end up going to another window during playback. Actions that you perform in the Tasker window will still have their normal effect, but this setting ensures that those actions will not go to a different window during playback.
Show warning when Windows interrupts Tasker	Microsoft Windows may occasionally interrupt a Tasker recording or playback. Some of the reasons why this might happen are if you press the Ctrl + Alt + Del or if you want to

shut down your computer.   This setting instructs Tasker to show a warning that the recording /playback has terminated. This setting should normally be left checked (ON).

Show Tasker verification prompts

This setting indicates to Tasker whether you want it to ask for verification and show warning messages for various system actions, such as: verifying that you do not want to save a recording when you close Tasker, overwriting a previously existing file, or showing the system tray location when Tray Icon is chosen.   There are many such actions that normally require the user's approval before continuing, but it is not feasible to list all the messages here.   This setting should only be turned off once you have used Tasker for a long period of time and are familiar with its behavior.   Unless you are an advanced user who completely understands Tasker, you will normally want to set this to ON (checked).

**Quit Tasker when
playback done**

With this chosen, Tasker will close after the first time that you play a recording.   This would be useful if you normally run a quick macro and do not want to switch to Tasker to close it afterwards.   When you directly run a recorded file by double-clicking on it, Tasker will close automatically and will ignore this setting.

**Stop script execution
when an error occurs**

If you are running a <u>script</u> and an error is encountered, Tasker will warn you with a message, stop the playback, and log the details in a file.   If you would rather have Tasker continue even if an error occurs, uncheck this option.   Any errors that occur will still be logged in the **log file**.

**Remember the previous session's
playback settings**

With this option selected, the **Speed, Loops, Continuous** settings will be saved when you close Tasker and reloaded each time it starts up.   If this option is not selected, these settings will be the defaults (Normal Speed, 1 Repeat, Not Continuous).
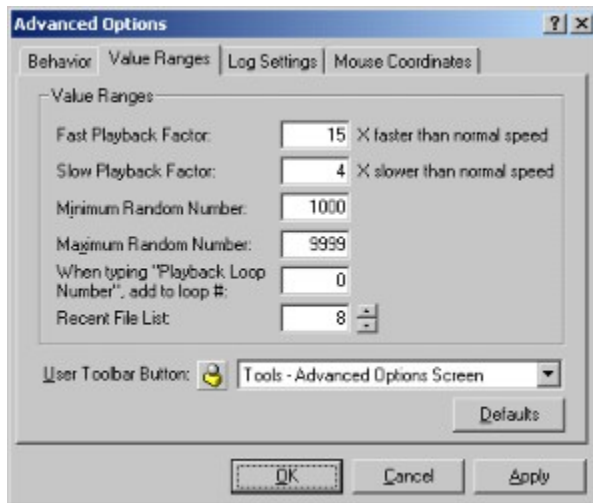
**Play Keyboard Mappings
at fast speed**

When you have key combinations mapped to Start Recording and Playback, this setting will make the recording play at **As Fast As Possible** speed no matter what your **Speed** is set to on the first tab (<u>Playback Tab</u>).   For example, if you are in Microsoft Word and want to record yourself typing, you would not want to see the playback occur at the same speed that you recorded it with all the pauses included, but rather just the results of your typing.

Text Editor

This setting allows you to choose an editor for text files.   The default editor is Notepad (notepad.exe), but you can choose any program that you like.   Use the ⊡ button to select the program so that the entire directory path is included.

Advanced Options – Value Ranges

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Fast Playback Factor	This option sets the playback speed ratio when the **Fast** option is chosen on the first screen (Playback Tab). It is a speed ratio of the original recording speed. Therefore, if you enter "20" for this value, a fast speed playback will move at approximately 2000% of the speed that it was recorded at (20 times as fast). The default value for this option is 15x (1500%). You might want to change it to suit your needs depending on your computer's performance.
Slow Playback Factor	This option sets the playback speed ratio when the **Slow** option is chosen on the first screen (Playback Tab). It is the speed ratio of the original recording speed. Therefore, if you enter "8" for this value, a slow speed playback will move at approximately 12% of the speed that it was recorded at (1/8 as fast). The default value for this option is 4x (25%). You might want to change it to suit your needs depending on your computer's performance.
Minimum Random Number	In the third main screen (**Keyboard Mappings Tab**), you can choose a key to be a placeholder during recordings so that another text entry is made during playback. One of the replacement text options is a **random number**. This option sets the lower limit of the random number. For example, if you want your random numbers to be between 1 and 100, you would set this number to 1.
Maximum Random Number	In the third main screen (**Keyboard Mappings Tab**), you can choose a key to be a placeholder during recordings so that another text entry is made during playback. One of the replacement text options is a **random number**. This option sets the upper limit of the random number. For example, if

you want your random numbers to be between 1 and 100, you would set this number to 100.

When typing "Playback Loop Number", add to loop #

In the third main screen (**Mappings Tab**), you can choose a key to be a placeholder during recordings so that another text entry is made during playback.   One of the replacement text options is the **playback loop number**, which is incremented after every playback loop is completed.   This option adds a specified base number to the playback loop.   For example, if you want the recording to loop 10 times and have it type the numbers 2000 – 2010, you would set this option to "1999" and choose **Repeat** "10" times on the first screen (**Playback Tab**). When the playback begins to loop, the first number will be "2000" (1 + 1999), then "2001" (2+1999) and will continue until it loops ten times.

Recent File List

By default, the Recent File List in the **File Menu** can contain up to a maximum of 8 entries.   This list will let you easily select a recording or script file that you previously worked on.   If you would prefer to have the list be shorter, you can adjust this setting.   Most programs place four recent files in the list.   This value can be anywhere from 1 to 8.   The up/down arrows allow you to change the value without typing anything.

User Toolbar Button

One of the buttons on the toolbar is dedicated you're your choice of commands.   The button is yellow person-looking icon near the right side of the toolbar:
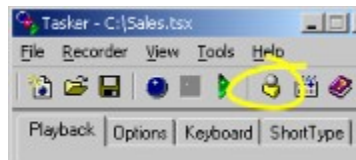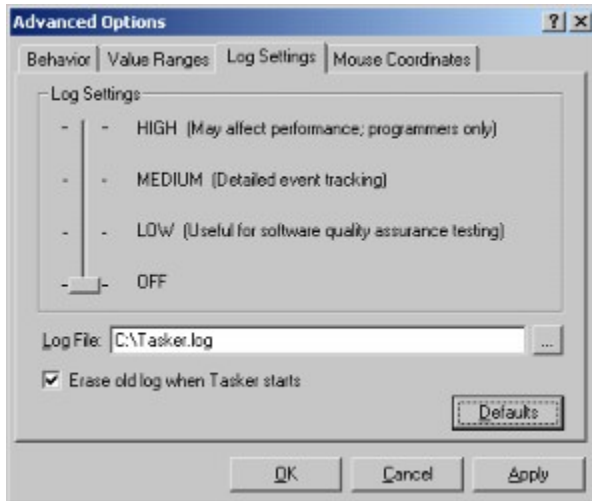

When this button is pressed, it will perform an option that you can choose.   This ability allows you to quickly access your favorite function in Tasker.   For example, if you are testing a script file, you may want to rapidly reload the file after you make changes to it, so you could choose the "**Reload Current File**" option.   Or, you might find it easier to use this button to jump to the **Advanced Options** screen to change settings.   The available options are:

- Playback - Use Fast Playback Speed
- Options - Toggle Always on top
- File - Reload Current File
- Recorder - Use Normal Play Configuration
- View - Toggle Tab Interface
- View - Total Number of Actions
- Tools - Edit Script File
- Tools - Edit Log File
- Tools - Backup All Settings
- Tools - Backup Basic Configuration
- Tools - Backup Mappings
- Tools - Backup ShortTypes
- Tools - Advanced Options Screen
- Help - Help File Contents

- <u>Help - Script Reference</u>
- <u>Help - Revision History</u>
- <u>Help - Tasker FAQ</u>

All of these options are accessible via alternative methods in the Tasker program.   Commands that are already on the toolbar (such as Record and Play) were not included as choices for the User Command button to avoid redundancy.

Advanced Options – Log Settings

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Log Settings Level	This control moves vertically and allows you to visually see what the current log level is. The **Log file** is a special text file that Tasker uses to output information while running. This file is helpful for locating a problem with Tasker because it will show you every assumption is made during recordings and playbacks. Additionally, any inconsistencies that Tasker finds will be listed in the log file (such as a memory error or a program that closed unexpectedly). There are four levels of logging:
HIGH	Everything is logged, even technical details that would be of little use to anyone but the Tasker programmers at Vista Software. This setting was left in for users so that they could see the internal decisions of Tasker in the event that it helps them to fix a problem. It also helps Vista Software support technicians to fix a problem on a user's computer without actually being there. **NOTE:** The HIGH setting could dramatically affect performance of your computer, since many entries may be logged per second! This setting should be used rarely, if ever. If the log level is set to HIGH or MEDIUM, a warning about performance will appear when Tasker is started.
MEDIUM	This setting tracks individual actions (events) during a recording and playback. This could result in many entries – each fraction of a mouse movement will be recorded, and a long mouse movement can result in hundreds of entries. If the log level is set to HIGH or MEDIUM, a warning about performance will appear when Tasker is started.
LOW	The LOW log level will only track recording/playback starts and completions, and any errors that occur. This level is very helpful because you will easily be able to see any errors that occurred without too much additional information in the way.
OFF	This log setting records nothing, not even errors, and no log file

is created.   Tasker should be operated in this mode under normal circumstances.

Log File

This field allows you to choose which file to use for logging information and errors.   The normal log file name is **C:\ Tasker.log**.   You can choose an existing filename with the ... button, but be aware that the chosen file will be erased and overwritten by Tasker.

Erase old log when Tasker starts

If this option is checked, the previous log file is erased when Tasker starts up (if it exists).   This is useful to prevent the Tasker log from growing too large.   Normally, you will want this selected even if you are using the log, since any errors that you want to track will have occurred in the most recent session.

# Advanced Options – Mouse Coordinates
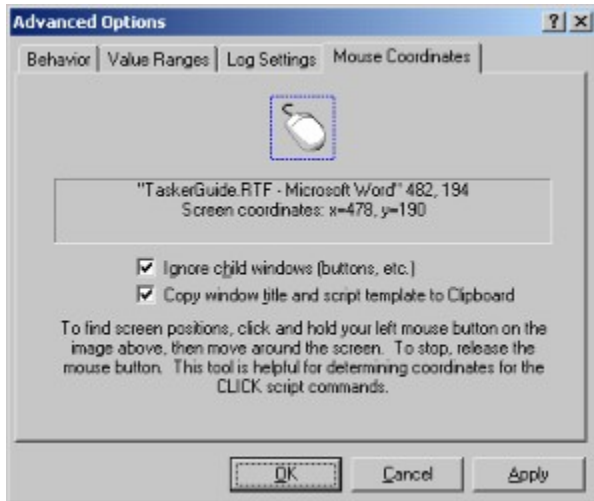
Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Mouse Hotlink	The purpose of this screen is to determine what coordinates you want to use when writing a <u>Tasker Script file</u>. For example, if you want to use script to make the mouse to click on a toolbar button (such as the Send Mail button in Outlook), you need to determine the X and Y coordinates. Using this screen, you click AND HOLD the left mouse button on the icon image of the mouse with the dotted line around it:

Then, the image will change to a new icon:

…indicating that mouse tracking is active.   Then without releasing the mouse button, move around the screen and the informational window in the middle of this screen will show you the relative coordinates ("Window Title") and the absolute coordinates ("Screen coordinates") under the mouse cursor:
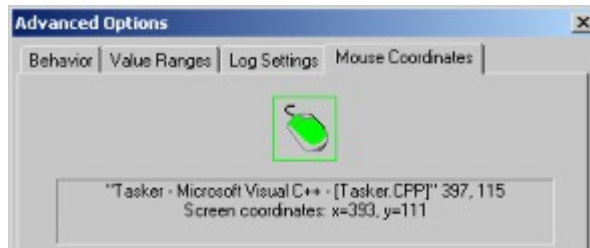
Ignore child windows (buttons, etc.)

While tracking the mouse, this option limits windows to programs and pop-up windows.   In Microsoft Windows, all controls, such as buttons, are technically also "windows", but

are not usually targets for program macros.   However, if you turn this feature OFF (unchecked), every control will report its coordinates to you in the informational window.

**Copy window title and script
template to Clipboard**   This checkbox allows you to directly copy the resulting window coordinates into a <u>Tasker Script file</u> once you release the left mouse button.   This saves you from having to manually type the coordinates in a script file.   It also helps you to remember to use the GOTO command before using the CLICK command so that the correct window is used during playback.   The output will be something like:

<u>GOTO TaskerGuide.RTF – Microsoft Word</u>
<u>CLICK 68, 60</u>

These two command lines can then be pasted into a <u>script file</u> and run.   (The example above will mouse click on the "Save" button in Microsoft Windows).

No matter where the Microsoft Word window moves to, the above script lines will always succeed in pressing the right button because the coordinates are relative to the upper left corner of the window.

As a safety feature, this checkbox always initially displays **unchecked** so that you do not inadvertently overwrite whatever is currently in the clipboard.   You must check this every time this screen displays.

File Menu
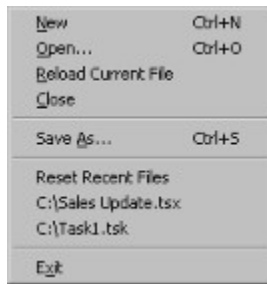
Screen Item	Purpose and Description
New	Creates a blank recording, similar to a new document in a word editor. Tasker will prompt you to save the current file if you have modified it, and then informs you to press the blue button to begin recording. The New toolbar button 🔵 has the same effect as this menu command.

Open…   Opens a previously recorded file (TSK) or a <u>Tasker Script file (TSX)</u>.   Once opened, it is loaded into memory, but is not run until you press the **Play** button or have chosen the "**Immediately play after File Open**" in the second screen (the <u>Options Tab</u>). The Open toolbar button 📂 has the same effect as this menu command.

Reload Current File	Reloads the current file that you have open. Tasker cannot automatically detect if a file has changed since it was last loaded, so this feature allows you to modify a <u>script file</u> and quickly reload it. This has the same effect as choosing File – Open on the currently opened file.
Close	Removes the currently loaded recording or script file from memory. This command disables the **Play** button since there will be no recording in memory.
Save As…	Requires Tasker to prompt you for a filename and then saves the recording with the name you provide. This feature also allows you to make a copy of the current file by saving it under a different filename. The toolbar button 💾 has the same effect as this menu command.

        If you enter a filename with an extension and choose a file format that is different, Tasker will ask you to clarify which file format you want to use.   For example, if you enter "MyFile.TSX" as a filename and the dropdown "Save as Type:" has Tasker Recording (TSK) format, you will need to pick which format is the desired one.

> *(There is no "Save" file command since recordings cannot be modified once they are created.   Any change to a recording causes a completely new recording to be made - the old recording is overwritten in memory.   Therefore, re-saving a previous recording is not a possibility.   <u>Script files</u> are not affected by this design since they are modified in a text editor that is separate from Tasker.)*

Reset Recent Files	This command allows you to remove all files that are currently listed in the Recent File list (which appear immediately below this command in the menu). The reason that you would want

to do this is to clean up the menu and not have your previous recordings available on the File menu.   The actual files themselves are not modified in any way.
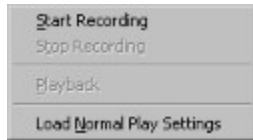
"Filename1-8.tsx"   Each of the files recently opened will appear on the menu, up to a total of the eight most recent files.   As soon as you open a new file, it will move to the top of the list and all the other recent files will move down one position.   This recent list can be a great time saver to avoid finding files that are located in folders inside of your computer.   Clicking on any of these files has the same effect as the File – Open command.   You can modify how many of these files appear in the Advanced Options – <u>Value Ranges Tab</u>.

Exit   Closes the Tasker window and leaves the program.   If the **Tray Icon** option is selected, Tasker continues to run on the Windows system tray.

Recorder Menu

| Start Recording |
| Stop Recording |
| Playback |
| Load Normal Play Settings |

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Start Recording	Starts recording your keyboard and mouse actions. It will overwrite any other recording that you have in memory, but you will not lose the current recording if it was previously saved as a file. The Start Recording toolbar button 🔵 has the same effect as this menu command. Also see **Keyboard Mappings** for a way to start recordings without switching to the Tasker window.

Stop Recording   Stops a recording that is currently in progress.   This command will only be available while you are recording.   Stopping a playback is not possible with this option – you should use the Control + Escape key combination.   Once stopped, the Play button becomes active.   The Start Recording toolbar button 🟥 has the same effect as this menu command.   Also see **Keyboard Mappings** for a way to stop recordings without switching to the Tasker window.

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Playback	Plays a recording or script file. This command is not available until there is a recording loaded in memory, which is accomplished with the **File** – **Open** command, loading a recent file, or by recording some actions. The Playback toolbar button ▶ has the same effect as this menu command. Also see **Keyboard Mappings** for a way to play without switching to the Tasker window.
Load Normal Play Settings	Instructs Tasker to set all play configurations (Speed, Repeats, and Continuous) to the Normal configuration. This is the same as Normal Speed, 1 Loop, and Not Continuous. The reason for this command is to quickly set the playback options, and also to allow linking the **User Command** 🧑 to this option for quick configuration switches.

View Menu
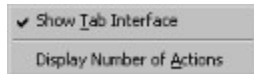
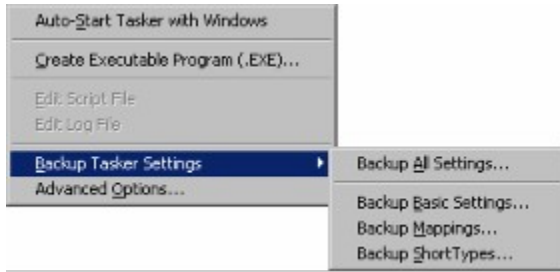| Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Show Tab Interface	Hides or shows the tab area of the Tasker window, depending on its currently visibility. This allows you to minimize the space that the Tasker window takes on the desktop in case you have the **Always on Top** option chosen. With the tabs hidden, you can still start, stop, and play recordings and choose all the menu items. The window will appear as:

Display Number of Actions	This command shows the total number of events that are contained in the current recording. Each fraction of a second a new mouse command is generated, so this number might be very high, depending on the amount of time that you were recording. Each action takes 20 bytes to store in a file in the TSK binary format, and considerably more if stored in the TSX text format. The maximum number of events/actions for a single recording is 32,768 (half of 64K). If you have a recording that is longer than that, consider breaking it up into separate recordings.

Tools Menu

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Auto-Start Tasker with Windows	When this feature is selected, Tasker will launch itself each time you login to Windows. This preference is useful because you do not have to manually start Tasker each time you turn on your PC. This option is normally combined with the **Tray Icon** feature to allow you to invisibly add a macro capability to every program that you use. This command is also available on the **Options Tab**.
Create Executable Program	With this command, you can create your own Windows programs that do not need Tasker to run. This "**mini-compiler technology**" is a very advanced feature, because you can compile a single-line script file into a native Windows application! No additional components are needed for the created program to run since it is a stand-alone .EXE file. A common use of this capability is to allow sharing of these programs with other people who do not have Tasker. People who run compiled .EXE files do not need to buy a Tasker license to run the program. The Create Executable Program toolbar button 🖼 has the same effect as this menu command.
Edit Script File	This command allows you to quickly open the script file that you are previously loaded with the **File** – **Open** command. The program used for text editing is read from the **Advanced Options** screen and run with the current script file as a parameter.
Edit Log File	This command allows you to quickly open the Tasker log file in a text editor. The program used for text editing is read from the **Advanced Options** screen and run with the log file as a parameter.
Backup All Settings	Generates a .REG format file (Registry File Format, version Win9x/NT4 for compatibility) for creating a copy of all configurations in Tasker. This includes all options, settings, recent file links, Keyboard Mappings, and ShortTypes. Once the backup is generated, you can reload all the settings at a future date by double-clicking on this file.
Backup Basic Settings	Like the **Backup All Settings** command, this generates a .REG format file that can be reloaded a future date by double-clicking

on it.   This setting specifically exports the basic settings, which are all the checkboxes on the Tasker main screens and the Advanced Options tabs.

Backup Mappings Like the **Backup All Settings** command, this generates a .REG format file that can be reloaded a future date by double-clicking on it.   This setting specifically exports the <u>Keyboard Mappings</u> that you created.
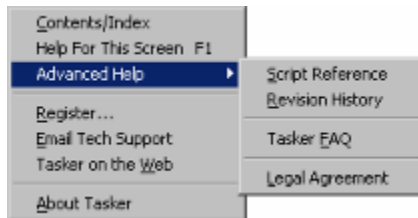
Backup ShortTypes Like the **Backup All Settings** command, this generates a .REG format file that can be reloaded a future date by double-clicking on it.   This setting specifically exports the <u>ShortTypes</u> that you created.

Advanced Options This tool command takes you to the Advanced Options popup window, where you can adjust many of Tasker's settings.   This is meant for advanced users and other people with experience with Tasker.

Help Menu

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Contents/Index	Launches the main **Tasker User's Guide** (this file). It includes general information about the use of Tasker and it not too technical. Most users should find answers to their basic questions in this help file. It is in standard Windows .HLP (Help File) format.
Help For This Screen	Provides context-sensitive help for the screen that is currently visible in Tasker. It describes every control or option that is on the visible screen and why you would need to use it.
Script Reference	Launches a file that contains documentation for the **Tasker Script commands**. Using Tasker script is a very productive way to use Tasker and this file contains detailed descriptions and many examples that you can use. This file is in HTML format and displays in your default Internet browser.
Revision History	This file lists all the **feature changes** that have occurred during the development of Tasker. It is useful for seeing what changes have transpired since the last version, or how long something has been included in Tasker. Not every little thing gets into this file, since it is updated when time permits, but it is fairly comprehensive. *(It also serves to demonstrate the huge amount of work that goes into developing a software product!)* This file is in HTML format and displays in your default Internet browser.
Tasker FAQ	Displays a list of **Frequently Asked Questions**, which are the most common questions that users have when using Tasker. Questions like "Why does Tasker seem to play too slowly/too fast?" or "How can I press Ctrl+S with Tasker script?" are answered here. This document is regularly updated, and is available on the web at www.vista-software.com/taskerfaq.htm. This file is in HTML format and displays in your default Internet browser.
Legal Agreement	Shows the license agreement that you agreed to when installing Tasker. It answers legal questions concerning the use of Tasker.
Register	Allows you to enter a Registration Number once you purchase Tasker, or displays the person who it is currently registered to if a number was already entered.
Email Tech Support	Quickly loads your default email program and creates a blank

email addressed to support@vista-software.com, which is the Vista Software support address.   Vista Software usually answers within 24 hours.

Tasker on the Web   Provides a quick link to the Tasker homepage at www.vista-software.com/tasker.htm using your default Internet browser.

About Tasker   Displays detailed information concerning the current version of Tasker that you have.   It also shows the registration information, build date/time, copyright information, and hotlinks to Vista Software websites and support emails.

Service Tray Menu
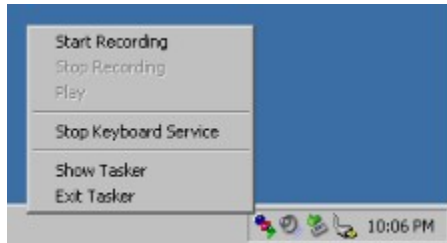
The Service Tray Menu appears when you click on the Tasker icon when the **Tray Icon** option is selected (located in the **Keyboard Mappings** or **ShortType** Tabs).   This menu shows various commands that are available while Tasker is running from the Windows system tray.

Screen Item	Purpose and Description
Start Recording	Same function as the Start Recording toolbar button 🔵. It is only available if you are not currently recording or playing.

Stop Recording   Same function as the Stop Recording toolbar button 🟥.   It is only available if you are currently recording.

Play   Same function as the Playback toolbar button ▶.   It is only available if you have recorded something or opened a file.

Start Keyboard Service   This command changes between Start Keyboard Service and Stop Keyboard Service depending on the current status of the Tasker service.   If the service is disabled, the small Tasker icon will be gray; otherwise it will be displayed in color.   This service can also be activated in the **Keyboard Mappings** or **ShortType** Tabs.

Show Tasker	Shows the Tasker main window. If the **Tray Icon** option is chosen in the **Keyboard Mappings** or **ShortType** Tabs, then the main Tasker window will disappear since it will be running in the background and not visible. If you need to change a setting or perform some other option in the main Tasker window, you can reshow Tasker with this command. Once you close Tasker, it will not exit but return to the system tray until you either choose **Exit Tasker** or remove the check from the **Tray Icon** option.
Exit Tasker	Closes the Tasker window and system tray icon. No Tasker functions will be available until you restart Tasker. This can also be accomplished by choosing **Show Tasker** from this menu, then removing the **Tray Icon** option, then closing Tasker. The **Exit Tasker** command is preferred because next time Tasker starts it will continue to run in the Windows system tray.