

Net Timer Pro 3.2

a software for monitoring internet usage under Microsoft Windows



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Introduction

This document is the user manual of Net Timer Pro (NTP). The software is an internet timer, it counts the time you stay on the net. This is especially useful if you are billed by hour or if your Internet Service Provider (ISP) does not let you know how much time you used the net until you receive your bill. Another nice feature for parents is the multiple user support and time limit. You could use these features to make sure your children won't pass too much time online.

Back in time (approx. 2 years ago), I needed an internet timer. A few were available but none were easy to use and most of them were not truly automatic. You had to press 'Start/Stop' button or modify your connection scripts. Nothing I found would satisfy my needs so I wrote one myself. After 5 months I had a working version. In the summer '96 the first public 16bits version (1.1) was available. The 2.0 was out in September '96. This was the first 32bits version. The 3.0 was available in May '97. It introduced multiple ISPs and multiple users support and detailed statistics for each user and/or ISP. The 3.1 fixed a few bug and added some features.

And now here is version 3.2 of Net Timer Pro !

What's new

New features in this version of NTP:

Mail checking: NTP can now optionally launch your email reader when you have new mail. You can enable this feature by clicking on Mail check in the Admin tab of the Setup.

Auto run: Using this feature, you can automatically launch selected application when you go online. For example, you could use this feature to load Netscape or Internet Explorer. This feature is effective for all users. This feature can be enabled in the Auto run tab of the Setup

Time limit bypass for Supervisor: Some user wanted to be able to stay online even when their time limit was reached. NTP now has an option that, when enabled, allow the Supervisor to bypass time limits. This feature is only available for the Supervisor though.

And of course bug fixes:

The Black box print function is finally fixed.

Password now properly saved when adding users.

The login window now allow three retries before disconnecting.

The help command now works correctly.

Features

[Below is a list of features implemented in version 3.2:](#)

- Automatic detection of connections with no user intervention and no script modifications.
- Email checking
- Launch of email reader on new email
- Loading of selected application each time a new connection is detected.
- Multiple users and ISPs support.
- Configurable time limit for each user on each ISP.
- Black box (or log file) logs every connection.
- Detailed statistics.
- Support for modem, ISDN and any supported PPP dial-up connection on Windows 95.
- Adjustable timers.
- Optional small window
- Password for each users.
- Configurable billing date for each ISP.
- Fast, easy and secure online registration
- Ease of use.

Requirements

NTP only needs Windows 95 and a PPP internet dial-up connection. It will not time anything else than a PPP connection. This might be useful if you have special serial line IPX connection or Windows for Workgroup connection. You would no want to time these connection as these are not internet connection. NTP has not been tested under Windows NT but it should work correctly.

Quick introduction

When NTP start, it will put itself in the system tray except the first time you run it. Click on the timer icon to show the main form. It looks like this:



As you see there are three timers. One for the session, day and month. The time displayed corresponds to how long a user has connected to the net using a particular ISP.

Initially when NTP load, it may have a similar appearance as above or it may show *000:00:00*. This happen when you have two or more users and/or two or more ISPs.

If you want to add users, you will have to click on *Setup* and click on the *Admin* tab. ISPs are added automatically, you do not need to enter them. NTP will detect if you use a new ISP and will add it to its list. The first time you use an ISP, you will be asked for a billing date (date at which your ISP start billing you). Every month when this date is reached, NTP will reset all timers to zero and create a new empty Black box for all users.

The Black box is where connection logs are kept. Click on Blackbox to access it. Each user has a Black box on every ISPs.

You already know enough to use NTP !

Functions documentation

Not every feature will be explained in details. The vast majority are pretty obvious and easy to understand.

Setup

The setup is divided onto four part: *Options*, *Admin*, *Misc*, *Auto run*.

In the *Options* tab, you can enable or disable Black boxes. The *Check black boxes* button has the same effect as clicking on the *Black box* button in the main window.

You can also tell NTP if it will always times every connection or ask you if it must time the connection each time one is detected.

The Warn XX minutes before disconnecting is nice: when you set a time limit, NTP will warn you XX minutes before you reach it. When it is reached, NTP disconnect you.

The *Admin* tab is where you can set time limit, add, remove users. The user window should show at least the Supervisor user. This is a special user that can enter the Setup (other can't) and view other user's Black boxes (again, other users can't do that). If this is the only user, NTP won't ask you any password because it is operating in "mono-user" mode. If you have two or more users, NTP will ask you a password when connecting, entering in the Setup or Black box. A user can view his Black box by typing his or her name and password in the login dialog box. As stated before, the Supervisor is able to check every user's Black box.

If there is no ISP in the ISPs field, click on *Cancel* in the bottom of the setup window and connect to the net. NTP will add your ISP to the list. Once you are online, you can already disconnect. Your ISP should be added to the list.

Almost all buttons are obvious. Some of them requires you to select a user and an ISP, a single user or a single ISP. The *Remove ISP* button needs some clarification. You will ***rarely*** need to use it. Suppose you use two ISPs. These ISPs will be in the list. But if you stop using one, it will remain in the list even if you don't use it. This function can be used to remove all references about this ISP inside NTP. It's only useful when you change your ISP for example.

A very nice feature is the time limit. When your time limit is reached, NTP will disconnect you. You can set limits for session and/or day and/or month. If you have children and you don't want them to use the net for more than XX hours, add a user for each of your child and set a time limit for these users.

The mail check button is also very handy. It is used to configure the automatic mail checking. If it's enabled, NTP will check your mail when you go online. Clicking on this button will show a form on which you can enable or disable mail checking. If you enabled it, you will be asked for your email username (the part before @. In *sparadis@globetrotter.qc.ca*, the username is *sparadis*), POP Host (part after the @. *globetrotter.qc.ca* in the last example), POP Port whose default value is 110 and your password (your email password, not the user password of NTP). A timeout is also requested. The default value of 30 seconds should be enough unless your email server is very slow. In case the mail checking times out, NTP will show an error message. If you have new mail, a message box will tell you how many messages you have and on which server. The Launch mail reader on new mail, when enabled, allow NTP to load your mail reader when you have new email. Use the Browse button to select the application.

The *Misc* tab contains some less often modified options. Since all of them are easy to understand, I won't tell every details.

The *Auto run* tab is where you can add application to be launched each time you go online. This feature is effective for all users. You can use this feature to automatically load you browser.

Black box

This will fire up the Black box viewer. If you have two or more user, you will be asked for your username and password. Normal users can only view their own Black box. The Supervisor can view every black boxes. The *Statistic* button provides more detailed usage statistics. The Supervisor can consult normal user's statistics.

Password

Like is says, it's function is to change passwords. If you only have one user, changing the password won't be accepted. This is normal since passwords are not needed when there is only one user. If you add a new user, you'll be able to add/modify passwords.

About

The about box contain the state of the application (demo or full version) and tell you how many remaining tries and days you have before the demo expires. The web page button will launch your browser at the NTP homepage if you click on it.

Small mode

Just a word before. If you look at the main window, you'll see that NTP does not seem to have a menu bar. In fact, there is a menu bar but it's hidden. Drag the mouse cursor near the title bar. The menu bar will appear. Drag the mouse elsewhere on the main window and it will disappear.

The Small mode is a feature to help save screen space. Click on the menu Options...Small mode. The main window will hide and a smaller window will appear containing the session, day and month timer. To move this small window, click on it. It will turn to cyan and you can drag it. To hide the small window, right click it.

Upgrading to the full version

In this new version, the demo version is fully enabled with no crippled features and you are allowed to evaluate it for a maximum of 35 days or 70 uses, whichever comes first. After this delay, NTP will disable itself and will not time any connection you make until you upgrade to the full version. The full version is identical to the demo but has no time limits and no registration reminder screens. Registered users of a major version can get the minor upgrades and bug fixes free (ex: 3.1 to 3.2 upgrade is free).

Registration now takes only a few minutes with the new MoneyPump™ online registration system from BrainTree Ltd. It is also more secure and easier. In about two minutes, you will have the full version!

To order the full version, just click on “Order full version” in the about box or registration reminder screen or click on “Register” in the main window and follow the instructions. Your order will show as from “BrainTree Ltd.” on your credit card bill. NTP can also be bought using checks or postal mandate for those who do not have a credit card.

Registered users of version 3.0, 3.01 or 3.1 may request the free upgrade by email. You will receive an authorization code that will upgrade the demo to the full version. Users of versions 1.1 and 2.xx must now buy the 3.2 version at the full normal price.

Product support

In case you have problems, questions or ideas you can email me at *sparadis@globetrotter.qc.ca*. You will receive a reply usually in less than 24 hours. Please, be specific when asking questions or reporting bugs. If you received an error message, note the text and write it in the email.

The Net Timer Pro homepage is at *<http://ntp.home.ml.org>*.

Known bugs

This is a list of known bugs in this version:

Multiple users under NTP does not work correctly with multiple Windows users profiles. In this setup, each user has it's own dedicated zone in the registry. Because NTP stores all data except the Black boxes in the registry, this causes the data to be scattered in each user profile. Each time you logon as a different user under Windows, NTP will show different data. A workaround to this problem would be to create a special internet user profile under Windows that everyone will use when connecting to the net. This is the only know workaround until this bug is fixed.

The window of the Small mode feature may sometimes stick to the mouse. If this happens, you will have to kill Net Timer Pro with the Task Manager. For example, the bug happens when you, while dragging the window, press Ctrl-Esc to bring up the Start menu and releasing the mouse button. While an application is loading, dragging the window a lot can also create this bug.

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