

Auto Start Manager v1.3

Introduction

Auto Start Manager extends the functionality of the Windows StartUp folder by giving the ability to conditionally start programs either at startup time or after a specified time delay.

Programs added to the Windows StartUp folder are run every time Windows starts. Sometimes it is useful to have additional control - for example, to backup important files the first time the machine boots each week. By defining programs to the Auto Start Manager instead of the Windows StartUp folder, you gain the ability to define the conditions under which the program is started.

Auto Start Manager is not a scheduler. The program is itself called from the StartUp folder when Windows is starting. It then simply evaluates the defined time and configuration dependent conditions on each of the defined programs, before deciding which programs to start. Tests are provided for day of week, time of day, time elapsed since last run, start configuration, and power mode (if APM installed). The programs are then started either immediately or after a specified time delay.

Installing/Uninstalling

Run setup.exe included in the distribution package to install Auto Start Manager. To uninstall, use the Add/Remove Programs option from the Windows control panel.

Updating existing version

If you already have a version of Auto Start Manager installed, then you can install over the previous version, or alternatively download the smaller update archive (asm13u.zip) from the Cool Bay web site, and simply replace your existing files with those from the archive.

What's new

v1.3 released 27-Nov-97

Runs the associated program if a non-executable file (e.g. "readme.txt").

Shortcuts and other files can be dropped onto main screen.

Some small changes to User Interface:

- Show delay timer on main screen
- Shows delay countdown if screen opened from system tray
- Allow sorting of items on main screen (by clicking column header)
- Add browse button for program parameters (if parm is filename)
- About box has clickable link to home page
- Default name for new items no longer has extension

Fix some bugs:

- Execute button was not starting tasks with delays specified
- Frequency specified as months/years was starting every time
- Cursor was not positioned correctly on definition screen

- v1.2 released 25-Sep-97
timer functions added:
- delayed execution
- automatic close/restore/minimize/maximize after specified time
- minimizes to system tray when timer function pending
add testing on "change" of config/power/user
command line parameter /r to force execution
remembers position of program definition screen
- v1.1 released 23-Aug-97
now runs on NT 4.0
add testing on time of day
add testing on userid
start directory dialog now includes network neighborhood
validate defined programs are executable
file open dialog mask includes all executables
icon was not changing if program changed
fix load icon error for program without icons (e.g. ms-dos applications)
fix bug which allowed duplicate on name of first item
documentation included in pdf format
- v1.0 released 06-Aug-1997

Updates

The latest version of Auto Start Manager can be found at the home page.

<http://indigo.ie/~bryan/coolbay.htm>

Please send any queries, comments or suggestions to **bryan@indigo.ie**. Your input is always welcome.

Registration

Auto Start Manager may be evaluated for 30 days. After this time you must register the program if you wish to keep using it. The registration fee is \$10 which entitles you to use this and all future versions of the program. Credit card registration is possible by following the registration link on the page <http://indigo.ie/~bryan/auto.htm>. Alternatively, you can send cash of \$10, or the approximate equivalent in your local currency, to me at the address below. Please include your email address for the registration key. No cheques please - bank charges would simply exceed the value of the cheque!

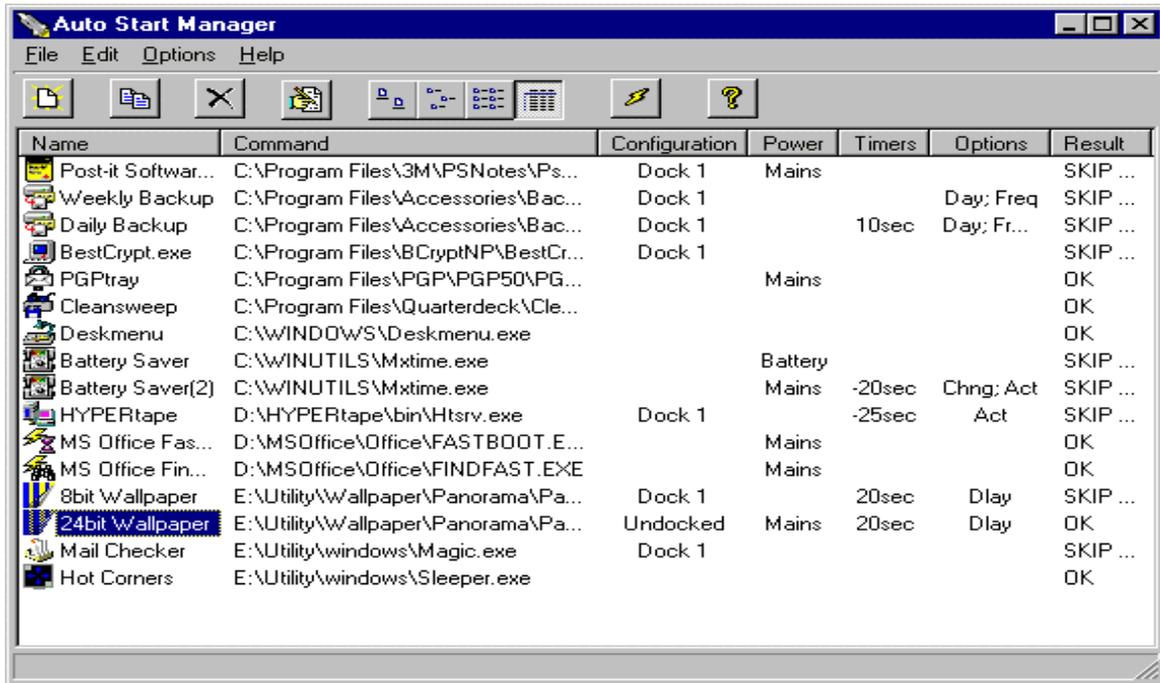
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Thanks

A special thanks to all those who contributed suggestions for the new release. I will continue to develop the program as suggestions are received.

Main Screen

When you start Auto Start Manager you will be presented with the main application screen, showing all the programs defined to the Auto Start Manager along with an overview of the conditions associated with each program. From this screen you can create, edit and delete entries.



The screenshot shows the 'Auto Start Manager' application window. The title bar reads 'Auto Start Manager' and the menu bar includes 'File', 'Edit', 'Options', and 'Help'. Below the menu bar is a toolbar with icons for file operations and help. The main area contains a table with the following columns: Name, Command, Configuration, Power, Timers, Options, and Result. The table lists various programs such as 'Post-it Software', 'Weekly Backup', 'Daily Backup', 'BestCrypt.exe', 'PGPTray', 'Cleansweep', 'Deskmenu', 'Battery Saver', 'Battery Saver(2)', 'HYPERtape', 'MS Office Fas...', 'MS Office Fin...', '8bit Wallpaper', '24bit Wallpaper', 'Mail Checker', and 'Hot Corners'. The '24bit Wallpaper' entry is currently selected and highlighted in blue.

Name	Command	Configuration	Power	Timers	Options	Result
Post-it Softwar...	C:\Program Files\3M\PSNotes\P...	Dock 1	Mains			SKIP ...
Weekly Backup	C:\Program Files\Accessories\Bac...	Dock 1			Day; Freq	SKIP ...
Daily Backup	C:\Program Files\Accessories\Bac...	Dock 1		10sec	Day; Fr...	SKIP ...
BestCrypt.exe	C:\Program Files\BCryptNP\BestCr...	Dock 1				SKIP ...
PGPTray	C:\Program Files\PGP\PGP50\PG...		Mains			OK
Cleansweep	C:\Program Files\Quarterdeck\Cle...					OK
Deskmenu	C:\WINDOWS\Deskmenu.exe					OK
Battery Saver	C:\WINUTILS\Mxtime.exe		Battery			SKIP ...
Battery Saver(2)	C:\WINUTILS\Mxtime.exe		Mains	-20sec	Chng; Act	SKIP ...
HYPERtape	D:\HYPERtape\bin\Htsrv.exe	Dock 1		-25sec	Act	SKIP ...
MS Office Fas...	D:\MSOffice\Office\FASBOOT.E...		Mains			OK
MS Office Fin...	D:\MSOffice\Office\FINDFAST.EXE		Mains			OK
8bit Wallpaper	E:\Utility\Wallpaper\Panorama\Pa...	Dock 1		20sec	Delay	SKIP ...
24bit Wallpaper	E:\Utility\Wallpaper\Panorama\Pa...	Undocked	Mains	20sec	Delay	OK
Mail Checker	E:\Utility\windows\Magic.exe	Dock 1				SKIP ...
Hot Corners	E:\Utility\windows\Sleeper.exe					OK

Display Columns

The displayed rows can be sorted in ascending or descending order for any of these columns, by clicking on the title bar of the corresponding column. The columns displayed are as follows:

Name name assigned to the defined item. New items will by default be allocated the name of the module executed (with a numeric suffix if this name is already in use). You can rename the item by selecting it and then single clicking it, or by right clicking and choosing "Rename" from the popup menu. This name can contain any meaningful text that you wish, but must be unique.

Command displays the module name to execute. Any command line parameters are not displayed here.

Configuration if the program is only to be run for a specific start configuration, then the name of the configuration will be displayed here. If this column is blank, then the program applies to all configurations.

Power displays the power status (mains/battery) for which this program should be run. For desktop machines, or if the program should be run irrespective of battery or mains (plugged-in) operation, this column will be blank.

Timers	displays the delay time (if set) before the program is started, and/or the time after execution before the specified automated action. Positive values indicate delay timer value, negative values automated actions. If no timers are set, this column will be blank.
Options	<p>gives an indication that additional restrictions apply. Any combination of the following texts may be displayed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the program should only run on certain days of the week, then the text "Day" is displayed. • if the program should only run if starting between specific times of day, then "Time" is displayed. • if execution depends on when the program was last executed (e.g. once per day), then "Freq" is displayed. • if execution depends on the logged on user, then "User" is displayed. • if execution occurs after time delay, then "Dlay" is displayed. • if execution depends on changes in environment, then "Chng" is displayed. • if a close/restore/minimize/maximize message is to be sent to the application after a predefined time, then "Act" is displayed.
Result	<p>displays the result of the last condition test or execution. Possible values displayed here are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "OK" - execution performed without errors • "SKIP" - condition tests not passed - see statistics display for exact reason. • "ERROR" - error occurred start the program - see statistics panel for more details.

Drag & Drop Support

If you drop one or more files onto the main screen (i.e. drag a program from explorer window to the Auto Start Manager main window), then a program item will be automatically defined for each of the dropped files. This is a convenient way of adding new items.

If a shortcut is dropped on the main screen, then Auto Start Manager will automatically extract the program name, parameters, working directory and run style from the shortcut, and create the appropriate program item.

Popup Menu

The name field has a popup menu accessed by right clicking on an item. The menu items are as follows.

Edit Properties calls the program definition dialog for the selected item. Same as menu Edit|Properties

Test evaluates the conditions defined for this item, and displays whether the conditions are satisfied, or have failed.

Run executes (launches) the program defined in this item immediately. This bypasses the conditional tests.

Run with Action same as run, but will also perform specified "action" (close/restore/minimize/maximize) after specified time. This option is only visible if an "action" is defined for the program.

- Cancel Action** cancels the outstanding “action” timer for this program. This option is only visible if the program was started, and an “action” event is currently pending. When the timer is cancelled, the specified action will not take place.
- Cancel Run** cancels the outstanding “run” timer for this program. This option is only visible if the program is due to be started when the specified delay has elapsed. When the timer is cancelled, the program will not be started.
- Copy** duplicates this item, and jumps to the program definition dialog for the copy. Same as menu Edit|Copy.
- Delete** deletes the selected item. Same as menu Edit|Delete.
- Rename** enters edit mode on the name field. Allows you to place any meaningful name that you want on the selected item. The new name must be unique - if it is not, then when you press enter the old name will be restored.

Main Menu

File Menu

- Save** saves the program definitions, and remains in the Auto Start Manager
- Exit** exits the application. If any changes were made, a dialog box will ask you if you want the changes saved or not.

Edit Menu

- Undelete** allows the recovery of deleted program definitions. Items deleted during the current program execution can be undeleted any time before exiting the program. Undeletion occurs in LIFO (last in first out) order.
- New** creates a new blank entry and switches to the program definition screen. If you exit the program definition screen using the cancel button, then no new item is created.
- Copy** creates a copy of the currently selected item, and switches to the program definition screen with this copy. If you exit the program definition screen using the cancel button, then no copy item is created.
- Properties** switches to the program definition screen for the selected item. Here you may modify the program definition, or the conditions associated with this item.

Options Menu

Splash Screen if checked, the Cool Bay splash screen will be displayed when the program is starting up. Unregistered versions will have this feature permanently checked after the 30 day trial period has elapsed.

Auto Run if this item is checked, then on the first time Auto Start Manager is run during the current Windows session, it will evaluate the conditions for each program defined to it, and execute those whose condition are satisfied. On completion of this, the program will terminate automatically. If this option is not checked, or if it is not the first time the program is run in the current Windows session, Auto Start Manager will simply display the main screen when called. For normal operation this option should be set, and Auto Start Manager should be included in the Windows StartUp folder. Unregistered versions will have this feature permanently disabled after the 30 day trial period has elapsed.

Registration... displays the registration dialog screen where your registration name and key can be entered. The registration key is an eight digit number that will be emailed to you on receipt of your registration.

Help Menu

Contents displays the contents page of the Auto Start Manager Help file.

About... display the About dialog box. This displays the current start configuration and power mode in addition to the program version number and registration details.

Tray Icon

When timers (delay/action) are used then Auto Start Manager minimizes to the system tray (beside the clock) while these timers are counting down during execution. You can open the main screen by clicking on the Auto Start Manager icon in the system tray. The timers will be shown counting down on the main screen. You can minimize or close the screen without effecting the timers.

Individual timers can be stopped by selecting Cancel Action or Cancel Run on the corresponding items popup menu. To stop all timers, select Exit from the tray icon popup menu. When all the timers have executed, the tray icon will be removed. If the main screen is open this will remain active, otherwise the application will terminate.

Tray Icon Popup Menu

Open opens the main screen.

Open on Top opens the main screen so that this remains on top of all other screens.

Exit terminates the program, cancelling any outstanding timers.

Toolbar Buttons

The toolbar buttons are as follows:



Create a new program entry - same as menu Edit|New



Create a copy of the selected item - same as menu Edit|Copy



Delete the selected item - same as menu Edit|Delete



Edit the selected item - same as menu Edit|Properties



Display large icons



Display small icons



Display in list mode



Display in report style (default)



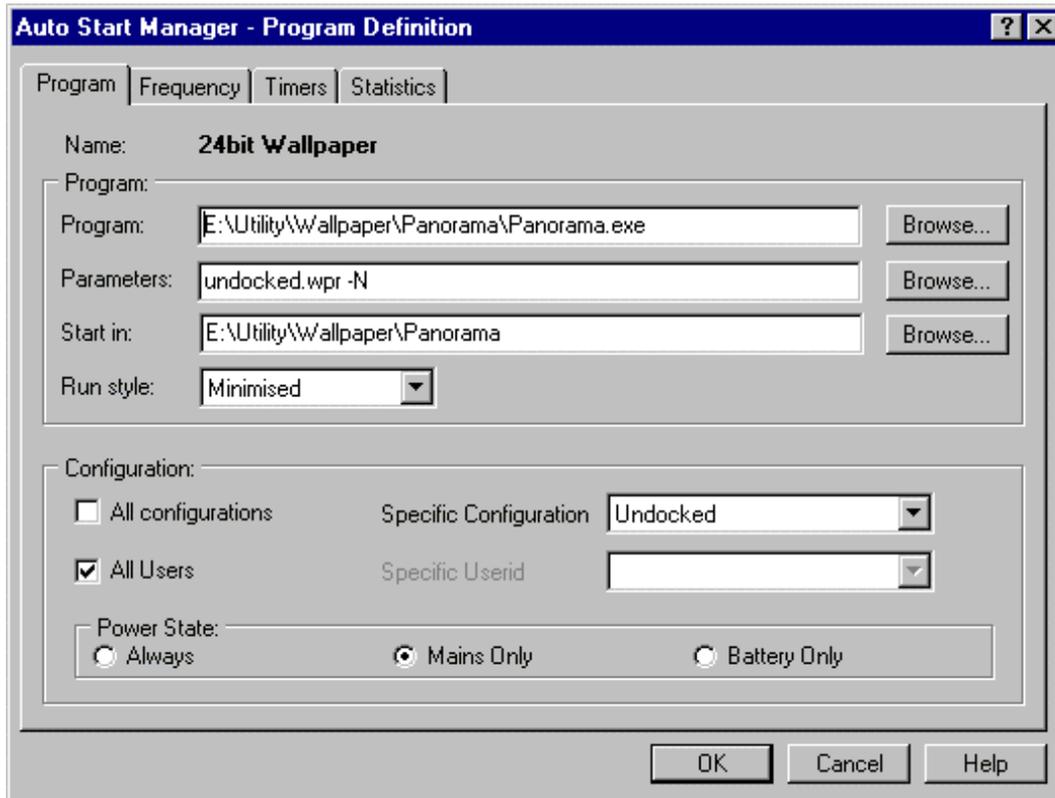
Start all programs which meet their conditions now!



Display Help "About" screen - same as menu Help|About

Program Definition

Use the program definition dialog to define the execution parameters, the conditions for selection, and to view the test/execution results. The program tab is shown below, where the execution parameters and the configuration conditions are defined.



The fields on this screen are described below.

Program Group

Defines the parameters required to start the program.

Program specifies the program, complete with path name, to be run. Note that an executable (exe, com, bat, pif) must be defined here. If the specified program is not an executable, then an error message will be issued at run time. Quotes are not required in this definition, even if the program or path names include blanks.

The Browse... button beside this field brings up the standard file open dialog which can be used to identify the program without having to type the full pathname.

Parameters specify any command line parameters required for the program. This field is normally left blank.

Start in specify the start directory for the program. This will default to the directory containing the specified program. Modify directly, or use the Browse... button to call a directory dialog from which the required directory can be selected.

Run Style use to specify the window size when the program starts. Valid styles are Normal, Minimised, and Maximised. Not all Windows applications react to this setting.

Configuration Group

Define optional testing on hardware configuration and power mode.

Configuration if the program should start irrespective of the start (hardware) configuration then set the check box for “All configurations”, otherwise uncheck this and select the specific configuration for which this program should be started. When a specific configuration is specified, then this program will only be started when Windows is booted using the specified configuration.

If you want the program to start for more than one, but not for all configurations, then simply duplicate the definition specifying different configurations in each copy.

Users if the program should start irrespective of the logon user (if any) then set the check box for “All users”, otherwise uncheck this and select the specific user for which this program should be started. When a specific user is specified, then this program will only be started when Windows the specified user logs on during boot processing.

If you want the program to start for more than one, but not for all users, then simply duplicate the definition specifying different users in each copy.

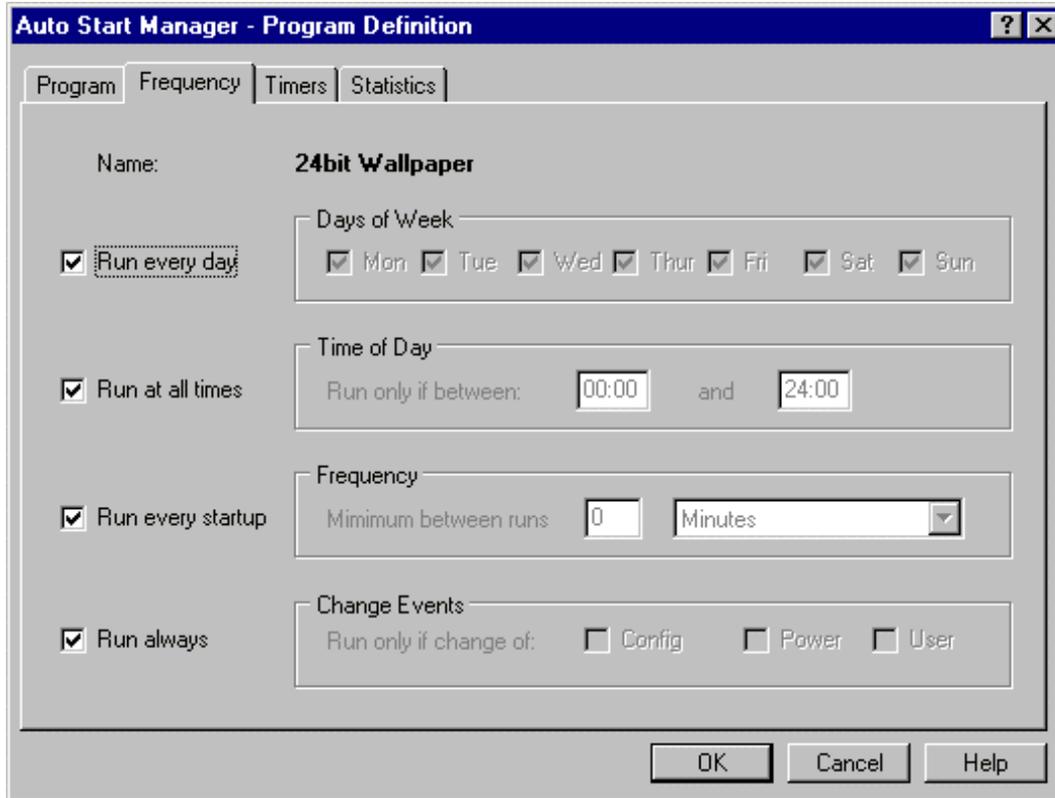
Note the this feature will only be effective if the different users share their desktop settings. In Windows NT this is not normally the case. If the desktop is not shared, then each user must define their own list of program to start.

Power State if your computer is equipped with Advance Power Management (APM), then these radio buttons are used to define the power mode for which the program should be started. The default value is “Always”, which means that the program should start irrespective of whether running on mains or battery power.

If APM is not installed, then these buttons are disabled (greyed out).

Frequency Definition

The frequency tab on the program definition dialog allows tests based on time dependent conditions.



Days of Week

By default “Run every day” is checked. If you wish the program to run only on specific days of the week, then uncheck this, and select the required day or days in the Days of Week group box.

Time of Day

By default “Run all times” is checked. If you wish the program to run only if Windows is starting at a certain time of day, then uncheck this box, and define the time from and to during which the program should be started. Use the 24 hour clock to define the times. Valid times are from 00:00 - 24:00.

Frequency

By default “Run every startup” is checked. If you want a minimum time to have elapsed between one execution of a program and the next - for example “only run this once per day”, then uncheck the run every startup box, and set the desired **minimum** interval between executions.

When calculating the interval, the minimum time is said to have elapsed when the start of the specified interval has elapsed. By this is meant an interval of, for example, 1 day will be said to be elapsed once 0:00 hours of

the next day arrives. This would mean for example, if the interval is set at 1 day, and the program is run at 23:00 (11pm), then if the next Windows start is at midnight, then the program will be executed again. If you really don't want the execution to occur for at least 24 hours, then specify an interval of 24 hours instead of 1 day.

Note also that these tests only apply to the last time the program was started by the Auto Start Manager. Executions started externally are not counted!.

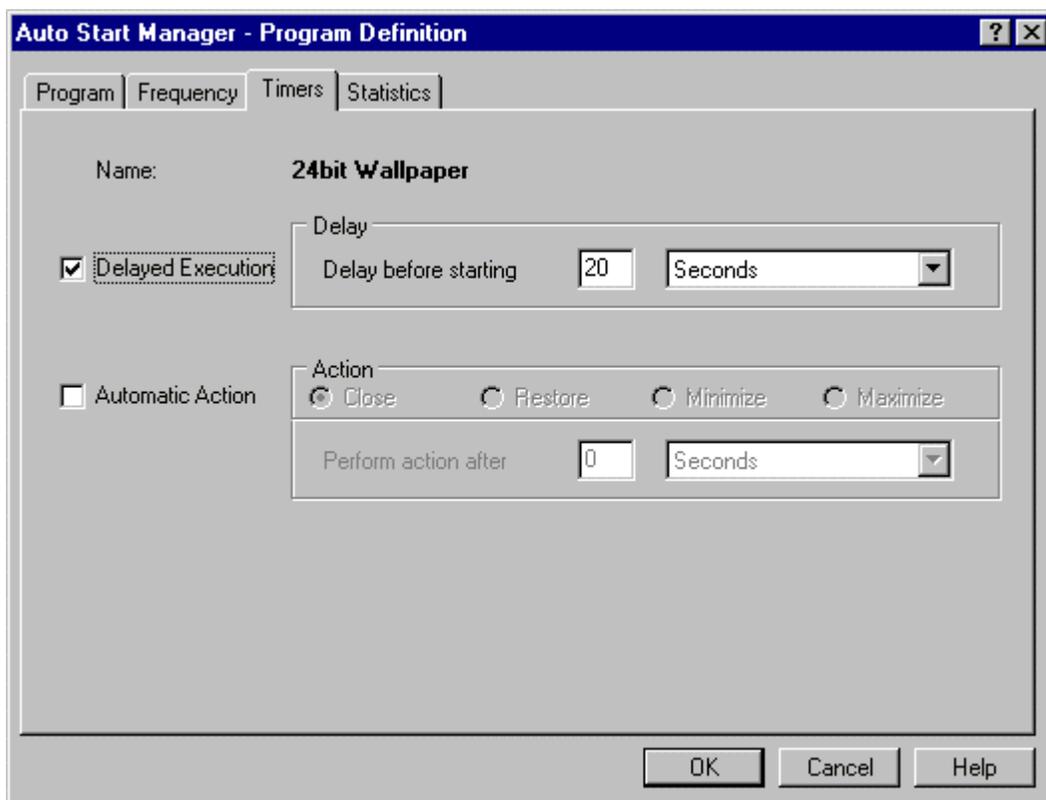
Change Events

By default "Run always" is checked. If you wish the program to run only if Windows is starting with a different Configuration, Power State, or Logged on user, then uncheck this box, and define the changes which you wish to test. If more than one of the check boxes "Config", "Power" or "User" are checked, then a change in **any** one of these items will suffice.

Timers

The timers tab on the program definition dialog allows the setting of a delay before the program is started, and also allows the automatic sending of a system command to the started application after a predefined time has elapsed.

Delays are useful to stagger the starting of applications at startup, thereby allowing you to use the computer quicker. The automatic message actions are useful for programs which complete their task quickly, but don't close themselves, and also for programs which refuse to start minimized.



Delay

If the application start should be delayed, then check the delayed execution check box, and set the required delay time in the delay group box. The delay timer countdown starts after all other (non-delayed) items have been processed. The timer is not exact – if your machine is very busy, then the delays may be longer (but not shorter) than specified. A delay time of from 1 second to 999 days is possible.

Action

Allows the sending of a system command to the application after a predefined time. If desired, then check the automatic action check box, and set the required action, and the time after which the action should take place. The action timer countdown starts after the program is started.

Note that Actions will not currently work for definitions where non-executable programs are specified (i.e. where the associated program is started). For example, if the program name is “readme.txt”, then notepad.exe is started by association – in this case it will not be possible to send notepad an action message.

Statistics

The last tab on the program definition dialog is the Statistics tab. This simply shows the date & time of the last test and execution of the program, along with the result of the last test or the last execution (if the test was successful).

