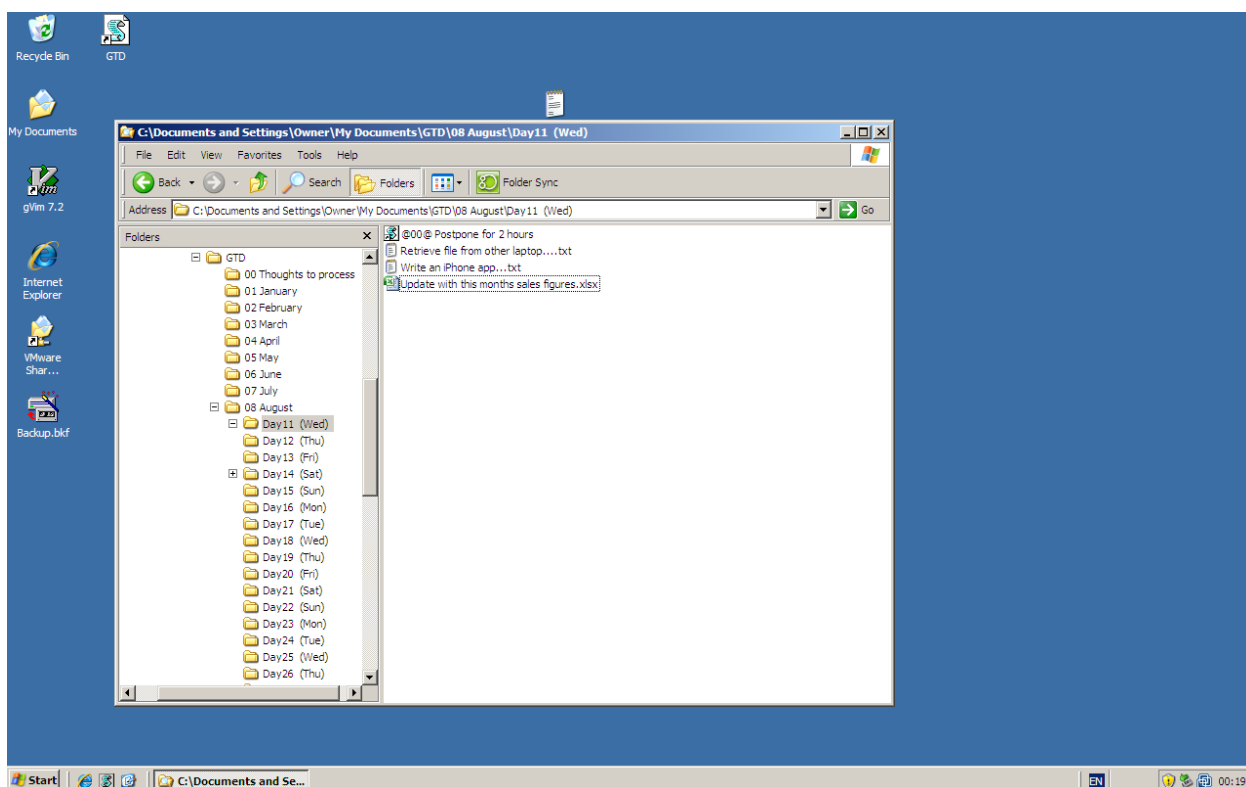


Simple GTD

Overview

While looking at time management applications, I found that most were too complicated for my needs. In the end I decided to create a simple Windows script that would manage a [‘tickler file’](#) of 43-folders for me.

When you first run the script it creates a series of folders that become your tickler file. To create a note of something to do, I create an empty text file and rename it with the text of the note. For any other file type, I drag a shortcut to the folder and rename that with the text of the note.



Using this simple approach means that a ‘thing to do’ can be any type of file that Windows can handle. Above is a screen grab from my own machine where you can see sub-folders and PDFs as well as plain text notes. (Note: this is XP in classic mode — it also works for Vista and Windows 7.)

Installation

Installation is really simple...

1. Unzip the *Simple GTD for Windows.zip* file that you downloaded and open it.
2. Drag the *GTD* folder to where you want it to live. I have mine in *My Documents* but anywhere will do.
3. Open the *GTD* folder and drag the *GTD* shortcut that’s inside it to the desktop.

Drag the shortcut from the desktop to the *Quick Launch* toolbar if you want a copy there as well.

4. You're done!

How to use *Simple GTD*

Just click the GTD script icon in the Quick Launch toolbar to run it. The first time you do this it will create the 43-folders structure. That is a folder for each month of the year, 31 day folders in the current month folder plus folders for *Thoughts to process* and *Future Projects*. Each day folder is labeled with the day of the week to make it easier to think 'next Tuesday' rather than work out the day number.

Now you're ready to create notes and 'things to do' by putting files into the appropriate folders — either today's or a future one.

When you run the script tomorrow, it will move all of today's items into tomorrow's day folder, irrespective of whether they are simple files or deeply nested folders.

Filename clashes are handled by appending the name of the day folder the older item came from. Don't worry about months with fewer than 31 days — it sorts itself out.

When you've done one of your 'things to do' simply drag the note or the alias to the wastebasket.

Don't worry if you accidentally delete some of the 43 folders — the script re-creates any missing ones each time it is run.

Some tips to show just how brilliantly simple it is :-)

1. Dropping a file onto the icon on the desktop causes a shortcut to be placed in today's folder.

You can then rename the shortcut to be something long and meaningful — a reminder of what needs to be done with that file — without affecting the original. Double-clicking the renamed shortcut will still open the original file.

2. Easy to create new notes.

Right-click->New->Text Document to create a new text file. Simply rename it with the text that describes the 'thing to do'. If you need to record more information, simply open the file and add more text inside.

If plain text notes are too limiting then keep a Word .dot/.dotx template in today's folder and double-click that to create a new note based on a template that you can customize to suit your needs exactly. Remember — *Simple GTD* works with any file that Windows can.

Advanced use

1. Multiple GTD lists

You can have more than one set of GTD folders if you prefer — for example if you want to separate home from work stuff. To do this simply repeat the installation instructions, as above, but put the GTD folder into a different home folder, or rename it to something different. Then drag the *GTD.app* icon to the desktop and/or Quick Launch toolbar again and you will have two GTD icons, each working on separate sets of 43 folders.

Annoyances/Bugs

Just a couple, I'm afraid.

- You can't create items for a year ahead: the script thinks they belong to yesterday and moves them forward to today when you next run *Simple GTD*.

Actually it's about 10 months ahead because the script will cope with items that are a couple of months old in case you go on holiday or don't need to run it for a while.

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Bruce Horrocks, August 2010.