

Auto Task, Version 1.3
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Auto Task For Windows

Version 1.3

Users Manual

Overview

Auto Task Version 1.3 is an automated task processor/manger for Windows. 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.

Whats New?

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

Enhanced Scheduler: Interval type tasks can now be scheduled by Minute, Hour, Day, or Week. Weekly and Monthly type tasks can be scheduled to execute on more than one day (e.g. A weekly task can be scheduled to run on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). Monthly type tasks can be scheduled on weekdays or by day (e.g. A monthly task can be scheduled to run every 1st, 2nd and 3rd of every month). Finally, a new schedule type allows a task to run at a specific date (e.g. 1/1/95).

New Task Type: A new task type "Terminate Task" has been added. This allows you to schedule a time to automatically terminate a running task.

Enhanced Task Editor: Auto Task now dynamically creates task options based on the type of task selected for added clarity. Data entry fields can now be edited using the keyboard rather than using the scroll bars. A new file selection dialog has been added when scheduling Execute type tasks. Any task which is not executing can be edited or removed without disabling task processing.

Enhanced Task Logging: The log file generated by Auto Task now has more detailed information the status of tasks which have been executed.

New Options: A Reschedule option has been added to reschedule a specific task or all tasks. A Duplicate Task option has been added which will allow you to create copies of tasks for quicker editing. You can now pass the file Auto Task you wish to load from the command line. The task manager can now be sorted by description, type, time, status, and frequency.

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

UPGRADING FROM AUTO TASK V1.2: While the data structure of Auto Task has been modified due to the addition of new features, Auto Task v1.3 will automatically convert Auto Task v1.2 ATF files into the new file format.

Package Contents

ATASK13.ZIP should 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

System Requirements

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

Installation

Auto Task uses InstallWare v3.5, (c) 1995 by Bob Dolan. Auto Task can easily be installed by performing the following steps:

-> Create a directory and unzip the contents of ATASK13.ZIP 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 ATASK13.ZIP into the newly created directory.

-> 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. Remove CTL3DV2.DLL 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 v1.3*

Command Line: *AUTOTASK.EXE*

Working Dir.: *C:\AUTOTASK (or whatever directory ATASK13.ZIP 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, 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.

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 supported: 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 Params.: 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 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 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.

Unable to exit while automated tasks are running.

You are trying to exit Auto Task while tasks are still running. Disable Auto Task processing and terminated all running tasks before attempting to exit again.

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.

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.

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.

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

GEne: B.FREESE

Compuserve: 73422,3117

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 1.3a

- 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 silliness with event processing.

Auto Task Version 1.0

- Initial release

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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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