

review by Marc Messer

stars — 1 Star Poor, 5 Stars Excellent

Title: T-Minus Ten

Version: 2.0

Developer: MK Software

Price: \$20 Shareware

Contact Info: <http://home.austin.rr.com/mk/tmt/tmt.html>

Genre: Automation Tool

System Requirements: Mac OS System 7.5 (8.1 or later recommended)

## o What's the Big Deal with Automation?

Probably one of the best-kept secrets and biggest advantages of the Mac over Windows is how easy it is to automate tasks. Graphics professionals love AppleScript because it allows them to easily create scripts for repetitive actions, of which they have many. All of us can benefit from those little scripts that allow us to perform in one step what would normally take several. MK Software has made that even easier. T-Minus Ten is designed to automate scripts and give you more power over their execution. With AppleScript and T-Minus Ten you'll be able to further customize your Mac, giving you more spare time and making you look cooler to everyone around you, too.

## o What is AppleScript and What Does T-Minus Ten Do?

If you have never used an AppleScript, you're in for a treat. First off, your Mac probably already has a few dozen on the hard drive just waiting to be used. Most likely in the Apple Extras folder, you'll find the AppleScript folder with lots of useful scripts, as well as good examples for your own unique scripts. Not only can simple acts be automated, but many programs are scriptable, allowing you to utilize AppleScript even further.

T-Minus Ten is designed to customize your experience by allowing you to open an application, open a document, or run an AppleScript on a schedule, when a hot key is pressed, upon startup, upon shutdown, when the Mac is idle, or when a hotspot is entered. This is completely customizable... you can schedule a script that reminds you to get green food coloring for the beer to run at 4:30 pm every day until March 17th, or you could run a script warning you to buy flowers the Monday before your anniversary every year. I think Erik uses it to kick him off when Ally McBeal is starting (some people have interesting priorities). Because T-Minus Ten can be designed to run any script or open any file, it is virtually boundless, limited only by your creativity. You can modify some standard scripts for your own personal use, like checking your email every half hour or making speakable items tell you a joke when the computer is idle.

## [ore on T-Minus Ten Specifics](#)

Below is a snapshot of T-Minus Ten's Tasks window. Here, you can see all of the events, their status, and what their triggers are. If the task is scheduled, you will see when it will occur next. If it is hotkeyed, it will show the key that is needed to launch it. T-Minus Ten utilizes a standard list method which allows you to organize by any category.

ext is a snapshot of the task setup window. Here is where you decide how, when, and for how long the selected task will happen. To set the time, just drag the red bar to when you want it to occur. Click on the bar to add another time or drag one off of the bar to get rid of a time. The calendar allows you to verify that the schedule will go as planned, even way off into the future. Pick a starting date and/or ending date and you're ready to go.

## iscellaneous Goodies

One of the things that makes T-Minus Ten great is the attention to detail which MK Software undoubtedly put into it. Besides the highly useful automation, there is a customizable activity log that allows you to monitor what tasks are being performed and whether there are any problems. You

can adjust the log to only show certain activities and can have it automatically clean itself out after a certain number of logs or time. Just like the task window, it utilizes standard lists, allowing you to organize how you'd like to view it.

The interface is consistent with Mac OS 8.x and takes on much of the productivity of the OS 8.x style lists as mentioned before. Because of this, however, if you use Mac OS 8 or earlier, you'll need to download Appearance 1.0.2 from the T-Minus Ten website.

Another goody is the ability to control failed tasks. It is possible that a task cannot run if your Mac is busy. T-Minus Ten allows you to repeat the task for a specified amount of time until a successful attempt or wait until startup (in the event that it is shut down during the event's scheduled time). You can also turn T-Minus Ten off (via a simple start/stop button) if you're going out of town and don't want any automation at all, instead of having to change each task separately.

## onclusion

T-Minus Ten is a handy tool for harnessing your Mac's inherent ability to perform automated tasks. And besides doing its job effectively, it also comes with a great interface and well-thought-out options. Since I really couldn't find anything missing from this program, I have no choice but to award it with a perfect five-star rating. How often can a simple program so thoroughly change your relationship with your Mac? And for \$20 shareware, it's a steal. Head on over to <http://home.austin.rr.com/mk/tmt/tmt.html> and try it out.

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