Defining Tasks

Everyone has their own sense of what a project is or what a task is, and how far they want to refine that concept. As an example, let's say you need food for a party, so you create a task with the title "Get Food". What does that mean?

You could simply create a task for each food item.

- Get Food
    - Cake from Bakery
    - Bread from Bakery
    - Eggs from Corner Market
    - Beer from Liquor Store
    - Wine from Liquor Store

Or you can create a sub-task for each grocery store, with a sub-task under each store for each food item.

- Get Food
    - Bakery
        - Cake
        - Bread
        - Corner Market
        - Eggs
    - Liquor Store
        - Beer
        - Wine

The implication here is that "Bakery" isn't a task as in "something to do", it's just a task for organization, a container to support other tasks underneath it. So tasks are used for organization as well as to itemize concrete things to do. Note also here that each food item task is a thing to "get", not a thing to "do".

There's no right answer to organization. The challenge is to organize the tasks in whatever way makes the most sense to you. Quite frequently we create tasks and then decide to move them around to make more sense. ToDoList makes this very easy with keys and menu options to move and copy one ore more tasks, retaining structures, and shifting entire structures under others.

For example: In this scenario there is a party, so perhaps you want a top-level task called Party with Get Food as one of the sub-tasks, and food items under that.

- Party
    - Get Food
        - Bakery
            - Cake

Note here that Party was made a top-level task, and Get Food and related "nodes" were shifted to be sub-tasks of Party.

- Birthday
    - Party

- Get Food
- Send Invitations
- Decorate
- Clean House
- Get Gifts

But what is the party for? If it's a birthday then the party might just be one sub-task under that, and there are probably tasks other than just getting food. Again we create a new top-level task and shift everything else under it, then add new ones.

Finally, note above that with a random thought process, the various tasks seem out of order. Tasks don't necessarily need to be entered or displayed in the order in which they occur. But after tasks are created, it's easy to move them up and down in a way that makes more sense.

- Birthday
  - Send Invitations
  - Get Gifts
  - Party
    - Get Food
    - Clean House
    - Decorate

Task lists grow and get re-arranged like this all the time - as you explore each task you think about more specific things that need to be done. You might estimate a business project to take 50 hours but to document that you'll need to think about each milestone, and what needs to be done to achieve each goal. So tasks routinely get added, shifted, and moved around in whatever way seems most appropriate.

Information about exactly how to move tasks will be posted soon in the User Interface section.

Other examples for structuring ToDoLists are available:

- Example for a consultant with clients
- Example for a company employee

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