

Auto Task, Version 1.2  
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# Auto Task For Windows Version 1.2 Users Manual

## Overview

Auto Task Version 1.2 is an automated task processor/manger for Windows. Auto Task lets you schedule any *MS-DOS* or *Microsoft Windows* application to run at a specific times without user intervention. Individual tasks can be scheduled to run on a per minute, daily, weekly, or monthly basis. 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. 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.

## What's New?

The following enhancements have been made to Auto Task:

**Task Termination:** Auto Task can not automatically terminate Windows tasks directly from the task manager.

**Multiple Task Files:** Multiple task files can be maintained for greater flexibility.

**New Look:** Auto Task now uses Microsoft 3-d Window Controls in addition to a completely revamped interface, which features status bars and menu tracking. In addition, the current date/time is displayed at the bottom of the Task Manager.

**Registration:** This version, and future updates can now be automatically registered by entering the correct serial number into Auto Task.

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

**UPGRADING FROM AUTO TASK V1.0:** The data file created by Auto Task v1.0 is not compatible with the new version. The file format was changed to allow for changes which will be made in future updates. Tasks entered within Auto Task v1.0 will have to be re-entered into v1.2.

## Package Contents

ATASK12.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
REGISTER.TXT	Registration/Order form
LICENSE.TXT	License information file
PACKING.TXT	Packing list file

## **System Requirements**

- > An Intel 386 or compatible
- > MS-DOS 5.0 or greater
- > Microsoft Windows v3.1 or greater

## **Installation**

Auto Task can easily be installed by performing the following steps:

- > Create a directory in which you would like Auto Task to reside (e.g. C:\AUTOTASK) and unzip the contents of ATASK12.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 Windows, create a new program item with the following parameters:

Description: *Auto Task*  
 Command Line: *AUTOTASK.EXE*  
 Working Dir.: *C:\AUTOTASK (or whatever directory ATASK12.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.

## Tasks Menu

## **Add**

Adds a new task to the current Auto Task data file. Task processing must be disabled before a new task can be added to the database.

## **Edit**

Edits an existing task in the current Auto Task data file. Task processing must be disabled before a new task can be added to the database. Optionally, you can double-click on the item you wish to edit.

## **Delete**

Removes an existing task from the current Auto Task data file. Task processing must be disabled before a new task can be added to the database.

## **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.

## **Scheduler**

The Scheduler is the core of Auto Task. In order to ensure task database integrity, task processing must be disabled before entering the Scheduler.

When adding or editing a task, the task editor is displayed. The following options are available:

### **Task Information**

**Type:** Specifies the type of task. Two types are supported: Execute, which runs the specified application; or Reminder which displays a reminder dialog at the specified time.

**Task Description:** Specifies the descriptive name of the task.

### **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.

**Command Params.:** Specifies the command line parameters used when executing the task.

**Startup Directory:** Specifies the initial directory used when executing the task.

### **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 is executed every x number of minutes as defined by the user. The interval range can be from 1 to up to 60 minutes.

**Daily:** A daily task is executed once per day at a specific type as defined by the user.

**Weekly:** A weekly task is executed once per week, on the specific day and time as defined by the user.

**Monthly:** A monthly task is executed once per month, on the specific week number, day, and time as defined by the user.

## **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.*

Task processing must be disabled before entry into the Scheduler is allowed.

*You are trying to enter the Scheduler while task processing is still enabled. Disable Auto Task processing and try again.*

All active tasks must be terminated before entry into the Scheduler is allowed.

*You are trying to enter the Scheduler while tasks are still running. Disable Auto Task processing*

*and terminate all running tasks before attempting to enter the Scheduler 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.

*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.

*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*

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.*

## **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.*

## **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**

GEnie: B.FREESE

CompuServe: 73422,3117

Internet Address: BFREESE1@AOL.COM

If 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 1.2

- 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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## Evaluation and Registration

**This is not free software.** This license allows you to use this software for evaluation purposes without charge for a **period of 30 days**. If you use this software after the 30 day evaluation period a registration fee of \$15 US Dollars **is required**. Payment can be in Cash, money order, checks Payments in checks must be in US dollars.

Payments should be sent to:  
Brian K. Freese  
860 Lakeside Drive, #1A  
Vernon Hills, Il. 60061  
USA

Quantity discounts are available, as described in the file REGISTER.TXT.