

# **Activity Monitor 1.1**

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### **User's Guide**

#### **Introduction: What is the Activity Monitor?**

As the name indicates, this program is designed to monitor the activity on your system. Activity Monitor, ACTMON.EXE, will record on an on-going basis all the active applications on your system, and make note of the application with the focus. Every time the focus, or in other words the system's attention, passes from one application to the next, the Activity Monitor will record the change. It will accurately report Windows applications ( we have yet to find an application that it does not report accurately -- please let us know if there is one! ), as well as DOS applications running in a window. It will not, however, detect and record DOS applications running in a full screen. The log file that it produces is encrypted for added security. As is the case with simple encryption algorithms, anyone spending enough time on it will crack the code, but this one should be sufficiently complicated to stop the average peeper long enough.

The Activity Monitor, as was just hinted, can have applications as a security or as a reporting tool. For example, if you suspect that someone is using your system without authorization, you can obtain a full account of the illicit activity through the use of the Activity Monitor, since it can be made virtually invisible to the average user. Again, any given individual with a sufficient knowledge of Windows will in relatively little time detect the activity of the program, and possibly disable it, but even moderately advanced users should not be able to detect its presence on your system.

You can use the Activity Monitor as a reporting tool, showing a complete log of active applications and in some cases of the open files, to an eventual supervisor.

As you have probably guessed by now, this program can also be used to monitor an employee's activity unbeknownst to him or her. We do not approve of the use of the Activity Monitor in such spying uses without due cause, and ask our customers to use this tool with discernment.

#### **What are the system requirements?**

Activity Monitor 1.1 requires Windows 3.1 or later. The installation, using the Visible Mode, Program Manager Icon option may fail if you are using replacement shells such as the Norton Desktop or others, because the installation program uses Program Manager-specific DDE commands. It is recommended to use the Activity Monitor on systems with 4 MB of RAM or more, although it would work well on systems with less memory. On systems with less than 4 MB of memory, the Activity Monitor 1.1 may cause a slight degradation of the system's responsiveness.

#### **How do I use the Activity Monitor?**

The Activity Monitor is a little program which is automatically launched along with Windows. This can be achieved in a number of ways, which we will discuss later. The program immediately takes note of the time and date of the launch, and then checks the system every subsequent 5 seconds approximately. Each time the Activity Monitor detects that a new application has the focus, it writes it

in a log file. The entry contains the date, time, name of the application, actual path and file name of the executable, and in some cases, a mention of the currently open file. The log file can only be read by the Activity Monitor Control Centre, the general purpose utility included in the package, as an added precautionary measure. We will come back to this later.

### **There are many files in the package. What are they?**

All the files that have a .TXT or a .WRI extension are information files that you should read when you have time. The files with a .TXT extension can be viewed and printed using Notepad or a DOS text editor. The files with a .WRI extension must be viewed or printed using Windows Write or an other word processor which is able to import Windows Write files.

All the files with a .VBX extension are special libraries that are used by AMCTRL.EXE.

ACTMON.EXE is the system surveillance module.

AMCTRL.EXE is the general purpose module that you use to install or remove the Activity Monitor, view or print text files, prepare your registration form, view or otherwise work with the log file, issue an activity report, etc.

UTILDATA.DAT is a small data file containing information used by the registration form module of AMCTRL.EXE. It contains information such as pricing, exchange rates for the various currencies listed in the module, and so on.

REG.DAT will be added to the list of files when you start to prepare your registration form. It contains your registration information, just so you can continue later where you were if you are interrupted in the process of filling-out the registration form.

### **How do I install or remove the Activity Monitor?**

If you downloaded the Activity Monitor 1.1 from a BBS, then it came as a ZIP file, and you probably expanded it on your hard disk. The installation program will work just fine from there, but if your intent is to confirm illicit activity on your computer, then it is better to remove this and other Activity Monitor related files from your hard disk, keeping only the installed program, INI and LOG files. You may use AMCTRL.EXE to transfer the files to a diskette. AMCTRL.EXE will also help you through the preparation of a registration form. Please make sure that you expand the ZIP file in a specific directory, which does not contain any other files, or some operations could wipe some of these other files away from the disk. The program is absolutely safe for files outside the sub-directory where it is residing.

In order to work properly, the Activity Monitor must be installed and initialized. This is done with the same companion program, AMCTRL.EXE, which contains installation and de-installation routines designed specifically for the Activity Monitor. AMCTRL will install all the required files, create the appropriate INI file and set operating parameters according to your system configuration, and to the installation option selected. It will also remove all traces of the Activity Monitor when you no longer require it on your system, removing all the files that it installed and erasing the log files created by the Activity Monitor. If you re-install the Activity Monitor on a system where the program already is installed, then the current log file will be wiped out. You would normally reinstall the program just to change the installation options. For this purpose, it is preferable to use the Change button instead. it will reinstall the Activity Monitor with the new options, but will not wipe the log file out.

The Activity Monitor can be operated in two ways, and installed in five different ways.

The first operation mode is called Stealth. Under this mode, the program is virtually undetectable. It is not visible, does not respond to keyboard or mouse events, does not produce any icon at the bottom of the screen and does not appear on the Task Manager's list of active programs.

The second mode of operation is the Visible mode, under which the program runs as an icon that can be restored. The Visible mode is mostly designed to be a deterrent for eventual peepers.

The first installation option specifies a simple installation of files on the system, for manual launch. This option is only available under the Visible mode.

The second installation option specifies the launch of the program through the RUN line in your WIN.INI. This line is seldom used by modern programs; its functionality was replaced and enhanced by that of the Start-Up group under Windows 3.1. Using the RUN line is the preferred method of installation under the Stealth mode, since very few users ever dare to venture in the WIN.INI file, and also because, being little known, few people will even think of looking there.

The third installation option specifies the launch through the use of a hidden WIN.BAT file in your root directory. In this case, your AUTOEXEC.BAT file is saved under a new name ( for the subsequent de-installation ), edited to change any reference to WIN.COM, and the WIN.BAT file is then created. Under MS-DOS 5 and later, it accepts up to 5 command line parameters in addition to the ACTMON.EXE reference. All the command line parameters in your AUTOEXEC.BAT are preserved. AMSETUP will not however edit any other shell, such as the DOSSHELL or any other menuing system. This option is far less secure than the previous one, since many common programs such as the DOSSHELL and the File Manager can display hidden files. The Activity Monitor is therefore far easier to detect if this option is selected. You may increase your chances by disabling the "Show Hidden/System Files" option in both the DOSSHELL and the File Manager.

The Visible Mode has two additional options available to it. First, AMCTRL can add the Activity Monitor to your Start-Up group, regardless of its name. AMCTRL will probe your PROGMAN.INI to detect any special name you may have given to your Start-Up Group. If you deleted the Start-Up group from the program Manager, then AMCTRL will create it back. The Start-Up Group contains all the applications to be automatically launched with every start of Windows. You can add and remove applications freely in this group, unless you restricted the editing rights of the user to the Program Manager. It is a good idea to reset all such options prior to installing the Activity Monitor 1.1. Once installed, you may return to the restricted setup. AMCTRL will not handle editing restrictions automatically.

Finally, the program can be launched from the WIN.INI LOAD line, which works much like the RUN line, except that the loaded applications run minimized until restored.

Should an unexpected error occur during installation, AMCTRL will clean-up all the successful steps so far, and leave your system the way it was.

When you remove ACTMON.EXE, the options you select have no bearing on the de-installation process. The parameters used by the de-installation routine are all internal, and the routine does not read the parameters set by the user at the time of de-installation. Instead, it reads the parameters recorded at the time of the installation in the file ACTMON.INI. It is important not to edit, delete, move or rename this file, or the de-installation process will fail.

### **How do I read the log file?**

The only way to read the log file is through AMCTRL. Launch AMCTRL, and click on the "Log File" command button located on the Report/Log tab. The content of the log file will be either deleted, displayed or printed depending on the checked option button. Large log files may take some time to be read and decrypted. A visual indicator keeps you informed of the progress.

### **How do I issue a report?**

On the Report/Log File tab, you will find a Report button. Clicking this button issues an activity report. The full report includes file names, while the summary report lists only program names. Click the appropriate option button to select the type of report you want. Once again, a visual indicator keeps you informed of the progress of the process, which can be long if your log file is very large.

It is good practice to purge the log file once a report is issued, to save precious hard disk space and keep the reading and decrypting time to a minimum. The only limits to the log file size are your system's available memory and your patience...

### **What about support?**

We can only offer full support to our registered customers. You will be required to provide your licence number when you call for service. If you are an unregistered user, you will get enough support to properly evaluate the product. If you are having some difficulty testing the program, please do not hesitate to send us an e-mail message at the CompuServe address listed below.

### **The final word:**

We think that the Activity Monitor is very easy to use and that it contains very useful and valuable features. You may disagree with us or you may want to see new features added to the Activity Monitor. Please report any improvements that would be useful to you, and any problem that you may encounter using the Activity Monitor. We will respond as promptly and diligently as possible.

We can make versions of this program that are specific to the needs of any given customer. Prices for such custom releases need to be negotiated on a case by case basis. Customers who wish to purchase upwards of 50 licences, please contact us for company wide licensing agreements.

Thank you for using and registering the Activity Monitor.

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Member of the Association of Shareware Professionals. For more information on the benefits to you, please read the other information files included with this program.