

Can OPC run automatically on startup?

If you want OPC to automatically load when you start your PC then you must place a shortcut to OPC in the windows startup folder.

1. Goto your OPC folder (where OPC.EXE is)
2. Right click on OPC.EXE and select "create shortcut"
3. An icon called "shortcut to OPC.EXE" will be placed in the same folder
4. Right click on this file and select "Cut"
5. Goto your windows folder, i.e. "c:\windows" and then goto "Start Menu\Programs\StartUp"
6. Once in the startup folder, right click in the folder on a blank space and select "Paste"

Thats it! Once you restart your PC OPC will load automatically. To stop OPC loading on startup just delete the shortcut from the startup folder.

Read me first

Hello and welcome to OPC!

OPC is not free software, it is Shareware. For registration information please [click here](#). OPC is fully functional for 30 days. There are no annoying popup messages, reminders or limitations on the program. So, if you enjoy using OPC then please [register](#).

For the most up to date version of OPC and the Helpfile please visit the website.

Well, now that you have obtained a copy of OPC I assume that you, like myself and many, many, others want to save money on their phonebill by keeping an accurate track of how much they have spent online. OPC is as simple as it is complex, that is to say it will do anything from just simply keep a basic track of your phone costs to creating charts which let you analyse your online patterns and areas which you spend the most.

OPC is aimed at the standard dial-up internet user who connects to the internet via a modem from their PC. Its aim is clear and simple, to keep a track of your phone costs due to the internet and to support your every need. It has been designed to cater for all users world wide and is flexible enough to support any telephone company, and of course will support up to 10 telephone companies with 4 rates per company (i.e. cheap, peak, weekend, other) and 2 prices per rate (i.e. for 2 different isp's in different areas, hence the price is different, one may have a local number and one maybe a national number).

Getting Started...

OPC will run on any standard PC which has Windows 95/98 installed, there are no special requirements in terms of either hardware or software.

Ok, now that you know what it can do, its time to make it do what **YOU** want. This will take about 5 minutes depending on what you change and setup. The first step is to tell OPC all the necessary information about your telephone company. Before you enter all the information about your telephone company you could check the OPC website to see if your telephone company is listed and then download the file to save you the effort. You would be surprised how much you don't know about how your telephone company and how they charge you. Personally, I thought I knew everything about mine, but I was proven wrong by many OPC beta testers. As all telephone companies are different you will need to contact your telephone company or have a look on their website if you need specific help concerning your telephone company.

OK, enough of the blurb. Firstly on the OPC main screen you will notice on the menubar a button called **Program** and when you click on this a menu will drop down. On this menu click on "[Define daily call rates](#)". Now, click on the arrow beside the rectangular box. Select the day(s) which you want to set the rates for then click Ok.

Now, you will see a series of boxes down the right hand side. You click these to enable the rate which is to the right of the box. To the right of each box you may either enter the rate including or excluding VAT/TAX. I recommend that you enter the rate excluding VAT/TAX so you can view a more detailed breakdown and obviously this is vital if you use the internet for business purposes. Then to the right of that you will notice a "from-to" time. Here you enter the time period during the day on which that rate applies.

Note: All times must be in the 24 hour format and the earliest time which can be entered is 00:00 and the latest is 23:59, i.e. use 00:00-23:59 if you want all day to be covered by one rate and not 00:00 to 00:00.

Now that you have entered your rates and times for that day click **Ok** and repeat the process for the rest of the days.

Once this is complete goto the **Program** button again and on the menu goto **Billing Details**. Go through each menu here and where you may be unsure about an option consult the help file, which is conveniently laid out in the same format as the program menu structure under **Menu Help**. Now that you have set these options return to the **Program** menu and goto **Options** and once again follow the same simple procedure. Now restart OPC and your ready to go!

For customising tips and general information see the [Read Me Notes](#). For known possible problems you may have please go to [known problems](#).

Error Message Meanings

You can only run one instance of OPC at a time

If after just starting OPC you receive the message (You can only run one instance of OPC at a time). This is because you are already running a copy of OPC. To avoid logging conflicts you can only run one instance of OPC at any given time.

Invalid Integer Value

If you receive an error message which contains something about an "invalid integer" then its most likely because you have a gap/overlap in your "Define Daily Call Rates" time periods. Go and look at the current days time periods and make sure there are no gaps. If you are unsure about this [see the relevant help topic](#).

Connection

[Dial Up Network Connect]

When enabled, OPC will attempt to detect when you are online. It can only detect Dial Up Networking connects. Therefore, it will not automatically detect connections made with other programs such as AOL or DOS programs running under Windows 95/98. To detect these you will have to use the modem carrier detect option.

Check for connect every X seconds

This is how often you want OPC to look for a connection. I recommend that you check approx. every 5 seconds or so. This means that the timings will on average only be out by 5 seconds for every call, i.e. 2.5 secs to realise a connect and 2.5 secs to realise a disconnect. This is an acceptable error for most people without having to waste computing power by using lower checking rates.

[Modem Carrier Detect]

This actually asks the modem if it has a connection to another modem. You need to use this to detect connections to services such as AOL because it does not use Windows Dial Up Networking to make the connection therefore OPC needs another way to detect the connection.

Check the appropriate box below to which comport your modem is connected. Normally this will be either com1 or com2. If you are unsure it will probably be written on the back of your PC where you modem connects to it. It may say just the number, i.e. [1] or Serial 1 or Com 1.

Alternatively you can goto the Windows Control Panel, to modems and select your modem then click on properties. Under the heading General it will tell you which Port you modem is connected to in the form Communications Port (ComX) where X is the comport number.

The Text beside the checkboxes is the physical address of the comport. **DO NOT change this unless you know what you are doing.** You may need to change this if your comport, i.e. COM1 does not use the specified default address. This will become apparent if OPC does not detect connections when you are sure you have selected the correct comport. To find out the correct address you will need to check your system BIOS. As everyone's is almost different I cannot help here, you will need to dig out your PC manuals. The BIOS is the thing when you start your PC and it says something like "hit DEL to enter setup."

Logging

[Logging]

OPC has the ability to save 3 types of log file. I have incorporated a log file viewer also.

- (1) Log Dat File ** : This keeps an interrogatable log file for the filters.
- (2) Log File * : This keeps a log of all the calls made and their details.
- (3) Report File * : This is deleted and replaced every time OPC is run. It is a summary of your OPC settings and overall values.

*Unreadable by User

**Plain Text File

Note: All files are saved in your OPC directory.

[Autosave]

If your PC crashes whilst logging a call all details of the call will of course be lost. The Autosave option helps to prevent this by saving the details of the call periodically as you specify. If you set it to save every 10 minutes then if your PC was to crash 6 minutes after the last autosave then you would obviously lose the last 6 minutes. Therefore I can see no reason as to why everyone wouldn't set it to 1 minute.

Modes

[OPC Run modes]

Run OPC in Windows system tray on startup

If enabled, when you start OPC it will be placed in the system tray. To show OPC right click on the phone icon. To hide it, right click on the icon again.

Place in Windows System Tray when Timer Started

If this option is selected it will place OPC in the Win95/98 system tray every time it is started to help free up some desktop space. To show OPC again right click once on the OPC icon in the system tray. To hide OPC again right click on the icon again.

Place OPC on taskbar when the timer is started

As the title suggests, this mode will place OPC in the taskbar when the timer is started to help unclutter your desktop. To show the screen again merely click once on the OPC icon in the taskbar.

Run OPC in small mode

This option enables you to run OPC in a smaller display. There is less information displayed but it is neater. If you enable this option it will run in this mode every time. You may temporarily change this mode by selecting **Standard Mode** or **Small Mode** on the toolbar at the top of the OPC window.

[Main Screen Totals]

All calls logged with OPC

When you use this option the OPC main screen will refer to all calls logged by OPC, i.e. all the totals will represent all the calls logged.

All calls logged this billing term

This will basically filter out all the calls made in the specified billing term and the totals will refer to the filtered calls, i.e. if you are billed monthly then set the period to monthly and at the end of each month the main screen totals will be reset to zero but the previous calls will have been saved, just filtered out. *This is of course useful if you want to know what your bill is at a glance.*

Notification

[Notification]

If you enable the reminder sound (every x mins) you must specify a wave file via its full path in the field below the option. If the sound isn't found OPC will report this to you when it is running.

[Time & Sound]

This option links a time and a particular sound. If you select **Add sound** then you must specify a time in minutes after the call has started and select the associated wave sound file. To remove a sound click it to select it then click the **Remove sound** button. [You may have upto 20 sounds.](#)

Misc

[Password]

In the options menu you will find the password option. When this is enabled you will be able to keep out unauthorised users. However, there are two points you should note :

- (1) The password is **case sensitive**. If you forget your password you will have to delete your Online.dat file and start again.
- (2) The password system is by no means secure and anyone with a little determination can break the system therefore you should note that it is just in place as a deterrent and it is not as secure as Fort Knox.

[Currency]

This allows you to show your currency symbol throughout OPC. You may select the U.K. pound sign, the U.S. dollar sign or another sign, where you may enter a symbol to be displayed.

[Call Rates]

Here you can define which rate(s) to use.

- (i) Always use rate 1 [Set in Define Daily Call Rates]
- (ii) Always use rate 2 [Set in Define Daily Call Rates]
- (iii) Ask at the start of each call which rate to use.

Define Daily Call Rates

Select a day to edit, or select ALL which will load the current settings for Monday. Once you make your changes and save it, it will make all the days use those settings.

Here you must **specify in 24 hour format** the time zones (upto 4) which OPC will use to determine the current cost rate.

OPC can handle 2 rate types which you can specify i.e. a local call or a foreign call. It will work if your PC clock is using 12 hour format though you must still enter the times in 24 hour format. *No checking of the time zones specified is executed so ensure that you provide accurate information.* If you ever receive **bogus current cost per min rates** then I suggest you check your times to make sure that there are no overlaps or unspecified gaps.

To tell OPC whether or not to use a certain rate just click on the checkbox to the left of that rate option.

If you enter the costs including VAT/TAX then do not enable VAT/TAX calculation in the Billing Details section or else VAT/TAX will be added onto the costs you entered, hence adding VAT/TAX twice.

Note: All times must be in the 24 hour format and the earliest time which can be entered is 00:00 and the latest is 23:59, i.e. use 00:00-23:59 if you want all day to be covered by one rate and not 00:00 to 00:00.

Connection

If your telephone company charges a connect fee for each call made then you can add that option here. You can also specify how long after the call is started the billing will commence, i.e. how long after the connect fee is charged.

If your phone company has a minimum call charge that can be enabled here.

Discount

[Options]

You can tell OPC what discount(s) you receive from your phone company. You may also enable discounting on the "connect fee" and "minimum charge" if necessary.

All of the rest of the options here are self explanatory.

Budget

[Allowance]

All of this is completely self explanatory so I will try to provide an overview.

If you want to try and regulate the amount you spend online then firstly you must tell OPC the maximum amount which you can spend online in one of the specified periods. If you select to show the allowance remaining a **vertical green bar** will appear on the main screen. As you allowance is "used up" the **green bar** will shrink and when you have less than **20% of your allowance remaining** the bar will become **red**. Once your allowance expires the word **NONE** will appear in a vertical fashion and if you have enabled the warning message it to will appear to let you know that you have run out.

To see known problems with the allowance problems see [known problems](#).

General Report Charts

This is a note for users of any version of OPC prior to 3.0

If you have logged calls with OPC before using version 3.0 then this function will only work for calls made with version 3.0. Therefore, for example, if you were to look at a chart of the current month and observe the totals and then you looked at the summary report or log for that month you would notice a difference if you started using 3.0 during that month.

Hence, the message is, bear in mind when you installed 3.0 when looking at the charts and don't create a chart which would include calls made before 3.0 was installed or else your results will not include those calls and will be incorrect (the values will be too small).

Rate File

A rate file (*.rte) contains all the necessary information specific to **your telephone company**. If you use several telephone companies then you will of course need to have more than one rate file. With OPC you can have upto **10 different rate files**.

Creating your own rate file...

You may create your own rate files by entering all the telephone company information into OPC relevant to the company and then quit OPC. If you goto the OPC folder the file will be called "Default.rte". Rename this to resemble your phone companies name, i.e. if the company was called "123 Phone Communications" then you could call the file that or something shorter like "123 Phone" not forgetting the ".rte" extension. Now load OPC and do the same for all the phone companies you wish to have. When you look on the **Rate File** option on the title bar you will notice that all of your rate (*.rte) files will be listed and the one which OPC is currently using will have a tick to the left of it.

On my website there will be a collection of rate files for popular telephone companies. So perhaps instead of making the rate file yourself you could check the website first. Also, please send your rate file to my website if your phone company does not already have a rate file to help out other OPC users.

Once you change rate file by selecting a new one on the Rate File option restart OPC to ensure that there are no conflicts.

Small Mode

Clicking on **Small Mode** will make OPC run in the smaller mode which will take up less area on your desktop but of course it will display less information. However, once you quit OPC and start it again it will revert to the **Standard Mode**. If whilst in **Small Mode** you wish to go back to the **Standard Mode** simply click on the **Standard Mode** button on the tool bar.

If you wish for OPC to always run in **Small Mode** then goto [Programs/Options/Modes](#) and select "*Run OPC in Small Mode*".

Can OPC work with Netlaunch?

OPC now works with **Netlaunch** which is ideal for people who want to incorporate OPC into their dial up package. This makes it even more convenient to log your calls than ever before.

To start OPC and have the timer start automatically then call OPC with the command line, "**OPC.EXE -START**". For greatest timing accuracy on connect check the "**just prior**" to connect box, this way the timing will start as the connection starts, not after a connection has been made which takes over 10 seconds each time.

Then to close OPC and stop the timer by NetLaunch under the options for OPC, enable :

Close	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Disconnect	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Close Window	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Destroy Window	<input type="checkbox"/>	All <input type="checkbox"/>
Quit Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Read me notes

Millennium (2000)

OPC is millennium compliant. OPC will continue to function properly in the new millennium.

Logging

When logging a calls used rate for that call, it will use the rate which was being used when the timer was stopped. I.e. you may overlap into another rate time and during the call the rate could change.

Custom OPC Background

Place the bitmap file in the opc directory. Call it OPC.bmp. It should be 160x337 in size, if it is different than this it will be stretched/shrunk to fit.

Custom Start/Stop icons

To use your own icons just replace the two icons go.ico and stop.ico with your own, but use the same name.

Large Fonts

If you are running Windows using the "Large Fonts" option then some menu's may have text which appears to run off the screen and many menu's will look out of proportion. I am currently trying to find a way to fix this problem. At the minute the only way to fix it is clearly to turn off "Large Fonts". If you wish to do this it can be easily done by doing the following;

1. Goto Start Menu / Settings / Control Panel
2. Goto Display / Settings / Advanced
3. Then under display it says font size. Select "Small Fonts" and click OK.

Why register?

Well, were do I start...

As you can see OPC is **Shareware** which of course means that I give you 30 days to try the full product so you can determine whether or not it is of use to you. If it is, then just like software you buy in the shop you have to pay for it. Though I and other shareware authors let you try it first unlike boxed software from the shop which you are willing to buy without even trying. As you have seen, I do not hinder your use of OPC by disabling functions or popping up nag screens on every possible occasion, just a simple "unregistered" notice on startup to remind you.

Once 30 days passes OPC will cease to function and at this stage you have to decide whether or not to register to continue to use it, or to discontinue using OPC. All of your information which you entered and calls you logged will be saved so if you are going to register do not delete any of the OPC files. Just register then run OPC and enter your registration information and continue to use OPC as before. Obviously, if you decide to register before the 30 days expires I recommend that you do so as quickly as possible so you will not miss out on logging any calls, i.e. if 30 days expire then you take a few days to register you will have lost the ability to log calls for those few days, so it just makes sense.

OPC is somewhat unique compared to other software products in the sense it is designed to help **save you money**. Therefore this gives the product itself more value BUT since you are trying to save money why spend your savings on expensive software? Thats exactly why OPC is significantly cheaper than the vast majority of similar products on the market, and OPC is one of the most advanced products in its field.

By registering you are supporting the author to continue to work on the product and improve it. The majority of the options and functions you see when using OPC where added because users suggested them to me. When you register OPC you will be entitled to email support which will only be limited by my ability to help you. **Your registration will be valid for at least all of the current versions of OPC**, i.e. if the version is 3.0 then it will work for at least all of the versions starting with 3, i.e. 3.1 etc...

I will never, unlike many other companies, sell, give, lease, disclose etc your email address or private information. I respect the privacy of the individual completely.

If you are interested in registering please see the section "[How to register](#)".

How to register

Registration could not be any simpler!

Since OPC is orientated about logging calls made to your internet service provider the method of registration which I have chosen is "Online Registration". This is because it is the fastest, cheapest and most convenient way for you to obtain your registration information for OPC. As OPC is an international product I have provided 2 main sites where OPC can be registered.

There is a UK based ordering site and a USA based ordering site. If you order from the UK site your credit card will be billed in UK Pounds Sterling and if you order from the USA site it will be billed in US Dollars. Therefore if you live outside both of these countries it is your choice which to purchase from.

OPC 3.0 costs UK £15 or US \$20.

If you have never ordered any product over the internet before using the credit card then I shall explain how the process operates. You go to a website which has a "secure sever". This basically means that it will encrypt your credit card details to prevent fraudulent use. Once the company has verified your credit card they send me your details (except credit card details) and I will then email you your registration information.

To order OPC you need three things.

1. **A method of connecting to the internet**
2. **An email address**
3. **A credit card**

If you do not have any of these you can always ask a friend to help you. With their permission you could use their internet account and/or credit card to order OPC.

What your registration entitles you to

Apart from limited email support and other advantages laid out in the help file it entitles you to use OPC on one machine by one user. If you wish to use OPC on more than one machine or it is to be used by an educational institution then see the section "Site Licenses".

To order from the UK site

I use one of the biggest registration services in the UK, UKSHAREREG. Just follow the link below in your internet browser, enter your details and that is you registered for OPC.

<http://www.uksharereg.com/opc.html>

This will cost UK £15 for normal orders. See "Site Licenses" for multiple copies or educational usage.

To order from the USA site

I use the very popular and easy to use REGNOW service. To access the registration form all you have to do is load this link in your internet browser!

<https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=2144-1>

Its that simple! Then just enter in a few details and you will be registered!

This costs US \$20 for normal orders. See "Site Licenses" for multiple copies or educational usage.

Site Licenses

If you wish to use OPC on more than one machine or it is to be used by an educational institution then

please email me with your requirements and I will quote you a price.

Change of email address

Please inform me of any change of email address incase I need to send you a new registration code if a future version of OPC requires one.

email : swmillar@aol.com

website : <http://members.aol.com/swmillar>

Key Features

- Automatically detects a Dial-Up-Connection
- Automatically detects a modem connect, i.e. to AOL or a BBS
- Keeps 3 types of log with a complex filter system and ability to export them to a text file
- Has an autosave feature incase your PC crashes during a connection, it will still be logged
- Can be run in a variety of ways, i.e. on the taskbar or on the system tray and has a big and small mode
- The main menu can display a variety of totals, i.e. all calls logged, or calls logged this week/month/quarter/year
- Has a sound notification function, i.e. will play a sound of your choice every periodic defined interval
- Will play a specific sounds at specific times
- Has a password protection system
- Supports any currency and VAT/TAX
- Supports a variety of call rates and can support upto 20 phone companies
- Supports connection fees and minimum charges
- Has a complex discounting system available
- Helps users to regulate their usage with a powerful allowance function
- Can generate various 3D pie-chart reports
- Creates an annual summary which is broken down into months for easy viewing

How do I uninstall OPC?

If you wish to uninstall (remove) OPC from your system, (why would you want to do something silly like that?) then follow this simple procedure.

Note : Unlike many programs the OPC uninstaller will actually remove everything it put on your system unlike so many programs which leave entries in your registry and files in your system folders. It will however leave your custom files in your OPC directory such as your preferences and log files incase you may wish to use them again.

1. Click on the **start** button
2. Click on **settings**
3. Click on **control panel**
4. Click on **add/remove programs**
5. In the list of programs find **OPC**
6. Click on it
7. Click on **add/remove...**
8. Confirm you wish to delete OPC
9. Thats it gone!

Can OPC detect ISDN connections?

As long as you use your ISDN to connect to a "Dial Up Networking" account, then yes it will automatically detect your connection if you enable it. To detect other types of connection then you can simply manually start and stop OPC.

Starting/Stopping OPC



If you enable OPC to start/stop the timer automatically then on each connection all you have to do is make sure that OPC is loaded by clicking on OPC.EXE.

However, if you wish or need to start OPC timing manually then simply click on the **Start Timer** button as seen above. You then stop the timer by clicking on **Stop Timer** or if you wish to cancel the log for that call before you can click on **Cancel Timer** instead of clicking **Stop Timer**. You can use this manual method of starting and stopping OPC to log any type of connection such as a voice call.

Alternatively if you have OPC set to run on the taskbar or system tray (bottom right corner beside clock) then you will need to start/stop the timer by double clicking on the traffic light symbol in the system tray. If the timer is stopped then the light will be **red** and if it is started then it will be **green**.



If you right click on the traffic icon then this will show/hide OPC.

If you enable timing to start/stop automatically then the traffic light symbol and buttons on the OPC screen will automatically change to indicate whether or not OPC is timing.

OPC Files

The following is a list of files which come with OPC and files which OPC uses including a description of each file.

OPC.EXE - the main application file which you run

stop.ico - the traffic icon which represents a stopped timer

go.ico - the traffic icon which represents a started timer

opc.dll - contains program functions which OPC uses

tone.wav - the sample sound file which OPC plays

opc.hlp, opc.cnt - this help file

changes.txt - a list of detailed changes made to OPC since the 1st version

License.txt - the legal license which you accept by storing and using OPC

File_id.diz - a brief description of OPC for distribution purposes

Custom Files

online.dat - contains your preferences and total costs

log.dat - contains information on all the calls which have been logged.

default.rte - the default rate file which comes with OPC. Stores all the information about your telephone company.

Problems Allowance

If you are using the allowance option and you have it set to show how much you have used daily it will show an inaccurate amount if the following situation occurs.

If you start a call, i.e. a Tuesday night at 11:50pm and then stop it on Wednesday morning at 00:05am. As you can see the call has lasted 15 minutes. When you look at the allowance bar you will notice that it is full but you have used 5 minutes of Wednesday so far, from 00:00 to 00:05. Actually, OPC thinks you have used 0 minutes of Wednesday because for allowance purposes it saves the call with the date on which the call started.

The only solution to this is to either not make a call which spans over into a new day, but more realistically don't set the allowance bar to daily, set it to weekly or higher.

This problem does not effect the actual recording, just what the allowance bar might say for that day as all it simply does is act as a filter for calls.

Call Duration

As most calls to the internet at most only last a few hours OPC is aimed at these sort of calls. Really it is only geared towards people who make calls which last less than 24hours but has been designed to record calls upto 99 hours and whilst the totals maybe correct after this length of time the logfile for the total time spent online will probably be incorrect. However, this has never been tested.

