

MarsIcon 2.6 - February 18th, 1994

[What is MarsIcon?](#)

[Installing MarsIcon](#)

[Configuring MarsIcon](#)

[Changing the icon's title](#)

[Current Meridian window](#)

[MarsIcon and Screen Savers](#)

[Troubleshooting](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Calling all icon artists!](#)

[Revision History](#)

[Author Information](#)

[Other related programs](#)

[Registering MarsIcon](#)

MarsIcon is a shareware MicroSoft Windows 3.x program that displays the current view of the planet Mars in an icon. You can specify the icon's title to display the current Central Meridian longitude, the number of hours and minutes until the next CM crossing, and the time and/or date in **many** different formats. You can also change the icon's background color and rotation direction. MarsIcon even adjusts **automatically** for daylight savings/summer time for users in the United States, the UK and Europe.

Simply use the Program Manager to create a New Program Icon in the group of your choice and set the *Working Directory* to the subdirectory where you installed the program files. You may place the files in the subdirectory of your choice, but the software **must** be able to find it's MARSICON.INI file there.

If it cannot find the .INI file, then the **About** box will be displayed *each and every time* you start **MarsIcon**. See the [Troubleshooting](#) section for more information.

I also recommend placing the Program Icon in the **Startup** group so it loads every time you start Windows.

If you don't already have the file **BWCC.DLL**, make **sure** you copy it to your Windows system subdirectory and erase any other older copies of it. See the file BWCC.TXT for more information.

Before you can use **MarsIcon**, you need to tell it where you live and how to adjust for daylight savings time. You can also select **many** different options as well. Select the following links for more information:

[Setting your Time Zone](#)

[Adjusting for Daylight Savings/Summer Time](#)

[Animating the MarsIcon icon](#)

[Background Colors](#)

["Always on top" feature](#)

Once you have set all the above options, you will probably want to have a look at how you can [change the icon's title](#).

MarsIcon must know the **time zone** in which you live to display the icon properly. The default is the Eastern Standard Time time zone, which is valid for cities in the United States such as New York City, Boston and Miami. If you live in another time zone, you must select it yourself.

When you first run **MarsIcon**, the program's **About** box appears. Here you'll find a list box containing all of the world's time zones. Simply select the one in which you live.

There is a check box if you want the **Daylight Savings Time** (Summer Time) adjustment applied or not. Check this box if your area observes Daylight Savings Time. Just below this, there are four radio buttons to determine which set of summer-time dates you wish to use. If you select *Manual*, the daylight savings time adjustment will be applied **regardless** of today's date. This means you must change the above check box twice a year when the time changes. You may need to select this option if your region is not listed below. Tables that list the daylight savings time start/stop dates for the other radio buttons follow below. If you select one of these, the daylight savings time adjustment will be applied or not-applied **automatically** based on today's date. All daylight savings time adjustments subtract 1 hour from the current time.

United States:

1994 - Start: April 3rd	End: October 30th
1995 - Start: April 2nd	End: October 29th
1996 - Start: April 7th	End: October 27th
1997 - Start: April 6th	End: October 26th

UK:

1994 - Start: March 27th	End: October 23rd
1995 - Start: March 26th	End: October 22nd
1996 - Start: March 24th	End: October 27th
1997 - Start: March 23rd	End: October 26th

Europe:

1994 - Start: March 27th	End: September 25th
1995 - Start: March 26th	End: September 24th
1996 - Start: March 24th	End: September 22nd
1997 - Start: March 23rd	End: September 28th

If you live in one of these regions and the above dates are incorrect, OR if you live in another region not listed above, please contact me with the correct dates so I can update my software.

You can also select an **update interval** for the **MarsIcon** icon. The default is *Real-Time*, which shows the current view of Mars. South is at the top to match the view in a telescope. Other values are available to **animate** the icon, or to display a new icon once every update interval. The values you may choose from are once every second, once every five seconds or once every ten seconds.

You can also have the icon **rotate** in the normal forward direction, or in reverse. Just click on the appropriate radio button.

You can change the **title** beneath the icon to whatever you like. More importantly, you can have other information such as the Central Meridian location displayed here as well.

The **About** box has the default icon title set to **Mars C.M.=~C**, which means to display the current Central Meridian position after the word "Mars". Note how you can add spaces between the various options to cause them to "wrap" down to the next icon title line, if desired.

If you prefer, you can change the title to be just a simple word or two, like "Mars". This may be necessary to work with some screen savers.

All the available options are listed below:

Mars options:

- ~c = Central Meridian relative to Earth to the nearest degree (i.e. 273°). Zero degrees means the Martian Central Meridian is directly facing Earth, 180 degrees means it's facing directly away, etc.
- ~C = Central Meridian to the nearest one-tenth of a degree (i.e. 273.4°).
- ~T = Time until the next transit occurs. Use with *Clock options* below. (i.e. "~T~2" will display as "04:32", meaning there's 4 hours and 32 minutes until the next CM crossing).

Clock options:

- ~1 = 12-hour format
- ~2 = 24-hour format
- ~a = "am" or "pm"
- ~A = "AM" or "PM"
- ~p = "a" or "p"
- ~P = "A" or "P"
- ~w = Weekday name as "Mon", "Tue", etc.
- ~W = Weekday name as "Monday", "Tuesday", etc.
- ~m = Month name as "Jan", "Feb", etc.
- ~M = Month name as "January", "February", etc.
- ~h = Month number (1-12)
- ~d = Day of the month number (1-31)
- ~y = Year as "94", etc. (Year without the century)
- ~Y = Year as "1994", etc. (Year with the century)
- ~o = Ordinal suffix of "Day of the month" as "st", "nd", "rd", "th", etc. (as in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.)

Example icon titles:

Title:	Displays as:
"~2 ~W ~m ~d~o"	21:05 Friday Feb 18th
"~1~A"	9:05PM

"~W ~M ~d ~Y"

Friday February 18 1994

"~y.~h.~d"

94.02.18

"Mars"

Mars

Feel free to experiment with different combinations to suit your taste.

You can select one of many different **background colors**. The default is black, but you can select white or a shade of gray if you prefer. The "transparent" color allows you to display Mars with no background, appearing on top of whatever is beneath it.

You can click the *Icon is always on top of windows* button **on** to have the **MarsIcon** icon stay visible when other windows are covering it. When on, the icon will always appear "on top of" the other windows instead of being "hidden" beneath them.

When you select the **Current Meridian** window, the current date and time and the position of the Central Meridian, in degrees, are displayed and updated every few seconds.

Press the Minimize button in the upper right corner to shrink the window back to an icon.

In the default configuration, **MarsIcon** displays the Central Meridian beneath the icon. Since this will automatically update the icon's title once per minute, this may cause some **screen savers**, which can sense such activity, to never activate. A simple solution is to change the *Icon Title* field in the **About** box to some simple word or words, such as "Mars". You will not be able to use **MarsIcon**'s clock feature (although you could still display the date), but your screen savers should work again.

Look for EARTHSxx.ZIP, a Windows icon that shows the current sunlit-side of Earth, GREDSpxx.ZIP, a Windows icon that shows the current view of the planet Jupiter and its moons and SOLSYSxx.ZIP, a Windows icon that shows the current position of the nine planets in our Solar System. All three have been released and are available at the Internet FTP sites **oak.oakland.edu** and its mirrors, **ftp.cica.indiana.edu** and its mirrors, and at the Software Creations BBS, **(508) 365-2359** (2400,N,8,1), all in the USA. All users receive the shareware versions of these programs when they register.

The current versions are **EARTHS26.ZIP**, **GREDSpx36.ZIP** and **SOLSYS10.ZIP**.

Print out the file ORDER.FRM to get a quick order form for registering **MarsIcon**. This shareware version is not cripple-ware, nag-ware or free-ware, although it will remind you every 5 times to register until the evaluation period expires. When you do register, you will receive the latest executable version that allows **UNLIMITED** use of the program with no reminder box and no expiration.

All future versions/upgrades of this program are **FREE** to registered users. When a new shareware version becomes available, just download it and copy the new files to the registered version's subdirectory. It's that simple!

The cost of the diskette and the mailing charges are all included in the **US \$10** registration fee. Personal checks, money orders and American Express travelers checks are all accepted (sorry, I do not yet accept credit card orders). If you wish, you may register for US \$20 and receive the full Borland C++ 3.1 source code and Windows resource files used to make this program as well. The source code for each future version will be available **free** for registered source-code users.

If you find **MarsIcon** useful, please upload it to other bulletin boards and/or Internet FTP sites so other people can enjoy it, too!

MarsIcon 2.6 - Order Form

Return this form along with:

US \$10: for the latest registered executable version
OR

US \$20: for the latest version PLUS the full Borland C++ 3.1
source code and Windows resource files

to:

W. Scott Thoman
41 Lee Road
Dryden, NY 13053 USA

Registered users are entitled to ALL upgrades AT NO EXTRA COST!
When a new shareware version becomes available, just download it
and copy the new files to your registered version's directory.

Personal checks, money orders and American Express traveler's
checks are all accepted. (Sorry, I do not yet accept credit
card orders). You will also receive the shareware version of
3 other icon-programs, one for Earth (EarthSun; EARTHS26.ZIP)
Jupiter (GRedSpot; GREDS36.ZIP) and (SolSys; SOLSYS10.ZIP).

Name _____

Address _____

Internet/CompuServe Address: _____

Can I e-mail it to you? ___ .ZIP file ___ UUENCODEd ___ No

Where did you hear about MarsIcon? _____

Disk size: ___ 5.25" ___ 3.5"

Comments: _____

THANK YOU!

If you have improved the existing **icons**, or have created any new icons to improve the animation, please send them to me and I might include them, along with your name and my thanks, in future versions. If I use your contributions, you will receive the latest registered executable version **free**, including the **source code**, for your efforts.

If you get the **About** box each and every time you start the program, make **sure** you have the program icon's *Working Directory* set to the directory where you have the MARSICON.EXE file. This allows the program to properly find its .INI file. Make sure your MARSICON.INI file is in the same subdirectory as the MARSICON.EXE file; if it isn't, move it to that subdirectory. This is the recommended way to keep all of **MarsIcon**'s files together.

If you prefer, you may also set the *Working Directory* to your Windows subdirectory explicitly, or just leave it blank to have it default to your Windows subdirectory. Again, just make **sure** that MARSICON.INI is, indeed, located there.

Finally, make sure the .INI file is marked as read/write (this is the default); do **NOT** mark this file as read-only.

Many thanks go to **Peter Hayes** (peter.hayes@uk.cray.com) in England for the information he supplied to me on the daylight savings time issues in the UK and Europe. Thanks also to **Eric Rickin** (erickin@umich.edu) for pointing me in the right direction, namely to **Don LeClair** (71534.3255@compuserve.com) for help on doing transparent backgrounds and having icons stay "always on top".

Hi Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa, Brian, Joe, and my wife, Robin.

MarsIcon - Revision History

- 02/18/94 Version 2.6 - Added support for transparent backgrounds. Added the "always on top" check box. Added printable order forms directly from the help system.
- 01/20/94 Version 2.5 - Added the on-line help system. Improved dialog box background.
- 12/03/93 Version 2.0 - Initial release. All options are now fully user-configurable on the About screen and saved in MARSICON.INI. Added support for all timezones, automatic daylight savings time, and update intervals. Support for displaying transit time, date and time in many formats. Improved all of the Mars icons. Using straight Windows API calls instead of OWL.
- 07/12/93 Version 1.0 - First version. Used BC++/OWL as a framework.

Any suggestions, bugs, ideas, complaints? Let me know what you think of this program so I can improve it! Please include the version number you are using in all correspondence; this is version 2.6.

Mail Address:

W. Scott Thoman
41 Lee Road
Dryden, NY 13053
USA

Internet E-Mail Address:

thoman@law.mail.cornell.edu

Thank you for using MarsIcon!

If you're familiar with the idea behind Shareware, then you know that Shareware is the ultimate in **money-back guarantees**.

Most money-back guarantees work like this: You pay for the product and then have some period of time to try it out and see whether or not you like it. If you don't like it or find that it doesn't do what you need, you return it (undamaged) and at some point - which might take months - you get your money back. Some software companies won't even let you try their product! In order to qualify for a refund, the diskette envelope must have an unbroken seal. With these "licensing" agreements, you only qualify for your money back if you haven't tried the product. How absurd!

Shareware is very different. With Shareware, you get to **try it** for a limited time, **without spending a penny**. If you decide not to continue using it, you throw it away and forget all about it. No paperwork, phone calls, or correspondence to waste your valuable time.

Software authors who use the Shareware method of distribution feel that Shareware is the **best** way to try a product. You are able to try it on your own system(s), in your own special work environment, with no sales people looking over your shoulder. Have you ever purchased a car and realized that if you could have test driven it for 30 days your purchase decision might have been different? With Shareware, these problems can be avoided - you **do** have a 30 day test-drive!

After trying a Shareware product and deciding to continue to use it, then - and only then - do you pay for it. Not only that, but Shareware is traditionally **much less expensive** simply because you are paying for the software, not the advertising and marketing that comprises the majority of the cost of most software (a one-page ad in PC Magazine, one time, can cost upwards of \$20,000). If the try-before-you-buy concept sounds like an ideal way to make your purchase decisions, you're right!

Some companies burden their products with annoying copy protection schemes because they don't trust their users. Shareware developers not only don't use copy protection, they **freely distribute** their products because they trust their users.

Someone once said that you should never trust software which doesn't trust you. This makes a lot of sense - no wonder Shareware is becoming so popular among users and developers.

Shareware is a distribution method, **not** a type of software.

Shareware is produced by accomplished programmers, just like retail software. There is good and bad Shareware, just as there is good and bad retail software. The primary difference between Shareware and retail software is that with Shareware you know if it's good or bad **before** you pay for it. Registration of Shareware products, in addition to being required, is also an incentive for programmers to continue to produce quality software for the Shareware market.

There is another significant advantage to Shareware - it allows small companies to make software available without the hundreds of thousands of dollars in expenses that it takes to launch a traditional retail software product. There are many programs on the market today which would never have become available without the Shareware marketing method. Please show your support for Shareware by registering those programs you actually use and by passing them on to others.

Thank you for your support!

