

# AlwaysONline 1.7b

©1997-98 By Alex Rampell

## What It Is

AlwaysONline is an indispensable tool for everybody who uses America Online(R). As many of us America Online users know, every 46 minutes we are confronted with a dialog asking us if we would like to stay online. Even the slightest bathroom break can be an excuse to be "logged off due to inactivity." And large downloads from the Internet (or World Wide Web) must be "babysat" so that they will not be stopped when America Online's "Would you like to stay online?" message goes unanswered. To make matters even worse, the current dialing limit of 5 times per number, 10 times total, is often too small to even connect to America Online in the first place.

AlwaysONline is the solution. In addition to answering all dialogs asking if you would like to remain online, it allows you to control exactly how many times America Online should dial each access numbers---in a row. AlwaysONline can have America Online dial each number up to 999 times---for a total of 1998 times. This way, you enter your password once, and don't have to do anything until America Online connects.

The way AlwaysONline works is quite simple and efficient. When America Online detects inactivity, it will present a dialog to you, asking: "You have been idle for a while. Would you like to remain online?" AlwaysONline automatically hits "OK" to all these dialogs. No more getting disconnected when you're browsing the web, yet fail to see the infamous dialog.

AlwaysONline requires America Online 2.7, 3.0x, or 4.0 (although the redialing feature only works with versions 3.0x). You can easily, and without cost, acquire America Online 3.01 by going to KEYWORD: UPGRADE while on America Online.

This version (1.7) was re-written to allow dialogs to be answered when AOL is in the background without switching AOL to the foreground. It also implements compatibility with new releases of AOL 4.0 beta. Like version 1.6, it adds tested America Online 2.7 compatibility, and support for screensavers. It also has several speed improvements, and adds the ability to "learn."

Use of this software is governed by the clauses of the LICENSE AGREEMENT.

## Setup

Setting up AlwaysONline is quite easy. You first need to drag the AlwaysONline 1.7 control panel (not the entire AlwaysONline Folder) into the Control Panels folder of the System Folder. Then, double click AlwaysONline in order to open it up.

In order to start using AlwaysONline for redialing purposes (if you just want to use AlwaysONline to automatically dismiss the "Would you like to stay online" dialogs, you can forget this step), you need to pick your current America Online Locality file. This is where the phone numbers, modem type, etc. are stored. All Locality files appear within the Online Files folder, within the America Online folder. In most cases, your Locality File will simply be called Home, although it can depend. To select the Locality File that you wish to use, click on the "Select Locality..." button located in the control panel, and navigate to the America Online folder, followed by the Online Files folder. Be sure to select the Locality that appears in your America Online locations menu (shown below). The only files that you can choose are locality files, so you'll probably choose the correct one.

nce you have correctly selected your locality file, you'll receive notification of your choice, and then the AlwaysONline main screen will return. Now, you need to type in the amount of times you want to have America Online dial each number. The default setting is 99, for a total of 198 tries (for both numbers), but you can go all the way up to 999 per number.

Also, if you would like to use the "Automatically hit OK to all dialogs asking whether to stay online" function, then click on that checkbox. The default setting is to have this function turned on. Every time that an America Online timer dialog pops up, AlwaysONline will now automatically dismiss it.

As soon as you've selected your settings (providing that this is the first time you've used AlwaysONline), restart your computer. If you chose to see the AlwaysONline icon, then it should appear on startup.

You only need to restart the \*first\* time you use AlwaysONline. After that, all changes are saved when you close the control panel (provided that AlwaysONline was loaded at startup).

Notes (IMPORTANT)

- Even though AlwaysONline will cause America Online to dial up to 999 times per number, the AOL settings will still show a maximum of 5 tries. The number of times that AOL will dial each number is the exact number that you enter in the AlwaysONline control panel.
- To cancel loading of just AlwaysONline on startup, hold down the Control key.

## Advanced Settings

Advanced Settings for AlwaysONline are offered for those who wish to refine or modify the settings for AlwaysONline's Automatic Dialog Dismissal (ADD) feature. Here are the different options:

- 1) Auto dismiss all dialogs when AOL is the current application - This feature is part of the default functionality of AlwaysONline. When checked, AlwaysONline will dismiss all inactivity dialogs that pop up when America Online is the very frontmost application.
- 2) Auto dismiss all dialogs when AOL is NOT the current application - This feature is also part of the default functionality of AlwaysONline. When this is checked, AlwaysONline will dismiss all inactivity dialogs that come up when AOL is running in the background (i.e., you're using another application while AOL is open).

These two functions—taken together—are AlwaysONline's default functionality.

The next three functions refer to actions taken (or not taken) when an AOL inactivity dialog is detected.

- 3) Flash the menubar X times - As the name implies, when an AOL inactivity

dialog is detected, AlwaysOnline will flash the menubar a certain number of times (1-9 times).

4) Beep X times - When an AOL inactivity dialog is detected, AlwaysOnline will cause the computer to beep a certain number of times (1-9 times).

The number of times that either one of these actions will repeat is set in a text field called "X="

Note: In most cases these options will only be enabled when Option #2 is turned off. Also, on some machines, when Option #3 is enabled (Flash menubar), the menubar will flash rather quickly---so it's hard to actually see it flashing. You might want to either increase the number of times it flashes to 9 times, or simply add in Option #4 (Beep X Times).

5) Don't Switch AOL to the Front if a Certain App is in the Front... - This one is a little more complicated, and with version 1.7 of AlwaysOnline, is practically rendered useless. Basically, in previous versions of AlwaysOnline, if an AOL inactivity dialog is detected, generally (if option number two is selected), AlwaysOnline will switch AOL to the front, dismiss the dialog, and return to the original application. However, if you would like option two enabled in all but one circumstance (for all applications except one), you would select this option. When you select this option, you will be presented with a dialog box; locate the application that you don't want AlwaysOnline to "disturb," and hit OK.

Possible (previous) uses for Option #5:

You're playing a game over the Internet, but you don't want the game to be interrupted when the AOL inactivity dialog pops up. Instead, you can have AlwaysOnline give you notification (with options 3 and/or 4), and then, at your earliest convenience, you can switch to AOL, where the dialog will be automatically dismissed by AlwaysOnline. Certain dialogs (which AlwaysOnline also tackles) come up every 47 minutes or so, regardless of the level of activity; ten minutes is given to respond to these messages, so you probably should have enough time to pause the game sometime between then... Option #5 doesn't really have too much of a use anymore...but it's there anyway.

6) Recognize Screensavers - If you have a screensaver installed, then AlwaysOnline---by default---will not work correctly. So if you are using a screensaver such as AfterDark, PointCast, etc., then you need to set this option to true.

7) Dismiss "learned" dialog - This is one of the neatest features added in

AlwaysONline version 1.6. AlwaysONline now has the ability to "learn" to dismiss any one additional America Online dialog...

Once you have selected the dialog to be learned, and AlwaysONline has learned it, you can toggle whether or not you want AlwaysONline to continue dismissing it, by changing this option.

-Learning:

Version 1.6 of AlwaysONline added support for an additional feature-learning. Now, AlwaysONline can be set to automatically dismiss any one additional dialog---or at least mimic hitting the return key whenever a certain dialog/window pops up.

How to have AlwaysONline learn:

While running America Online, and the dialog which you want AlwaysONline to dismiss comes up, do the following:

Hold down the Apple, Option, and Control keys on your keyboard...and then click somewhere in the window. It is important that you are holding down the keys while you click.

Also, make sure that you don't click in one of the buttons on the dialog.

If AlwaysONline has learned properly, then you will hear one beep after clicking. The next time that this dialog pops up, it will automatically be dismissed.

## Shareware & Reminders

Please do remember (there is a message that reminds you when you start up your computer...) that **this program is NOT free, and costs \$12**. When you register, you will receive a unique code that disables that reminder. You have 15 days to evaluate this software, and if you decide to keep using it past that point, then you are REQUIRED to register. AlwaysONline will continue to work for a few additional days past the trial period, but if you haven't registered, then AlwaysONline will disable itself.

-**NEW**-Now you can register AlwaysONline, or any of my other products, over the Internet. The web address is <http://order.kagi.com/?6G&S>  
Secure ordering is supported, so your credit card information will remain safe. This is the easiest and fastest way to register and eliminate the annoying shareware reminder.

If your browser does not support secure ordering, you can order from:

<http://order.kagi.com/?6G>

If you use AlwaysONline and like it, which I'm sure you will, I ask a small registration fee in return. Please be honest---it's the only way that you will continue seeing good shareware products and new versions of AlwaysONline.

Please use the included "Register AlwaysONline" program to register, unless you register over the Internet. Kagi Shareware handles all registrations for me, so please send all information to them, (and all methods of payment made out to them, not me) using the Register AlwaysONline program.

Also, when register AlwaysONline, you can register any of my other popular products, including FunKeys, Instant Answer, and StopWaiting® for AOL.

The price of AlwaysONline goes by the following system:

1- 11 single user licenses, \$12 per user

12+ single user licenses, \$10 per user

A Site License costs \$500 (roughly equal to 50 users) and covers all locations for your organization within a 160 kilometer radius of your site (100 miles). An unlimited number of people and machines may use a site license, within the specified site.

A World-Wide License costs \$1200 and it covers all locations for your organization everywhere.

Paying for AlwaysONline is fairly simple. Open the Register AlwaysONline program that accompanies AlwaysONline. Enter your name, your email address, and the number of single user licenses you desire for each program you wish to purchase (or Site or World-Wide licenses). Save or Copy or Print the data from the Register program and send the data and payment to Kagi.

If paying with Credit Card or First Virtual, you can email or fax the data to Kagi. Their email address is sales@kagi.com and their fax number is +1 510 652-6589. You can either Copy the data from Register and paste into the body of an email message or you can Save the data to a file and you can attach that file to an email message. There is no need to compress the data file, it's already pretty small. If you have a fax modem, just Print the data to the Kagi fax number.

Payments sent via email are processed within 3 to 4 days. You will receive an email acknowledgment when it is processed. Payments sent via fax take up to 10 days and if you provide a correct internet email address you will receive an email acknowledgment.

If you are paying with Cash or USD Check you should print the data using the Register AlwaysONline application and send it to the address shown on the form, which is:

**Kagi**  
1442-A Walnut Street #392-6G  
Berkeley, California 94709-1405  
USA

You can pay with a wide variety of cash from different countries, but at present if you pay via check, it must be a check drawn in US Dollars, on a US bank (or somewhere noted, to be payable by a US bank). Kagi cannot accept checks in other currencies, the conversion rate for non-USD checks is around USD \$15 per check and that is just not practical, given the small price of AlwaysONline.

If you have a purchasing department, you can enter all the data into the Register program and then select Invoice as your payment method. Print three copies of the form and send it to your accounts payable people. You might want to highlight the line that mentions that they must include a copy of the form with their payment. Kagi can not invoice your company, so you need to act on my behalf and generate the invoice and handle all the paperwork on your end.

Please do not fax or email payment forms that indicate Cash, Check or Invoice as the payment method. As far as we know, there is still no technology to transfer physical objects via fax or email and without the payment, the form cannot be processed.

Payments sent via postal mail take time to reach Kagi and then up to 10 days for processing. Again, if you include a correct email address, you will hear from Kagi when the form is processed.

AlwaysONline has a protection/registration system, and when you pay, you will receive a registration code from Kagi that will disable all reminder messages. If you do not have an email address, please enter your complete postal address and please remember, I do not know what country you live in, so please enter that (your country) into the postal address also. However, since AlwaysONline is for (and only for) America Online, it is only logical to assume that you will have an e-mail address.

## Troubleshooting...

If AlwaysONline isn't working, then chances are that it hasn't (a) been installed correctly, (b) been configured correctly, or (c) all of the above. If AlwaysONline is properly installed, then you should see (unless you chose otherwise...) the AlwaysONline icon show up when your computer boots up. The AlwaysONline icon should appear with all those other icons that show up on the bottom of the screen. Also, if AlwaysONline is properly installed, then you should see the AlwaysONline "reminder" message shortly after startup. This message comes in the form of a dialog box reminding you that you are using an unregistered version of AlwaysONline.

If you see these things, then AlwaysONline is installed correctly. If you don't see these things, then see the file called "Problems with Installation?" included in the AlwaysONline folder.

If you see these things, yet AlwaysONline doesn't seem to be working, check for the following:

- You've selected a locality file. See the "Setup" section for more info here.
- The "Automatically hit OK to all dialogs asking whether to stay online" checkbox is on.
- Options 1 and 2 of the Advanced Options are both turned on---see the Advanced Options section for more info.
- You are using America Online version 2.7, 3.0, 3.01, or 4.0 (or something in between)

If all of these things are true, then something strange is indeed happening. Here's what you should do:

- Open up the AlwaysONline control panel.
- Click the button named Advanced Options...
- Turn on the checkbox called "Beep X Times."
- Set the field "X=" to 4.

Now, when AlwaysONline detects a "Stay online?" dialog, you should hear at least four beeps.

If AlwaysONline does not work, and you are certain it is installed properly, do the following:

- 1) Sign on to AOL.
- 2) Do nothing for ten minutes, until a "Do you wish to stay online?" dialog appears.
- 3) Hold down the Apple, Option, and Control Keys, and click the mouse



somewhere within that dialog. Just don't click on the button...click somewhere in that dialog where there are not any buttons. You should hear a beep to confirm that AlwaysONline has "learned" to dismiss this dialog.

4) Wait another 10 minutes until you see the same "Do you wish to stay online?" dialog box. AlwaysONline, having "learned" this dialog box, should now dismiss it.

Or, repeat this step, only for the "Would you like to stay online?" dialog which comes up about every 46 minutes.

If AlwaysONline has caused your computer to crash (this happens very, very rarely, to the best of my knowledge), then try renaming "AlwaysONline 1.7" (the file in your Control Panels folder) as "~AlwaysONline 1.7" Then restart your computer...

If that doesn't work, try renaming it as " AlwaysONline 1.7" (the space in front of the name causes it to load at the beginning of the extensions/Control Panels)

If you've tried everything here, and nothing seems to work nor help you, then I'd recommend contacting me directly at [arampell@kagi.com](mailto:arampell@kagi.com)

I'll be more than happy to help you out.

## Important Information!

If you find any of this confusing, or if you have any questions, please contact me (Alex Rampell) at my e-mail address, [arampell@kagi.com](mailto:arampell@kagi.com)

My newest utility for America Online is called Instant Answer, and is the perfect complement for AlwaysONline. It acts as an answering machine for Instant Messages when you are away from your computer. Once activated, it will automatically respond (with a preset message) to all Instant Messages you receive.

My other best-selling program is called **FunKeys**, currently in version 1.5. It allows you to set the Function Keys on the top of your keyboard (F1-F15) to do many different tasks, including opening applications, files, and control panels—even "typing" repetitive data such as your ending part of a letter ("Sincerely yours,...")

Also, you might want to check out my other utility for America Online:

StopWaiting® for AOL. Occasionally, AOL will stall, not allowing you to do anything---including sign off. All you can do is sit, staring into your computer screen, watching your cursor-turned-spinning beachball spin around in circles. If you try to click, type, etc., you will simply hear your computer beep (or quack, Eeep!, etc.) at you. With StopWaiting installed, you just hit three keys, and AOL stops waiting instantly. This program manages to save me about an hour a week

in online time.

All updates to AlwaysONline will be free. Check my web page periodically for information:

<http://www.rampell.com/software>

America Online 4.0, as of February 8, 1998, is still in the beta stage, but AlwaysONline should already work with it.

The redial function of AlwaysONline will ONLY work with AOL 3.0.

## Credits

This help system uses John W. Walker's excellent show\_Help system.

Thanks to those who beta-tested this program, as well.

Thanks to David N. Donadio for help with the art, and also Eli Kagan for a few ideas.