# Task Till Dawn
## Manual

Version 2.0

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# Overview

So much stuff to do that you often decide to take a nap instead? Task Till Dawn to the rescue!
Let it handle your recurring and tedious tasks, so you can focus on the real work. Back up important data while you're away from your computer, automatically sort and archive documents you've been working on, or simply remind yourself to take a break. With Task Till Dawn it's no big deal. Build tasks out of predefined actions using a visual workflow editor. Let them run manually, by setting up a schedule, or when various events occur.

Sort your tasks into groups so you always easily find what you're looking for.

Of course you can export and import tasks and reuse them on another computer. Let it be a Mac running macOS or a Windows PC.

## System requirements

Task Till Dawn is available for Microsoft Windows and Apple macOS.
The system requirements described below are the minimum system requirements. Running Task Till Dawn on older operating system versions than listed might work, but it is not supported.

### Windows

• Windows Vista SP2 or Windows Server 2008 RS SP1 (64-Bit) or newer
• About 200 MB of free disk space for the application and the JRE
• Java 8 runtime

### macOS

• Mac OS X 10.7.5 or newer
• About 200 MB of free disk space

## Installation

There's not much to say regarding the installation. Simply move the application file to a place on your hard drive you like. The first time you start the application an assistant will be shown which takes you through the initial setup. It is recommended that you confirm the automatic start of Task Till Dawn. Tasks cannot be executed while the application is not running.

You can also start the application from a removable storage like an USB stick. However, the tasks and the settings will always be stored on the startup drive of the computer you run it on.

## Removal

If you want to get rid of Task Till Dawn, quit it if it is currently running and put the application file to the trash.

# Software updates

Task Till Dawn features a built in update check which can inform you about available software updates. You can either trigger the update check manually or the application can look for updates automatically upon startup, if you've enabled the automatic update check in the preferences.

Installation of updates needs to be done manually. Just download the newest version from https://www.oliver-matuschin.de/en/downloads/ and replace the existing application on your computer with it.

# Bug reports and feedback

Even though I invest a lot of time into testing of Task Till Dawn it can always happen that a bug remains undiscovered. Additionally, some bugs or issues only appear with certain operating system versions and / or hardware configurations.

If you find a bug, please let me know using the build in feedback function! The sooner I know about a bug, the faster I can fix it.
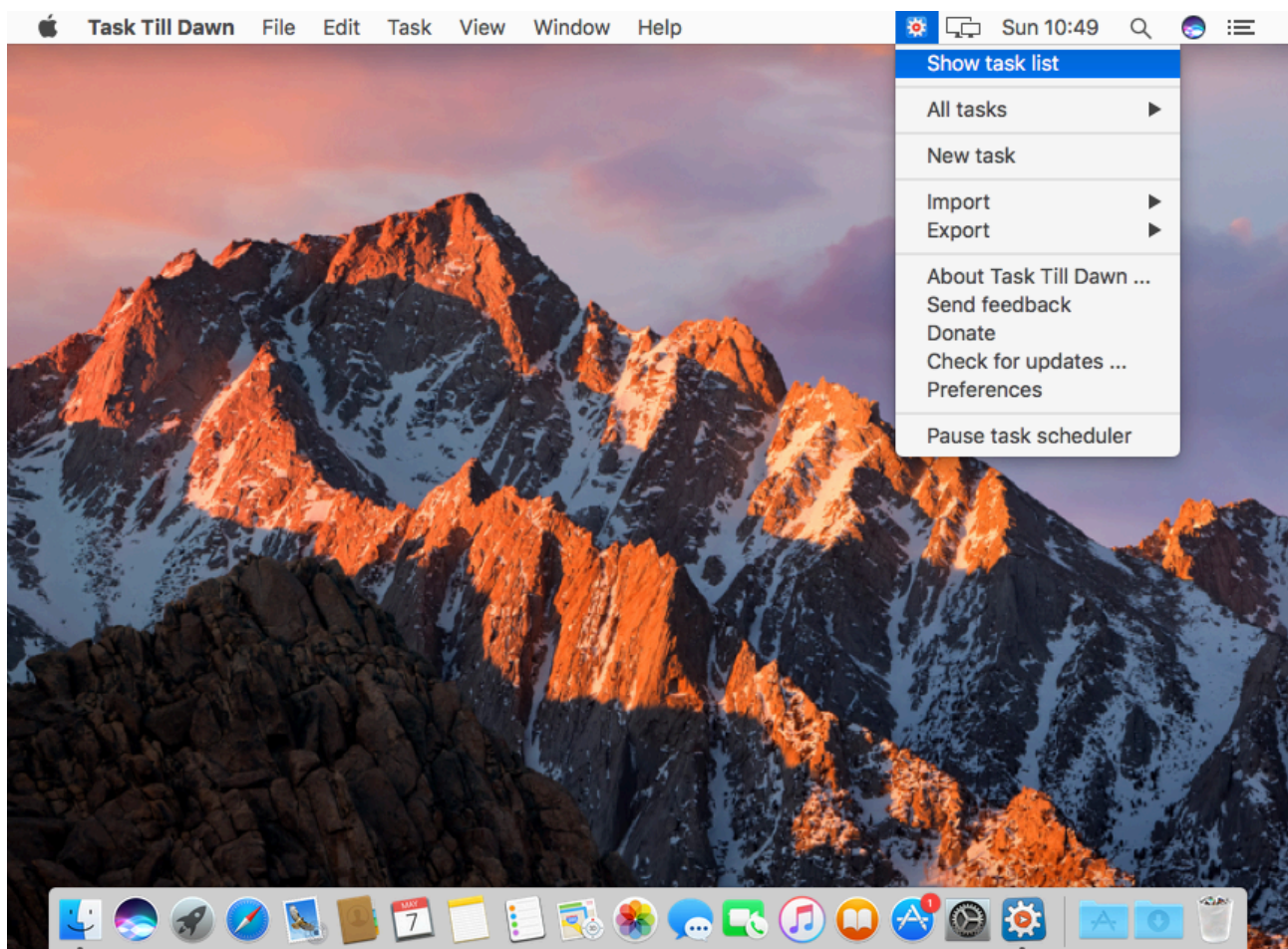
Of course any feedback is appreciated, not only regarding bugs! If you have a good idea for improvements, just let me know.

# The task list window

When you start Task Till Dawn, the first thing you see is normally the task list window (or just „task list"). If you have changed the application preferences so that the list does not show up automatically, you can open it in several ways.
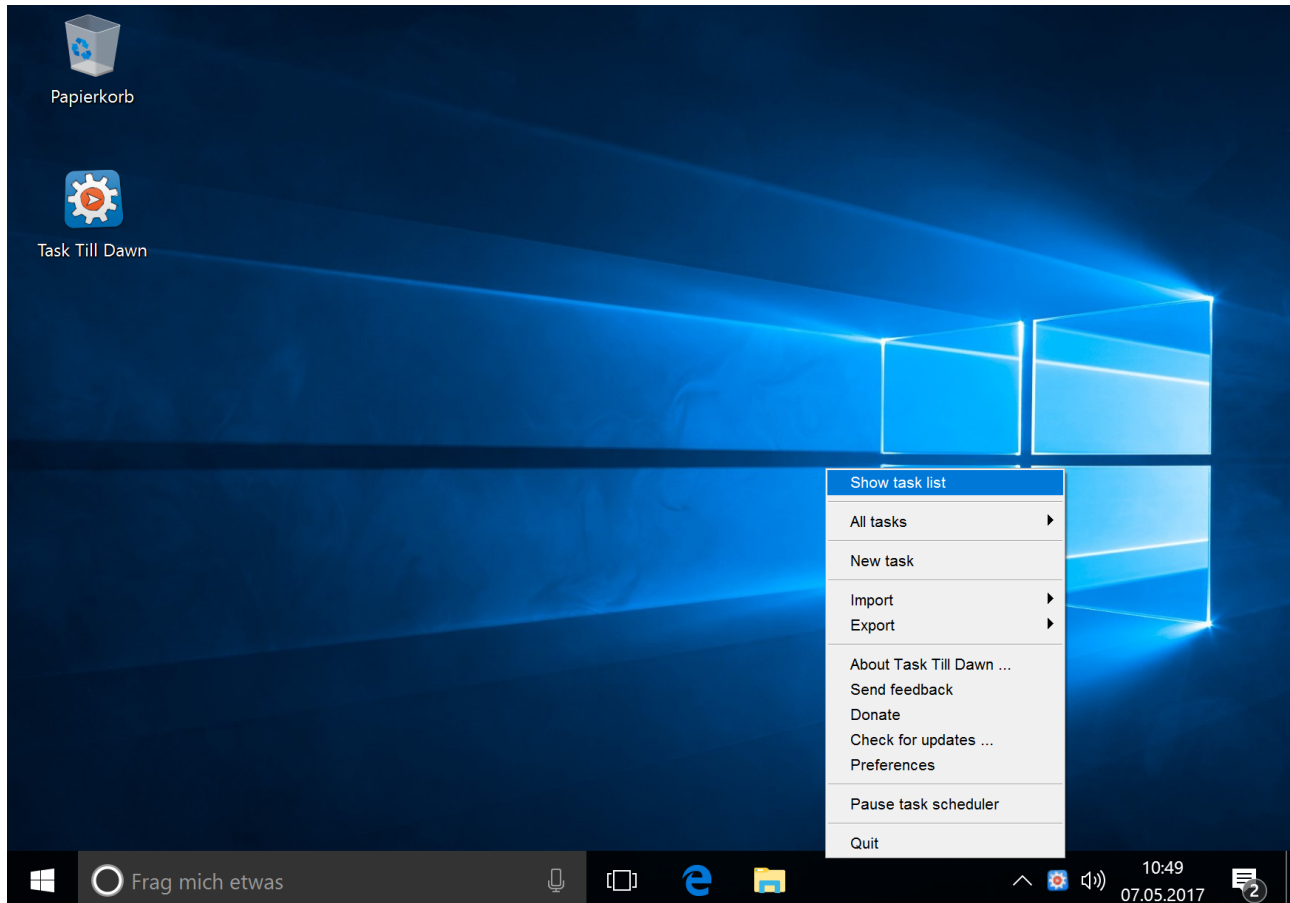
## Opening the task list window on macOS

Find the application icon in the dock and right click on it. The dock menu which opens contains an entry called „Show task list". Click it and the task list will appear.



If the application is not visible in the dock then have a look at the right side of your menu bar. There should be a small Task Till Dawn icon. Click on it and a menu will drop down. This menu also contains an entry called „Show task list" which you can use to open the list.
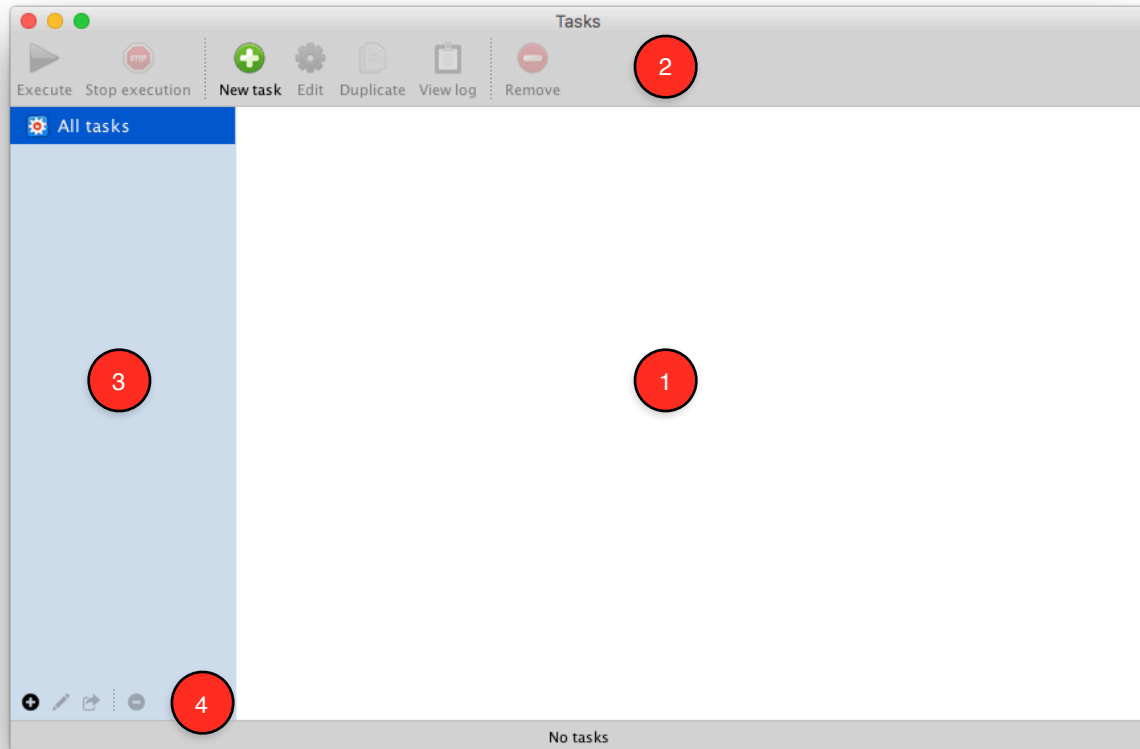
# Opening the task list window on Windows

On Windows, Task Till Dawn resides in the task bar notification area in form of a small icon. The task bar notification area is usually located at the bottom right area of your screen. If the icon is not visible, click on the arrow pointing upwards at the leftmost side of the notification area. It should then appear.



You can either double click on it to show the task list, or right click on it to open a menu. This menu contains an entry called „Show task list" which you can use to open the list.

# Task list overview

Within the task list you can group, rearrange, add and delete tasks. It also gives you a nice overview of all the assigned schedules, the last execution dates and more.
When you open Task Till Dawn for the first time, the task list is empty.



The window consists of the following areas:
1. The task area: Once you've created at least one task it will appear here. Rearrange tasks by dragging them around with the mouse while holding your mouse button.
2. The toolbar: Use the toolbar to manually run tasks, stop tasks, create new ones etc.
3. The group area: It displays all the groups available to sort tasks into. Groups have no special functionality, they are meant to help you keep track of your tasks if you have a lot of them. A task can be assigned to different groups at once. The special group „All tasks" always contains all of the available tasks. You can rearrange groups by dragging them around with the mouse while holding your mouse button.
4. The group toolbar: Use these buttons to create new groups, edit existing ones, or delete a group. You can also open any group in a new window.

# Creating a task

There are several ways to create a new task (not all of them are always available):
- Click the „New  task" button in the task list window´s toolbar.
- Choose File > Create new task (from the File menu at the top of your screen).
- Right click on the application icon in the menu bar (on macOS) or in the task bar notification area (Windows) and choose „New task".
- On macOS: right click on the application icon in the Dock and chose „New task".

All of these do the same thing: they open the task configuration window.

The task configuration window is used to configure everything related to a single task. Using the four toolbar buttons at the top of the window you can switch between different sections. Once you're done setting everything up, click the „Create" button at the bottom right corner of the window to store the task.

## Metadata

In the Metadata section you can give the task a name, a description, and define an execution limit. Also, it is possible to activate or deactivate a task.
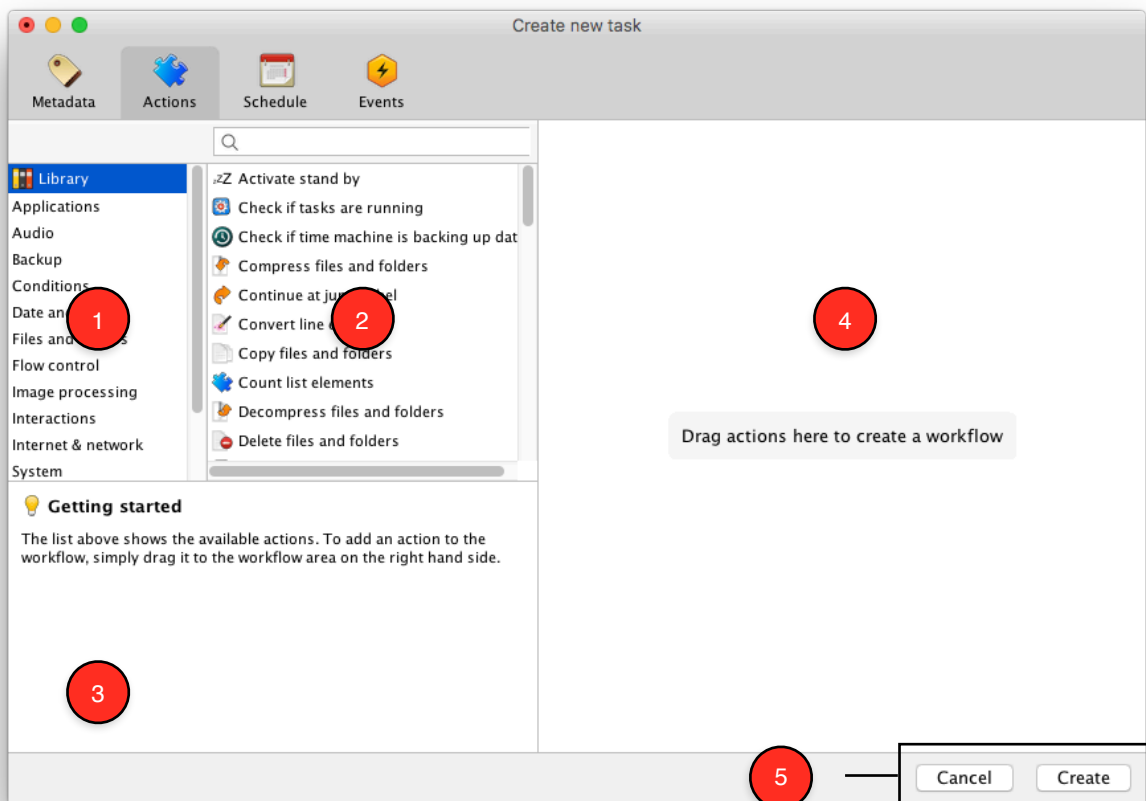


The section contains following areas:
1. The task name field: Enter a descriptive name of your task here. The name will later be shown in the task list and in all menus where you can choose a task. The name is mandatory and cannot be left empty. However, multiple tasks can have the same name.

2. The description field: You can use this field to give a detailed description of what your task does. It is only shown in the task list.
3. Enable or disable this task using the checkbox. A deactivated task will never be executed automatically, but it can be executed manually. You can use this option to temporarily disable any specified schedules or events for this task.
4. Define an execution limit. The task can either be deleted or deactivated after the defined maximum execution limit has been reached.

# Actions

Use the Actions section to build the workflow, which is the heart of every task and actually defines what the task does. A workflow consists of actions which are executed one after another, starting from the top of the list.
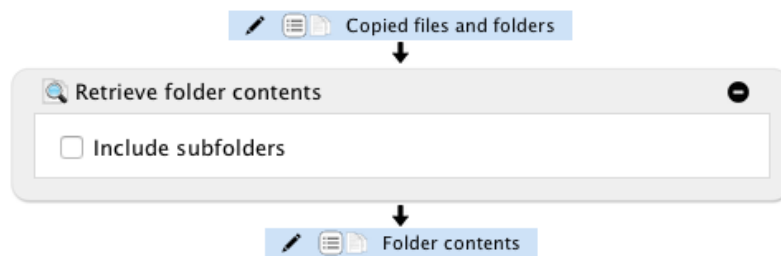


The section contains the following areas:
1. This list contains several categories which might help you to find an action based on what you want to do. Select a category and the action list (2) will be filtered to only display the contents of the selected category. Click on „Library" to see all actions available.
2. This is the action list. Use these to build your workflow with. Simply double click an action (or drag it while holding your mouse button) to add it to the workflow (4).
3. Once you select an action in the action list (2), this area displays a description of what the action does. It also displays information about what data the action requires as input (if any) and whether the action returns a result or not.
4. This is the workflow area. It displays all actions of the workflow and also lets you configure actions (if the action can be configured). You can rearrange actions by dragging them around with the mouse while holding your mouse button.
5. Click on „Create" to store the task once you're done with its setup.

# Configuring an action

Once you have added an action to the workflow, all available configuration options will be shown. Note that there are also actions which cannot be configured at all.

The following example image shows the retrieve folder contents action and how it is displayed inside of a workflow. It offers one configuration option („Include subfolders"). The fields above and below the action are used to configure the input and output variables. Variables are described in the next chapters.



# Workflow variables

Variables define data most actions can work with, and actions can also return variables as a processing result – which can then be used again as input for subsequent actions.

A variable consists of a variable name and a variable type. The type of a variable is defined by the action returning the variable as its result, and is indicated by an icon. The variable name can be freely assigned but has to be unique per workflow.

The variable type defines what kind of data the variable actually contains. For example, an action working with files will most likely return a variable containing one or more files as a result. Whereas an action working with text will probably return a variable containing one or more text strings.

The following variable types are available in Task Till Dawn 2.0:

| Icon | Type | Description |
|------|------|-------------|
| | Single file | Variable containing information about a single file. |
| | Multiple files | Variable containing information about multiple files. |
| T | Text string | Variable containing a text string. |
| # | Number | Variable containing a number. Number variables are treated like text string variables. Future versions of Task Till Dawn will allow calculations to be done using number variables. |
| | Task | Variable containing information about a task. |
| | Multiple tasks | Variable containing information about multiple tasks. |

If you select an action in the action list, the description area displays the type of variables the selected action allows as its input, and what type of variable it returns as its result.

### ✎ Replace text in files

This action looks for a text string inside the specified files and replaces all occurrences with another text string. The action returns all files where at least one occurrence has been replaced. Warning: This action should be used only with plaintext files!

> **Input:** ≣ 🖹 Files and folders
> **Result:** ≣ 🖹 Changed files

**Platforms:** All
**Version:** 1.0
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Variable types are not directly interchangeable. However, Task Till Dawn offers some automatic variable conversion options for most of them, which makes it possible to use a variable as an input for an action which would normally require a different variable type to work with.
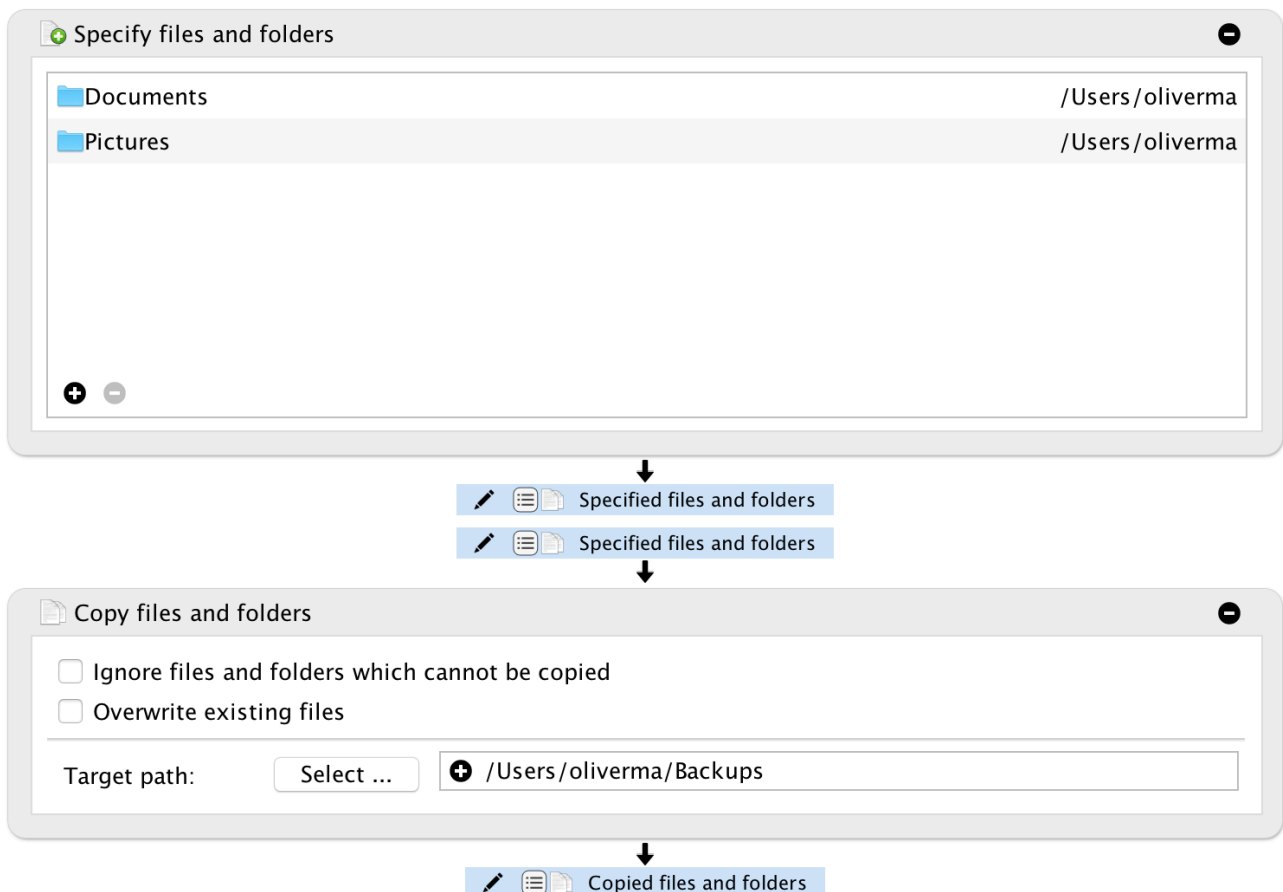
For example, if you want to pass a file variable to an action which needs text strings to work with instead, Task Till Dawn allows you to define that you would like to use some property like the file name of a file variable as the text string input.

# Assigning result variables

To create a variable of a certain type, use an action which returns a variable of the required type as its result. For example, let's assume that you'd like to copy some files somewhere using the „Copy files and folders" action. The action itself offers no way to directly specify which files it should copy. Instead, it copies all the files provided in the variable specified as its input.

To create a variable which can be used at the input, and to specify which files the variable should contain, you can use the „Specify files and folders" action.
It offers a list where you can add files and folders to, and these will then be stored in the result variable for later use with other actions.



In the picture above, the variable „Specified files and folders" is returned as the result of the „Specify files and folders" action and then directly passed into the „Copy files and folders" action.
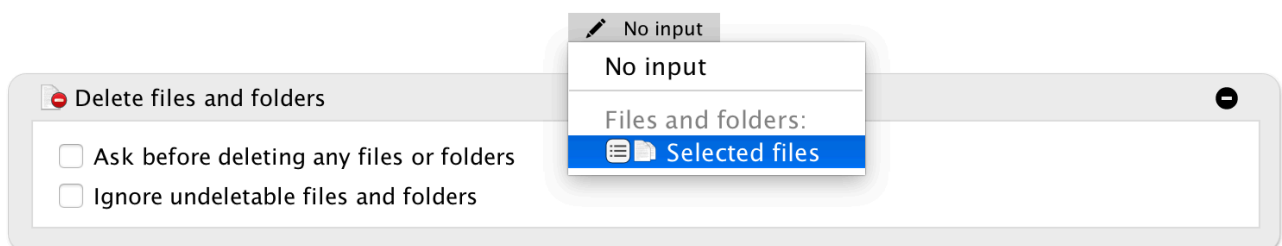
Variable names for result variables are often automatically assigned by Task Till Dawn once you add an action to your workflow. Of course you can also create new variables or reuse existing ones. Simply click on the area below the arrow pointing downwards. A menu will then pop up offering all variables with the same type which can be reused, and also a menu entry to create a new variable. A variable remains available for selection in the workflow as long as it is assigned anywhere. If this is no longer the case, it is automatically removed.

## Assigning input variables

If an action allows the assignment of one or more input variables, an arrow pointing downwards is shown above the action inside the workflow. Above the arrow, the currently selected input variable is displayed. If no variable has been selected, the text „No input" is shown instead. Task Till Dawn tries to automatically preselect matching input variables as soon as you add an action to the workflow.

Click on the area displaying the variable name and a menu will pop up. It contains all available variables which can be used as input for the action. If variables do not directly match the required variable type, but can be converted, the available conversion options will also be displayed per variable in the menu.
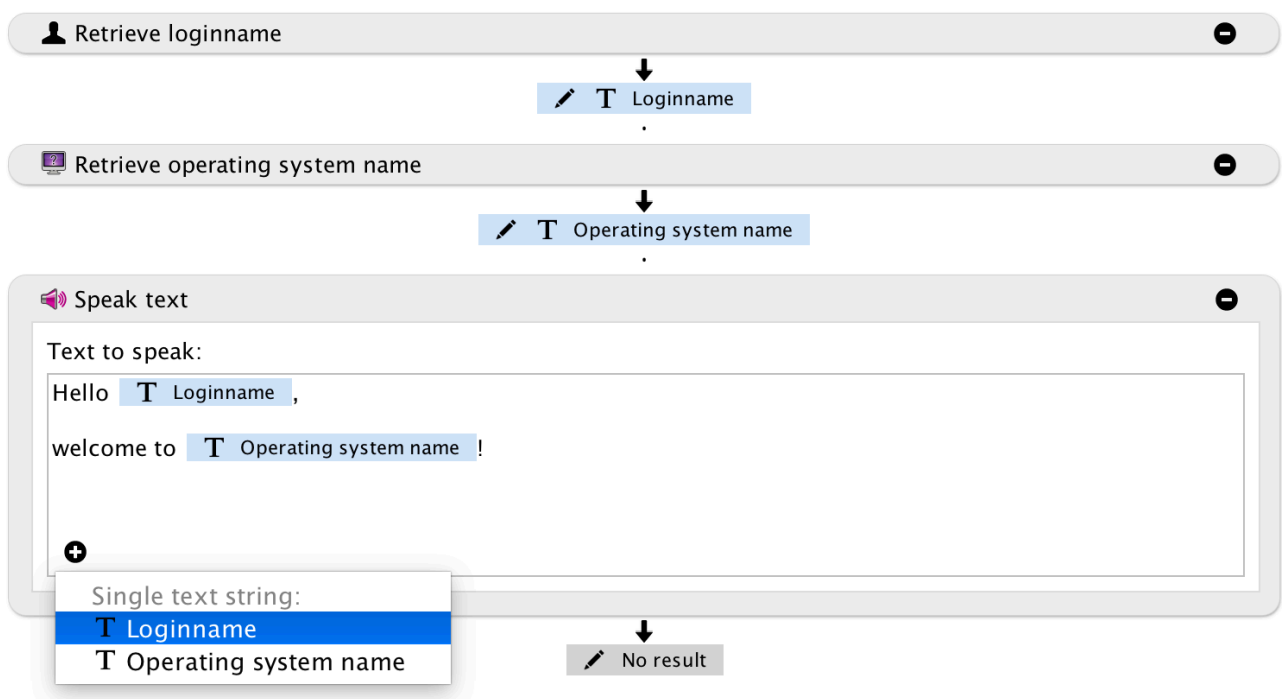
In the picture below, the only variable which can be used as input for the action „Delete files and folders" is the one named „Selected files". Click on a variable name and it will become the input variable for the action. Click on „No input" to unassign a previously selected variable.



## Using variables inside text fields

A lot of actions allow you to enter some text – for example the „Speak text" action. Many text fields offer the possibility to insert variables in between the text entered. You can recognize such by the small plus-button on the left side inside the text field itself. Click on it and a menu pops up showing all variables which contain a text string or can somehow be converted to a text string.
If you select a variable it will be inserted into your text and evaluated during execution of the action.
To remove a variable from your text, delete it using the delete or backspace key on your keyboard.
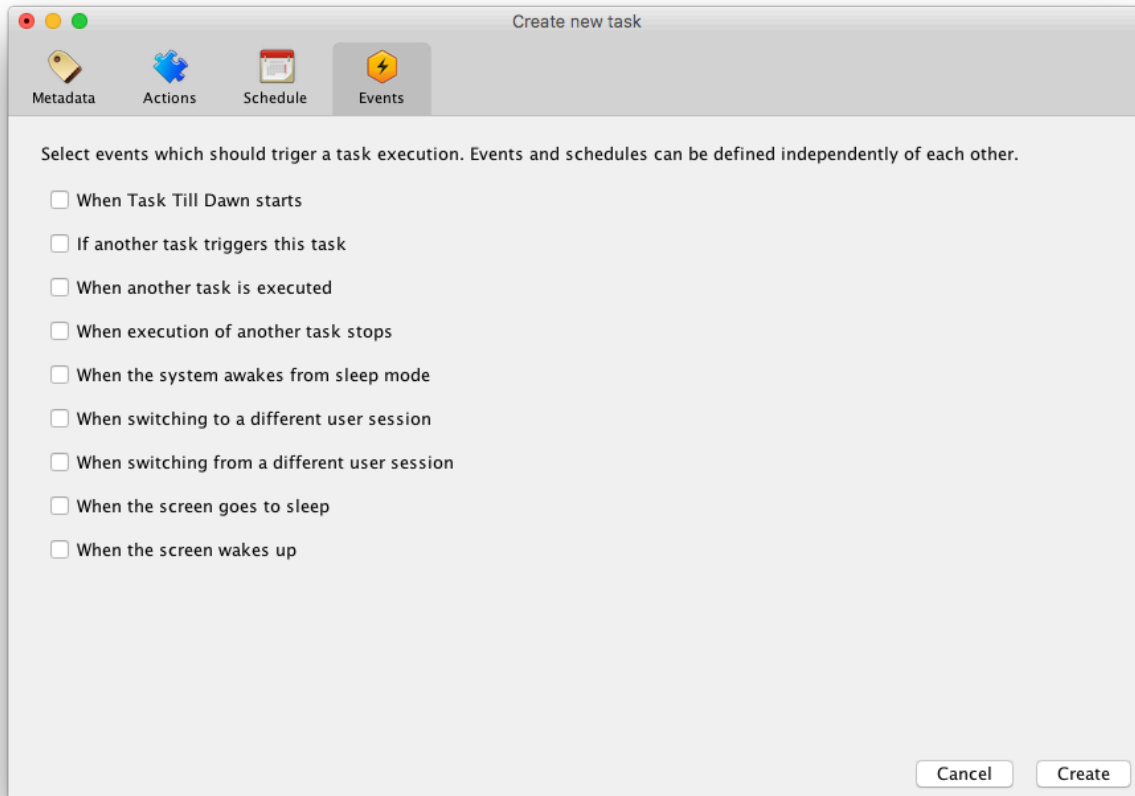
# Schedule

The Schedule section allows you to set up an optional schedule for your task. Task Till Dawn will execute your task every time the schedule occurs.



The section contains the following areas:
1.  Select this option if you don't want to your task to be executed based on a schedule. It is preselected initially.
2.  This option sets up an interval schedule. The task will be executed every specified seconds, minutes, hours or days. Lets say you define an interval schedule of 5 minutes and create the task at 8:02 am, then it will be automatically executed at 8:02 am (right after you created it), at 8:07 am, 8:12 am and so on. If you want the task execution to start exactly at a given time, use the optional schedule validity options (4). You can also define that the interval should only be taken into account between certain hours of every day. To do that, check the option „Only execute between…" and specify start and end times.
3.  Use this option to specify a fixed time at which your task should be executed.
4.  These options allow you to specify a time range during which the chosen schedule should be valid.
5.  Specify whether a task execution should be skipped or not if the schedule was missed. For example, let's assume you've set up a fixed time schedule for 5pm (without any other limitations), but your computer happens to be off at that time. You turn on your computer at 6pm. Now, if you've selected this option, Task Till Dawn will consider your schedule missed and re-schedule the task to be executed on the next day at 5pm. Without this option being selected, your task will be executed as soon as you turn on your computer.
6.  Here you can limit the schedule validity to specific days or days of a month.

# Events

The Events section allows you to define multiple optional events which – as soon as they occur – trigger the execution of your task. It is possible to define a schedule and multiple events for a task at the same time. Whichever comes first triggers the task's execution.

# Tips & tricks

## Mounting a network share on macOS

Use the „Open URL" action to mount a network share on macOS. Simply enter the network path of the share, like „smb://networkcomputer/networkshare„ and the Finder (or any other default application handling the smb protocol) will connect to it once the action is executed.

## Check if a network share has been mounted

To check if a network share is available, the following workflow might come in handy:
1.  Use the „Specify files and folders" action to create a variable containing the local path to the mounted network share. For example „/Volumes/networkshare" on macOS or „E:\" on Windows. Name the resulting variable „Network share".
2.  Use the „Filter files and folders" action to filter the „Network share" variable for existing files – input and output variables of the action both need to be „Network share".
3.  Use the „Count list elements" action to check if the variable „Network share" contains at least 1 element. If it doesn't, the network share has not been mounted before.