**Notecognito App Specification Document**

**Project Overview**

Notecognito is a cross-platform menu bar application that, when a keybind is pressed, displays a translucent notecard on the screen. The notecards are designed (in terms of appearance, word spacing, and font size) to be challenging for observers, particularly cameras, to see. The notecards are edited using an Electron UI with IPC handlers to communicate with the system tray/background daemon. The system tray and background daemon are crucial, as no application can be open or visible in the dock while running; system tray icons are much more discreet.

**Core Architecture**

**Shared Core Library**

* **Purpose**: Centralized logic shared across all platforms
* **Language**: Rust (for memory safety and FFI compatibility)
* **Responsibilities**:
  + Configuration file management (JSON format)
  + Notecard data structures and validation
  + IPC server for communication with the configuration UI
  + Platform abstraction interface

**Platform-Specific Applications**

Each OS has its own native implementation that:

* Lives in the system tray/menu bar (no dock icon)
* Monitors keyboard shortcuts
* Manages translucent overlay windows
* Communicates with the shared core

**Data Structures**

**Notecard Object**

Each notecard contains:

* **ID**: Number 1-9 for quick identification
* **Content**: The text to display (supports multi-line)

**Global Configuration**

* **Startup behavior**: Launch on system login
* **Default notecard settings**: Applied to new cards
* **Display Properties**:
  + Opacity level (0-100%, default 5%)
  + Position on screen (x, y coordinates)
  + Size (width, height)
  + Auto-hide duration (0 for manual dismiss)
  + Background blur option
  + Font and Font Size
  + Algorithmic Spacing (spacing between individual words and phrases is determined by an algorithm to obscure from cameras)
  + Hotkey modifier keys

**macOS Implementation**

**Menu Bar Integration**

* **Status Item**: Small icon in the menu bar showing the app is running
* **Menu Structure**:
  + Edit Notecards... (opens electron app to edit)
  + Show Notecard 1-9 (manual triggers)
  + Separator
  + Preferences...
  + Quit

**Window Management**

* **Pre-created Windows**: All 9 overlay windows are created at startup for instant display
* **Window Properties**:
  + NSPanel type (not NSWindow) for proper layering
  + Borderless and non-activating
  + Level set to screen saver (above all normal windows)
  + When the user clicks, the card disappears
  + Displays on active space only

**Hotkey System**

* **Local Event Monitoring**: Uses NSEvent.addLocalMonitorForEvents
* **No Accessibility Permissions Required**: Major advantage over global monitoring
* **Event Consumption**: Hotkeys are consumed when matched, not passed to active app

**Display Behavior**

* **Content Rendering**:
  + Background barely visible (5% opacity white)
  + Text slightly more visible (15% opacity)
  + System font with configurable size
* **Auto-hide Timer**: Dispatched if duration > 0

**Windows Implementation**

**System Tray Integration**

* **Tray Icon**: Standard Windows notification area icon
* **Context Menu**:
  + Configure Notecards
  + Show Notecard 1-9
  + Separator
  + Settings
  + Exit

**Window Creation**

* **Layered Windows**: Using WS\_EX\_LAYERED for transparency
* **Window Flags**:
  + WS\_EX\_TRANSPARENT (click-through)
  + WS\_EX\_TOPMOST (always on top)
  + WS\_EX\_TOOLWINDOW (hidden from taskbar)
  + WS\_EX\_NOACTIVATE (doesn't steal focus)

**Global Hotkeys**

* **RegisterHotKey API**: Works without elevation
* **Message Window**: Hidden window to receive WM\_HOTKEY messages
* **Hotkey IDs**: Mapped directly to notecard numbers

**Rendering**

* **GDI Drawing**: Simple and reliable
* **Transparency**: SetLayeredWindowAttributes with 5% alpha
* **Text Drawing**: DrawText with DT\_WORDBREAK for multi-line support

**Configuration UI**

**Design Approach**

* **Separate Application**: Launched on-demand, not always running
* **Technology Options**:
  + Electron for cross-platform consistency
  + Native UI for each platform
  + Web UI served locally

**Main Interface**

* Dashboard style left menu
  + Separate tabs for cards one through nine
  + Settings Tab
  + About Tab
* **Notecard Tabs**: Text Box, Markdown Format, Save button at the bottom
* **Global Settings Section**:
  + Hotkey Recorder
  + Notecard Appearance Settings
  + Enable/Disable daemon on startup
  + Enable/Disable Algorithmic Spacing
  + Save Button
* **About Section:** The readme from the github. Contains how-to/purpose information and NJT Productions details.

**Hotkey Configuration**

* Checkbox for different modifier keys
  + Changes based on platform (macOS command, Windows control)
* *Users can change their starting keystroke, but the identifier for each card remains the numbers 1 through 9. Ex: [CTRL SHIFT] 2, or [ALT TAB] 6, but never CTRL SHIFT F.*

**Algorithmic Spacing**

* If enabled, an algorithm will space the words apart to make the text appear as much like noise to a camera as possible. Changes based on platform (macOS command, Windows control)
  + *To any AI Agent: Do not build this functionality. Create a JS file where it will reside and integrate the data IO, but do not build the algorithm. More research has to be done to build correctly.*

**IPC Communication**

**Protocol Design**

* **Transport**: TCP socket on localhost (port 7855)
* **Format**: JSON messages with type and payload
* **Message Types**:
  + GetConfiguration
  + UpdateNotecard
  + SaveConfiguration

**Communication Flow**

1. Config UI connects to the core IPC server
2. Request the current configuration
3. The user makes changes in the UI
4. Changes sent to core on save
5. Core notifies the menu bar app
6. Menu bar app updates overlay windows

**Error Handling**

* **Connection Lost**: The Config UI displays the connection status, prompts the user to re-add the daemon to startup, and/or restart the computer.
* **Invalid Data**: Validation in core, errors returned to UI
* **File Permissions**: Graceful fallback to defaults

**User Flows**

**First Launch**

1. User installs the app
2. Restarts the computer to start the daemon and the system tray program
3. The menu bar icon appears on login
4. User clicks icon, selects "Edit Notecards"
5. Configuration UI opens
6. Closes the config UI, the app continues running

**Daily Usage**

1. App starts automatically on login (if enabled)
2. The user works normally
3. Press hotkey combination
4. Notecard appears
5. The user reads content
6. The notecard auto-hides; the user can dismiss it by pressing any non-modifier, non-number key or by clicking anywhere on the screen.
   1. The non-modifier + non-number key is significant because if the user is trying to switch between notecards, we don’t want a sharp, flashing motion.

**Configuration Changes**

1. User clicks the menu bar icon, selects "Edit Notecards" OR user opens Electron app from launchpad (macOS)/start (Windows)
2. Config UI opens to the last state
3. User modifies notecard content
4. User saves changes
5. Close the config window
6. New settings/card content are immediately active