superuser

How to run an .exe application as a background task on startup

Asked 5 years, 2 months ago   Modified 1 year, 2 months ago   Viewed 67k times

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I have a certain application that runs by creating a window on startup, and when you try to minimize the application it just closes the main frame and runs in the background. I was wondering how you can make it run in the background on startup instead of popping up. I have Windows 10 Home, if that information is needed.

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windows   windows-10

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edited Dec 29, 2018 at 21:19

Run5k
15.1k   23   45   61

asked Jan 18, 2017 at 1:32

Yeeee11
91   1   1   2

Did you add the program to startup or it was added by the program itself? If the 1st one, did you add it to startup by adding the shortcut to the progam in the Startup folder? – Yisroel Tech Jan 18, 2017 at 1:38
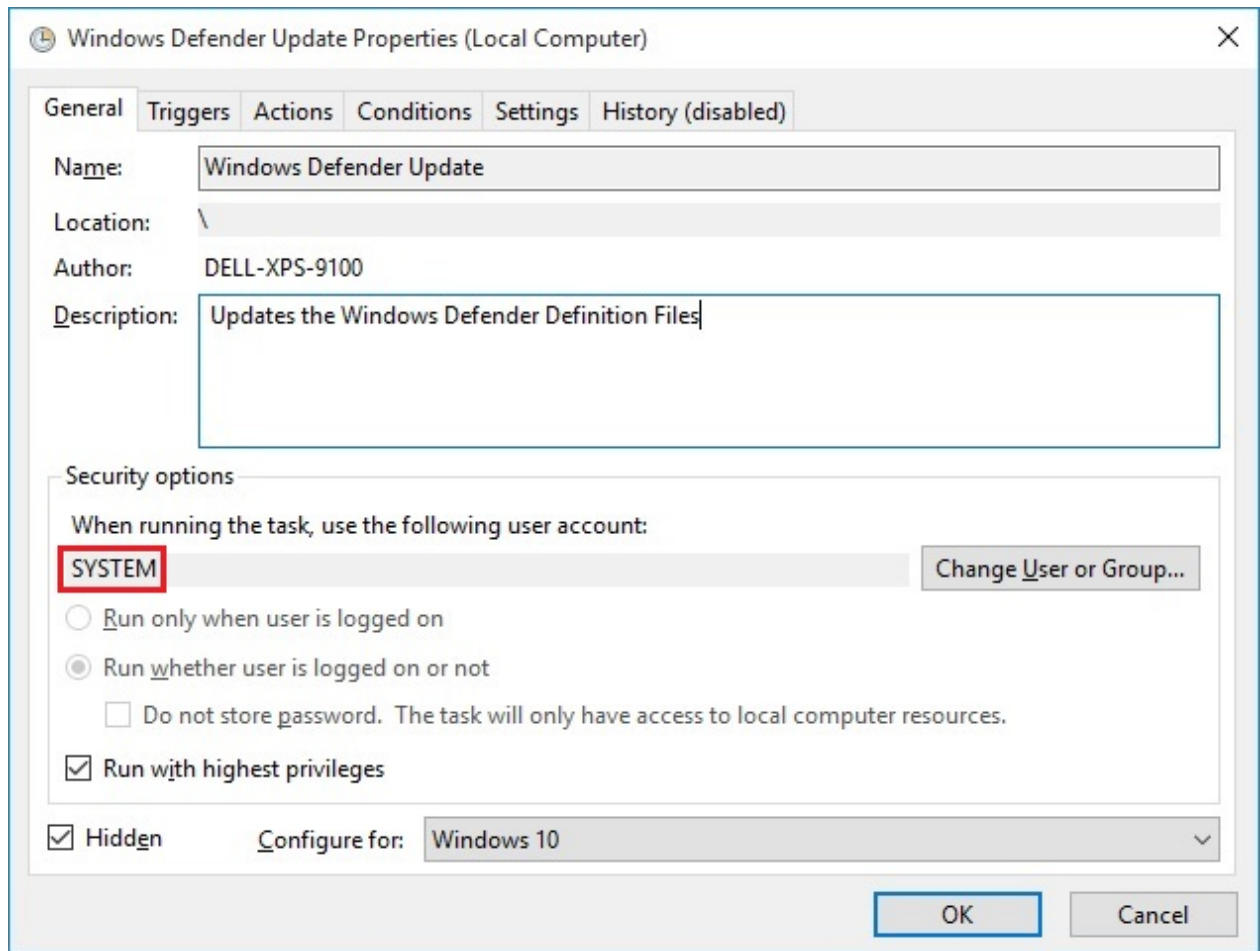
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4 Answers

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Try setting the application to start with the `Task Scheduler` . If you configure it to run with the **System** account, it should remain hidden:

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1   Running programs as SYSTEM is both a potential security risk (a program running as SYSTEM has full
    privileges and can take over your machine easily) and also may not work correctly if it needs to
    access *your* data and does it using a path relative to the current user profile (such as
    `%appdata%\progname\filename.ext`) or via the current user registry hive (HKCU), as these locations
    are different for the SYSTEM account than they are for your account. The program might not work at
    all, or might do the wrong thing. – CBHacking Jan 18, 2017 at 1:56 ✎

    Why not to create dedicated a standard account that will run such programs that even can not by
    design add themself correctly to the scheduler, especially running hidden... and with highest
    privileges... If application throwing some pop up then there should be a reason why it doesn't start in
    background – Alex Jan 18, 2017 at 2:07

    @CBHacking , all good points and I am aware of the potential drawbacks. However, the OP worded
    his question rather carefully to avoid revealing any details regarding exactly *what* they were trying to
    run, so I made this suggestion and awaited their feedback to see if any adjustments were necessary.
    For the example that I posted, the SYSTEM account works rather nicely, but in a different scenario
    your mileage may vary. – Run5k Jan 18, 2017 at 5:11 ✎

1   Agreed with Run5k on this one. A program with special purpose should be able to run under system
    just fine. – Overmind Jan 18, 2017 at 9:10

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Shortcut files allow you to specify how you want the program to launch. Here's one way to do what you're asking, assuming the program is in your Start menu Startup directory:

1. Open Windows Explorer (you can use Win+E for this).

2. Paste this path into the location bar: `%appdata%\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup` . If you don't see your program there, try this location instead: `%programdata%\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup`

3. Right-click the program (it'll actually be a link file, with a little arrow in the corner of the icon) and select `Properties` .

4. Go to the `Shortcut` tab of the window that opens (if you didn't start there).

5. One of the options will be `Run:` with a drop-down next to it (probably saying `Normal window`). Change the drop-down to `Minimized` .

6. Hit OK (if you get a UAC prompt, allow the action).

The next time you log in, the program will still run... but it will be minimized from the start, which probably means it won't even appear. You can try launching it directly from Windows Explorer to see what this will look like.

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answered Jan 18, 2017 at 1:52

CBHacking
5,759   2   18   34

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4   You misunderstood what background means, running in background (like a service) ≠ minimizing the window to taskbar. – Meow Oct 24, 2017 at 15:15

@Meow I was using the term "background" (which can mean either "headless service / daemon process" or simply "not in the foreground") the same way as the OP used it in the question. The app was stated to run "in the background" if minimized, with a request that it "run in the background" from launch. – CBHacking Oct 24, 2017 at 23:28

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What I do is start the application with a VBS script. When doing this no (console) window is visible, and in task manager you see the process running under 'Background Processes'

```
Dim WShell
Set WShell = CreateObject("WScript.Shell")
WShell.Run "c:\x\myapp.exe", 0
Set WShell = Nothing
```

safe this snippet, for example in 'run.vbs'

now run from command line (or task schedular)

```
> wscript run.vbs
```

Open the Task Manager, and you'll see the application is running as background process.

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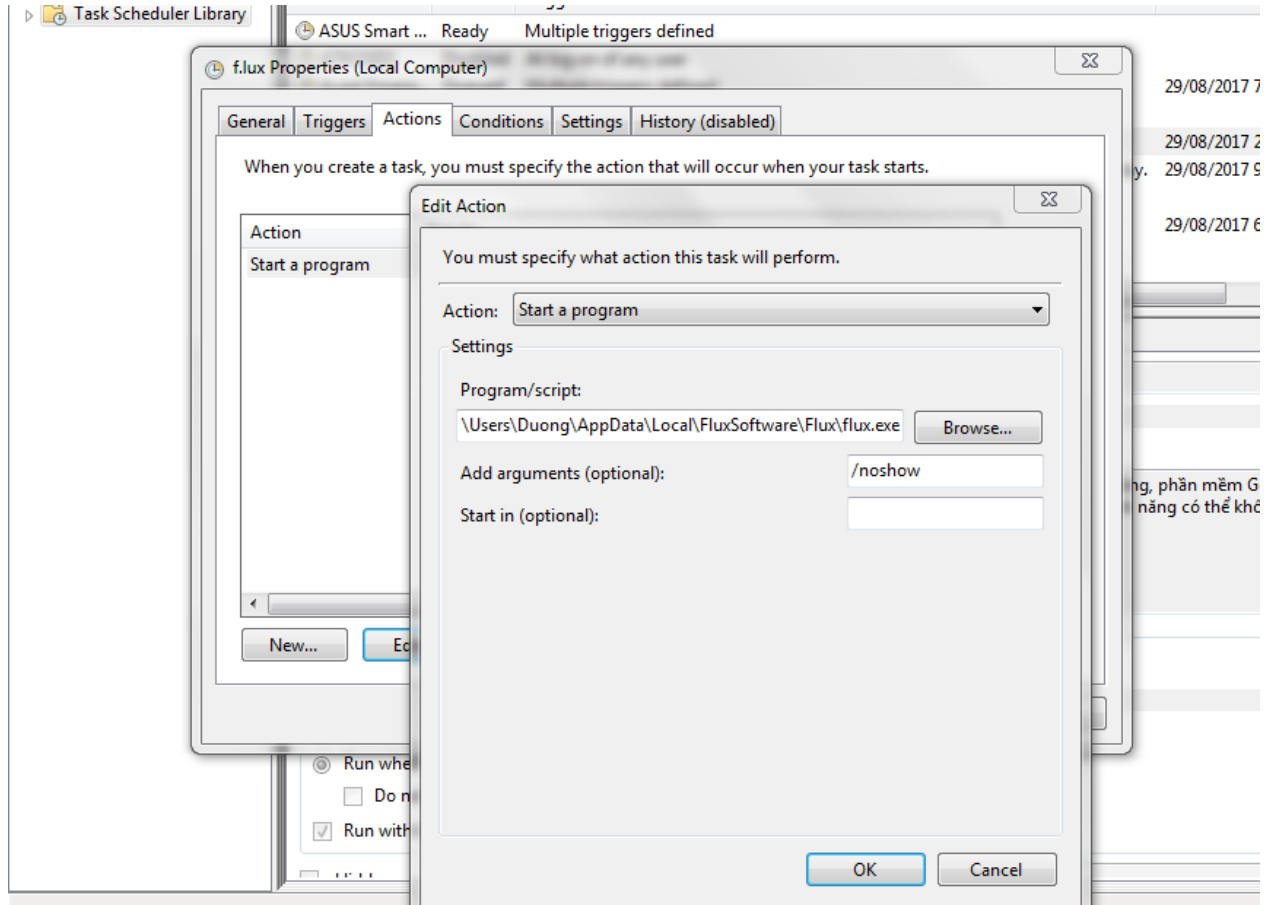
answered Jan 22, 2021 at 9:56

FrankyHollywood
141   3

Just go to Actions and Edit it with adding "/noshow" to arguments text box. I'm sure this is what you're looking for.

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edited Aug 29, 2017 at 2:15

Scott
20.5k   44   59   112

answered Aug 29, 2017 at 1:29

Feliks
21   1

in `general` tab? – DolDurma Apr 27, 2018 at 6:21

Didn't work for me. – user2884707bond Dec 15, 2018 at 15:16