

Npro Scheduler

For Newsletter Manager Pro v.7.50 – 8.20

User's Guide

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1 Introduction

- Npro scheduler is an add-on for Newsletter Manager Pro
- It is an application that you install on the host server and runs as a Windows service
- This Windows service is making regular requests to some special pages in your Npro installation and in fact it triggers the mailings.
- It enables execution of mailings in a future date/time and re-scheduling of mailings.
- Administration is done via the admin panel of Newsletter Manager Pro
- Creates a debug/log file where every step of its operation is captured.
- As a service it restarts automatically after server reboot or hardware failure
- It needs asp.net 3.5 installed on the host server. Also available for .net 2.

If you are in a **shared hosting environment** then you need **permission from your host** (or server administrator) in order to install and use this application. Some hosts may accept it. Most will not. If you want to ask your host whether they will accept to install Npro scheduler then let them know the following details:

- It runs as a Windows Service under the Local System Account
- It is spyware-free
- It has very low server overhead

Dedicated servers: This is the ideal case. You run your own dedicated server and you have full control of what to install so there is absolutely no limitation.

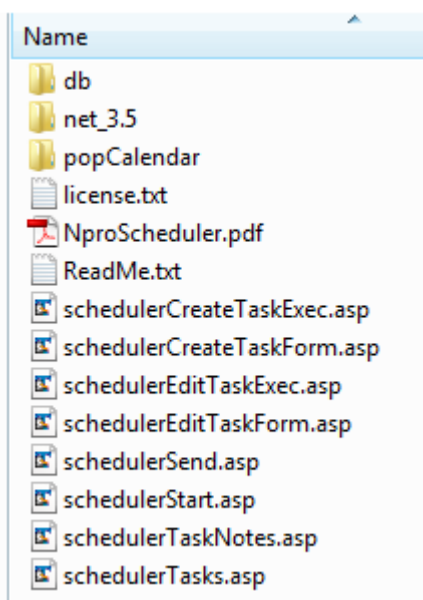
Shared servers: sometimes and although your Host may refuse to install the Windows service they may offer an alternative for scheduling requests. In this case you will be able to use the Npro scheduler. What happens is that you replace the Windows service with another scheduler your Host offers. But of course you still need all other scheduler files in order to make it work. [Contact us for further details.](#)

2 Installation

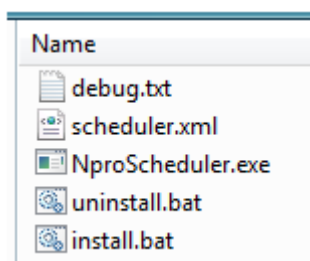
2.1 Preparation

The scheduler can be installed under .net framework 3.5 (or 2).

You will find the following files in this package:



1. Place in the **admin** folder of your Newsletter Manager Pro installation all the *.asp files and the popCalendar folder (overwrite existing files when asked).
2. Create a folder at the server's hard drive. Give it any name you want. For example in this manual we will use the following: [C:\nproscheduler\](#)
3. Open the folder net_3.5 and copy the following files into the [nproscheduler](#) directory you created in the previous step:



! If you are installing the server edition you will find one more file in this folder: servicename.xml

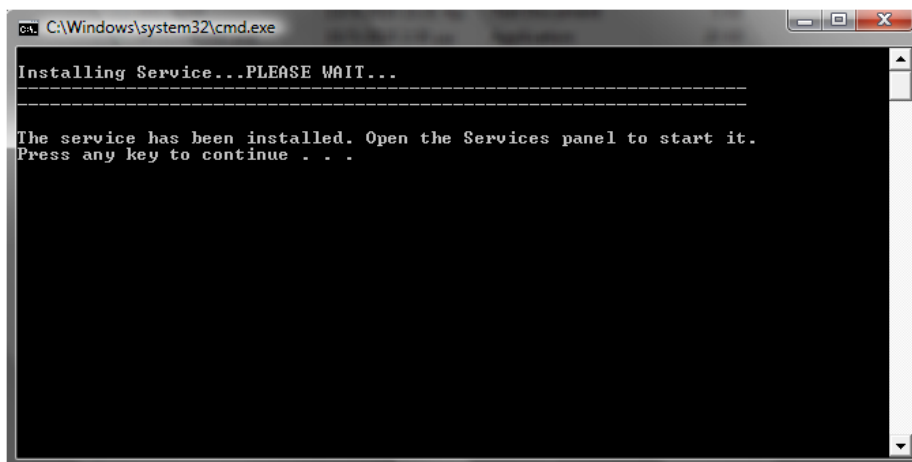
You are now ready to start the installation.

2.2 How to install

1. Open the file [scheduler.xml](#). You will see these two lines:

```
<resources>
  <resource>
    <TargetUrl>http://www.yourdomain.com/newsletter/admin/schedulerStart.asp?admin=admin_123</TargetUrl>
    <interval>20</interval>
  </resource>
</resources>
```

2. You must change the **yellow parts**.
3. Change to your own url and folder where you have Newsletter Manager Pro installed.
4. Change admin and 123 with your actual administrator username and password. Keep the underscore in between (_).
5. Change the interval as you like. The value is in minutes. It defines how often the scheduler service checks for tasks
6. If you are installing the server edition change the service_id in the file servicename.xml
7. Click on the [install.bat](#). The following window will pop-up:



8. Press any key to close the window. Now the service is installed. But you must start it.
9. Go to your services panel. Control Panel > Administrative Tools > Services and find this service: [NproScheduler](#).
10. Right click on the service name and click on "Properties".
11. In the "Startup type" select "Automatic".
12. Next to "Service status" click "Start".
13. Click "Apply" and "ok" to close the properties window.
14. Installation is complete.

Go to the [nproscheduler](#) folder and open [the debug.txt](#). You will read:

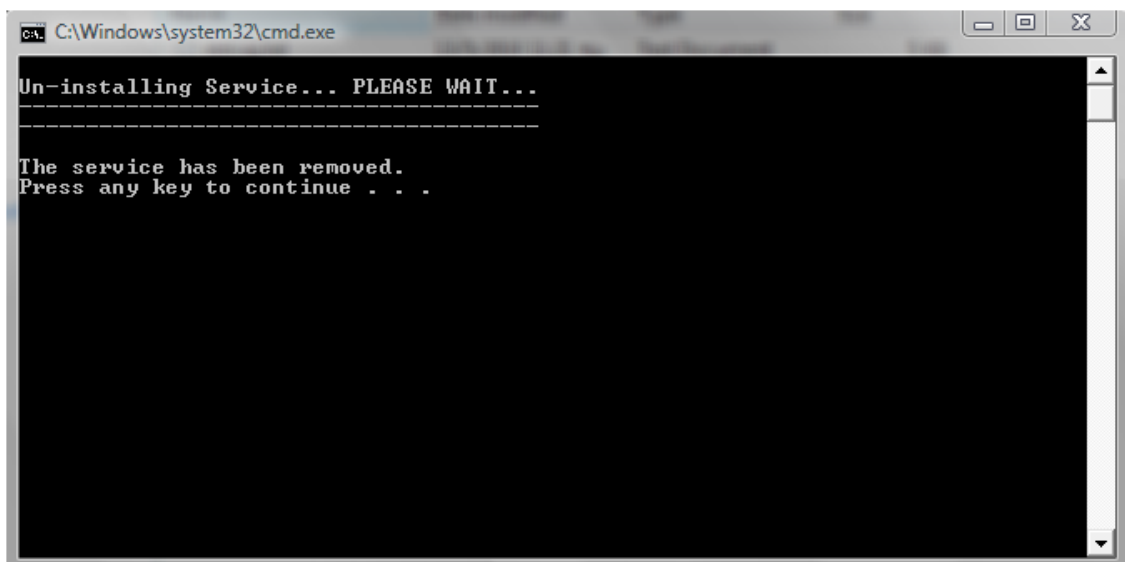
Service Initialized.

Service started OK.

In the debug.txt the service writes in detail when it checks for tasks, what it finds and what it executes.

2.3 How to uninstall

1. Go to your Control panel click on Administrative Tools and then click on Services. Find the [NproScheduler](#). Service right-click and then click "Stop".
2. Go to the [C:\nproscheduler\](#) directory and click on the [uninstall.bat](#). The following window will pop-up:



```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
Un-installing Service... PLEASE WAIT...
-----
The service has been removed.
Press any key to continue . . .
```

The service has now been removed from your server.

2.4 Installing the server edition

The server edition applies when you have several installations of Newsletter Manager Pro and you want to install a distinct windows service that targets a specific installation.

The steps

You will repeat the same steps as with the single edition with a small difference. For each installation **create a separate folder** like [C:\nproscheduler_01\](#), [C:\nproscheduler_02\](#) etc. In each of these folders **change the service postfix** (*service_id*) in the file [servicename.xml](#), in the following way 01, 02 etc. Then click the [install.bat](#). The created service will appear as [NproScheduler_01](#), [NproScheduler_02](#) and so on.

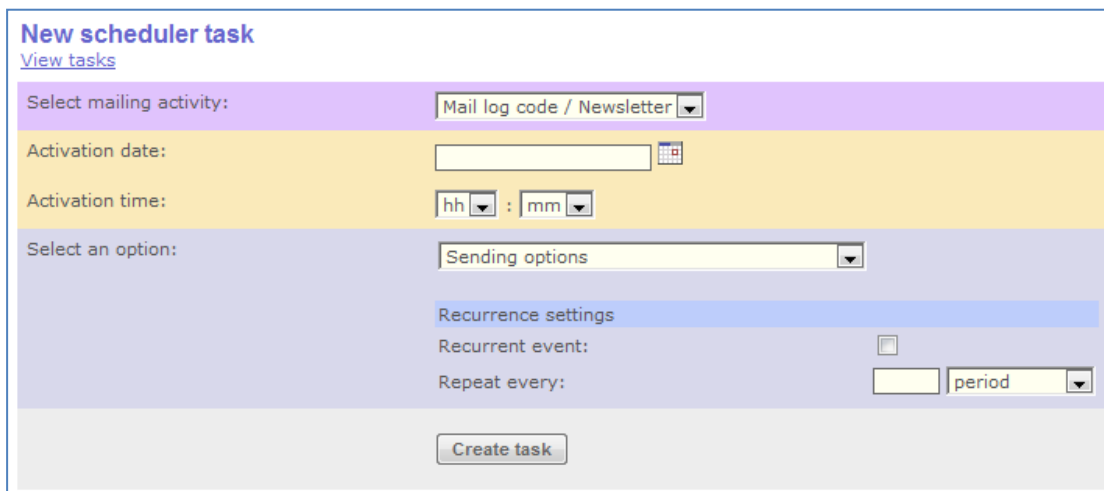
3 Using Npro scheduler

3.1 Step 1: Create a new mailing activity

Go to your Newsletter Manager Pro administration panel and create a new mailing activity. Select the newsletters (or URL) and lists that you want to send to and then click on “**Create mailing to send later**”. Verify, in the mailing activity table that the new activity has been created.

3.2 Step 2: Create a scheduler task

At the top menu go to [Extras>Scheduler>Create new task](#). You will see this screen:



The screenshot shows the 'New scheduler task' form. It has a title 'New scheduler task' and a link 'View tasks'. The form is divided into several sections: 'Select mailing activity:' with a dropdown menu showing 'Mail log code / Newsletter'; 'Activation date:' with a text input and a calendar icon; 'Activation time:' with two dropdown menus for 'hh' and 'mm'; 'Select an option:' with a dropdown menu showing 'Sending options'; 'Recurrence settings' section with a 'Recurrent event:' checkbox and a 'Repeat every:' field with a 'period' dropdown; and a 'Create task' button at the bottom.

Select a mailing activity: In the drop down list you will see all the mailing activities that have not been completed. Select the one you want to schedule.

Select the activation date & time: This is the date & time when the sending will start.

Select a sending option: You have two options.

- a. [Send all messages at once](#). The sending will start and it will not stop until all newsletters are sent.
- b. [Send in batches and repeat until completed](#).

If you select the second option then the menu will change to the following:

Select an option: Send in batches and repeat until completed ▼

Batch settings

Number of messages (batch size):

Repeat every (batch interval): period ▼

Recurrence settings

Recurrent event:

Repeat every: period ▼

Create task

You must give values both to “[Number of messages](#)” and “[Repeat every](#)” fields. The scheduler defined batch settings are completely independent of those of Newsletter Manager Pro (the ones you have in your settings page). These batch settings (of the scheduler) can also be applied to recurrent tasks.

Batch settings and the interval in the scheduler.xml

The interval you define in the scheduler.xml works in this way:

It checks for a task and if it finds one matching the criteria it starts executing it. When it finishes it will check again in x minutes (x=interval) after the previous finish time. So the interval is counted from previous finish time.

If you have several tasks for execution more or less at the same time then by using different batch intervals for each the scheduler can pick tasks interchangeably.

You can set the interval at a very low value like 2 minutes. And set the batch interval in a higher value.


You will see and understand this better in practice when you read the log entries in the debug.txt.

Recurrence settings

These settings allow you to periodically repeat a scheduled mailing activity. Example: you want to send a specific newsletter every week. To achieve this you simply define the scheduler task as recurrent and you specify the repeat period.





The recurrence settings are independent from the batch settings. A recurring mailing can be executed with or without batching. You can read more in the next paragraphs.

After you schedule a mailing activity, return to your mailing activity table and you will see that the mail log code of this activity is underlined and is linked to the scheduler task that will process it. Here is an example:

ID	Mail log code
6	9116135116 
	1. Admin




3.3 Viewing your scheduler tasks

Go to [Menu>Extras>Scheduler>View tasks](#). You will see this screen:

Scheduler tasks 							
Create new							
années / My list 							
ID	1	Created on	6/11/2009 1:40:16 µµ	Batch size	0	Recurring event	Yes
Mail log code	9116135116	Activation Date/Time	6/11/2009 2:05:00 µµ	Batch interval		Recurrence period	20 / Minutes
ID Admin	1	Last execution from scheduler		Batch interval in seconds	0	Recurrence period in seconds	1200
Admin name	Admin	Date last completed		Edit / modify task		Delete task	


Here you can see all your scheduled tasks. The fields [Last execution from scheduler](#), and [Date last completed](#) are updated automatically during the sending.

Your [mailing activity table](#) is also updated automatically in real time as the sending evolves.

To delete a task click on the  icon. To modify a task click on the  icon. To see notes and add your notes for a scheduler task click on the  icon.


In the case that you decide to schedule mailing activities one very close in time to the other, if the previous mailing activity process is still in progress then the new event will be canceled and reactivated again to the next tick of the scheduler process. But in any case it is not advisable to schedule mailing activities too close between them.

3.4 Modifying a scheduler task

To modify a task click on the  icon. You will see this screen:

ID	Mail log code ID. Admin	Format	ID. List ID. Newsletter ID. Filter	Created / Started / Finished	Finished?
6	9116135116 ⓘ 1. Admin	Html	1. My list 3. années -	6/11/2009 1:51:00 μμ / /	NO Continue
5	9116133946 1. Admin	Html	1. My list 3. années -	6/11/2009 1:39:46 μμ / 6/11/2009 1:46:18 μμ / 6/11/2009 1:46:28 μμ	YES

Which means that the scheduler finished processing the mailing activity with ID 5 and created a new activity with the ID 6.

The scheduler also keeps detailed notes about the start / end times of recurring mailing activities. If you click on the  icon of the recently created mailing activity (ID 6) you will see the following details:

Mail Log id: 6

Note:

This is a recurring mailing activity.
Date Created:6/11/2009 1:51:00 μμ
This mailing activity was automatically created as a continuation of the activity with Mail Log Code:9116133946
This mail log will be activated on 6/11/2009 2:05:00 μμ

Now go back to your **scheduler tasks table** where you will see:

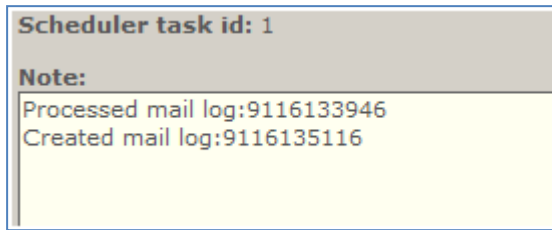
Scheduler tasks
[Create new](#)

années / My list ⓘ

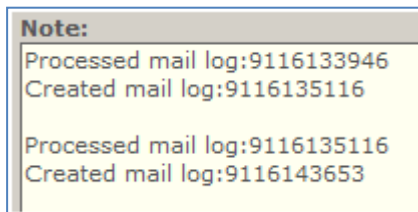
ID	1	Created on	6/11/2009 1:40:16 μμ
Mail log code	9116135116	Activation Date/Time	6/11/2009 2:05:00 μμ
ID Admin	1	Last execution from scheduler	
Admin name	Admin	Date last completed	

Note that the mail log code now refers to the new mailing activity. You can see that at the Mail log code.

Click on  to see this task's notes:



After a while when the new activity is processed for the second time the notes will change to:



The task's notes will be updated each time a mailing activity is completed and a new one is created.

3.6 Application scenarios

3.6.1 One-time mailings

You want to send a specific newsletter once at a given date/time in the future.

- a. You create a new mailing activity
- b. You create a scheduler task for this activity and define the activation date/time that you want the sending to start
- c. You may use the batch sending option (select "Send in batches and repeat until completed. Example: send 1000, wait 1 hour and so on) or not (select the "Send all messages at once" option).

3.6.2 Periodic or recurrent mailings

You regularly send a newsletter to a list. Suppose that you send a weekly newsletter to a list and you want to schedule this activity.

- a. You create a new mailing activity
- b. You create a scheduler task for this activity and define the activation date/time that you want the sending to start
- c. Under recurrence settings, you check the "recurrent event" check box and you say for example: repeat every week. 1/week.

- d. You can still use the batch sending option if you need to do so.

3.6.3 Sending birthday newsletters

- a. Create a birthday newsletter.
- b. Create a birthday filter by going to Menu>Filter+>Create birthday filter. You can use the same filter any day.
- c. Create a new mailing activity that will use the filter and the birthday newsletter you created. This mailing can target all lists or a specific list.
- d. Create a scheduler task that uses this mailing activity and set it as recurrent. It will execute every day, send the birthday newsletter to the subscribers and re-program itself for the next day automatically.

3.6.4 Follow up mailings at the x, y, z days after sign up

Suppose you want to automatically send a newsletter to subscribers at the 3rd, 5th, 9th day after they sign up.

Login to your Newsletter Manager Pro and go: Menu>Filter+>Follow-up by date subscribed.

- a. Create 3 filters for these days. Use 3, 5, 9.
- b. Create 3 newsletters each one for a specific day.
- c. Create 3 mailings that use these newsletters and filters.
- d. Create scheduler tasks for these mailings and set them as recurrent (to repeat every day).
- e. The scheduler will execute these mailings daily and it will send the newsletters only to the subscribers that match the date filter criterion.

3.7 Benefits

- By scheduling your mailings you don't have to be in front of your computer to start a new mailing.
- Even if a sending fails or the server is re-started the scheduler will start again and continue the mailing from where it stopped.

- You can put your periodic mailings in auto-pilot. You create a periodic scheduler task and then you can work on your newsletter and have it ready just before the sending date.
- By applying batch settings you can spread the mailing, over a period of time instead of sending all newsletters at once.

4 Acknowledgments and final notes

Throughout this guide we have used several brands and company names. These are all either trademarks or brands of the respective corporations. MS Access, Windows and MS SQL Server are products of Microsoft Corporation. MySQL is a product of Oracle Corporation.

Thank you for using the Npro scheduler component.

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