NPro Windows service

For Newsletter Manager Pro v.12 +

User's Guide

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Contents

1 Introduction

- The NPro Windows service is, as the name implies, **a Windows service application**. It can be used with Newsletter Manager Pro but also with other applications. The service is making <u>periodic requests to a URL</u> that you set with a period you choose.

- Using it with Newsletter Manager Pro enables you to schedule your execution of campaigns and send them automatically in the background.

- The service 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.

Requirements

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 it 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 or VPS: 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.
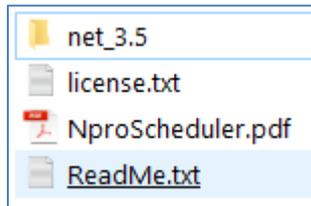
Shared hosting: sometimes and although your Host may refuse to install the Windows service they may **offer an alternative for scheduling requests** (like cron or *Plesk's scheduled tasks*).
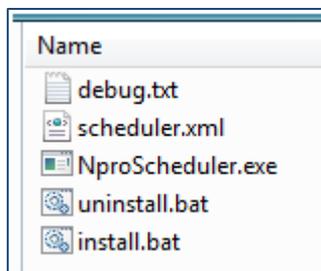
2 Installation

2.1 Preparation

The service **can be installed under .net framework 2 / 3.5 / 4 or later**.

You will find the following files in this package:

1. 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\

2. 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:

```xml
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8" ?>
<resources>
    <resource>
        <TargetUrl>http://www.domain.com/nmanagerpro/admin/_start.asp?jd7hvbv1kf8js5s09kn1we</TargetUrl>
        <interval>5</interval>
    </resource>
</resources>
```
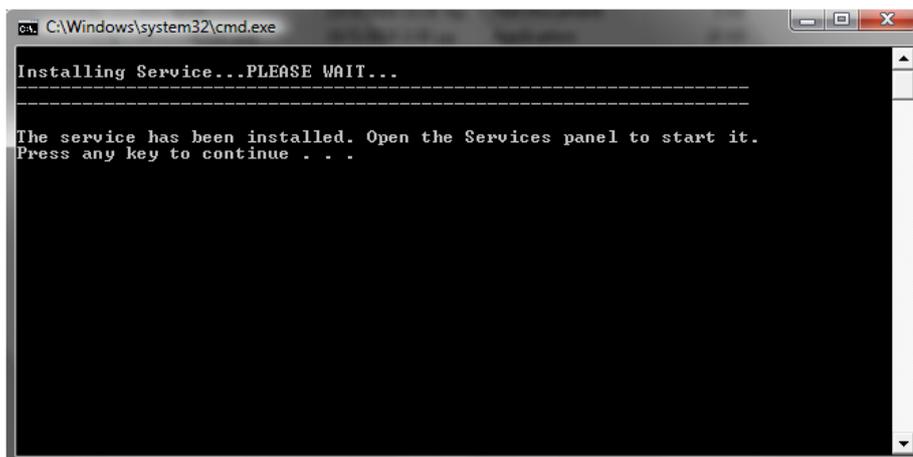
2. You must change the highlighted parts: **installation url** & **api key**. You will find your api key at your administrators table:

Active	Email alerts	Api key ⓘ	Last logi
Yes	No	AFB5AB9BAA72AAA9B4C6BA9C7397BB	12/01/20

Note: your api key depends on your administrator email and encryption password. Changing any of these changes your api key.

3. Change the interval as you like. The value is in minutes. It defines how often the scheduler service checks for tasks. Usually 5 minutes is ok.

4. **If you are installing the server edition** change the service_id in the file servicename.xml

5. Right-click on the install.bat and then click "Run as administrator". The following window will pop-up:

```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe

Installing Service...PLEASE WAIT...
------------------------------------------------------------
------------------------------------------------------------
The service has been installed. Open the Services panel to start it.
Press any key to continue . . .
```

6. Press any key to close the window. Now the service is installed. But you must start it.

7. Go to your services panel. Control Panel > Administrative Tools > Services and find this service: NProScheduler.

8. Right click on the service name and click on "Properties".

9. In the "Startup type" select "Automatic".

10. Next to "Service status" click "Start".

11. Click "Apply" and "Ok" to close the properties window.

12. Check if the service is running ok.

    a. Inside your NPro admin panel go Menu>Campaigns>Campaigns log file

        If you see such lines "Task: 0-->Scheduler request" it means the service is running ok and finds your installation.

        In addition, go to the nproscheduler folder and open the debug.txt. You must read:

        Service Initialized.

        Service started OK.

13. Installation is complete.

2.3   How to uninstall

1. First stop the Windows service. 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, right-click on the uninstall.bat and then click "Run as administrator". The following window will pop-up:
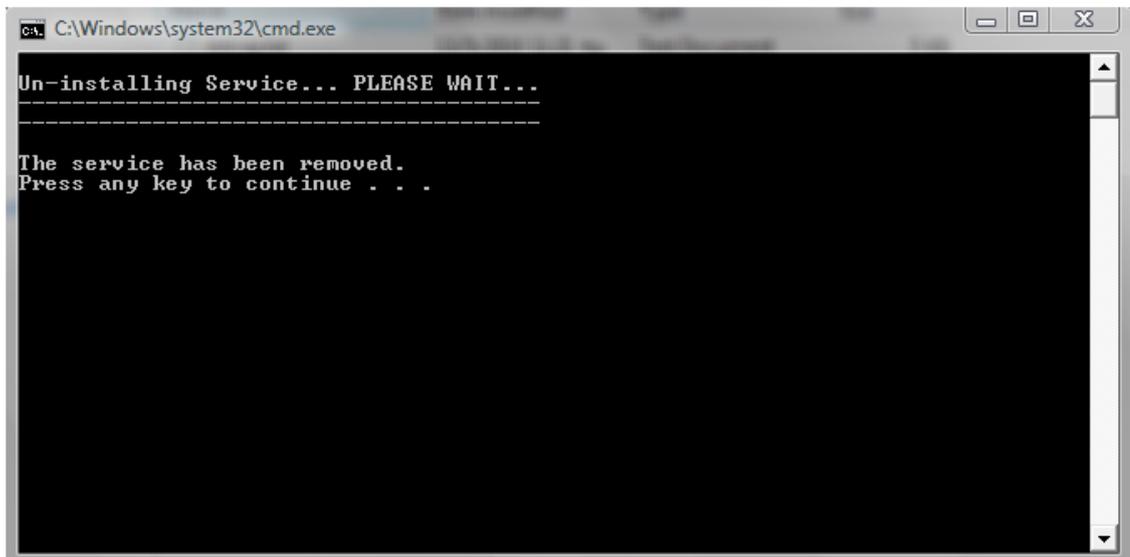
The service has now been removed from your server.

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.
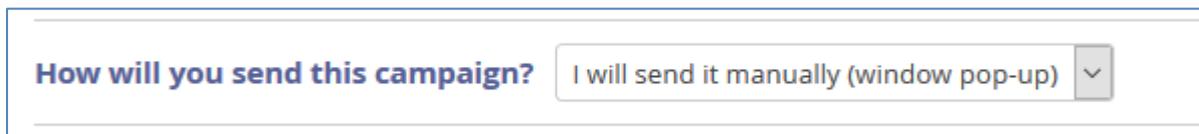
3 Scheduling your campaigns

3.1 Creating a new campaign

In your Newsletter Manager Pro administration panel go create a new campaign.
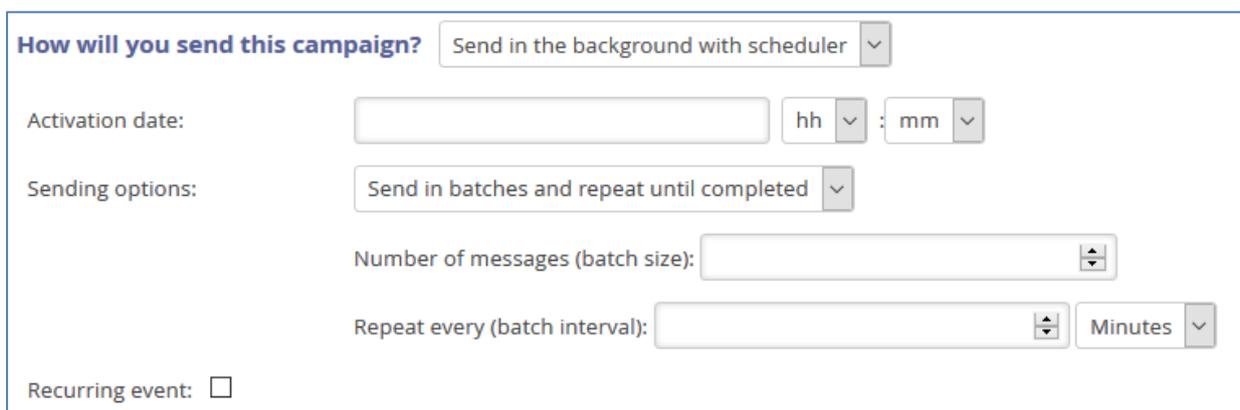
Menu>Campaigns>New campaign

At the bottom you will see:

Leave as-is if you want to execute the campaign manually with a pop-up window.

To schedule it change to:

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.

Sending in batches is strongly suggested!

You must give values both for "Number of messages" and "Repeat every" fields. **The scheduler defined batch settings are not related to the ones you have in your configuration settings page**. This means that you can define different batch settings for each task.

Tip: You can use 0 minutes for the batch interval and regulate the timing from the xml file. See below.

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

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

The batch interval defined at task level works as a minimum safe distance between two consecutive batches.

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 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 campaign. Example: you want to send a specific newsletter every week. To achieve this you simple 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 using batches. You can read more in the next paragraphs.

After you schedule a campaign, return to your campaigns table and you will see a new calendar icon. If you mouse over you see details about the task. Here is an example:

3.2 Viewing your tasks

Go to Menu>Campaigns>Scheduler tasks

This page is only provided as an overview. To make changes or delete a task simply edit the related campaign.

3.3 How recurrent tasks work

When you define a task as recurrent, the scheduler, after processing this campaign, will automatically create a new campaign with exactly the same parameters (list, newsletter, recipients etc.). The scheduler task will also be updated in order to process the newly created campaign. This is done in order to have separate statistics for each campaign. By doing so, you can have a comparative view of your consecutive campaigns.

The scheduler also keeps detailed notes about the start / end times of recurring campaigns which you can see in the campaign and task notes. The task's notes will be updated each time a mailing activity is completed and a new one is created.

3.4 Application scenarios

3.4.1 One-time mailings

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

a. You create a new campaign

b. You create a scheduler task for this campaign 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).

3.4.2 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 campaign

b. You create a scheduler task for this campaign 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.

3.4.3 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 campaign that will use the filter and the birthday newsletter you created. This mailing can target all lists or some specific lists.

d. Create a scheduler task for this campaign 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.

3.4.4 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 campaigns that use these newsletters and filters.

d. Create scheduler tasks for these campaigns 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.

3.5 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.