

METER's main functions are available anytime from the METER menu in the system menubar. You can also bring up a dialog anytime by pressing its key combination:

ctl-opt-P	=	Project (to create or switch projects)
ctl-opt-T	=	Tasks (to create or switch tasks)
ctl-opt-C	=	Charges (to charge for your time)
ctl-opt-D	=	Documents (to select the kinds of documents to record)

Alter these key combinations in Owner nfo.

Select 'Open METER' to launch the METER control panel and view your records.

Select 'METER off' to suspend METER's monitoring functions temporarily. This toggle is always reset when you restart your system.

Select a project or task name from the appropriate menu to switch to that project or task. If a project is listed with an ellipsis (...), then a password is required and the Projects dialog will appear. Some projects may not appear in the menu, if their "Include in menu" option has been turned off.

Tasks should appear in alphabetical order. Projects are listed in order of recent activity.

You can define a separate Project to record all work you do toward a single goal, or for a single client, customer, or other identifiable “account.” Within any project you can divide your work into discrete Tasks. Whenever you switch to another project, METER automatically assumes you are resuming the same Task as the last time the project was active.

To create or switch projects, enter its name and password; if you have typed the information correctly, the ‘OK’ button becomes active. If the name entered matches no existing project, click ‘New’ to create a new project by that name. The ‘New’ button remains disabled if the current project is not authorised to create sub-projects.

You can create or delete any number of projects, or change their privileges, without actually switching your current active project. Just click ‘Cancel’ when finished, instead of ‘OK’. You can use the METER menu to bring up a project's name even while the dialog is on screen (this may not work on all Macs).

You can edit project names, passwords, addresses, and other information in the Project info screen.

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Tasks

Fig.2

You can define Tasks to record specific jobs done within a project, or to define certain kinds of work that you do for multiple projects. If you set a billing rate specific to a task, that rate overrides the current project's normal rate for the duration of the task (while following the same billing scheme, e.g. hourly rate or daily fee).

To create or switch tasks, enter its name; if you have typed the information correctly, the ‘OK’ button becomes active. If the name entered matches no existing task, you can click on ‘New’ to create a new task by that name. The ‘New’ button remains disabled if the current project is not authorised to create tasks.

To edit an existing task name, click on ‘Edit’, make your changes, then click ‘Set’.

You can create, edit, or delete any number of tasks without actually switching your current

active task. Just click 'Cancel' when finished, instead of 'OK'. You can use the METER enu to bring up a task name even while the dialog is on screen (this may not work on all Macs).

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Documents Fig.3

Open a document of the kind you want recorded, then choose Documents from the METER enu. Make sure the correct application's signature is displayed at the top of the dialog. Turn on 'Record documents', and use the 'list current documents' menu to select the currently open document. A number should then appear in the 'window type' field; this identifies the internal specification for the kind of window to record.

Normally you should leave the 'Use ... window' menu set at 'best guess', and METER will choose which of an application's windows is likely the one you are working in. (Sometimes applications keep invisible or other non-document windows open, so the type number alone is not enough.) If you select 'frontmost', METER just uses the first window it sees of the type you specify. If you select 'most recent', then METER will continue logging time to a window record even after the actual window closes, until a new window of the same type is opened or the application quits. You might use this, for example, with modem software that displays a connection window only at the start of a session.

Turn on 'follow name changes' to keep a document's data collected under its single, most recent name. This will record fewer of your 'Untitled' work windows. However, some applications may use the same window for different documents, which METER would lump together under one name (not what you want). You can experiment to see what works best for you.

Click on the Lock button to prevent accidental changes to your settings. The settings can be unlocked only when a project of equal or higher privileges is active.

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Charges Fig.4

You can bill your projects by hourly rates, periodic (subscription) fees, a flat price, or itemised charges.

To set a basic rate, make sure the 'Base' button is lit, and enter a dollar figure. Use the pop-up menu to set when and how the rate is applied. To set a charge ceiling, make sure the 'Max' button is lit, and enter a dollar figure. Use the pop-up menu to set when and how the maximum is calculated. See Data types for more info on billing schemes.

To enter custom items, make sure the 'Item' button is lit, then enter an item name, quantity, and cost. If all three fields are filled correctly, the 'No' and 'OK' buttons will be enabled and the 'Done' button disabled. Click OK or No. Repeat with any remaining items.

Shareware fees work the same way as project charges.

METER-aware shareware programs may propose their rates for your approval when first run. The Software dialog will appear automatically with its shareware section filled in; you can adjust the settings as you like, or simply switch off shareware status. If the program proposes itemised charges, you must refuse or accept each charge (using the 'No' or 'OK' buttons) before you can exit the dialog.

Click on the 'Info' button to edit a mailing address or other information for the displayed project or software. This address or info can later be included in invoice-style output.

Click on the Lock button to prevent accidental changes to your settings. You can only unlock the settings when a project of equal or higher privileges is active. If you lock the settings with the 'Items:' box checked, then individual charges can still be entered freely.