Auto Task, Version 1.3c
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Auto Task For Windows and Windows NT
Version 1.3c
Users Manual

Overview

Auto Task Version 1.3c is an automated task processor/manager for Windows v3.1 or Windows NT v3.5 or greater. Auto Task lets you schedule any *MS-DOS* or *Microsoft Windows* application to run at specific times without user intervention. Individual tasks can be scheduled to run by Interval, Day, Week, Month, or Date. Task processing can be monitored using the automated task manager which provides information on current tasks running, or those still waiting to run. Task processing can be enabled or disabled globally, or on a per task basis. Tasks which are currently running, can be terminated both manually or automatically. In addition, task logging can be activated which will write the status of each processed task to file.

While Auto Task is **SHAREWARE**, it is not limited in any way. The version of the program you currently have is the version you would receive as a registered user. Please read the **LICENSE AGREEMENT** section for more information on how to register Auto Task.

What's New?

The following new features have been added in Auto Task v1.3c:

Revised Task Manager: The main window can now be resized. A control bar no resides at the top of the window which allows you to open, close and create new task files.

Bug Fixes: Version 1.3c is primarily a maintenance release. Several bugs have been fixed. Please see the version history section for details.

NOTE: See the **Version History** section for a more detailed listing of changes made to the program.

UPGRADING FROM AUTO TASK V1.3: While the data structure of Auto Task has been modified due to the addition of new features, Auto Task v1.3c will automatically convert Auto Task v1.3, v1.3a, or v1.3b ATF files into the new file format. Earlier versions will not be converted.

Package Contents

If you are running *Auto Task for Windows*, the archive ATASK13C.ZIP shoudl contain the following files:

AUTOTASK.EXE	Auto Task executable
AUTOTASK.HLP	Auto Task help file
AUTOTASK.WRI	Auto Task Installation & Users Guide
FILE_ID.DIZ	BBS Identification file
ORDER.TXT	Registration/Order form
LICENSE.TXT	License information file
PACKING.TXT	Packing list file
VERSIONS.TXT	Auto Task version history file
CTL3D.DLL	Microsoft 3d Controls v1.x
CTL3DV2.DLL	Microsoft 3d Controls v2.05
DYNODLG.DLL	Auto Task Dynamic Dialog Controls
APPSETUP.INF	Installation script
SETUP.EXE	Installation program

If you are running *Auto Task for Windows NT*, the archive ATNT13C.ZIP shoudl contain the following files:

AUTOTASK.EXE	Auto Task executable
AUTOTASK.HLP	Auto Task help file
AUTOTASK.WRI	Auto Task Installation & Users Guide
FILE_ID.DIZ	BBS Identification file
ORDER.TXT	Registration/Order form
LICENSE.TXT	License information file
PACKING.TXT	Packing list file
VERSIONS.TXT	Auto Task version history file
CTL3D.DLL	Microsoft 3d Controls v1.x
CTL3D32.DLL	Microsoft 3d Controls (32 bit)
DYNOD32.DLL	Auto Task Dynamic Dialog Controls (32 bit)
APPSETUP.INF	Installation script
SETUP.EXE	Installation program

System Requirements

If you are running *Auto Task for Windows*, the folllowing system requirements apply:

- >   An Intel 386 or compatible
- >   MS-DOS 5.0 or greater
- >   Microsoft Windows or Windows For Workgroups v3.x

If you are running *Auto Task for Windows NT*, the following system requirements apply:

- >   An Intel 386 or compatible
- >   Windows NT v3.5 or greater

Installation

Auto Task uses **InstallWare v4.0, (c) 1995 by Bob Dolan**. Auto Task can easily be installed by performing the following steps:

- >   Create a directory and unzip the contents of ATASK13C.ZIP (or ATNT3C.ZIP if installing for Windows NT) into the newly created directory. *IMPORTANT: Auto Task was zipped using PKWARE's PKZIP v2.04g. Using a ZIP utility not compatible with v2.04g will not work.*

- >   From the Windows Program Manager, run the program SETUP.EXE located in the newly created directory. This program will install Auto Task to the location you specify.

If you have problems installing Auto Task using InstallWare, or have a slight aversion to automatic installation programs, Auto Task can manually be installed by performing the following steps:

- >   Create a directory in which you want Auto Task to reside and unzip the contents of the archive into the newly created directory.

- >   If running Auto Task for Windows, check the contents of your WINDOWS/SYSTEM directory and verify the existence of CTL3DV2.DLL. If the file does not exist, move the CTL3DV2.DLL file into this directory. If you are running Auto Task for Windows NT, check the contents of your WINNT35/SYSTEM32 directory and verify the existence of CTL3D32.DLL (dated 9/6/94 or greater). If the file does not exist, move the CTL3D32.DLL file into this directory. Remove CTL3DV2.DLL (or CTL3D32.DLL if running Windows NT) from the directory in which Auto Task resides. If this file is not removed, Auto Task will report an error.

- >   From Windows, create a new program item with the following parameters:

Description: *Auto Task v1.3c*
Command Line: A*UTOTASK.EXE*
Working Dir.:   *C:\AUTOTASK (or whatever directory archive was unzipped to.)*

Loading The Program

Auto Task, like all Windows programs, can be started by double clicking on the Auto Task icon from the Program Manager. In time, however, you may wish to have Windows load Auto Task automatically. This can be accomplished in two different ways:

- >　　　Using your favorite text editor, edit the WIN.INI file and add AUTOTASK.EXE to the "load=" line of the [windows] section. (e.g. load=c:\autotask\autotask.exe).

- >　　　Under Windows 3.1 or Windows NT, you can simply drag the Auto Task icon into the StartUp program group from the Program Manager.

Auto Task Menu Options

File Menu

New

Select this option to create a new Auto Task data file. All tasks currently running must be terminated before a new file can be created.

Open

Opens an existing Auto Task data file for processing. All tasks currently running must be terminated before a new file can be opened.

Close

Closes the current Auto Task data file. All tasks currently running must be terminated before the file can be closed.

View Task Log...

This option displays the contents of the task log file. When active, the task log provides detailed information as to the status of tasks which have been processed since the last time the file was viewed. The task log indicates the date/time a given task was executed. Any error which is encountered while executing a task is also logged. When you are finished viewing the task log file, you have the option of deleting it.

Preferences

The preferences dialog allows you to make some global decisions on Auto Task will operate. The following options are available.

Maximum Concurrent Tasks: Specifies the maximum number of tasks which will be executed at the same time. Up to 99 tasks can be executed at any single time.

Timer Interval (in seconds): Specifies the amount of time Auto Task waits before checking the current time against a tasks scheduled execution time. The default timer interval is 5 seconds. This can be adjusted from 1 to 99 seconds. In general, the faster the timer interval the more of a drain on system resources.

Enable Task Processing At Startup: Select this option to enable or disable task processing when Auto Task is initially loaded.

Minimize Window At Startup: Select this option to minimize the main window as Auto Task is initially loaded.

Enable Task Logging: Select this option to enable or disable task logging. If enabled, Auto Task will write status information to the log file specified as each task is executed.

Task Editor: Specifies the text editor/viewer used to display the task log when the View Task Log menu option is selected. This defaults to Windows Note Pad.

Log File Name: Specifies the name of the file used when task logging is activated. This defaults to AUTOTASK.LOG.

Exit

Exits Auto Task. Auto Task can not be exited until all currently running tasks have terminated.

Options Menu

Enable Task Processing

The Enable Task Processing menu item enables or disables task processing. When enabled, all tasks will be "rescheduled" based on the current date and time. When disabled, no tasks will be processed.

Enable Logging

The Enable Logging menu item enables or disables task logging. If enabled, Auto Task will write status information to the log file specified as each task is executed.

Sort Menu

By Description

Sorts the task manager by task description.

By Frequency

Sorts the task manager by schedule type.

By Status

Sorts the task manager by status.

By Time

Sorts the task manager by trigger time.

By Type

Sorts the task manager by type.

Tasks Menu

Add

Adds a new task to the current Auto Task data file.

Edit

Edits an existing task in the current Auto Task data file. Optionally, you can double-click on the item you wish to edit.

Delete

Removes an existing task from the current Auto Task data file.

Duplicate

Edits a copy of the currently selected task.

Reschedule

Reschedules the currently selected task.

Reschedule All

Reschedules all tasks contained within the current Auto Task data file.

Help Menu

Index

The help index provides detailed information regarding the usage of Auto Task.

Register Auto Task

Registers this version of Auto Task. Registering Auto Task removes the imposed 30 day restriction. See the Evaluation and Registration section for further details.

About Auto Task

Displays information regarding the version of Auto Task you are currently running.

Task Manager

The Task Manager is the main window of Auto Task. The Task Manager provides you with information regarding the current state of all the tasks which have been entered into Auto Task. Several options are available:

Enable:	Enables a previously disabled task.
Disable:	Disables (suspends) a task which is currently waiting to be processed.
Trigger:	Forces a task to execute. A task is triggered by changing it's "trigger time" to the current date/time.
Terminate:	Terminates a task which is currently running. *NOTE: MS-DOS applications cannot be terminated from this command.*

Scheduling Tasks

When adding or editing a task, the task editor is displayed. The following options are available:

Task Information

Type: Specifies the type of task. Three types of tasks are support: Execute, which runs the specified application; Terminate, which terminates the specified task; or Reminder which displays a reminder dialog at the specified time.

Task Description: Specifies the descriptive name of the task.

Based on the type of task selected, the following options will appear:

Execute Task

Window State: Specifies the initial state of the task application when executed. Tasks can initially be Minimized, Maximized, or Normal (default).

Command Line: Specifies the command line used to execute the task. By selecting the **File...** button next to this field, you can select the application to execute from a file selection dialog box.

Command Parms.: Specifies the command line parameters used when executing the task.

Startup Directory: Specifies the initial directory used when executing the task.

Terminate Task

A listbox of the all the tasks stored within the current data file will be displayed. Select the task to terminate. *NOTE: Only Execute type tasks can be automatically terminated.*

Reminder

Message: Specifies the reminder message which is displayed at the specified time.

Click the **Schedule...** button to assign a time to execute the current task. The following schedule types are available:

Schedule Types

Interval: An interval task can be scheduled to execute a user defined number of seconds (up to 60), minutes (up to 60), hours (up to 24), days (up to 31) or weeks (up to 52).

Daily/Weekly: Weekly tasks can be scheduled to execute on any combination of days of the week at the time specified by the user. A task is considered "daily" if all days of   the week are selected.

Monthly (By Weekday): Like Weekly tasks, Monthly tasks can be scheduled on any combination of days of the week. Select the week number and the time that the task should be executed on.

Monthly (By Day): Monthly tasks can be scheduled to execute on any combination of days of the month at the time specified by the user.

Specific Date: Tasks which are scheduled by date will run once at the date and time specified. Date tasks will never be rescheduled.

Messages

The following are some of the messages that you may encounter in the course of using Auto Task. A brief description of what might have caused the message to appear and the action that should be taken when you see this message on your screen is listed.

The evaluation period for this product has expired. If you find this product of use, please register it as outlined within the help file. Auto Task has been disabled.

> *You are currently running the **SHAREWARE** version of Auto Task past the 30 day evaluation period.   Register the product for a licensed version of the product if you find this product of use. Without of registered version of the product, Auto Task will leave itself in a "disabled" stated.*

The Description field must be filled for each task.

> *You attempted to save a task which does not have a description. Enter a description and attempt to save again.*

The Command Line field must be filled for each task.

> *You attempted to save a task which does not have a command line. Enter the command line and attempt to save again.*

Error opening log file.
Error writing to log file.

> *An error occurred while writing to the status log file specified. Ensure the Log File Name entered contains a valid path. Ensure the volume you are saving the log file to has*

enough free hard drive space.

Memory allocation error.
Memory allocation error building dialog.

> *A memory allocation occurred during task initialization. Close out any un-used applications. Reduce the number of concurrent tasks allowed. Reduce the total number of tasks.*

Event initialization failed.

> *Either the task database is corrupt or you are attempting to initialize multiple instances of the task database. Ensure you are running only on instance of Auto Task on a single machine. File a bug report.*

Unable to register notify callback.

> *Auto Task was unable to register the notify callback function. Selectively close out any un-used applications and try to run Auto Task again.*

Event execution failed.

> *Auto Task was unable to execute the current task. Ensure the command line parameters of the failed task are correct. Reduce the number of tasks which are allowed to execute concurrently.*

Error writing to event database.

> *Auto Task was unable to save the current task entry. Ensure you have enough free drive space to save the file.*

Error reading event record.
Bad event number.
Invalid event database file.
Database initialization has failed.
Error reading from event database.
An internal error has occurred! OP:xxxxxx

> *Internal error. File a bug report.*

You have entered an invalid serial number!

> *An invalid serial number was entered when registering Auto Task. Ensure you have entered the correct serial number and entered your name exactly as indicated on the registration form.*

Database version mismatch.

> *You have attempted to open an obsolete database file which is not compatible with the current version of Auto Task you are running.*

Attempt to terminate event failed.

> *Auto Task was unable to terminate the selected task. Auto Task is unable to terminate MS-DOS applications. If this is an MS-DOS application, switch to the task and terminate it manually. If this is not a MS-DOS application, verify that the task has not locked up.*

This application uses CTL3DV2.DLL which has not been correctly installed.

> *Auto Task uses the Microsoft 3-d Window Control DLL v2.05. Ensure that a version of CTL3DV2.DLL is located within your WINDOW/SYSTEM directory. This error could also be displayed if CTL3DV2.DLL is located in the same directory as the Auto Task*

executable.

Time values must be in HH:MM AM/PM format.

The schedule time entered is invalid. Enter the time in 12 hour format: HH:MM: AM/PM.

Error setting timer interval.

During initialization Auto Task was not able to set the internal timer needed to schedule tasks. As there are a limited number of system timers available at any given time, close out any clock type applications and try to run Auto Task again.

An editor/log file must be defined in Preferences.

Before the Auto Task log file can be viewed, an editor must be specified in the Preferences dialog.

Error executing log file editor.

The file editor specified within the Auto Task preferences could not be found. Verify that the path to the file is correct and try again.

Error viewing help file.

Auto Task was unable to display the help file. Verify that AUTOTASK.HLP is located in the Auto Task installation directory. Reinstall Auto Task.

Tasks which are currently running cannot be modified.
Tasks which are currently running cannot be deleted.

Any task which is currently running cannot be modified or deleted. Terminate the task and try again.

File xxxxxxxx.xxx was created using an older version of Auto Task. Convert it?

Auto Task has detected an obsolete data file. If possible, Auto Task will attempt to convert it to the new file format. The old data file will be renamed with a .OLD file extension.

Error converting file: xxxxxxxx.xxx!

Auto Task was unable to convert an obsolete data file. Verify that there is adequate hard drive space. Verify that you have the proper access rights. If you are still unable to convert the file, file a bug report.

Event to terminate is not currently running.

A terminate event was unable to execute because the target event is not currently running.

The task to be terminated has been removed from the database.

A terminate event was unable to execute because the target event is no longer located in the database.

Common Questions

I am trying to run a MS-DOS application minimized, but Auto Task won't minimize it. What's wrong?

Auto Task cannot minimize MS-DOS applications directly. In order to run an MS-DOS application minimized, create a Windows PIF file for the application, which can be configured to run minimized. Launch the .PIF file instead of the MS-DOS application

directly.

I find that tasks which should have executed have not. If I look at their status in the Task Manager, they are disabled. What's wrong?

> *If you don't have task logging enabled, enable it to see if there is an execution error which may be logged. If a task execution fails, Auto Task will automatically disable the task to prevent it from repeatedly attempting to re-run it. Ensure the command line parameters for the task are correct.*

I am unable to terminate an MS-DOS application. What's wrong?

> *MS-DOS applications can not be terminated from within Auto Task. Switch to the MS-DOS task you wish to terminate, and manually exit.*

How To Get Help

If you have any problems which can not be resolved by reading the user documentation, help is available from the following sources:

Write to me at the following address:

Brian K. Freese
860 Lakeside Drive, #1A
Vernon Hills, Il 60061

If you have access to the internet, or other electronic service, you can E-MAIL me at:

America On-Line (preferred): BFREESE1
Compuserve: 102377,422
Internet Address: BFREESE1@AOL.COM

If a you do find a bug, or have a technical question, please provide detailed information regarding your system configuration, including: the hardware you are using, operating system, the version of Auto Task you are using, and the exact steps required to duplicate the problem.

Version History

Auto Task Version 1.3c

- > 	Fixed Win16/Win32 structure differences.
- > 	Fixed video problem using high resolution drivers.
- > 	Fixed a problem in CPROFILE with bool8 flags which errored when converting to new
	SPECTYPES.
- > 	Fixed problem with Windows 3.x timing: Tasks which termiate immediately after execution would
	fool Auto Task into thinking they were still running.
-> 	Fixed scheduler problem. "Weeks" selection was missing within the scheduler dialog. This
	caused max. range values to be off by one.
- > 	Added control bar at the top of screen. Can select: New, Open, Close, Enable/Disable, Trigger,
	Terminate from control bar.
- > 	Added Enable, Disable, Trigger, Terminate tasks options on the main menu.
- > 	Added the ability to resize the task manager window.
- > 	Fixed validation of the interval values within the task scheduler. Weekly intervals were not
properly 	verified.
- > 	Added missing scroll bar for interval type selections within the scheduler.
- > 	Fixed task sorting. The task manager was not sorting after changing the status of tasks reliably.
- > 	Added logic to allow exit of Auto Task while tasks are currently running: You can now exit and
	leave all running tasks active, or exit and terminate all running tasks.

Auto Task Version 1.3b

- >   Initial release for Windows NT version.
- >   Added new preferences option "Timer Interval (in seconds) for more precise task execution.
- >   Added new Scheduler interval type in seconds.
- >   Modified registration routines. Auto Task now enters "registered mode once a valid registration code is entered.
- >   Renamed 16bit version of Auto Task to "Auto Task for Windows".

Auto Task Version 1.3a

- >   Fixed a problem which caused task processing not to be enabled at startup.

Auto Task Version 1.3

- >   Added exception handling for all allocations.
- >   Modified task manager window; the scroll bar was cutting off a portion of the screen when active.
- >   Modified structure of event database.
- >   Added the ability to modify task list without disabling task processing.
- >   Fixed bug in which non-execute tasks were eating up instance storage space causing tasks to pause until reminder was terminated.
- >   Added the ability to schedule task termination events.
- >   INI file is now stored in the users WINDOWS directory rather than the application path location for network installations.
- >   Task editor now dynamically creates controls based on the type of task to be edited.
- >   Added a file selection button to select a file when scheduling and 'execute' type task.
- >   Added "Reschedule", "Reschedule All", and "Duplicate" menu items.
- >   Added the ability to pass the .ATF file to open from the command-line.
- >   Fixed incorrect display of error message with database version mismatch error is encountered.
- >   Added new Interval task options. You can now schedule an interval of Minutes, Hours, Days or Weeks.
- >   Added new Specific Date schedule option.
- >   Added new Daily\Weekly schedule. You can now select multiple days for task   execution (i.e. Monday-Wednesday-Friday).
- >   Added new Monthly schedule. Multiple weekdays OR multiple month days.
- >   Added the ability to sort task manager entries.

Auto Task Version 1.2

- >   Fixed a problem with v1.1 which caused PM times to revert back to AM times.
- >   Added the ability to edit times directly without the use of scroll bars.

Auto Task Version 1.1

- >   Added the ability to terminate tasks from within Auto Task.
- >   Added 3-D controls (CTL3DV2)
- >   Added status bar (with date/time) and menu tracking
- >   Added "auto" registration for future updates.
- >   Added "Enable Logging" menu option.
- >   Added ability to maintain multiple task files.
- >   Fixed disable of Task Logging options when "Enable Task Logging" is disabled.
- >   Added Reminder tasks.
- >   Changed event times from 24 hour to 12 hour format.
- >   Fixed some sillyness with event processing.

Auto Task Version 1.0

- >   Initial release

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- The statement of SHAREWARE registration requirements MUST be printed on a label, or other form, that is directly attached to the distribution media.

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Payments should be sent to:
      Brian K. Freese
      860 Lakeside Drive, #1A
      Vernon Hills, Il. 60061
      USA

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