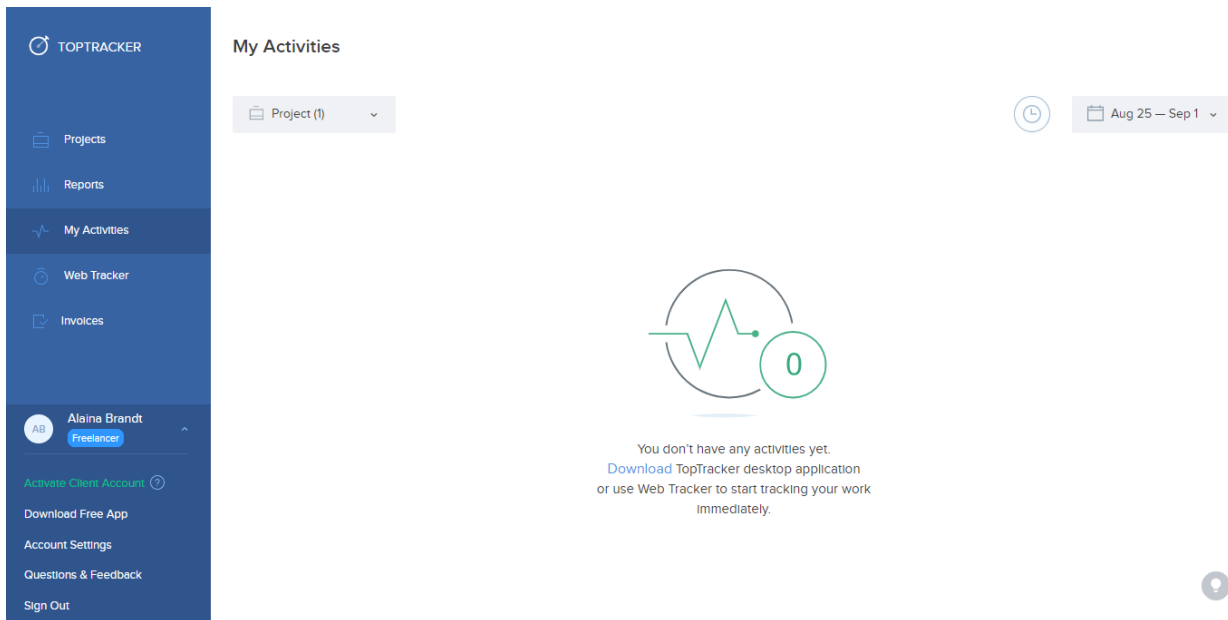# Time Tracking with TopTracker

TopTracker is a lightweight system for tracking time with web and desktop applications. TopTracker is also entirely free of charge to use. Read on to familiarize yourself with the TopTracker application.
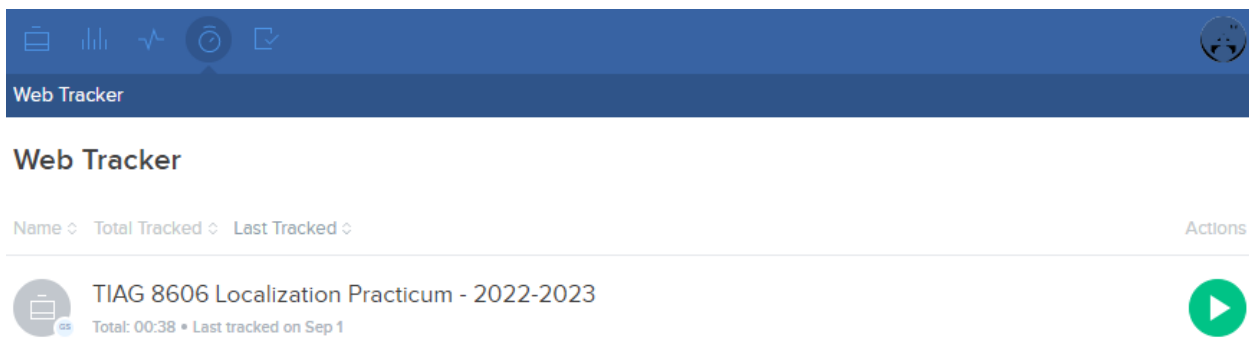
Getting into TopTracker

1. Create an account here: https://tracker.toptal.com/signup
2. Sign into the web application here: https://tracker.toptal.com/signin
3. Download the desktop application here: https://www.toptal.com/tracker/#download
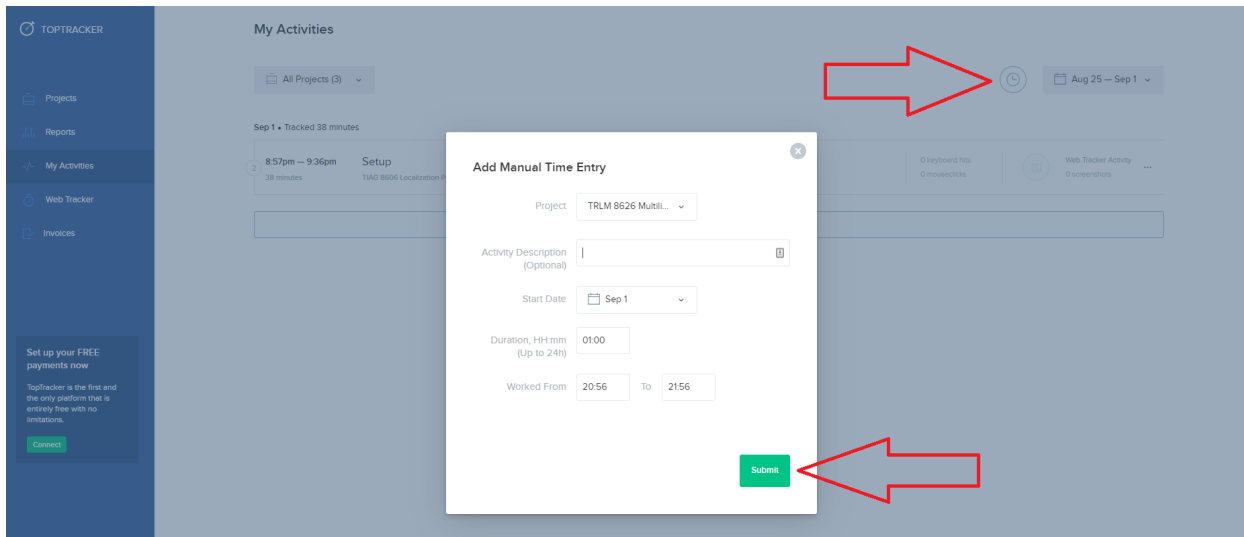
Navigating Around the Web Application

The web application consists of 3 main panes. In the pane in the bottom left corner, you can access your settings. The pane in the top left corner of the screen is where you can navigate to the various pages in the application. The primary pane displays information related to the page you selected. You can start tracking time on a project by navigating to the Web Tracker page and clicking the green Play button alongside the corresponding project.

Manually Entering Time Data

You can manually enter time data into a project by navigating to My Activities and then clicking the Timer button in the top right corner of the primary pane (next to the date period). A dialogue will appear in which you can select the project for which you'd like to manually add a time entry and enter the activity description, date, and times (in military time). Once you're finished with your manual time entry, click the green Submit button.
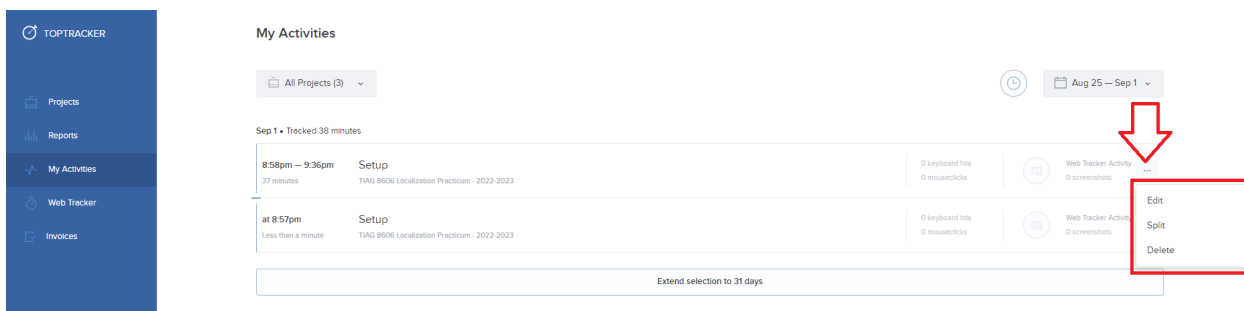

Note on Manually Time Entries versus Live Time Tracking

You can track your time simultaneous to your work or you can manually enter in time data. Simultaneously tracking your time has the benefit of more accurate data, since accurate time data is difficult to obtain if time worked is not captured as close as possible to the time at which the work was produced. Getting accurate time data from live tracking takes a lot of practice, so you're encouraged to start getting practice early. It is inevitable that at first you'll forget to track time, or you'll forget to stop the tracker. Once you get good at time tracking, the data produced is an important indicator of your efficiency and ability to meet your quotes.

How to Edit a Time Entry

When you notice you need to edit some of your time data, you can do that easily from the web interface, and ONLY the web interface (so don't bother digging around the desktop application if you realize you need to edit data you logged from there). Editing your data is easy. Go to the My Activities tab, find the time entry you need to edit, click the ellipses, and then press Edit. You can also Split a time entry if you switched between projects and forgot to stop the tracker.

How to Export a Time Data Report

You may at times want to export your time tracking data by project or the time you've worked for the entire class. To export your activity in a line-by-line time tracking report navigate to Reports > Activity Log > Export as CSV. Use the dropdowns along the top of the primary pane to select the projects, team members, and dates for which you'd like to export data.

Navigating Around the Desktop Application

The desktop application offers some functionality not offered on the web – though again, you can't edit time data from the desktop application, so no need to go searching around for that there.

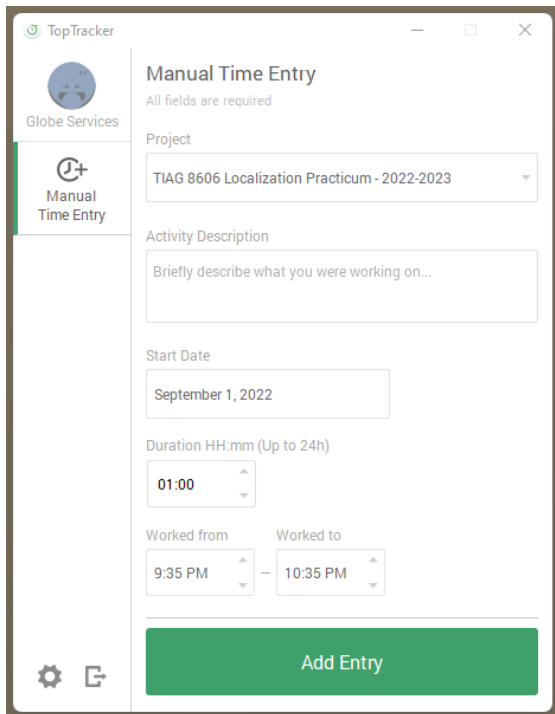Your active project list appears within the purple box on the top. You can toggle between Start/Stop Tracking using the big green (or red) button. Use that button to quickly get started.
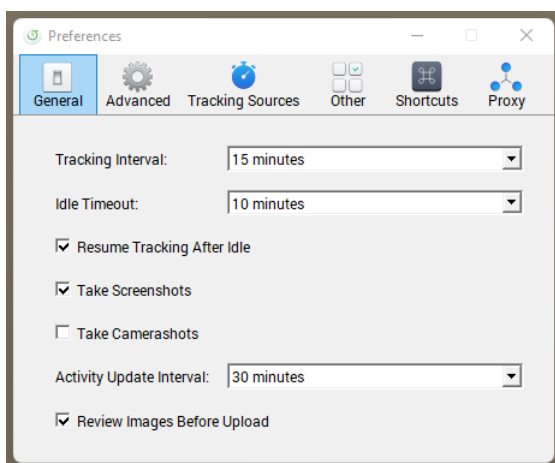
When you start tracking time from the desktop application, this dialogue may appear in which you'll be prompted to enter in an activity description (more on that at the end).

Notice that if you press the gear, you can have a TopTracker dialogue pop up every 5 minutes (or more). This is a great method to get back on track for those (like me) who easily get lost on the Internet.
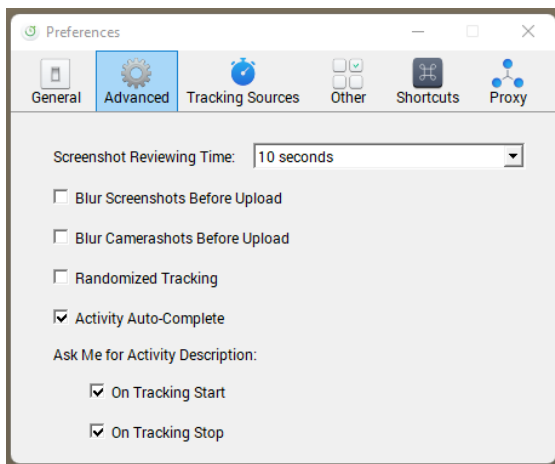

You can toggle between live time tracking and adding manual entries by clicking between the Manual Time Entry button and your name.

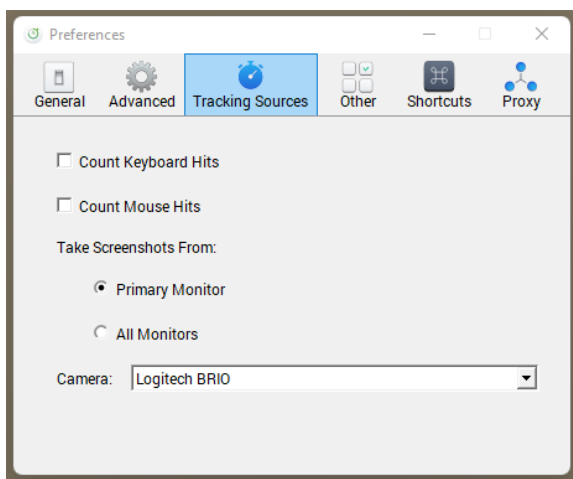Notice the Preferences gear and the Quick Sign Out button in the bottom left corner too.

Did you notice the Preferences gear in the image in the previous row? Click that gear to access important settings.

For instance, under "General" Preferences you can prompt the system to take a screenshot of your screen and a camera shot of you working. Screenshots can be used to later confirm that you were working on what the time entry says you were working on. Camera shots can be used to verify the person completing the work (for certification exams for instance).

Under "Advanced" Preferences (again, we started at the gear), you can blur your screen- and camerashots for a little more privacy.

You can also ask the system to prompt you for a description of your activity when you start or stop work. (Maybe you're the kind of person who doesn't quite know what you'll work on until you go. In this case, recording your description at the end of an activity would be preferable.)

Under "Tracking Sources" Preferences (accessed through the gear), you can have TopTracker record your keyboard and mouse hits.

Back in the web application, you can review your activity, keyboard hits, and mouse hits from the My Activities tab. Perhaps keyboard and mouse hits could be used as indicators for processes becoming more efficient (requiring less key strokes) or for typing speed at different conditions (when tired versus when awake).
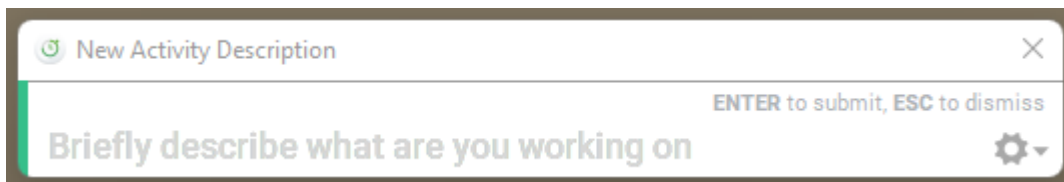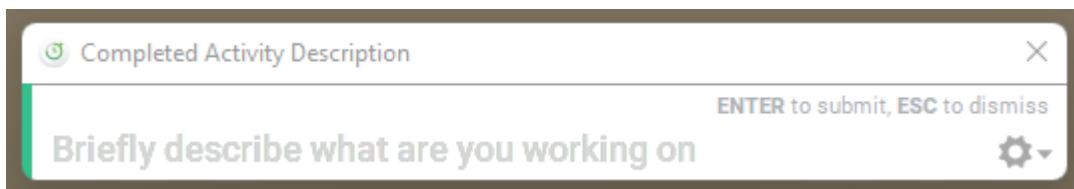
Writing Descriptions for Activities Tracked

Whether you use the web or the desktop applications, enter a description of the activity you're tracking in the dialogue. In the web application, edit the activity description by clicking in the space with the Pencil that says "Working on Unnamed activity."

In the desktop application, edit the activity description within the New Activity Description dialog, where it says "Briefly describe what you are working on."

In the desktop application, press the ENTER button on your keyboard to submit your description and ESCAPE to track your time without an activity description. When you stop tracking your time, you will then be prompted again to submit a Completed Activity Description.

Helpful Links

TopTracker has some helpful pages you may want to visit, such as Frequently Asked Questions and the Feedback page. (It is not certain if you will get a response if you submit a question via the Feedback page.) You can also review the terms and conditions related to your use of the TopTracker system via the following links:

> https://tracker.toptal.com/privacy
> https://tracker.toptal.com/tos
> https://tracker.toptal.com/cookies