

Job Scheduling Software

Automate recurring operations



The growing number of job-scheduling packages that work in a Windows 2000 and Windows NT environment signals the maturation of

Windows in the enterprise and of Windows users themselves. For years, as Windows played second fiddle to UNIX and legacy IBM OSs in large organizations, Microsoft did little to position its OS within a traditional IT operations framework. Finally, in

a move to help customers implement a highly reliable and effective IT organization, Microsoft made available the Microsoft Operations Framework. The framework, which consists of white papers, operations kits, assessment tools, best practices, case studies, templates, support tools, and services, includes a Windows 2000 Operations Guide series that provides a wealth of concepts and procedural information covering a variety of operations topics.

One topic the Operations Guide series covers is job scheduling (you can access the Job Scheduling Operations Guide at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/windows2000serv/maintain/opsguide/jobschog.asp>.) Mainframe-based IT shops have long used job-scheduling packages to reduce total operating cost, to more reliably carry out routine and predictable application maintenance and reporting tasks, and to make better use of available computing resources.

IT shops that run UNIX or IBM OSs are finding that the kinds of operations management tools they

use to manage legacy systems are now available for Windows. Many of this issue's listed products support only Windows environments, but several packages let you centrally manage jobs between a variety of OSs. One particularly intriguing product takes a data-centric, rather than a task-centric, approach to job scheduling. That product's approach lets specific data values trigger other jobs to run and makes it easier to create database maintenance jobs. Some listed products also provide special support for specific third-party application software packages. For example, one job-scheduling package lets you automatically reconfigure your SCSI or fibre channel network so that a backup job stream can move a tape drive from one server to another and back up each server's storage at local-device speeds. Other job scheduling products support complex job dependencies, conditional execution, and drag-and-drop job stream development.

Some job scheduling systems can detect specific error condi-

tions that cause a scheduled job to abend and automatically execute a job to recover from the error. Other job scheduling systems can track changes to production job definitions and implement procedural controls to ensure that someone tests and approves changes to production jobs before they run.

Although you can use job-scheduling packages by themselves, they are just a piece of the larger operations management puzzle. All full-featured systems should log all job executions to tell you who executed a job and when, whether the run completed successfully, and the resources that the job consumed. Job scheduling systems that help you collect performance-related data make performance analysis much easier. Larger organizations that have large workloads need to balance the workload across multiple application servers. Job-scheduling packages let you monitor CPU, memory, and disk utilization across several computers and submit a batch job to the least-used server.

If you've never worked outside a Microsoft environment, you might find the IT operations concept foreign. The Job Scheduling Operations Guide provides a good introduction to the job scheduling aspect of operations. And with the variety of feature sets and price ranges in this Buyer's Guide, you're sure to find something to meet your needs.

—John Green

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The Buyer's Guide summarizes vendor-submitted information. To find out about future Buyer's Guide topics or to learn how to include your product in an upcoming Buyer's Guide, go to <http://www.win2000mag.com/buyersguide>. To view previous Buyer's Guides on the Web, go to <http://www.win2000mag.com/articles/index.cfm?action=buyersguides>.

Compiled by Sue Cooper

Contact Information	Product Name	Price	Description
Advanced Systems Concepts 201-798-6400 800-229-2724 http://www.activebatch.com	ActiveBatch	Starts at \$595	Schedules and manages your calendar and events jobs; designed for Win2K and NT systems; supports job execution on UNIX and other platforms, the windows Security Model, and Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI) for event processing; features include dependencies, performance monitoring, alerts, job streaming, a Web client, and workload balancing
APCON 503-639-6700 http://www.apcon.com	AUTOSWITCH 2000	Contact vendor for pricing	Monitoring and scheduling software for Win2K, NT, and Windows XP systems and servers; the APCON network components let you network connections; supports Storage Area Network (SAN) interoperability testing and operates unattended or on demand
AppWorx 425-644-2121 877-277-9679 http://www.appworx.com	AppWorx Enterprise Scheduler	Contact vendor for pricing	Lets you automate applications and balance workloads; is scalable enough to control an entire enterprise environment; integrates with application software
Arcana Development sales@arcanadev.com http://www.arcanadev.com	Arcana Scheduler 2.3	\$55	Provides scheduling options and basic batch-control features, such as job chaining, execution conditions, and status notification; supports loading user profiles and environment variables and mapping network drive letters when you run jobs under user accounts; lets you perform remote administration
Argent Software 860-674-1700 http://www.argent.com	The Argent Job Scheduler	Contact vendor for pricing	Can schedule as many as one million jobs per day on Win2K, NT, Sun Solaris, Hewlett-Packard (HP), and AIX systems; has all the features of a mainframe scheduler but with a modern client-server environment; features full autofailover, forecasting, archiving, and 24 x 7 technical support
Author Direct Shareware 306-789-4328 http://www.schedulewizard.com	Schedule Wizard Automation Edition	\$49	Automation software that lets you use integrated email, FTP and Web clients, and Zip technology; you can display messages, start applications, send key presses, reboot, start and stop services, and copy, move, and delete files and folders; features flexible scheduling options; lets you trigger events by event, by hot key, or as scheduled
Badger Network Technology (44) (0) 1306-883-882 enquiries@badgernt.com http://www.badgernt.com	ActivityScheduler	Starts at \$4500	Scheduler that runs interrelated jobs on multiple Windows, Open VMS, UNIX, and Linux platforms with full condition handling, multiple dependencies, flexible reporting, and choice of notification methods; uses a building-block approach for designing complex job sets; provides remote system management for the production environment
	ActivityScheduler Lite	Starts at \$375	Aimed at organizations with a central Win2K or NT machine that serves a small network of Windows PCs and workstations; has the full functionality of the standard product
Code Blue Technologies (61) (2) 6253-3375 contact@liquidtime.com http://www.liquidtime.com	Liquid Time 2.0	\$399 per server	Enterprise-capable batch-job scheduler that features integrated Win2K and NT security, centralized job management, user-friendly GUI, scheduling, and embedded basic scripting
Computer Associates 631-342-5224 800-225-5224 http://www.ca.com	Unicenter AutoSys Job Management	\$10,500 per server	Centralizes and automates job scheduling and management in distributed NT and UNIX environments; provides the functionality of mainframe batch scheduling with features such as self-correcting job control, centralized systemwide monitoring, and programmable error-recovery; offers Motif, NT, and Windows 95 consoles so that customers can mix and match scheduling components for their NT and UNIX environments

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Cypress Technologies 661-831-1836 http://www.cypressnet.com	AutoTask 2000	\$49.95	Task scheduler with flexible scheduling options; can run as a service or background process; lets you launch tasks based on conditions such as file change, process running, and file exist; can process multiple commands per task; supports Win2K, NT, and Win9x systems
	LaunchPad	\$29.95	Task scheduler for Windows that targets the single or corporate user; features flexible scheduling options; supports conditional scheduling; supports Win2K, NT, and Win9x systems
FabSoft 973-208-2112 888-580-9336 http://www.fabsoft.com	ShortCut	\$95	Automation tool based on visual interactive desktop technology, which lets you control any Windows or DOS-based application; you activate the software by using hot keys, schedule timers, or a mouse click; includes Internet Web form solutions, import utilities, custom fax interfaces, a function library to let you manipulate databases, and sample code that demonstrates how to use the functions
NORTHERN Parklife 813-639-0767 800-881-4950 http://www.northernparklife.com	OptiMover 1.5	\$1595	Automates data movement and performs defined actions when triggered by a customizable event, such as a database change, a file modification, or time- and date-related parameters; can execute programs and replicate, move, and import database records and files; works across sites and platforms; provides full logging with versatile displays
Opalis Software 416-253-9383 888-672-5471 http://www.opalis.com	Opalis JobEngine	\$199 per license	Advanced job scheduling and automation tool for Win2K and NT environments; automates routine tasks and multistep job sequences; provides parallel scheduling capabilities to automate IT processes
	OpalisRobot	\$999 per license	Comprehensive monitoring and automation solution; features a GUI that provides realtime monitoring, notification, corrective action, and event-driven job scheduling to enable proactive administration of Win2K and NT environments; monitors system resources and automates network administrative tasks to improve availability and performance
Orsyp Software 781-276-4600 888-560-0787 http://www.orsyp.com	Dollar Universe	Contact vendor for pricing	Cross-platform job scheduler; Cooperative Architecture, which equips each server with automation capabilities, is scalable and fault tolerant, minimizes network traffic, and continues operation during network or server outages; features Management Units, which are object-based logical views that enable rapid system updating and modification; supports Win2K, NT, UNIX, VMS, MVS, and AS/400 systems
TIDAL Software 650-475-4600 877-558-4325 http://www.tidalsoft.com	sys*ADMIRAL	Starts at \$15,000	Provides multiple-platform support, job-, file-, and WMI-dependency support, automated corrective action processing, extensive alert notification, and a Web-based interface; integrates with SAP, PeopleSoft, NetIQ's AppManager, and HP OpenView.
Unisyn Software 213-738-1700 888-786-4796 http://www.unisyn.com	AutoMate Professional	\$179.95	Lets you build automation tasks and deploy them to workstations and servers locally or across the network; features more than 100 available actions, event-monitoring triggers, and an optional Enterprise Connectivity Server in an intuitive drag-and-drop development interface
Vinzant 219-942-9544 800-355-3443 http://www.globalecs.com	Global ECS	Starts at \$7995	Provides an automation framework that lets you gain control of your production environment and manage your mission-critical applications