



Time out?

Site helps you manage life's many tasks

Things to do today: First, find a simpler way to keep track of all the things I have to do today. Simplifying the way you keep track of the things you need to get done is at the top of the list for the folks at **Kanban2go.com**. The website describes itself as “visual online task management software.” That description makes it sound more complicated than the simple, online to-do list that it is.

Websites and mobile apps featuring to-do lists are nothing new, and carrying around an “analog” list on a scrap of paper in your pocket still works fine. What Kanban2go offers that makes it worth a look is a system of organizing and tracking the progress of tasks without some of the limitations of other electronic, and paper, lists.



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Japanese philosophy

The design of the site is based on a philosophy that has been used for decades by Japanese auto companies to manage workflows. Kanban is Japanese for billboard. Tasks are organized on separate billboards. For instance, you can make boards for home, work, school, extra-curricular activities or any other projects you need to keep tabs on.

Each billboard has three color-coded columns for tracking the progress of individual tasks. The first column, which is yellow, is To Do. This is where an item first appears on a list. Next, in magenta, is In Progress, for tasks that have been started but not completed. Last,

in blue, is the Done column for tasks that have been completed.

List items can simply be dragged from one column to the next as they are started and, hopefully, finished. They also can be dragged up or down in each column to establish priorities. Tasks also can be moved or copied from one board to another. This is helpful if you have tasks that are recurring. You can make a master list of all your recurring tasks and simply copy them to the appropriate boards as they come up.

Simple and effective

Creating boards and list items is straightforward. There's a Create New Board link on the left side of the screen. Clicking the link takes you to a page that lets you name the board, and designate it as private if you like. The board then appears in a drop-down list under the My Boards heading, also on the left of the screen. Select a board on the drop-down menu and it appears as the dominant element on the screen.

At the top of the To Do column is an Add Task button. Clicking it brings up a blank list item where you can type in a description. Icons along the top of each item allow you to copy them to iCal or Google Calendar, set due dates, archive, trash and move or copy items to other boards. You also can add a tags to items that allow you to search for them.

Boards can be used by individuals or shared for group projects via email or Twitter. Profile pictures can be added to accounts if you plan on sharing. Creating an account is fast and free — for now. The Frequently Asked Questions sections hints at possibly charging fees in the future.

The site is currently in beta mode, so it would be wise to hold off put-

ting up any long-range or complex projects until the site proves it has staying power. That being said, the site does allow you to export your data so you can back it up elsewhere. Boards also can be synced with Outlook and Evernote.

Visual organization

Kanban2go has a very simple, clean design that makes it easy to see what's going on with a glance. There are no ads or clutter to distract you from your purpose. Navigation tools are minimal, logically placed and clearly marked.

The site is also designed to work with mobile devices so you can take your to-do list with you. It doesn't have a true app that would have to be downloaded. The website recognizes phones and tablets and configures itself to optimize the interface.

I'm a to-do list guy from way back. In fact, I have a paper list in my pocket right now, as well as several iCal and Google calendars set up on my work and home computers. The problem with paper is you run out of room as items get added and others don't get crossed off. Then you have to transfer everything to a new list, and sometimes you even end up with two or more lists in your pocket. Also, they don't track the progress of tasks. Electronic calendars are nice, but they don't track progress either.

Even if I become a regular Kanban2go user I'll probably still keep my electronic calendars, and even, occasionally, my paper list. I'll just have to add one more place to check on my to-do list.

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