

Automatic Scheduling Using AutoTrack Command Line Options

Applies to AutoTrack and AutoTrack Pro v3.1.11 and higher

A feature added in v3.1.11 allows you to use Command line options to set AutoTrack to automatically scheduling output for a defined period using 'command line switches' that can be appended to the desktop shortcut and more importantly, can be executed automatically using the Windows Task Scheduler functions.

The format for automatically scheduling is:

```
/SCHEDULE /Start=<StartDateTime> /End=<EndDateTime> {/QUIT}
```

The date format is a modified version of the XML datetime standard.

The format is:

```
<yyyy-mm-dd | nowday[<+|->x]>T<hh:mm[:ss] | nowhour[<+|->y]>
```

Basically you have a date on the left and a time on the right separated by a "T".

A date can either be yyyy-mm-dd (eg 2006-08-30) or a relative date such as "nowday-3".
A time can either be hh:mm:ss (eg: 14:32:55) or just hh:mm. It can also be relative by hours. e.g: "nowhour+5".

You do not have to specify both components. You can just use the date or the time on their own. The part you missed out defaults to nowday for dates and nowhour + 1 for times.

The optional */QUIT* causes AutoTrack to exit once it has completed scheduling. Note that any message boxes will remain on screen and you cannot run AutoTrack again until you have clicked the OK button. If you are using User Security you will need to use further command line options and should contact support@psquared.net for more information.

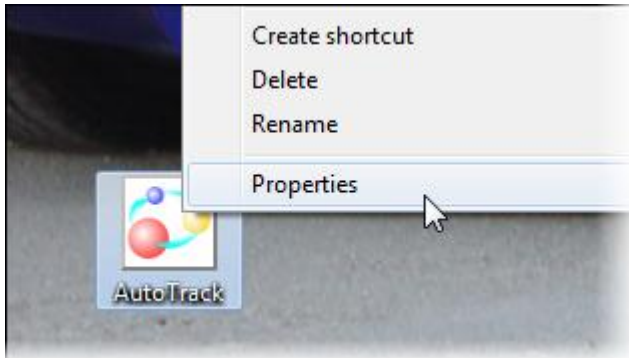
That is the technical description of the option but it would probably be more useful to see an example. Let's say we wanted to force AutoTrack to schedule 3 days ahead. The reason for doing 3 days ahead is that it builds in some redundancy to the process. AutoTrack will try and schedule 3 days ahead each day but the next 2 days would have already been scheduled (the previous day assuming there was no problems) so AutoTrack would only actually schedule the 3rd day.

First we will look at how to create an icon on the desktop that you can manually click on to run auto-schedule. We will then look at an alternative method that allows the process to happen automatically every day using Windows Task Scheduler.

Create A Desktop Icon That Can Be Manually Run

Please note that if you just want it to happen automatically using Windows Task Scheduler then you can skip this section.

1. We start by creating a new shortcut for AutoTrack (tip: you can drag the icon from the start menu to your desktop to do this).
2. Right click on the new shortcut and select 'Properties'



3. We are interested in the 'Target' box as this is the location of the application the shortcut will run and it is here that we need to add the extended command line to. This is the un-edited 'Target' location for AutoTrack on a typical installation.

"C:\Program Files\P Squared\Autotrack v3\AUTOTRCK.exe"

So now we need to append the command line option to force AutoTrack to automatically schedule 3 days and then quit whenever this shortcut is used.

For this simple example, we are not interested in a specific date or specific hours, only in AutoTrack starting and scheduling from today, ahead 3 days. So we use the NOWDAY tag for the 'Start=' section and NOWDAY+3 for the 'End=' section. Finally we add the {/QUIT} tag to the end to tell AutoTrack to shutdown when it has finished.

So the finished modified 'Target' should read:

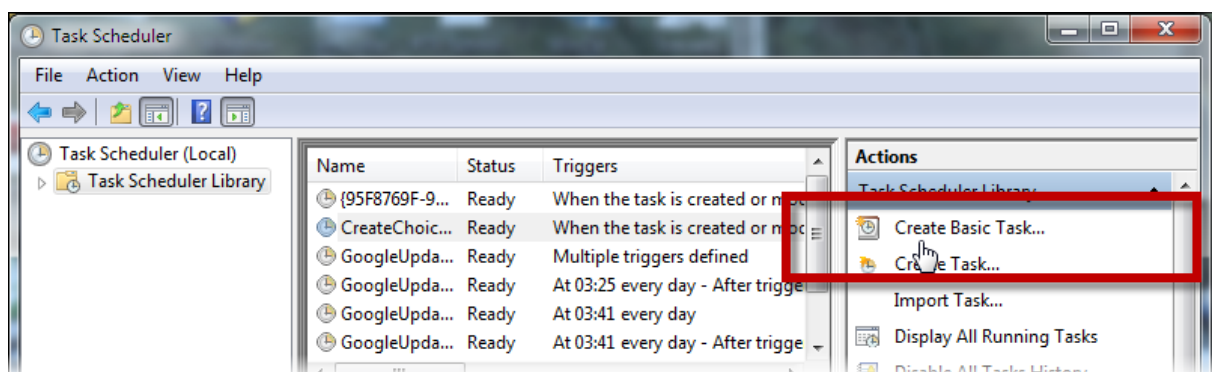
"C:\Program Files\P Squared\Autotrack v3\AUTOTRCK.exe" /SCHEDULE /Start=NOWDAY /End=NOWDAY+3 {/QUIT}

Obviously you can get more complicated with it but the basic idea is the same.

4. So now if you double click on the modified shortcut, AutoTrack should start, schedule 3 days and then shut down again. Give it a try at this stage and make sure it works.

Create An Automated Process Using Windows Task Scheduler

1. Start by running Windows Task Scheduler (tip: on Windows 7 just hit start and type 'task' into the search box to find the Windows Task Scheduler)
2. Click on the Create Basic Task option. This will open a wizard that will walk you through creating a task.



3. Give the Task a name and description.



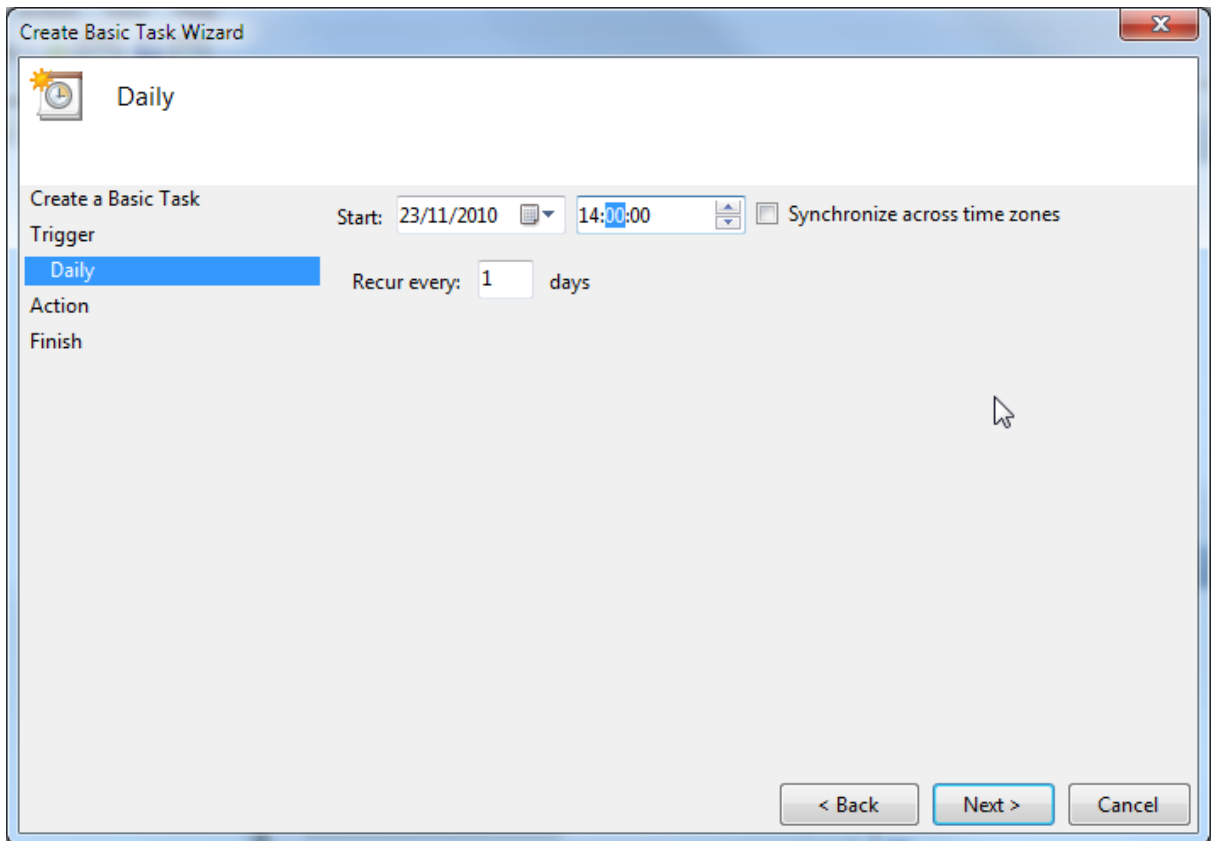
Create a Basic Task

Create a Basic Task	Use this wizard to quickly schedule a common task. For more advanced options or settings such as multiple task actions or triggers, use the Create Task command in the Actions pane.
Trigger	
Action	Name: <input type="text" value="AutoSchedule 3 Days Using AutoTrack"/>
Finish	Description: <input type="text" value="Using AutoTrack to schedule station output for 3 days"/>

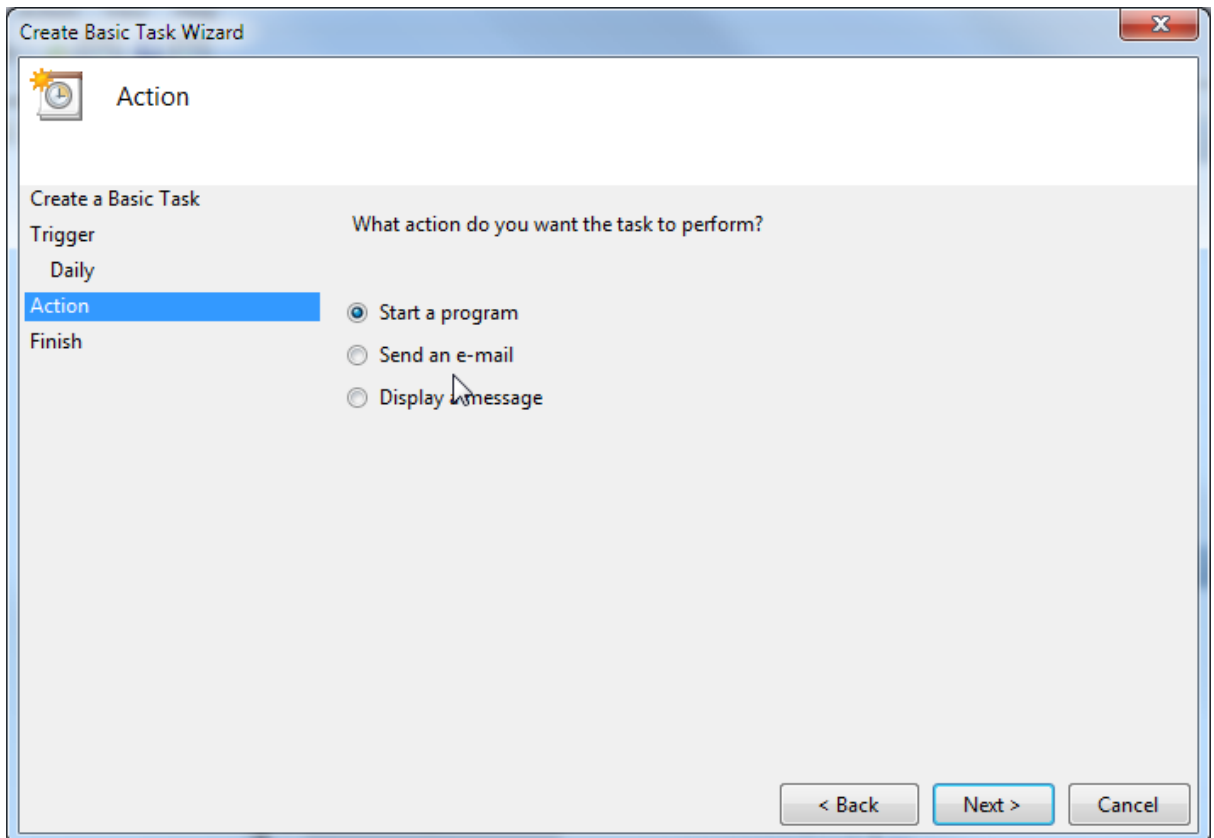
4. Select the 'Trigger' for the Task. We want to run the Task 'daily'.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Basic Task Wizard' dialog box with the 'Task Trigger' step selected. The 'Trigger' tab is active, and the question 'When do you want the task to start?' is displayed. The 'Daily' option is selected with a radio button. Other options include Weekly, Monthly, One time, When the computer starts, When I log on, and When a specific event is logged. The 'Next >' button is highlighted.

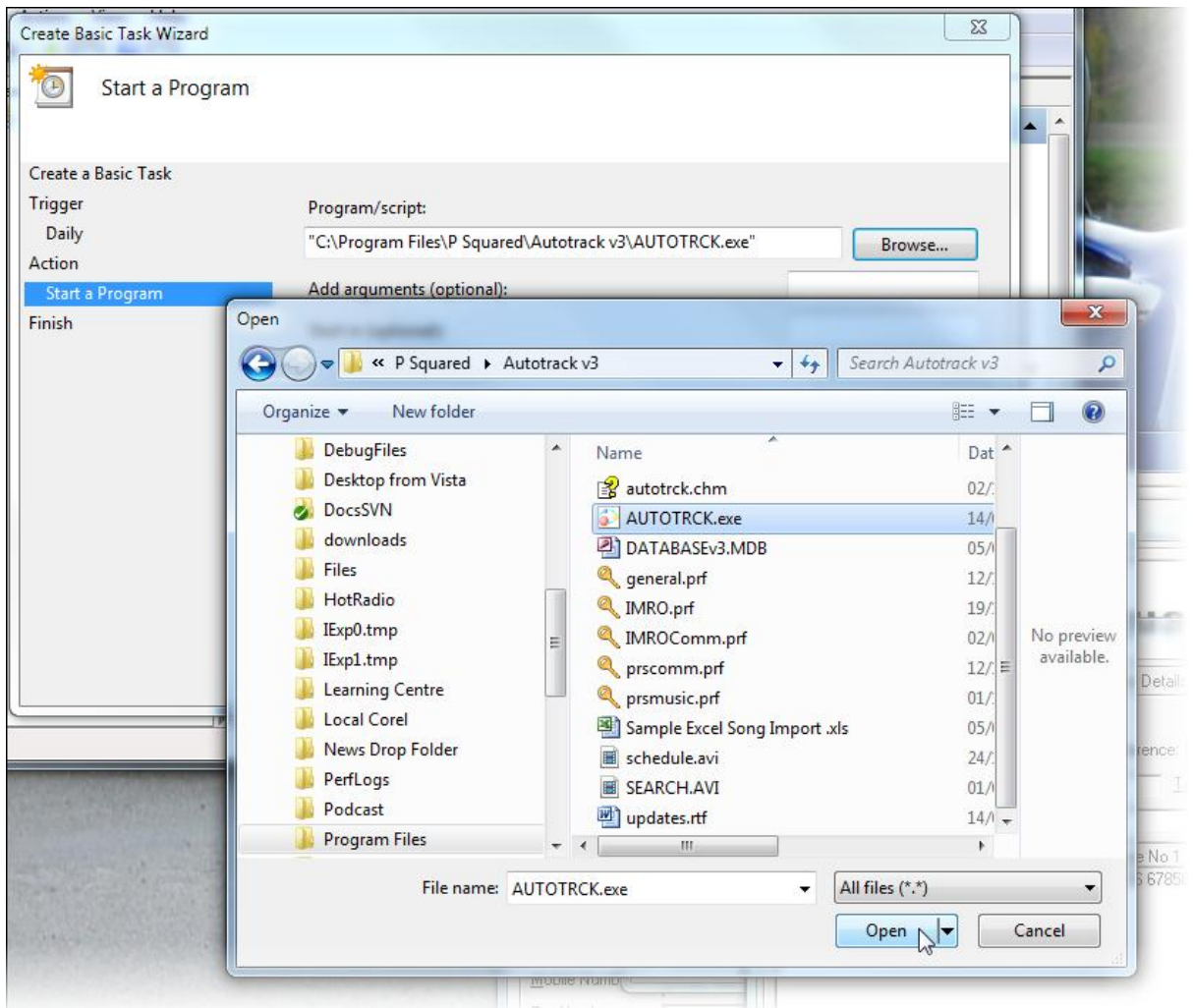
You can also set the time the Task will run. In this example, we will set it to run a 2PM.



5. Set the 'Action' that the Task should perform. In this case we want to run the special shortcut we setup earlier so we select 'Start A Program'.



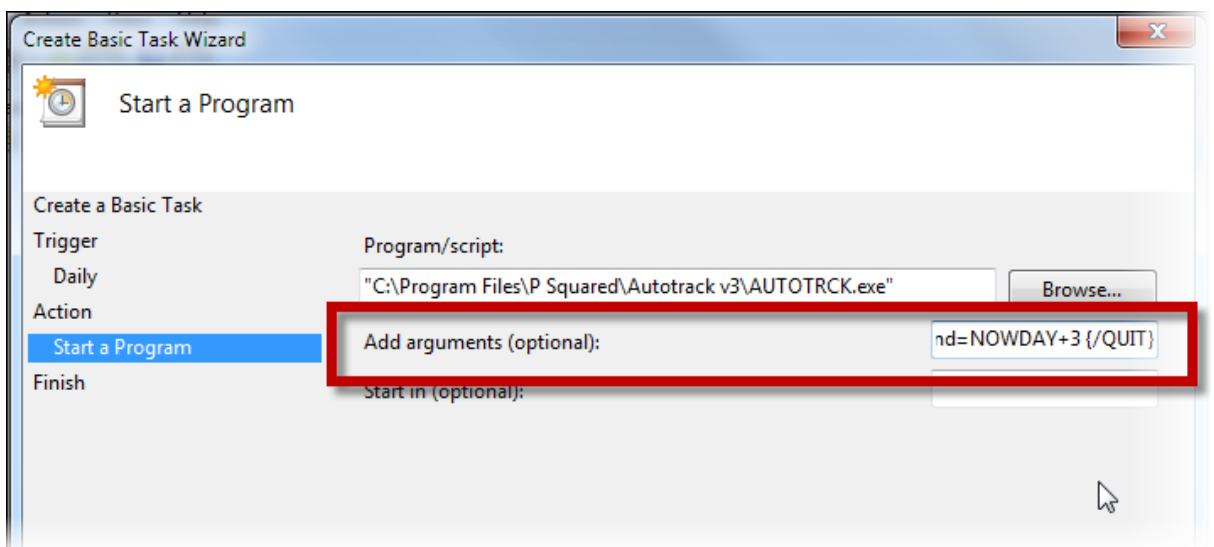
You can then click on the Browse button and select AutoTrack (see example below).



6. So this tells Task Scheduler that it needs to run AutoTrack but we still have to add the special commands to force AutoTrack to schedule 3 days and then quit. The command sequence we are after is:

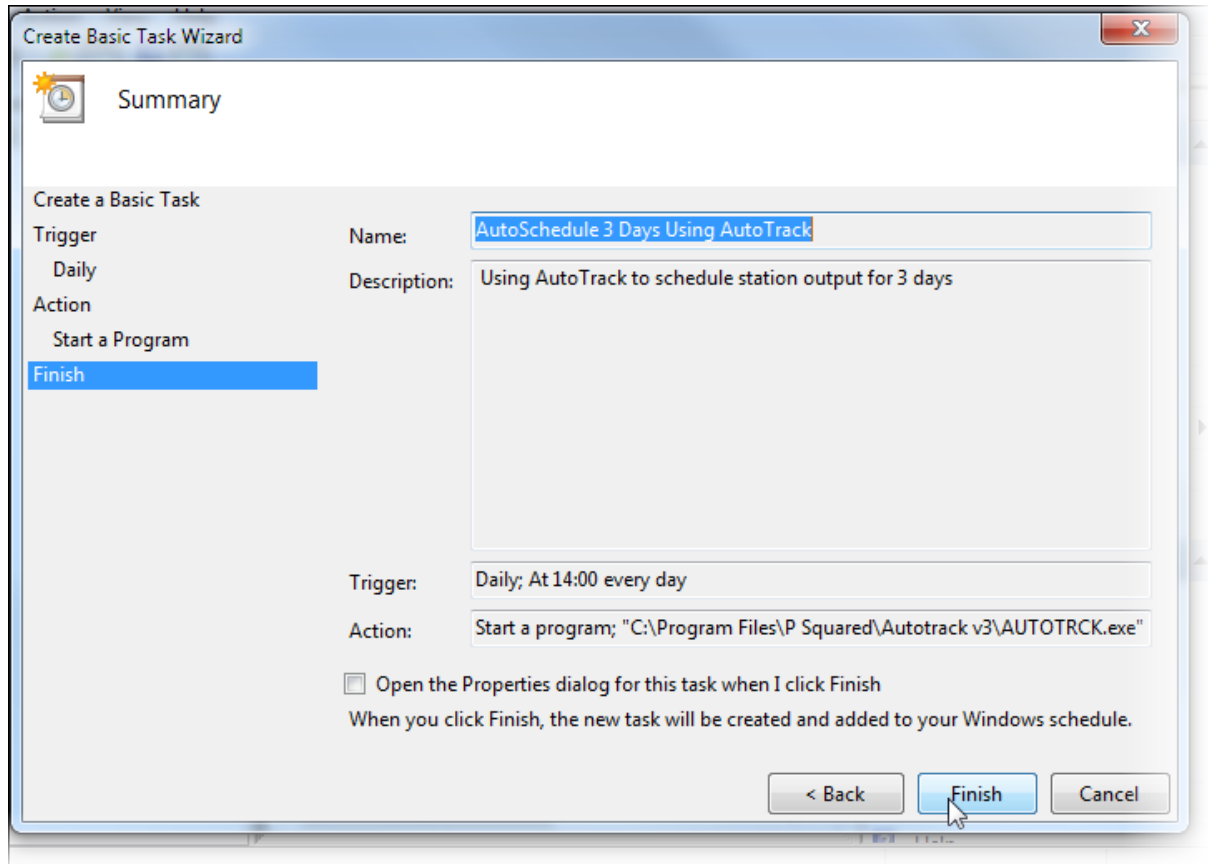
```
/SCHEDULE /Start=NOWDAY /End=NOWDAY+3 {/QUIT}
```

And we need to add it to the 'Add Arguments' field in Task Scheduler.



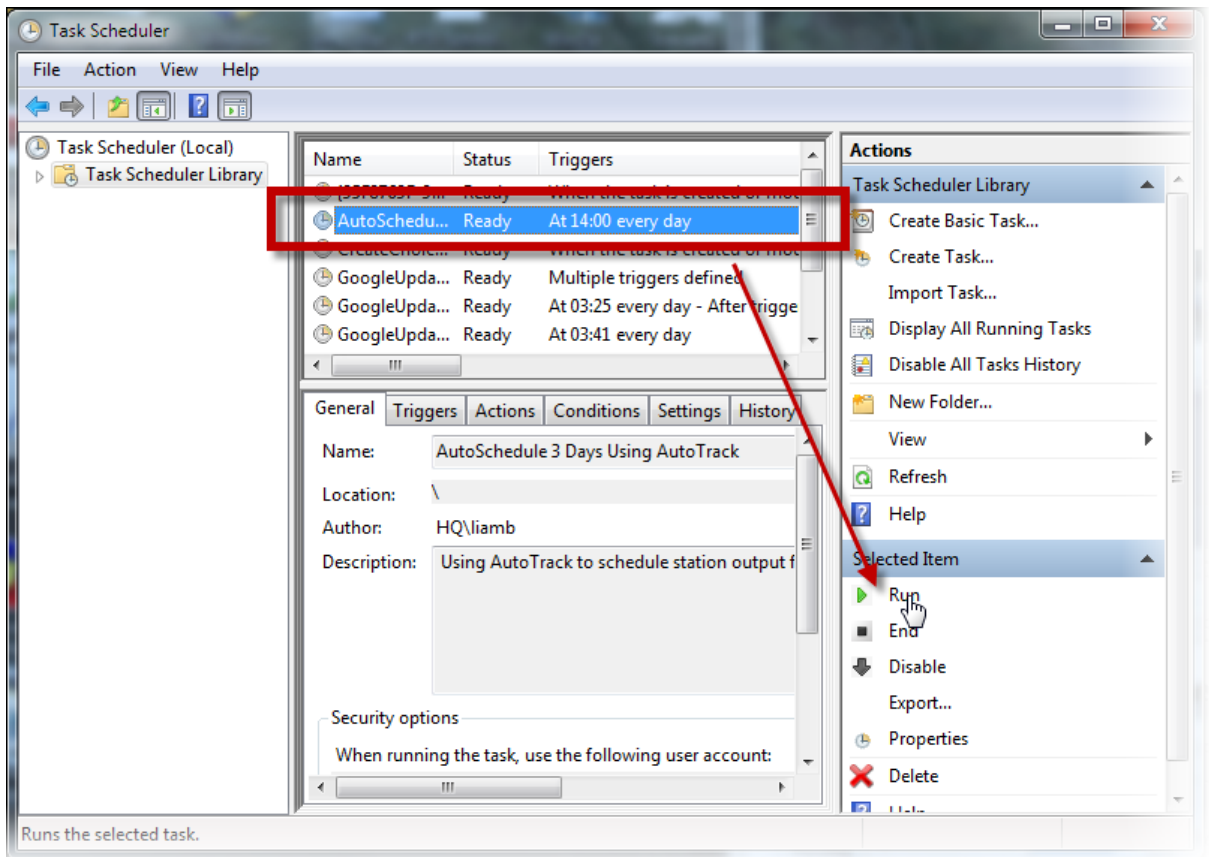
For this simple example, we are not interested in a specific date or specific hours, only in AutoTrack starting and scheduling from today, ahead 3 days. So we use the NOWDAY tag for the 'Start=' section and NOWDAY+3 for the 'End=' section. Finally we add the {/QUIT} tag to the end to tell AutoTrack to shutdown when it has finished.

7. Finally, you will see a summary of the Task we have created.



Click on Finish complete the process.

8. Technically we have finished but it is worth checking to see if it will work. You could wait until 2pm to see if it is OK but the much quicker option is to run it right now and see if it executes correctly.



Find the Task we just added in the list, highlight it and then click on the 'Run' option under the 'Selected Items' options on the right. You should see AutoTrack start up, schedule 3 days of content and then shutdown again.

Please note that if AutoTrack encounters a problem that produces a message box, the automated process will stop until you take whatever action is required. This is why we are doing 3 days to allow for it to occasionally miss a day but we recommend that you check the system every couple of days just to make sure you catch any issues before you run out of schedule. Obviously you could increase the scheduled period to more (say 7 days) if you wanted to check less frequently.

If you are using Windows Security you may need to add some additional command line options to either of the above methods, please contact support@psquared.net for more details.