

PingPlotter Standard as a service with FireDaemon

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Question

I'd like to have PingPlotter Standard running continuously - even when I'm not logged in. Is this possible?

Solution

PingPlotter Pro runs natively as a Windows Service (for more details, [see here](#)), but PingPlotter Standard runs only as an application. This means that you need to be logged into Windows for PingPlotter Standard to trace and alert. There may be cases, however, where you want PingPlotter to start automatically when Windows boots, without having to be logged in as a user.

Windows services, under Windows NT, 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista, are designed to run when Windows boots, and to run without a user interface. This is an ideal way to run a monitoring application that can work without a user interface.

If you want to run PingPlotter Standard as a Windows Service, you'll need to enlist the aid of an additional application. There are several tools available that can do this, but one of the most powerful and easy to use is [FireDaemon](#), a handy utility that will enable you to run just about any application as a service.

This article will walk you through the ins and outs of configuring PingPlotter for operation as a service using FireDeamon.

Prerequisites:

- Windows NT, 2000, XP, 2003 or Vista (not 95, 98 or ME).
- PingPlotter Standard 3.20s or higher, installed on your workstation (this does not work with Pro, which has its own service capabilities).
- Administrative rights on the installed workstation.

Note: These instructions were created using FireDaemon version 1.9, although other versions should be similar.

FireDaemon Installation

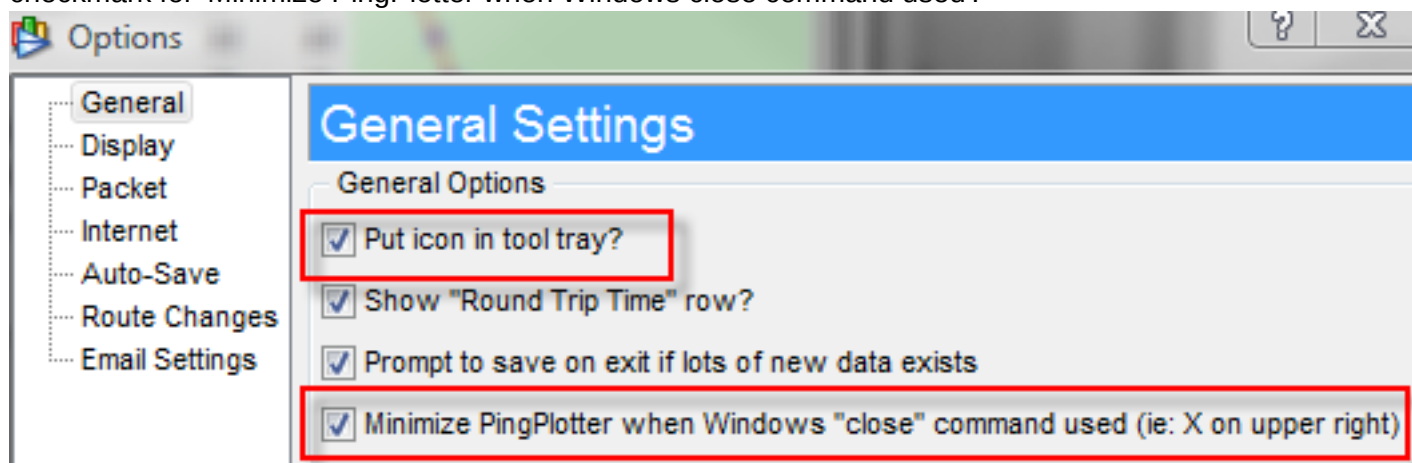
We assume that you already have PingPlotter Standard installed on your workstation. You'll also need to have FireDaemon installed. Download it from <http://www.firedaemon.com/downloads/> and install it by running the downloaded installer (you'll need to be an administrator for this to work). If you have questions or problems with this step, please consult the FireDaemon documentation and website.

Configure PingPlotter for monitoring

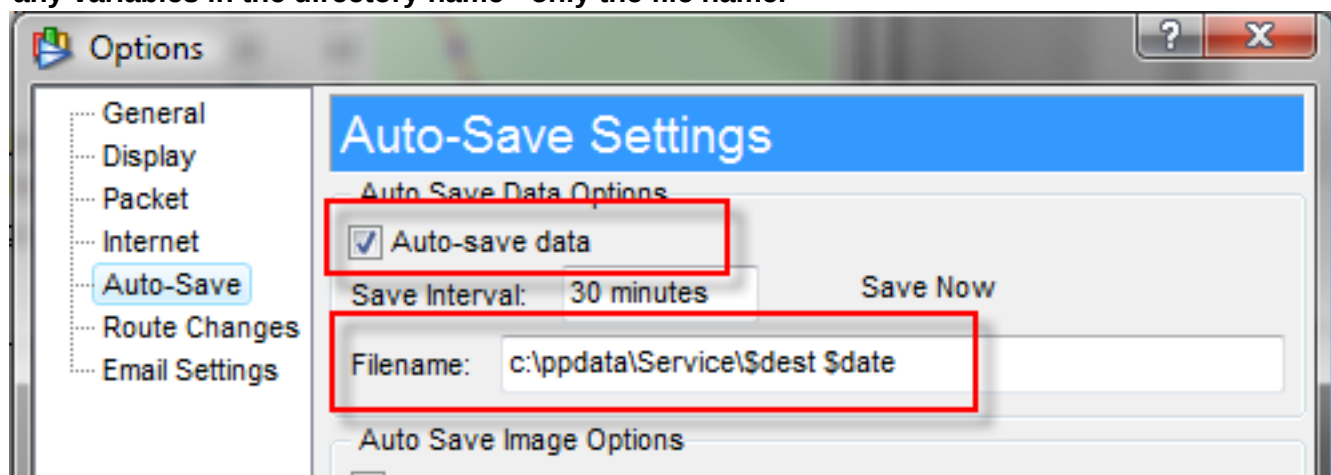
Before creating a service, let's get PingPlotter Standard working and tracing to the target of your choice. We're also going to configure auto-save, which makes sure a power outage or other crash doesn't cause

PingPlotter to lose data. You can change these settings later, so don't worry if you change your mind.

Trace to a target of your choice. Example: www.pingplotter.com Collect several samples (more than one). **Set PingPlotter to minimize instead of close. Go to Edit->Options, General and turn on** the checkmark for 'Minimize PingPlotter when Windows close command used'.



Set PingPlotter to auto-save data. Go to Edit->Options, Auto-save and turn on Auto-save data, set your 'Save Interval' to 30 minutes, and set your Filename to 'c:\ppdata\Service \$dest \$date'. Do not use any variables in the directory name - only the file name.



- Open PingPlotter Standard.
- Create a directory used for auto-save. We usually use c:\ppdata, so we'll assume you used this. If you want to save it elsewhere, that's fine, too, but we won't cover that. This directory should be on your local hard drive, though - you don't want to cause PingPlotter problems if you lose a network connection and it's trying to save right then. Use Windows Explorer to create a c:\ppdata directory, or do it in the next step from the save dialog.
- Save the collected data to a 'starting out' file, in c:\ppdata\Service Autosave.pp2. Go to File->Save Sample Set... in PingPlotter. Save that data to c:\ppdata\Service Autosave.pp2.
- Set PingPlotter to have a tray icon (View -> Put icon in tool tray).
- Close PingPlotter.

Make sure you're not getting a PingPlotter Standard licensing warning here, or PingPlotter won't launch correctly. For best results, you should be using a licensed version of PingPlotter.

Install the PingPlotter Standard Launch Helper

PingPlotter Standard isn't built to run as a service, and it doesn't tie together it's 'load file at startup' capabilities with it's 'auto-save' capabilities. We've written a little helper utility that will make things work a bit better. In particular, this helper application will start PingPlotter with the latest save file - either the auto-saved

file (from the schedule configured above), or from the file that was saved on shutdown (if PingPlotter was closed normally).

- [Download the helper application.](#)
- Extract the contents of the .zip file to your PingPlotter Standard install directory (probably c:\Program Files\PingPlotter Standard).

Configure FireDaemon to launch PingPlotter

FireDaemon, by default, will create several shortcuts to launch the 'Service Manager'. You can launch the service manager by either using the desktop shortcut, the Start Menu shortcut, or one of the other shortcuts created by FireDaemon.