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About AtoB

AtoB is a simple routeing package that occupies a small amount of desktop and hard disc space. It provides accurate mileages between two places with up to one via place. It generates the AA recommended route, which has been carefully selected to provide the best combination of speed and clarity. The gazetteer of places names that can be selected includes over 15,000 towns, villages, road junctions, places of interest and even a few pubs along the way.

In addition AtoB provides you with costing facilities on any combination of a fixed base cost, cost per mile/km and cost per hour.

How To Use AtoB

Simply enter your required start and destination places into the <u>from</u> and <u>to</u> edit boxes. When you move onto the next field in the AtoB window, AtoB will lookup the place name you typed in it's <u>gazetteer</u>. It will then present you with a list of places, with the best match selected. Select your required place name and this will be entered in the place name field.

Once you have entered the start and destination place names AtoB will automatically calculate the route for you, if the auto-calc feature is turned on. The route time, distance and outline directions will be displayed in the appropriate fields of the <u>AtoB window</u>. You can turn off the auto-calc feature by unchecking the auto-calc option in the <u>Options menu</u>. Use the <u>Calc button</u> to calculate a route if you deactivate the auto-calc feature.

If you add a place name to the <u>Via</u> edit control AtoB will calculate a route in two sections, from the <u>From place</u> to the <u>Via place</u>, and then from the <u>Via place</u> to the <u>To place</u>.

If you wish AtoB to calculate the cost of a route, enter values in the costs dialog by selecting the <u>Options/Set Costs menu option</u>. All costs are specified in the format £££.ppp. This dialog allows you to specify the <u>fixed base cost,</u> the <u>cost per unit distance</u> and <u>cost per hour</u>. These values are added together and displayed in the Cost field.

Command Line Options

AtoB accepts only a single command line parameter. This should be the name of the Routeing Network to load, i.e. BRITAIN.

If you do not specify a full path to the Routeing Network file AtoB will search for it in the following places:

o   Current working directory.
o   The directory from which AtoB was started.
o   The directory specified in the NETPATH environment variable

The NETPATH environment variable must be loaded into your current environment settings for the final search location listed above.

If the network files cannot be located, AtoB will not initialise with a Routeing Network and you will need to manually load a network using the File/Open Routeing Network menu option. Alternatively, amend the command line parameter to specify a valid network.

Routeing Networks

A routeing network consists of a set of files grouped by a common filename prefix. The British routeing network uses the filename prefix BRITAIN as the base name for its network files.

To specify a routeing network to load into AtoB you must specify the network definition file. These have a .NET filename suffix or extension.

You may want to associate the ".NET" filename extension with AtoB so that you can quickly load a routeing network from File Manager or Explorer or some other file manager on your system.

AtoB Window

From

This is where you enter the starting place for your route. Type the name of the place and press <Tab> or <Enter>, or click on some other field in the dialog. This will bring up the select place dialog which will allow you to select the place that best matches your entry, from the AtoB Gazetteer.

To

This is where you enter the destination place for your route. Type the name of the place and press <Tab> or <Enter>, or click on some other field in the dialog. This will bring up the select place dialog which will allow you to select the place that best matches your entry, from the AtoB Gazetteer.

Via

This is where you enter a waypoint for your route that you go to after leaving the start place and before arriving at the destination place. Type the name of the place and press <Tab> or <Enter>, or click on some other field in the dialog. This will bring up the select place dialog which will allow you to select the place that best matches your entry, from the AtoB Gazetteer.

Distance

This displays the total distance for a calculated route. It is display in the distance unit selected in the Options menu.

Time

This displays the total time in hours and minutes for a calculated route.

Cost

This displays the total cost for a calculated route. It is based upon the fixed base cost + the distance of the route multiplied by the cost per unit distance + the time for the journey multiplied by the cost per hour. The cost values are entered in the Set Costs dialog.

Calc

This button calculates the route. It is disabled unless a valid 'from' and 'to' place are specified.

Route Text Headings

When a route is calculated and displayed in the Route text window these describe each column of text.

Acc.   corresponds to the accumulated route distance.
Dist.   corresponds to the incremental route distance.
Road   corresponds to the current road.
Place   corresponds to the place names along the route.

Route text

This control lists the recommended route between the places specified in the from, to and via place edit controls. It lists the road number used to reach a place and the places reached at each road number

change along the route. The accumulative distance and incremental distance between each place where the route changes is also listed.

Status Line

This displays the current AtoB action. It additionally summarises the menu items, when you scroll down with the mouse or the cursor keys.

File

This menu allows you to open a <u>Routeing Network</u>, print the current route text, modify the printer setup, and exit AtoB.

File/Open Routeing Network

If you do not specify a <u>Routeing Network</u> on the AtoB command line or wish to load a network from a different location then you should use this menu option. This activates the Open dialog from which you must select the routeing networks <u>Network Definition file</u>.

File/Print

This option prints the current routes text to your default printer. It is initially disabled and is only activated when a route is entered and calculated.

File/Printer Setup

This option activates the printer setup dialog for your default printer.

File/Exit

This option saves the current configuration settings and exits AtoB.

Edit

This menu allows you select all of the route text and copy the selected route text to the clipboard.

Edit/Copy route text

This option copies the currently selected route text to the clipboard. It is initially disabled and only activated when some or all of the current route text is selected.

Edit/Select all route text

This option selects the entire contents of the route text display.

Options

This menu allows you to configure some aspects of the way AtoB works. These options include changing the font used for printing routes, setting the route costs, modifying the appearance of the main AtoB window, automatically calculating routes, and setting the default distance unit for all routes.

Options/Printed routes font

This option displays a font selection dialog box. This can be used to select the font, font style and point size to be used when printing routes.

It initially displays previously selected font characteristics. If you change these characteristics and accept the changes, the next time you invoke this dialog it will display these new settings. These new settings will also be used for all future printouts.

The font settings is saved to disk when you exit AtoB.

Options/Set costs

This option displays the Set Costs dialog. It enables you to specify what charges you wish to apply for journeys and have AtoB calculate the cost for routes.

Options/Shrink main window

AtoB initially starts up in it's standard window mode. This view can be reduced to minimise the space that AtoB occupies on the screen. By selecting this option the AtoB window resizes itself and the status line, route text display and route text headers are hidden.

Options/Restore main window

When the AtoB window has its size changed by selecting the Shrink main window menu option the window size is changed and the menu option changes its name to Restore main window. This enlarges the AtoB window back to its original size.

The size state of the main window is saved to the configuration file when AtoB exits. AtoB starts up with the same size window that it was previously specified.

Options/Always on top

AtoB can optionally be configured to float on top of all other windows. When this option is selected, AtoB will appear to float on top of all other applications on the desktop, whether AtoB is in full-size mode, shrunk mode or minimised to an icon.

This option is initially not selected. AtoB saves the state of this option to the configuration file when it exits.

Options/Auto calculate routes

When a place name is changed, AtoB can automatically recalculate the route and display the new route's text. This option is initially selected but if you prefer to manually tell AtoB when to calculate the route, you can press the Calc button on the main window.

This option is initially selected. AtoB saves the state of this option to the configuration file when it exits.

Options/Miles
Options/Kilometres

These two options specify which measurement unit is used for distance. When a unit is selected, the other selection is cleared. When the unit distance selection changes AtoB redisplays the current routes route text in the new distance units. The <u>distance</u> and <u>cost fields</u> are also updated to reflect the change.

AtoB initially selects Miles as the default unit. The status of this option is saved to the configuration file when AtoB exits.

Help

This menu provides access to this Help file and the About AtoB dialog box.

Help/Index

Invokes this help file.

Help/About

Displays the About AtoB dialog box.

Set Costs dialog

There are three different types of costing that can be applied. Any or all may be used simply by specifying a cost.

All costs are initially set to zero and any changes you make are saved to a configuration file by AtoB when AtoB exits.

Fixed base cost.

This is a one-off cost for all routes.

Cost per unit distance.

This is the cost per mile or kilometre, depending on the distance unit selected in the Options menu. It is applied to the total distance of the route.

Cost per hour.

This is the cost applied to the time of the route for each hour or part there of.

Select Place dialog

This dialog appears when you modify the name of a place in either the from, to or via place fields in the main window. It displays the AtoB gazetteer and initially selects the best match that AtoB has found for the place name you specified.

Select the correct place by double clicking the place name or select it with the mouse or cursor keys on the keyboard and select OK. The full name for the selected place will be placed in the place name field that you modified. If the Auto-calc mode is enabled AtoB will then attempt to calculate the route, if a valid route has been specified.

You can cancel the dialog by pressing <Escape> or by clicking the Cancel button.

The gazetteer can be scrolled up and down alphabetically. The only difference from a normal Windows listbox control is the scrollbar thumb which always remains in the centre of the scrollbar. It can only be dragged to the top or the bottom of the scrollbar to move the listbox to the start and end of the gazetteer respectively.