WebTicker 3.0

Improved & Intranet Compatible!

Automatically receive breaking news and information from multiple Web sites of your choice and display the content in a scrolling ticker across your PC's screen!

Table of Contents

Click on a topic to jump there:

Version 3.0 for Microsoft Windows 98/95 & NT 4.0

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Introduction

Welcome to WebTicker 3.0!

WebTicker is a 32-bit Internet application that automatically retrieves text content from Internet or intranet sites of your choice and displays it in a ticker that scrolls across your PC's screen.   WebTicker puts you in charge of the information you retrieve and the site from which you get it.   Controlled by a tray icon, the program is superior to the "push" utilities now in vogue because:

- You decide the Web sites from which you obtain headline news, sports, and other information.   Other utilities rely on proprietary sites and data channels dictated by the vendor, usually containing distracting graphics, useless screen savers and unwanted advertisements.   Because WebTicker retrieves text and not graphics, it downloads almost instantly from any working Web site!

- You configure WebTicker to retrieve data from any selected Web sites in the world.   You choose the sites you want to retrieve and the frequency of retrieval, so your information remains current.   Updating WebTicker's Uniform Resource Locator (URL or Web address) file with new sites is effortless, and the registered version allows you to retrieve from three different sites on a rotating basis.

- WebTicker's memory footprint is a fraction of a typical Web browser, avoiding "browser bloat' while retaining the option of viewing the current page in your browser with only a click of your mouse.   WebTicker does not interfere with existing Internet connections and works simultaneously with your existing Internet applications.   You can retrieve data (1) automatically at pre-set intervals or (2) manually by menu action whenever desired.

- With WebTicker, you lose no substance in the data you retrieve.   The information is not watered-down for display purposes by the on-line vendor but instead arrives as communicated by the Web site operator, and you don't have to "register" with the news service and release your address for junk email advertisements.

- WebTicker is unobtrusive and can be positioned anywhere on your screen.   By default, it remains "On Top" but the "On Top" setting can be turned off with a popup menu selection.   The ticker also can be hidden by clicking on the WebTicker tray icon and selecting "Hide Ticker" from the pop-up menu.   WebTicker remembers its location upon exit and returns there when re-launched.

- A tray icon pop-up menu controls major program functions.   A configuration dialog allows the user to set the auto-retrieval interval, scroll speed, default browser and viewer, Web site URLs, auto-timeout setting, server remote port, auto/manual retrieval, and a site tester for experimental retrieval of URLs.   Double-click on the ticker or click on the Browser View item, accessed from the pop-up menu, to view the current URL in your browser.

The unregistered version is limited to 25 launches and one pre-set Web site, while the registered version rotates among a maximum of three active sites.

System Requirements

- A 486 or Pentium-based PC with 8 MB RAM, Windows 98/95 or NT 4.0, a VGA+ color monitor and a mouse.   Windows NT 4.0 requires Service Pack 3 installed.

- An existing connection to the Internet through a modem using Windows Dial-Up Networking, or to a corporate intranet, and an advanced Web browser (optional) like Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer.

Installation

WebTicker 3.0 Files

- WEBTICK.EXE - The WebTicker executable file, limited to 25 launches on the unregistered version and unlimited launches on the registered version.
- WEBTICK.HLP - This WebTicker help file with registration form.
- WEBURLS.TXT - The WebTicker URL text file containing the Internet HTTP addresses of your favorite sites, loaded automatically when program is launched and used for configuring Web sites for retrieval.
- WEBTICK.LOG - A log file in text format, created when each retrieval is attempted, used for troubleshooting.
- WEBPAGE.TXT - A filtered text file containing the ticker's text, created when program is run and used when the Text View option is selected from the pop-up menu.
- REGISTER.HLP - A Windows help file with more registration information and options.
- DELSL1.ISU - A file that is installed to your WebTicker folder and used to control the uninstallation of the program.   Do not delete this file or any file beginning with an underscore!
- In addition to the program files listed above, certain setup files are used temporarily during installation, and other files are installed (if not already present) in your Windows\System (or System32 on NT 4.0) subfolder.

Installing & Uninstalling WebTicker

- WebTicker is installed by unzipping the downloaded archive and running the SETUP.EXE or SETUPEX.EXE file, which automatically places program and system files in the proper folders and puts the WebTicker icon on the Windows 95 or NT 4.0 Start Menu.
- WebTicker is launched by running WEBTICK.EXE or its shortcut.   We recommend that you place a shortcut to WebTicker in your Startup folder and set auto-retrieval to ON if you have a fairly constant connection to the Internet.   As an alternative to placing the shortcut in your Startup folder, it can be placed on your desktop and the program launched whenever desired.   You can always retrieve a site manually by clicking Retrieve on the pop-up menu or by placing the mouse pointer over the tray icon and pressing Shift.   Set auto-retrieval to OFF if you wish to conserve on-line time or lack a constant connection to the Internet.
- To uninstall WebTicker, click on the Add / Remove Programs icon in the Control Panel folder, locate the entry for WebTicker, and click on Add / Remove.   For manual uninstall, simply delete the WebTicker folder containing the files listed above and remove any shortcuts to WebTicker from your Start Menu or desktop.

Features

- WebTicker gives you essential access to breaking information on the World Wide Web without interfering with your PC's normal use.   The program's scrolling ticker displays news, sports, business, computing and other information retrieved and updated continuously from your favorite Web sites throughout the world.

- WebTicker is also the ideal solution for corporate intranets requiring immediate employee access to breaking information and announcements posted to an intranet server by management.   No need to stop and read your emails if the data is provided in real-time by WebTicker!

- Unlike the "custom news" offerings of some sites which require that you employ your browser to view the news in graphic format, WebTicker avoids the wasted memory, user distraction and slow downloads required by the browser-oriented approach.   You do productive work on your PC while remaining aware of current events, and your browser is only a mouse-click away!

- The program works effectively whether or not you have a constant connection to the Internet.   It automatically retrieves and updates data at pre-set intervals if you are continuously on-line or allows you to retrieve manually and then recycles the ticker's scrolling text if you are off-line.

- WebTicker's power results from the rapidly growing number of news-based sites covering every subject matter, including AP News, Boston Globe, Nando Times, Reuters, ZDNet News, C|Net News, Bloomberg, and other text-based sites providing information that is regularly updated.

- WebTicker's auto-retrieval feature can be used to maintain your Internet connection by preventing time-outs imposed by your Internet Service Provider (ISP), your modem or your Dial-Up Networking adapter, by generating download activity at intervals set in WebTicker's configuration dialog.

- Additional active Web sites may be accessed by launching multiple copies of WebTicker and separately configuring each copy for different sites.   A maximum of three copies of WebTicker may be run concurrently.

WebTicker - All Versions

- WebTicker is controlled by single or double-clicking its tray icon.   A single click displays a pop-up menu that handles manual retrieval and cancel, browser view, text view, configuration, hide ticker, edit URL file, help, program version, register, and exit.   Double-clicking on the ticker itself will also launch the currently scrolling URL in your browser.

- The configuration dialog, accessed by double-clicking the tray icon or selecting Configuration from the pop-up menu, permits the setting of preferences for ticker scroll speed, auto-retrieval interval, auto-retrieval status, server remote port, auto-terminate timeout, web site URLs, default browser and viewer, and a site tester for evaluating new URLs.

Registered Version Enhancements

The registered version of the program permits continuous rotation among three active Web sites, rather than only one in the shareware version, and the reminder screen and 25-launch limit are permanently disabled.

Configuration Tabs & Pop-up Menu

Configuration Dialog (Double-Click Tray Icon)

The configuration dialog is displayed by double-clicking WebTicker's tray icon or single-clicking the icon and selecting Configuration from the pop-up menu.   To preserve the settings between sessions, click on the Save button at the bottom of the dialog.

General & Personal Tabs

1   STICKER SCROLL SPEED - Adjusts speed of scrolling ticker.

2   AUTO-RETRIEVAL INTERVAL - When auto-retrieval is ON, this setting defines the minutes between automatic site retrievals.   Regardless of whether auto-retrieval is on or off, you can always retrieve a site manually by clicking Retrieve on the pop-up menu or by placing the mouse pointer over the tray icon and pressing the Shift key.

3   AUTOMATIC SITE RETRIEVAL STATUS - When turned ON, WebTicker retrieves sites automatically at the pre-set interval.   When turned OFF, retrieval is done manually by clicking   the task bar icon and selecting Retrieval from the pop-up menu.   In the unregistered version, the program always retrieves Web Site 1.   The registered version rotates in sequence through the enabled sites from Web Site 1 to Web Site 3.

4   PROXY HOST &   PORT - Proxy name and port number used by proxy server.   Leave blank if you are not using a proxy server to connect to the Internet.

5   AUTO-TERMINATE TIMEOUT - Number of hours before WebTicker automatically terminates.   Since WebTicker does not disconnect your network connection when it exits, Auto-Terminate TimeOut is important because it stops activity on your connection and may start the timeout of your modem, network adapter or ISP.   Set to 0 to disable timeout for corporate intranet use.

6   TICKER STYLE - Determines whether ticker has a window border.   The default is Border (Sizable).   A bordered ticker is resizable while a non-bordered ticker is not.   When changing border, the new style will not take effect until you save the setting to the registry, exit and restart WebTicker.

7   COLORS & FONT - Sets the background color of the ticker and the font and foreground color of the scrolling text.

8   USERNAME & PASSWORD - Usually unnecessary for standard Dial-Up Networking connection to Internet.   Use and save these settings if required for a connection to Internet or your intranet.

Browser & Viewer Tabs

Use the browser tab to provide the complete path and file name of your default Web browser and do the same for the default text viewer.

Web Site 1 to 3 Tabs

WebTicker loads the URLs from the file WebURLs.txt into the three combo boxes used by Web Sites 1 to 3.   In the unregistered version of WebTicker, only Web Site 1 is available, and the other two sites are grayed out.   The registered version offers all three sites for configuration.   Select a URL from the combo box (or enter one of your own) and ensure that the check box enabling the site is checked.

Site Tester Tab

Site Tester permits you to experiment with new URLs before saving them in your WebURLs.txt file.   If you find an interesting URL, enter it in the Site Tester and click on Retrieve.   Upon retrieval, the site content will be displayed in the scrolling ticker.   Press the Add URL button, and the URL will be saved to the WebURLs.txt file.

Save, Update & Cancel Buttons

To maintain settings between sessions, click on the Save button at the bottom of the dialog.   The Update button applies the settings to the current session but does not save them in the Registry, and the Cancel button returns the settings to their previous states.

WebTicker Pop-Up Menu (Left Single-Click Tray Icon)

Retrieve & Cancel

The Retrieve pop-up menu item manually retrieves the next enabled Web site (1, 2 or 3).   The Cancel button aborts the operation if the site is unresponsive or the URL is wrong.   Only Web Site 1 is retrievable in the unregistered version of WebTicker.

SHORTCUT: Retrieve = Mouse pointer over tray icon + Shift

SHORTCUT: Cancel = Mouse pointer over tray icon + Shift + Ctrl

Browser View & Text View

The Browser View item launches your Web browser and lets you view the Web page in full graphic format.   Double-

clicking on the ticker itself will also launch the currently scrolling URL in your browser. The View Text item launches your viewer and displays the filtered text component of the scrolling Web page.

Remaining Menu Items

The Edit URL File item permits you to manually modify and save changes to your WebURLs.txt file.   Use this feature to delete unwanted entries from the file.

The Hide Ticker item conceals the scrolling ticker without obscuring the task bar button displaying the site's content. The ticker also can be temporarily hidden by right-clicking on the WebTicker taskbar button and selecting "Minimize" from the popup menu.   By clicking the "Restore" button, the ticker will again appear.

By clicking the "Always on Top" menu item on the WebTicker popup menu, the ticker will remain on top of the desktop and can be positioned over the taskbar itself.   The Exit, Configuration, Help, About, and Register items are self-explanatory.

Operation & Shortcuts

SHORTCUT: Retrieve = Mouse pointer over tray icon + Shift

SHORTCUT: Cancel = Mouse pointer over tray icon + Shift + Ctrl

Dial-Up Networking Connection

By default, WebTicker launches with auto-retrieval ON.   If the program does not detect a network connection, it calls your default Internet Dial-Up Networking dialog.   Once a connection is established, WebTicker automatically retrieves sites at the pre-set auto-retrieval interval.   If WebTicker detects an existing connection while launching, it begins auto-retrieval immediately.   If you cancel the Dial-Up Networking dialog at WebTicker startup, the program continues to run and checks the system every 10 seconds to see if there is an active connection

You can always retrieve a site manually by clicking Retrieve on the pop-up menu or by placing the mouse pointer over the tray icon and pressing the Shift key.   If you manually connect to the Internet using Dial-Up Networking while WebTicker is running in auto-retrieval mode, it will discover the connection on the next retrieval cycle.   If you disconnect from the Internet while WebTicker is running in auto-retrieval mode, it will call the default Dial-Up Networking dialog on the next retrieval cycle.

After manually disconnecting from your network, it's best to exit WebTicker or turn auto-retrieval OFF.   By turning auto-retrieval OFF, the program will stop trying to connect with the Internet but will continue to recycle text in the scrolling ticker.   When WebTicker's auto-retrieval feature is OFF, all network connecting and site retrieval must be done manually.

Proxy Server, LAN & Intranet Connections - See Troubleshooting Page

Auto-Retrieval or Manual Retrieval

For PCs with constant connection to the Internet, we recommend that you place a shortcut to WebTicker in your Startup folder and leave auto-retrieval ON.   If your Internet connection is not continuous, we suggest that you place a shortcut to WebTicker on your Windows Desktop with auto-retrieval turned ON, and click to start WebTicker whenever desired. Alternatively, you can turn auto-retrieval OFF, launch the program and when you establish a network connection, retrieve manually with WebTicker's pop-up menu or switch auto-retrieval back to ON.

Monitoring Multiple Web Sites

The unregistered version of WebTicker permits retrieval from Web Site 1 only, whereas the registered version permits retrieval from three sites on a rotating basis with the next site retrieved after each interval has elapsed.   Once configured with your favorite three sites and your settings saved to the Registry, the registered version will monitor and retrieve from the three sites in sequence.   If you are a true information junkie, you can launch as many as three simultaneous copies of WebTicker, each separately configured, and monitor news on nine different Web sites!

Browser View of Web Sites

Double-click on the ticker or click on the Browser View item, accessed from the pop-up menu, to view your Web pages with your browser in full graphic and Java format.   Experiment with new URLs by using the Site Tester to determine the text content of specific sites and save the URLs with the Add URL button.   The program's available URLs are saved in the file WebURLs.txt, which is distributed with the program and initially contains several popular news-based URLs.

Auto-Terminate TimeOut

Since WebTicker's auto-retrieval feature can keep you connected to the Internet when you're not actively using it, we suggest that you use the Auto-Terminate Timeout feature to ensure that others have access.   For example, with auto-retrieval set at 15 minutes and auto-terminate set at 4 hours, your connection should last 4 hours before WebTicker terminates, assuming that your other timeout settings are longer than 15 minutes.   Depending on the other timeout settings, you probably will be disconnected from the Internet within the next 60 minutes.   For corporate intranet use, set the auto-terminate value to 0 to disable the timeout feature.

News-Based URLs

As a general rule, the best news-based URLs are associated with print publications, rather than network TV sites which often fill their Web pages with unnecessary (and slow downloading) graphics images.   By using Web search engines and looking for "News", "Business", "Sports", "Weather", and "Health", for example, you'll have no difficulty finding hundreds of informative sites that can be evaluated with WebTicker's Site Tester.   The best sites are those that are text-oriented with URLs that remain unchanged over time.

Troubleshooting

Proxy Server, LAN & Intranet Connections

If your system uses a proxy server, enter and save your proxy server host name and port number. Check your browser's Preferences or Properties dialog to determine if you are using a proxy server and its port number and name if you need the information to configure WebTicker. Enter and save your username and password if required. Then exit and restart WebTicker to activate the new settings. Since proxy server and Local Area Networks (LANs) present special configuration issues, WebTicker may not work with some proxy server and LAN connections to the Internet. Consult your network administrator for assistance if WebTicker does not connect to your intranet or the Internet. If you are using a corporate intranet server operating on a port other than the default port 80, you may need to include the port number in your target URL. For example, for an intranet server called "localhost" operating on port 8080 without a proxy server, you would address the index page of a web called "MyWeb" as http://localhost:8080/MyWeb/. In this example, no proxy server name or port setting is appropriate because no proxy server is involved. Note the designation of the intranet server name followed by a colon and the non-default port number, before naming the target web.

Dial-Up Networking

If you have multiple Dial-Up Networking connections, you can set the default connection by clicking My Computer | Control Panel | Internet | Connection | Dialing. The solution to most dial-up problems is first to manually establish an Internet connection using the Dial-Up Networking applet in the My Computer folder. Once an Internet connection is made, WebTicker can be launched and will detect the connection if auto-retrieval is ON. You can always retrieve a site manually by clicking Retrieve on the pop-up menu or by placing the mouse pointer over the tray icon and pressing the Shift key. If you're not already connected to the Internet, a launch of WebTicker with auto-retrieval ON will activate the default Dial-Up Networking dialog. If you're disconnected from the Internet and notice that when you launch WebTicker, it does not call up the dialog for Dial-Up Networking, then you should manually establish your Internet connection and launch WebTicker.

Web Site Retrieval

If a Web site URL is unresponsive or non-existent, WebTicker will attempt a retrieval and nothing will be downloaded, leaving the ticker displaying the WebTicker caption or the "Connecting to..." caption. Occasionally, the program's HTTP component will time-out waiting for a response from the site, and nothing will appear in the ticker. In both cases, the solution is to manually cancel the current retrieval and retrieve the next enabled site. Do this by clicking Cancel followed by Retrieve on the pop-up menu, or by placing the mouse pointer over the tray icon while pressing the Shift + Ctrl keys (Cancel) and then the Shift key (Retrieve). If you're using an unregistered version of WebTicker, only Web Site 1 is accessible. Cancel first, then retrieve again, and if the URL is still unresponsive, reconfigure the problem site for a working URL.

AOL & CompuServe Web Interfaces

The AOL and CompuServe interfaces for Windows 95 both use hidden dial-up networking adapters when connecting to the Internet. Once these interfaces are connected, however, WebTicker can be launched and will detect the Internet connection. Be cautioned that AOL and CompuServe, unlike many ISPs, charge by the hour for on-line time, and your WebTicker activity will result in connect time charges from these services.

Text Filtering

WebTicker downloads all text from the target site and then filters out HTML tags, JavaScript and other unwanted content. The remaining information is routed to the scrolling ticker on your PC's screen. Sometimes a site contains non-standard HTML tags or other characters that will pass through WebTicker's filters. This can produce unexpected characters in the ticker and may warrant a switch to another Web site. Since WebTicker makes assumptions about spacing of text based on the location of line breaks, carriage returns and HTML anchors, the resulting ticker may display too many (or too few) spaces between sentences or word groups.

Other Problems

Check the Support page of our Web site at http://www.spaeder.com to review the latest Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) file containing answers to many of the support questions that arise concening WebTicker.

Notices

Copyright

- Copyright © 1997-99 Spaeder Technologies Inc., All Rights Reserved

- WebTicker was written in 32-bit Object Pascal with Borland's Delphi 3.0 Rapid Application Development (RAD) system and uses a native Delphi component developed by F. Piette.

License Rights

Developer

WebTicker Developer

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Technical Support

Registered users with technical support questions, suggestions for improvements or bug reports should contact the developer at the US Mail or email addresses above.   Technical support policies are explained under "Notices", "License Rights" in this help file.

Registration Info

Registration Benefits

The WebTicker registration fee is only $18.   Browse our Web site at   http://www.spaeder.com for new product information and on-line registration options!   Contact us directly for corporate site license quotes.

- As a shareware evaluator, you have a license to use WebTicker for a brief evaluation period.   If you use it for a longer period or for a purpose other than evaluation, you must register it.   Registration grants you a license to use WebTicker as you would any commercial software you purchase.   Do not register WebTicker if it does not work correctly on your PC!

- Registration provides you with major enhancements available only in the registered version.   The registered version of the program permits continuous rotation among three active Web sites, rather than only one in the shareware version, and the reminder screen and 25-launch limit are permanently disabled.   Since you always receive the distribution version when you download our shareware products for evaluation, we do not send you a software disk when you register.

- Please read the file Register.Hlp that accompanies the program files for information on registration by credit card, toll-free telephone number, Internet, Compuserve, Fax and E-mail.   If you wish to obtain a $3 discount for mail registration, print out the registration form at the end of this Help file or copy the requested information and mail it long with your payment by check drawn on a US bank, a US postal money order, or American Express money order (foreign orders).

Registration Procedure

- Upon registration you will receive a registration code.   Click on the WebTicker tray icon and select "Register" from the pop-up menu.   You will be prompted for your last name as registered.   Enter your last name exactly as it appears on your registration form.

- You will next be prompted for your registration code.   Enter it from the email or hard-copy registration response.   A message will inform you that registration is completed.   The Register item on you pop-up menu will disappear.   Once registration is completed and the program is exited and restarted, the reminder screen and launch limit will permanently be disabled, and the maximum number of active enabled Web sites will be three.

Registration

Electronic Registration - WebTicker 3.0

Register now for only $18!   Register on the Compuserve Shareware Registration Forum (GO SWREG) with ID No. 15957 or with NorthStar Solutions using ID No. 1883.   Read the Register.Hlp file for credit card registration options, including toll-free telephone number, Fax, E-mail, and on-line Internet registration.   Use this form for non-credit card mail registration and get a $3 discount.   Browse our Internet Web site at   http://www.spaeder.com for other registration options and product information.   Contact us directly for corporate site license quotes.

Registration Form (Discount Mail Registration - No Credit Cards)

To print this form, click on this help window's Print button. You may also hit Alt-F, P for printing.   You can skip printing and write the requested information on paper if you wish.

YOUR NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE & ZIP _____

DATE _____

Make your check or money order for the discounted fee of $15.00 payable to Spaeder Technologies Inc. and mail to:

Spaeder Technologies Inc.
7624 Georgetown Pike
McLean, Virginia 22102-1412
Attn: Trialware Order

If you would like to be notified of your registration code by Internet mail or CompuServe (at no extra charge) in lieu of U. S. Mail, please provide your E-mail information below:

INTERNET ADDRESS   _____
or
COMPUSERVE ADDRESS _____

Your registration code will appear on the line below when this form is processed and returned if you elect notification by US mail.   Your last name and this registration code are input to WebTicker in response to prompts you receive when you click on the Register item in the WebTicker pop-up menu.

REGISTRATION CODE _____