

ComTimer 1.12a

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What is ComTimer ?

ComTimer is a simple utility intended to aid you in keeping track of the cost of your use of Internet.

If you are updating from a previous version to v 1.12 read section later in this document !

How to use ComTimer ?

The first time you're going to run ComTimer, you have to start ComTimer before your dialer, so that ComTimer can be able to determine the configuration of your system correctly without any interference from the dialer. It's also recommended that you read the contents of the helpfile UKComTimer.Hlp, prior to setting up ComTimer.

If you use a winsock utility like the one included in Windows 95, then you either start ComTimer before the dialing or after it. If you use an utility which uses scripts, like Trumpet Winsock x.x, then place ComTimer as one row in the script, so that it's loaded **after** the connection has been opened.

You can define the cost per minute and eventual monthly minimum cost. (Some netoperators charge a monthly minimum fee which includes a certain time of use. ComTimer takes this in account when it keeps track of your net-usage.) ComTimer logs the total cost and time spent surfing.

If you use for example Win95's original Dial-up Networking and start ComTimer before dialing, then you'll have to define an average time before connecting to your server. About 30 seconds is usually enough for this. ComTimer will wait for this amount of time before it starts counting. If you start ComTimer after the net session has begun, then you define this average time as 0.

ComTimer has been heavily improved. This version is able to handle quite sophisticated monitoring of costs. Look at the 'history' section of this document to see what v1.12 is able to do and for information on how to use all goodies, read the helpfile UKComTimer.Hlp, for English, SComTimer.Hlp for Swedish and SFCComTimer.Hlp for Finnish. As there seem to be as many different policies for charging as there're ISPs, I can't cover everything in ComTimer. With the possibilities offered by ComTimer most people will be able to create a combination suited for their needs.

ComTimer logs the usage with date and total time in a file named COMTIMER.LOG. This is found at Your_Windows_directory. You can watch and edit this file with the separate utility COMLOG.EXE. ComTimer takes into account and logs sessions lasting 1 minute or longer by default You can disconnect this feature if you want, so that ComTimer will log all sessions regardless of length. ComTimer rounds by default all seconds to 0 at shutdown, but this feature can be disabled too. If you enable the logging of sessions shorter than 1 minute, then the rounding will be automatically disabled. ComLog allows you to watch the logfile if ComTimer is running, but won't allow you to edit it. Read the helpfile's contents for more information on how to tune ComTimer to suit just your particular needs.

If you right-click on ComLog's main window, you'll be able to copy all or selected entries from the log to the clipboard. All changes of settings done under ComLog will not be effective in ComTimer at once, instead ComTimer must be restarted after the changes've been made. If you make changes in ComTimer, they'll be effective at once.

ComTimer is designed to be run minimized on the taskbar, therefore might someone find the window with the digital counter to be somewhat big. This window is intended to be seen only when you want it to be seen. The window itself isn't displayed until the modem is activated. Until this happens, you can't open this, as ComTimer is looking for the modem and nothing else. As soon as ComTimer detects any kind of activity over the modem, it opens the main window, which you can minimize if you wish to.

If you rightclick with the mouse upon this window, you'll get a popup menu where you can enter the settings for your netconnection, ie cost per minute, minimum fee and eventual average time of connecting to the net. (Look into the

helpfile for more information about all options that ComTimer offers you to monitor costs.) Here you see where the modem is found, too. If you look at the statistics and ComTimer is showing 2 values of which one is in brackets, the later means that's the real amount you've used. The first value in this case is your monthly minimum fee.

ComTimer saves the last position of it's main window upon exit and will use this the next time it's activated.

How to setup ComTimer ?

ComTimer can be run from any directory, therefore isn't any setup-program included with the package. I've in this way kept down the size of the zip-file, as larger files need more time to be downloaded.

ComTimer does automatically detect your modem. ComTimer looks into the Registry and checks out the location of your modem. It works well as long as everything has gone well when you did setup Win95 on your system. Otherwise you might be asked to manually configure ComTimer. See more about this in ComTimer's helpfile and later in this document (see NOTE).

IF YOUR DIALER COMPLAINS ABOUT ANOTHER APPLICATION USING THE MODEM:

Use either ComTimer or ComLog to open the 'Settings' dialog. Click upon the dialog's icon. Choose 'ComTimer refresh' from the system menu. This will allow you to change the interval in milliseconds used when the program checks for the modem. Enlarge the value shown here. The smaller the value is that you use, the more likely is it that a conflict between the checking routine and your dialer is born. If you used ComLog to change this value, then you'll have to restart ComTimer for the change to be effective. ComTimer will wait the specified amount of time before it tries to check if the modem is in use, giving the dialer ample opportunity to establish contact, before ComTimer pokes around.

IMPORTANT:

Never run ComTimer together with another application of this type, as this might cause an conflict between these 2 applications that might screw up your system.

NOTE:

If you've installed more than one modem in your PC, and ComTimer chooses the one you don't want to use, you can correct this by adding the following to ComTimer.ini:

```
[modem]  
port=COMx
```

x is the number of the com-port used by the modem.

This forces ComTimer to use a specified modem, and is useful in case if ComTimer chooses faulty modemsettings, too.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR USERS OF EARLIER VERSIONS :

Logfiles written by an earlier version will appear when viewed with a '>' in the begining of each row, to notify the user that the marked rows doesn't contain all data needed by the new ComLog to work properly.

You are able to update your logfile by running the included tool **TuneComTimer**, which is intended to be run only once.

This tool will analyze your logfile, and add the missing data to all entries.

System requirements:

Any PC equipped with a modem and running Windows 95.

Multilingual support:

ComTimer supports Finnish, Swedish and English. Choose language by pressing upon the appropriate flag.

History:

1.0 version	The first
1.0a used as default instead of Swedish icon added on the taskbar window to be non-sizeable	English is Animated Altered the
1.1 possibility to close down ComTimer before the dial-up procedure has taken place. possibility to change the interval between checkouts of the modem, in case of conflict with dialer. the way calculated cost of usage is shown at the mainwindow and the Statistics- statistics shown to reality, not anylonger frozen as before. some of the code, resulting in smaller size and less usage of resources. ComTimer to wait for the specified average time before starting to count time. bug that kept ComTimer from finding the modem, if ComTimer was run after was started.	Added the Added a possible Changed dialog. Linked the Rewrote Made Corrected a the dialer
1.11 possibility to disable dialog showing total cost at end of session. bug in ComLog, that didn't zero the total time used when you removed all the user to enter cost/min with 3 decimals instead of 2. This change was made for UK and other countries with "strong" currencies. copy all or selected entries from ComLog to the clipboard.	Added Corrected a entries. Allowed users in the Possible to
1.12 disconnect default rounding downwards of seconds when session is terminated. enable logging of sessions shorter than 1 minute. disable the monitoring of costs and instead use ComTimer as a simple timer. log connections < 1 min as failed tries, costing you the charge for 1 min of usage. (Some ISPs are greedy indeed). the shortcut Ctrl + Insert to copy items to the clipboard. price of each session to appear together with each row copied to the clipboard. into the data copied to the clipboard, to make the data better suited for spreadsheets. adjust how often ComTimer updates the value for charge per minute if you use the options for monitoring of costs.	Possible to Possible to Possible to Possible to (Some Activated Added the Added tabs Possible to advanced

Changed

the order of buttons in confirmation-dialog for 'delete' in ComLog.

Included

tool TuneComTimer intended to update old logfile for use with v 1.12.

Advanced

handling of different rates:

1. Define x

hours of use for totally \$ y, thereafter \$ z per hour.

2. Define \$

x for the first minute, thereafter \$ y per minute.

3. Allows 4

different rates to be defined for periods down to 15 min.

4. If

needed, define each day differently from the rest of week.

5.

Graphical interface for definition of rates.

6. Possible

to force ComTimer to use Sunday rates on weekdays.

7. If

wanted, an indicator on the tray showing if you're paying economy, medium or expensive rate at the moment.

1.12a

Corrected a

bug in the part handling initial rates.

Registered

users will receive an additional DLL for ComTimer.

Known quirks:

If you use a faxmodem and have the fax always activated waiting for faxes, then ComTimer will identify the modem to still be active, though you've closed down your internet connection. An activated faxfunction might interfere with ComTimer in other ways, too.

When you copy data to a spreadsheet, you might have to format the column with dates, depending on your settings, it might read dd.mm.yyyy 00.00 or something like this, as the spreadsheet's automatic formatting is playing its tricks.

Users, who have used earlier versions ought to read the note "IMPORTANT NOTE FOR USERS OF EARLIER VERSIONS"

Please report any anomalies to the author, so that I can investigate them. The programmer who claims that his/hers code is entirely bug-free is <censored>. A program is never completely bug-free, it only seems to be working quite well.

Other products:

Check out with the author for more products, for example SetFileDate 1.02. This utility changes the date & time stamps of multiple files selected in Explorer.

Credits to:

The digits used in ComTimer are designed by Alberto Garcia Alvarez, Spain; e-mail: agarcia@etsiig.uniovi.es

I thank all the people who've told me their opinion about ComTimer.

All product names mentioned here are either such or registered such of their respective owners.

Disclaimer

The author denounces any responsibility for anything that might be caused by the use of ComTimer. The author doesn't give any kind of warranty for this software. The user uses ComTimer at his own risk.

Files included in the package:

ComTimer.EXE	the timer itself
ComLog.EXE	the logutility
SComTimer.hlp	helpfiles
SFComTimer.hlp	
UKComTimer.hlp	
Setup.txt	textfile with setupinstructions
Readme.doc	this file