METER enu   Fig.1

Get acquainted with the METER menu, which should appear just left of Balloon Help (Apple Guide) in the system menubar. This menu contains all your main work-tracking functions in one convenient location.

 • Read "About METER..." to find out how to register your new software.
 • Select 'Open METER' to launch the METER control panel and view your records.
 • Select 'METER on' to suspend or resume METER's monitoring functions. (METER always switches back on when you restart your system.)

 • Select from the Project menu to switch projects, or to adjust project privileges. A password is required for projects listed with an ellipses (...). Select "Other..." to create a new one. Projects are listed in order of recent activity. See Projects.

 • Select "Applications..." to link application usage to specific projects. See Applications.
 • Select "Documents..." to set up what kinds of documents to record. See Documents.
 • Select from "Tasks" to switch to a different task, or to declare a new one. See Task.
 • Select "Earn..." to set up time-billing for specific projects. See Earn.
 • Select "Share..." to set up software cost-sharing. See Share.

Shortcut keys to summon the various dialogs can be assigned in Mac etup.

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Projects   Fig.1

Define a separate Project for any client, customer, assignment, goal, product, etc., for which you want to keep separate worktime records.

To Create a project or to Switch to a project:
   1. Choose "Other..." from the Project sub-menu.
   2. Enter a name and password.
   3. If the information matches an existing project, the 'OK' button is enabled.
   4. If no Project exists by that name, you may click instead on 'Create'.

   • You can still use the METER enu even when the dialog is open to bring up a project name.

   • If your currently active project is not authorised to create new projects, The 'Create' button remains disabled. Switch first to a project with Admin or Owner privileges, then try again.

   • To edit or delete existing projects, use the Project etup screen.

   • All projects fit within a simple 'privileges' hierarchy. A project with 'Owner' privileges can see and alter any data; 'Admin' projects can access all but certain 'Prefs' screens in the control panel; 'Normal' projects may be restricted from creating new projects or viewing others' data; 'Basic' privileges cannot view or change anything. No project can create a new project with higher privileges.

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Applications   Fig.3

METER automatically records all applications running on your Mac, even invisible or unused ones.

To Link an application to a specific project:

1. Select "Applications..." from the METER enu.
2. Select the application from the popup menu.
3. Click on "Belongs to project"
4. Select a Project to which the application will bind.

• From now on, this application will always be recorded as having been "used" by the project you chose, regardless of which project was currently active.

• Click "Same for documents" if you want all documents created by this application to be assigned automatically to the same project.

• Click "Switch project when frontmost app" if you want METER to switch the current active project whenever you open this application. The METER menu flashes to indicate when it auto-switches to a new project.

• Click "Charges" to edit the application's shared costs. (See Share.)

• Click on the Lock button to prevent accidental changes to your settings. The settings can be unlocked only when a project of equal or higher privileges is active.

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Documents   Fig.3

Recording documents provides detailed information about exactly what work you have done in a given application. Be careful that using this feature does not bloat your datafile excessively; some applications, such as email or Internet browsers, will generate very many document names.

To Record an application's documents:
1. Open the document to record and select "Documents..." from the METER enu.

2. Select the current application software from the top popup menu.
3. Select the document from the '<list current windows>' popup menu.
4. Select a recording method (for most apps use 'frontmost'):
   frontmost — usually the current active window, excluding palettes etc.
   most recent — keep logging time to a window record, even after it closes, until a new window of the same type opens or the application quits; you might use this, for example, with modem software that displays a connection window only at the start of a session
   largest — some apps use a single window ID for document, palette, or other windows; this ambiguity may be settled by selecting the biggest window (likely the document)
   best guess — let METER decide which window should be recorded (warning: sometimes METER is a lousy guesser)

   • Turn on 'follow name changes' to keep a document's data collected under its single, most recent name. This will record fewer 'Untitled' work windows. However, some apps use the same window for different documents, which METER would then lump together (not what you want).

To Record specific documents:
   1. Follow steps 1-3 above.
   2. Click "Record if title contains".

   • Use a shortened window title if you want to record a group of related files (or window titles) as a single document, for example "Floorplan: Layer 1" and "Floorplan: Layer 2" can be recorded as simply "Floorplan." Click "Record full name" if you want to keep their records separate.

To Link specific documents to one project:
   1. Follow steps 1-3 above.
   2. Click "Switch to project".
   3. Select a project from the popup menu.

   • Use the "record-by-title" feature sparingly; too many individual document names will eventually slow METER's monitoring somewhat. Use "record-by-type" whenever possible.

   • Click on the Lock button to prevent accidental changes to your settings. The settings can be unlocked only when a project of equal or higher privileges is active.

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Tasks   Fig.2

Define a Task for any function or task that you may perform in more than one project. Whenever you switch to a new project, METER automatically assumes you are resuming the same Task last performed for that project. If you define no Tasks, your work is recorded by default as "General use."

To Create a task or to Switch to a task:
   1. Choose "Other..." from the Task sub-menu.
   2. Enter a new Task name and rate.
   3. If the information matches an existing Task, the 'OK' button is enabled.
   4. If no Task exists by that name, you may click instead on 'Create'.

   • If the current project is not authorised to create tasks, The 'Create' button remains disabled. Switch to a project with Admin or Owner privileges, then try again.

   • If you set a Task's billing rate, it ONLY applies to Projects that are set to bill for "Hours ... in tasks". In that case, the Task rate overrides the Project's default rate. See Charges.

   • You can still use the METER enu to bring up a task name, even when the dialog is open.

   • You can create, edit, or delete any number of tasks without actually switching your current active task. Just exit the dialog when finished by clicking 'Cancel' instead of 'OK'.

   • To edit an existing task name or rate, click on 'Edit', make your changes, then click 'Set'.

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Charges   Fig.4

Use the Charges dialog to set up time-billing for your projects, or cost-sharing for software. You can define hourly rates, periodic (subscription) fees, flat prices, or itemised charges.

To Set a Project's billing rate:
   1. Select 'Earn' from the METER menu.
   2. Click the 'Base' button, and enter a dollar figure.
   3. Select a billing schedule from the popup menu:
     Hours — METER simply counts the hours (active or frontmost) spent in apps, docs, or

tasks, and multiplies by the billing rate. (If you select "Hours … in tasks", rates defined within each Task may override the Project's default rate.)

    Fees — a fixed fee is charged if the Project becomes active at any time within the specified time period, i.e. even five minutes of activity in a given day will register a daily fee.

    Fixed — the base rate is charged once only.

To Bill an item to a Project:
   1. Click the 'Item' button.
   2. Enter an item name, quantity, and cost. Each field must be completed.
   3. Click OK or No to accept or reject each completed item.

   • Click on the 'Info' button to edit a mailing address or other information for the displayed project or software. This address or info can later be included in invoice-style output.   • Click on the Lock button to prevent changes to your settings. (If the 'Items:' box is checked, item charges can still be entered freely.) Settings can be unlocked only by a project of equal or higher privileges.

To Set a Software billing rate or to Bill an item to Shared Software:
   1. Select 'Share' from the METER menu, then follow the instructions above.

   • Software metering is useful for distributing the costs of a new program among the people or departments who use it most, or to bill users of certain software on your system. Please note that some commercial software licenses forbid rental use.