

By: ~~April 2008~~ Bursuc, Windows Editor

## Put Your Reminders on Music

### *Or use your own recorded voice*

Technology is taking over our lives. This is a fact. And one of the logical consequences is that you get to do more things in less time. But we are all human beings, with flaws that we still cannot overcome. In other words, we cannot keep up with the technological progress in terms of actually doing all the things we could be capable of. So we need help to be able to complete all the tasks that inherently occur at work or at home. Their number can be overwhelming, so you have to be reminded of each and every one of them. You can't have your secretary or your mummy around you all the time, but since the computer is always there, a reminding piece of software will be really useful. And since one of my purposes on Earth is to help people, I looked for a reminder that would also be free. This is how I came across AIV Reminder, an application that seemed to allow you to set several alarms and use sounds to notify you when it's time to do something. This was my first impression of the program, but in order to offer you a serious recommendation, I had to study it closer. Launching it will display a not-so-friendly user interface, in the sense that it seems (literally) worn out. All the functions are placed somewhat symmetrically to one another, but they do not cover the entire area of the main window. At first glance, AIV Reminder features a GUI that is far from reaching the graphic standards of most of today's programs, especially since Windows Vista is gaining more and more popularity due to its attractive design. Moving on to the next step, we get to the essence of AIV Reminder, setting the alarms. If you choose to ignore the genie (you'll have to ignore it several times, because it keeps popping up), keep in mind the golden rule of the program: always press 'Reset' before changing an alarm! Otherwise, your modifications will not be saved. It will seem a little frustrating at first, but you'll eventually learn to live with it. Furthermore, you will also be intrigued by the default dates of the alarms: 10th February 2007 - a date in the past that you can no longer use to set alarms. It would have been more comfortable and more logical if AIV Reminder had synchronized these dates with the one on your computer, as it does when it displays the present date and the exact time. After you manually enter the day, month, year, hour and minute when you want to be reminded of an important event, you will need to specify the text of the reminder. As you will see, you can easily leave the box blank, as the message is optional. However, keep in mind that AIV Reminder allows you to set multiple alarms and if you don't write any text for any of them, you will have trouble remembering what you should be reminded of (nasty, right?). So I warmly advise you to write at least one word or phrase for each alarm, as long as you keep it short and relevant. And now we get to the exciting part of AIV Reminder: using sounds when displaying the alarms. Most applications only show a splash screen with a message. Since they are being emphasized by audio tracks, you won't be able to ignore the reminders or postpone them. Furthermore, you can even record your own voice and use it as a reminder - this recording would surely have a great impact on you and would get you to work. Of course, if you don't want things to get too complicated, you can choose a WAV or an MP3 file. Or, if music simply isn't your cup of tea, you can select one of the several animated characters to notify you of the alarm. After I set an alarm, I wanted to configure more advanced settings so I chose the Advanced View window. Honestly, I expected to be able to change the colors and the fonts of the alarm messages, or specify the location of the popup, but this window only allows you to set more alarms, i.e. 8 instead of the default 3. This is quite disappointing, considering that AIV Reminder doesn't offer the possibility to change the interface appearance or the actual reminders in terms of color or size. To round up, AIV Reminder can be considered an efficient tool to set several alarms or a daily one, but its simplistic GUI is not very encouraging for those who are accustomed to modern looking applications. **The Good** The great thing about AIV Reminder is that it is freeware, therefore notifications won't cost you anything. In addition, the software includes a calendar and a stopwatch, useful accessories for office work and management. They will always be in the system tray and you can use them with few mouse clicks. Also, you can set a daily alarm for the days of the week you select or you can schedule up to 8 distinct alarms throughout a day or a week. They won't seem annoying due to the background music you can attach to them. **The Bad** As I already mentioned, the interface is much too 'classic' - it probably follows the principle of being simple and efficient, but in this case it is too simple. The same thing goes for the calendar and

stopwatch; they are as basic as possible; for example, it would be nice if you could set alarms directly from the calendar or if the stopwatch could allow you to resume the timing after you stop it. Another nagging aspect is the fact that you need to press 'Reset' before changing anything, this meaning the alarm-related configuration, because the other settings are not at all flexible. **The Truth** Considering the fact that I started out looking for a reminder tool, I can say that AIV Reminder is quite a handy one. It is easy to manage and it lets you play your favorite music or enjoy an animated character on your desktop. But the genie that keeps popping up and the cold colors of the interface make me say that there's (a lot of) room for improvements and in the meanwhile, there's plenty of other fish in the ocean, also freeware, just waiting for us to find them. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*