The General Preferences Dialog

This is where you may configure some of the more 'global' functions of XTension.   You get here from the Preferences item in the Edit Menu.   Notice that there are three 'folders'....

ou probably won't need to change these prefs often, but you should know where they are and what they do.   Should you ever lose your XTension prefs from your System Folder, then you will need to set these up again.

These items are :

Auto save scripts to TEXT.
If checked, each time you save a script from the XTension script editor, XTension will automatically create a text copy of it and put it in the 'Scripts' folder in the same folder as the database.   This allows you to keep copies, and to be able to review all of your scripts using a text or script editor.

Auto sort lists.
If checked, XTension will automatically sort all lists into the preferred order each time you restart the program.   If you have carefully moved (dragged) items in lists to be next to other logical things, then you don't want to check this.

No duplicate addresses
If checked, you will not be allowed to create or change a unit which has the same physical address as another in the database.   If you want to do this and you know what you're doing, then turn this off while you make the changes, then turn it back on.   It's a good thing.

Monitor only
If checked, this copy of XTension will perform all functions as normal except that it will not send any commands out the serial port.   If there is a X-10 interface on its serial port, it will listen to events, however it will not try to actually issue commands.

This feature is specifically to support multiple Macs on a network which are operating in a 'redundant set'.

Note that there is a scripting verb which can be used to set this mode conditionally.

With version 1.5 and later, you may select this from the File menu.

Backup database every XXX minutes.
You may choose the period between automatic backups of the database. Although XTension does a good job of keeping up with this, you may want to choose a deliberate period for this.

DO write current time   (this may be 'Don't' in the pic)
If checked, XTension will write the current time of day to the database on disk.   Normally this is used to keep track of how long XTension had been down in case of a restart.

Since this is bothersome to some powerbooks, this is provided to shut it off. (If checked, it keeps the hard disk running...)
Since powerbooks are intrinsically 'battery-backed', you can
detect a powerfail and shut down 'softly'.

Save script context on Quit
This new Preferences option allows you to specify whether or not you need to save each of your scripts on each 'quit' of the application.

If you use 'local variables' with your scripts, saving them at quit will preverve their current values.   If you don't use local variables, you don't need it, and it will save some time on each 'quit'.

If you don't know what this is, then don't worry about it.

Return key is Edit or Toggle in Lists

With versions 1.7 and later, you can choose how you want to use the Return key when you have selected a unit.

Choosing Edit says that you want to edit the characteristics of the selected unit.   Choosing Toggle means that you want the Return key to turn on or off the selected unit, according to its current state.

Sunrise/Sunset
These are the calculated times for the current or next sunrise and sunset at your location.   This location is entered via your Map control panel, and the correct local time must also be set.

These times are calculated automatically by XTension each day, and at the appointed time for sunrise, XTension will run a script named 'sunrise' which you (may) have created.   Likewise at sunset, for a script called 'sunset'.

You can do anything you would like in the sunrise or sunset scripts, to change settings, turn things off or kick off your 'simulated sunrise' scripts.

The 'suntimes' are available to your scripts as variables, and there are two verbs which allow you to 'manually' offet the sunrise and the sunset to +/- 90 minutes of the 'real' calculated times.   See the scripting verbs.

Lock Windows
If checked, XTension will not allow changes to the database, nor the position of items in lists or views.   This allows you to have a simple way of preventing little fingers from messing up your arrangement of things.   This does not prevent anyone from changing the state of units etc.

Whenever you want to change things, just un-check the box.

Password
If you want one more level of security than the above check box, then you may create a password and use it to guard the same changes.   It's just a little more difficult to break.

By clicking on the Communications Prefs 'tab', we can see how to configure XTension and the serial port.