# Auto Start Manager v1.7

## 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, network connection, 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 (asm17u.zip) from the Cool Bay web site, and simply replace your existing files with those from the archive.

## Version History

v1.7    Released 13th of July 2000
        New feature to define the order of startup for programs.
        Import/Export now also save registration & advanced options settings.
        More options on network testing, with TCP/IP testing, and including test if dial-up connection active.
        Some changes to screen layout to make it easier to understand.

v1.6    Released 29th of August 1999
        Add network testing to allow programs to be started/skipped depending on presence of network resources.

v1.5    Released 9th of July 1998
        Add optional wait for idle or completion after starting item.
        Allow editing of global entries via menu option.
        Add export/import function to allow saving of startup definitions.
        Use new style flat buttons on toolbar.
        New install/uninstall routine used.

v1.4    Released 8th of March 1998
        Add optional delay time before any items are executed.
        Allow entries to be temporarily disabled without having to delete the definitions.
        Global entries can be defined common to all users under NT.

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 and 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 on the web site.

**http://www.autostartmanager.com/**

Please send any queries, comments or suggestions to brendan@coolbay.net. 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 $20, 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://www.autostartmanager.com/auto.htm.

Alternatively, you can send cash of $20, or the approximate equivalent in your local currency, to me at the address below. Please include you email address for the registration key. It is also a good idea to email me if you have sent cash in the post, so that I can send you a registration key immediately. No cheques please - bank charges would simply exceed the value of the cheque!

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## *Acknowledgements*

Auto Start Manager is written using C++ Builder v3.0 (http://www.inprise.com/).

The help file was produced using helpMATIC Pro v1.23 (http://www.btinternet.com/~harb/).

Auto Start Manager uses the freeware Delphi component TTrayIcon written by Derek Stutsman (dereks@metronet.com) and modified by Pete Ness (pete@nessoft.com) and Alexander Meeder (ameeder@dds.nl). Auto Start Manager also uses the freeware C++ Builder component TExeVer by Imran Hussain (imranh@imranweb.com).
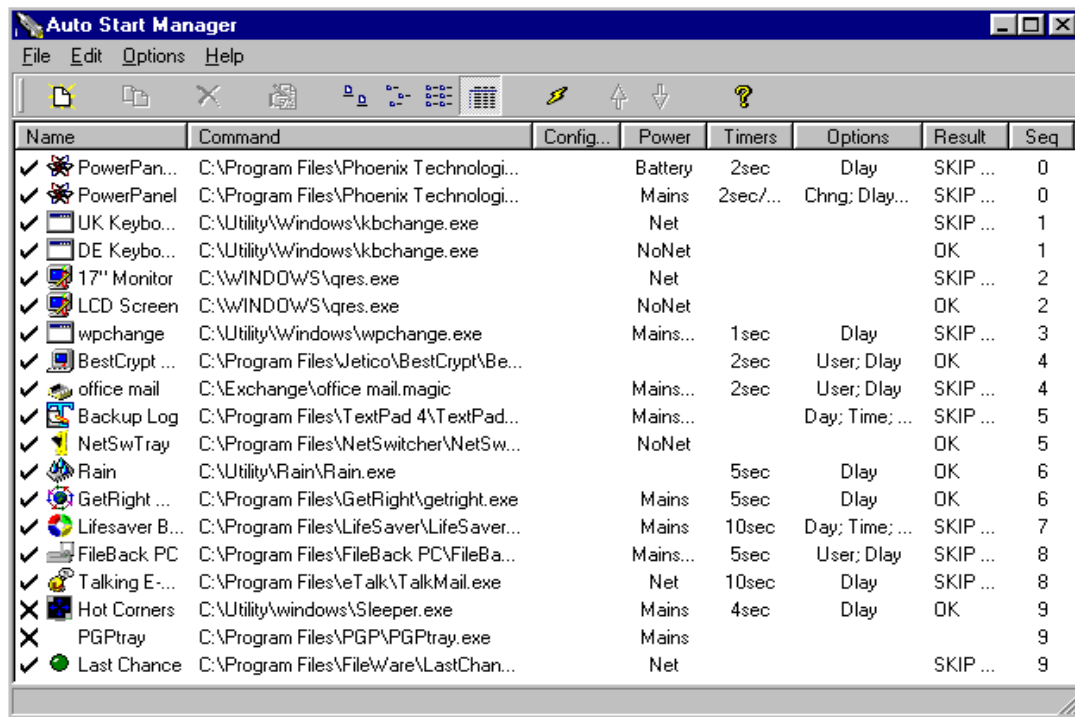
Auto Start Manager installation uses the freeware Inno setup program v1.3.11 http://www.jrsoftware.org/ written by Jordan Russell.

Some code snippets were taken from the Borland C++ Builder newsgroups, including the Dial up Networking test code written by Corey Murtagh (emonk@ihug.co.nz).

Thanks go to the numerous users who have provided suggestions for improving the program and who helped in the beta testing.

## *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.



## *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.

                  The checkmark to the left of the icon shows if this definition is enabled or disabled. Entries with a checkmark ✔ currently enabled, while disabled entries are shown with an ✖ beside them. Entries defined globally (see section on Global user definitions in NT), are shown here with the letter **G**.

**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), network attachment (attached/not attached), dial up networking state (dialed/not dialled) for which this program should be run. If the program should be run irrespective of battery or mains (plugged-in) operation, and irrespective of network attachment and dial up status, 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 a delay timer value, negative values automated actions. If no timers are set, this column will be blank.

**Options** Gives an indication that additional restrictions apply. Any combination of the following texts may be displayed.
- "*Day*" if the program should only run on certain days of the week.
- "*Time*" if the program should only run if starting between specific times of day.
- "*Freq*" if execution depends on when the program was last executed (e.g. once per day).
- "*User*" if execution depends on the logged on user.
- "*Dlay*" if execution occurs after time delay.
- "*Chng*" if execution depends on changes in environment.
- "*Res*" if execution depends on presence/absence of a specified network resource.
- "*Act*" if a close/restore/minimize/maximize message is to be sent to the application after a predefined time.
- "*Idle*" if wait for idle occurs after starting this program.
- "*Wait*" if wait for completion occurs after starting this program.

**Result** Displays the result of the last condition test or execution. Possible values displayed here are:
- "*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 on the error.

**Seq** Displays the startup sequence. Items with sequence number 0 will be processed before sequence 1 etc. Sequence is used to determine the order in which the programs are started.

## 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*

A popup menu is 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

**Disable**      Disable this entry. Disabled entries are ignored at startup. This is a convenient way of temporarily removing entries from the startup processing, which may be required again at a later date.

**Enable**      Enables entry that was previously disabled.

**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

**S**ave                Saves the program definitions, and remains in the Auto Start Manager.

**Export…**        Saves the program definitions to a text file. This text file serves as a backup and can also be used to copy the definitions to another user or machine.

**Import…**        Loads the program definitions from a text file (produced by the export command). If existing definitions of the same name already exist, then you will be given the option of overwriting these.

**E**x**it**            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.

**Delete**          Deletes the currently selected item.

**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.

**Global**          Switches to editing the global definitions. Global definitions are provided for use on NT machines where different users logon. The global definitions apply to all users of the machine. This menu option only appears when currently editing local (standard) definitions, and when the user has sufficient authorisation (i.e. administrator rights) to edit global entries.

**Local**          Switches back from editing the global definitions to editing the normal definitions.

## Options Menu

**A**dvanced…    Displays the advanced options dialog box. This is described below.

**R**egistration… 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.
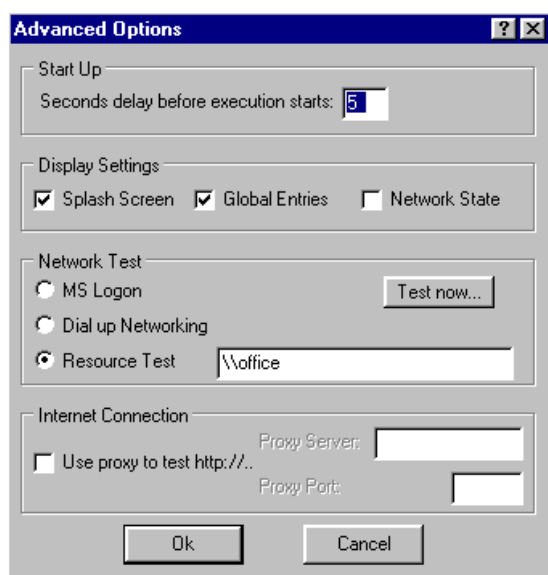
## Help Menu

**C**ontents      Displays the contents page of the Auto Start Manager Help file.

**A**bout…       Display the About dialog box. This displays the current start configuration and power mode in addition to the program version number and registration details.

### *Advanced Options*

The advanced options dialog screen is selected from the options menu.



## Start Up Group

Defines the behaviour of Auto Start Manager when executed.

**Seconds delay**  Specifies an optional delay time before Auto Start Manager will start any programs. On startup, Auto Start Manager will be minimised for the specified time and will show the delay countdown in the title text. While this is happening the application

may be closed by right clicking on the program icon, and choosing the menu item "Close". In this case no program will be started.

## Display Group

Set some display options.

**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.

**Global Entries**  If checked, then all definitions will be displayed. If unchecked, Global entries will be suppressed. Global entries are definitions common to all users of this PC. This feature is provided mainly for use with NT where each logon user has his/her own startup folder.

**Network State**  If checked, then the network connection state will be tested and displayed any time the help/about box is displayed. The default is unchecked which gives a faster display of the help/about box.

## Network Test Group

Defines how to test for presence of a Network.

**MS Logon**  Auto Start Manager will attempt to automatically determine whether a network is present or not based on whether a logon was done to MS networking. The automatic detection depends on the NIC (Network card) being removed from the machine when no network is present. This will only work for notebook PC's where the PCMCIA network card is physically removed, and even then does not work in all cases! Generally it is recommended that you do not use this setting.

**Dial Up**  Auto Start Manager tests to see if a dialup connection is active.

**Resource Test**  Here you can enter a named network resource. Auto Start Manager will attempt to locate the specified resource. If it is found, then the network is "present", otherwise the network is "not attached". The named network resource can be in any of the formats described in the following section.

**Test now…**  Test for the presence of the network using the definitions entered here. Use this to check that the test you specify is working the way you expect.

## *Network Resource Tests*

Auto Start Manager supports four different types of testing for network resources.

1.  UNC resource in the form \\server\… UNC resources are used for testing for other PCs or servers in a LAN environment. Any valid UNC name may be used, but there may be some small

differences in the syntax allowed depending on the network. In some cases a trailing backslash may need to be appended to the UNC name. Some examples are shown below:

> \\server
> \\server\sharename
> \\server\sharename\filename.type

2.  File/Drive name in the form x:\…. File/drive name tests are used primarily for testing removable drives, but can also test for the presence of a specific file. The drive specified may be a local drive, a removable drive or a mapped drive. There are some differences between NT and 9x in the syntax variations allowed. Some examples are shown below:

> L:
> L:\
> L:\directory\filename.type

3.  http address in the form http://…. Any valid http address (name or ip address) can be specified here. The tested address must be running a web server. Auto Start Manager uses http protocol to attempt to retrieve a page from the specified web address (actually it only reads the header of the page, rather that the complete page). Note here that if your dial up networking settings are set to dial automatically, and if you specify a domain name (as opposed to an IP number), then the network test may cause a dialup connection to be initiated. This can be by avoided if you specify an IP address instead of a name. Some examples are shown below:

> http://www.coolbay.net
> http://192.168.127.129

4.  Pingable IP address or name. Any value specified for the network resource that does not begin with a backslash, or "http:" or have a colon as the second character is assumed to be an ip name or address, and Auto Start Manager will attempt to "ping" the specified address. In contrast to the http address test, there is no requirement for a web server to be running at the specified address, however similar to the http test, if your dial up networking settings are set to dial automatically, and if you specify a domain name (as opposed to an IP number), then the network test may cause a dialup connection to be initiated. This can be by avoided if you specify an IP address instead of a name. Note that some internet servers, most notibly www.microsoft.com, are set not to respond to ping. Some examples of ping are shown below:

> www.coolbay.net
> 192.168.127.129

## Internet Connection

Allows the specification of a proxy server to be used if testing a network resource using http. This is not normally required, but may be necessary if you are testing from behind a firewall which only allows web access via a proxy server.

## *Global user definitions in NT*

When using Auto Start Manager under NT, and depending on system policies possibly also under Win 95/98, different users of a machine each have their own desktops. In such a situation the users will also have their own copies of Auto Start Manager definitions. To allow the sharing of these definitions, Version 1.4 introduced support for globally defined entries that are shared by all users.

Global entries are normally suppressed from the main screen display, but can be included by setting the option "Display Global Entries" on the Advanced options dialog. Global entries are displayed with the letter **G** before the program name on the main screen. These entries may only be viewed/copied in this mode.

To create or alter a global entry, select the menu item "Global" in the Edit menu. You must have Windows Administrator rights to do this - if you don't then this menu option will not be displayed. Global entries can then be created or altered. For convenience your own non-global entries are displayed (with the letter **L** before the entry) and these can be copied if required into global entries.

Global entries should only be used if different users logon to the one machine, and if you find that definitions made by one user are not visible to another user.


## *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*

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 that meet their conditions now!
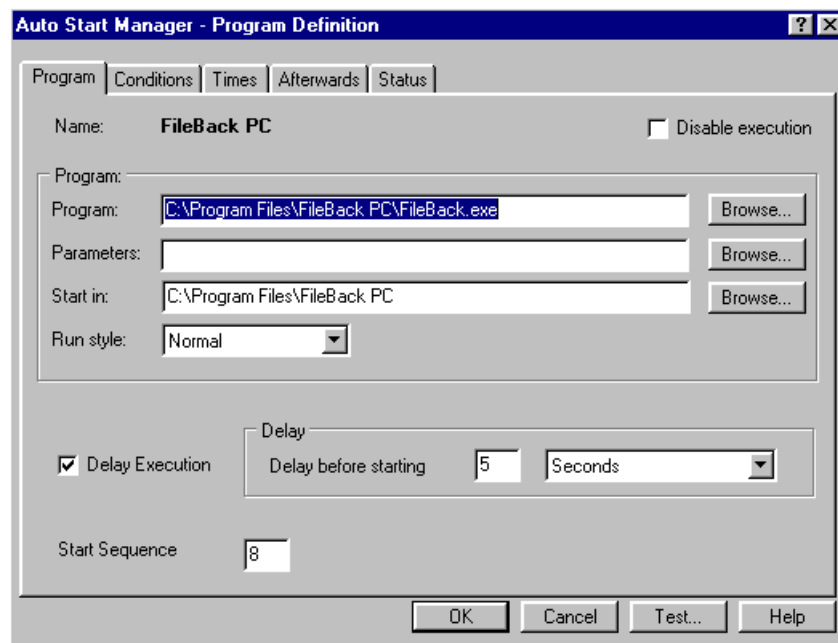
Increase sequence number (start program later)

Decrease sequence number (start program earlier)

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.

The Disable execution check box shown after the name allows the disabling of the program definition. Disabled entries can still be edited and started manually (from the popup menu on the main screen), but will not be considered for execution at program startup. Disabled entries are shown with an ✖ beside the entry on the main screen. Enabled entries have a checkmark ✔ .

## 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. The Browse… button beside this field brings up the standard file open dialog which can be used if you need to pass a filename as a parameter to your program.

**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.

## Delay

If the application start should be delayed, then check the delay execution check box, and set the required delay time in the delay group box. The delay timer countdown starts after all other items with the same or lower sequence number 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.
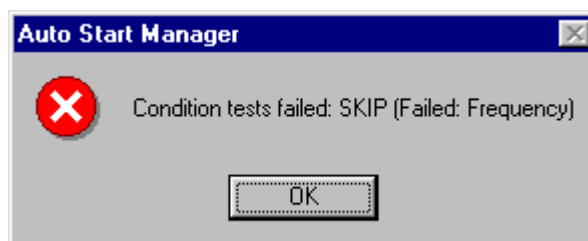
## Start Sequence

Start sequence is a new feature that controls the order in which programs are started by Auto Start Manager. Lower sequence number items are processed before higher sequence numbers. By default all programs are set to sequence 0.

It is not necessary to allocate unique sequence numbers to the individual programs and nor is it necessary to allocate numbers sequentially. Auto Start Manager makes multiple passes through the definitions, first processing items with sequence number 0, then sequence 1 and so on until all sequence numbers have been processed. Delay timers only start counting down when the corresponding sequence number is processed, and so this can easily be used to set a time between 2 programs being started.
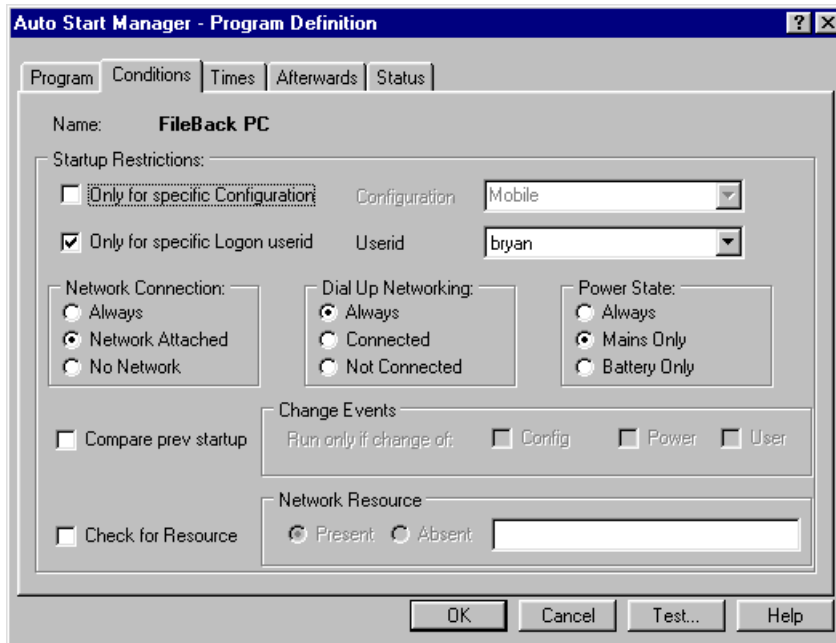
## *Test Button*

The Test… button allows you to test the defined conditions to see if they are currently satisfied. A message box is displayed with the result of the test.

## *Conditions Definition*

The conditions tab on the program definition dialog allows the definition of testing on hardware configuration, user, power and network states.



Startup Restrictions

Note that if any one condition test fails, then the program will not be started.

**Configuration** If the program should start irrespective of the start configuration (hardware profile) then leave the "Only for specific configurations" check box blank, otherwise check 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 program definition specifying different configurations in each copy.

**Users** If the program should start irrespective of the logon user (if any) then leave the "Only for specific Logon users" check box blank, otherwise check 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 the specified user logs on to Windows during boot processing.

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

Note that 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. In this case common entries can be defined by using the "Global" entries feature (see section on Global user definitions in NT).

**Network Connection** Specifies whether the program should be started depending on whether the PC is connected to a network or not.

If the program should start irrespective of whether the PC is connected to a network or not, then set the radio button to Always (default). Alternatively set Network Attached or No Network as appropriate.

Note that the test that Auto Start Manager uses to determine the network connection state is defined on the Options|Advanced screen.

**Dial up Networking** Specifies whether the program should be started depending on whether the PC is currently dialed up or not.

If the program should start irrespective of whether the PC is dialed to a network or not, then set the radio button to Always (default). Alternatively set Connected or Not Connection as appropriate.

If you specifiy Connected or Not Connected here, this test is performed independent to the network connection test specified on the Options|Advanced dialog.

**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).

## Change Events

By default "Compare prev startup" is unchecked. If you wish the program to run only if Windows is starting with a different Configuration, Power State, or Logged on user than at the previous startup, then check 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.
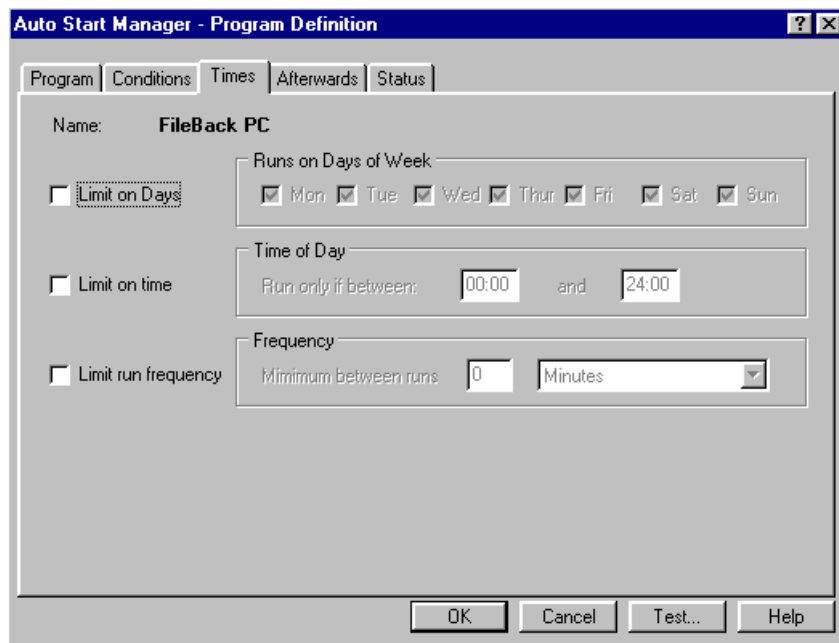
## Network Resource

By default "Check for Resource" is unchecked. If you wish the program to run only if a specific network resource is present (or absent), then check this box, and define the resource that you wish to test for (e.g. \\Myserver).

This option is provided in addition to the generic Network Present/Absent test that is defined on the Options/Advanced page, and selected above in the network connection radio button. The generic test is performed once per execution while the specific test is performed for each individual program. As each network test can take a number of seconds to perform, the generic test should be used where possible.

## *Times Definition*

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



## Days of Week

By default "Limit on Days" is unchecked. If you wish the program to run only on specific days of the week, then check this, and select the required day or days in the Days of Week group box.

## Time of Day

By default "Limit on Times" is unchecked. If you wish the program to run only if Windows is starting at a certain time of day, then check 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 "Limit on Frequency" is unchecked. 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 check the run every startup box, and set the desired **minimum** interval between executions.
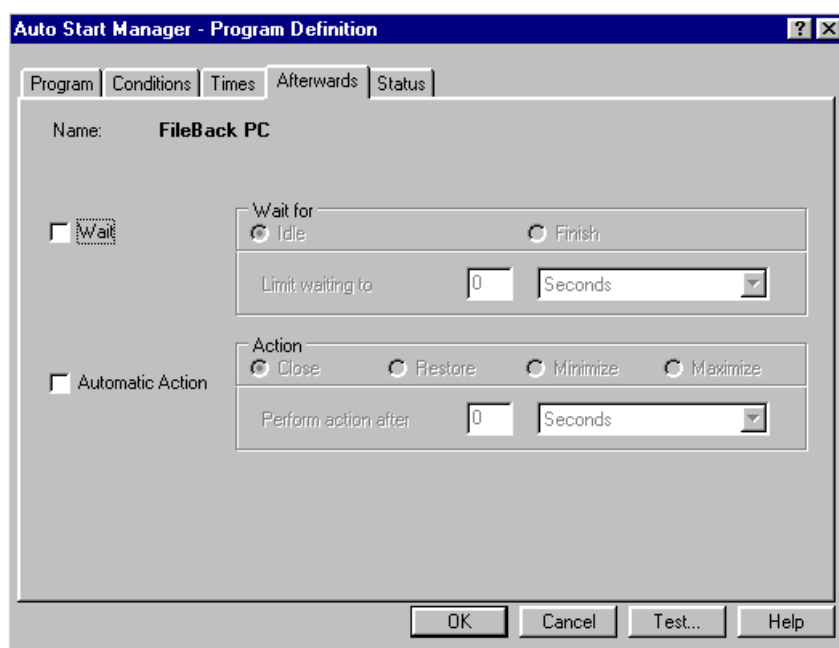
When calculating the interval, the minimum time is said to have elapsed when the start of the specified interval has elapsed. By this is meant an interval of, for example, 1 day will be said to be elapsed once 0:00 hours of the next day arrives. This would mean for example, if the interval is set at 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!

## *Afterwards*

The afterwards tab on the program definition dialog allows the setting of a delay after 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.

## Wait

Stops further processing by Auto Start Manager until the started program is idle, has completed, or until the specified time limit is reached. This feature allows serialisation of programs at startup.

Because Auto Start Manager enters a wait state when this option is used, it is important that a realistic time limit is specified on the wait, as not all programs enter an idle state, or indeed finish when expected. In any case a non-zero time limit must be specified, as a limit of 0 seconds means no waiting.

By default no wait occurs.

## Action

Allows the sending of a system command to the application after a predefined time. To use this feature 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.

## *Status*

The last tab on the program definition dialog is the Status 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).