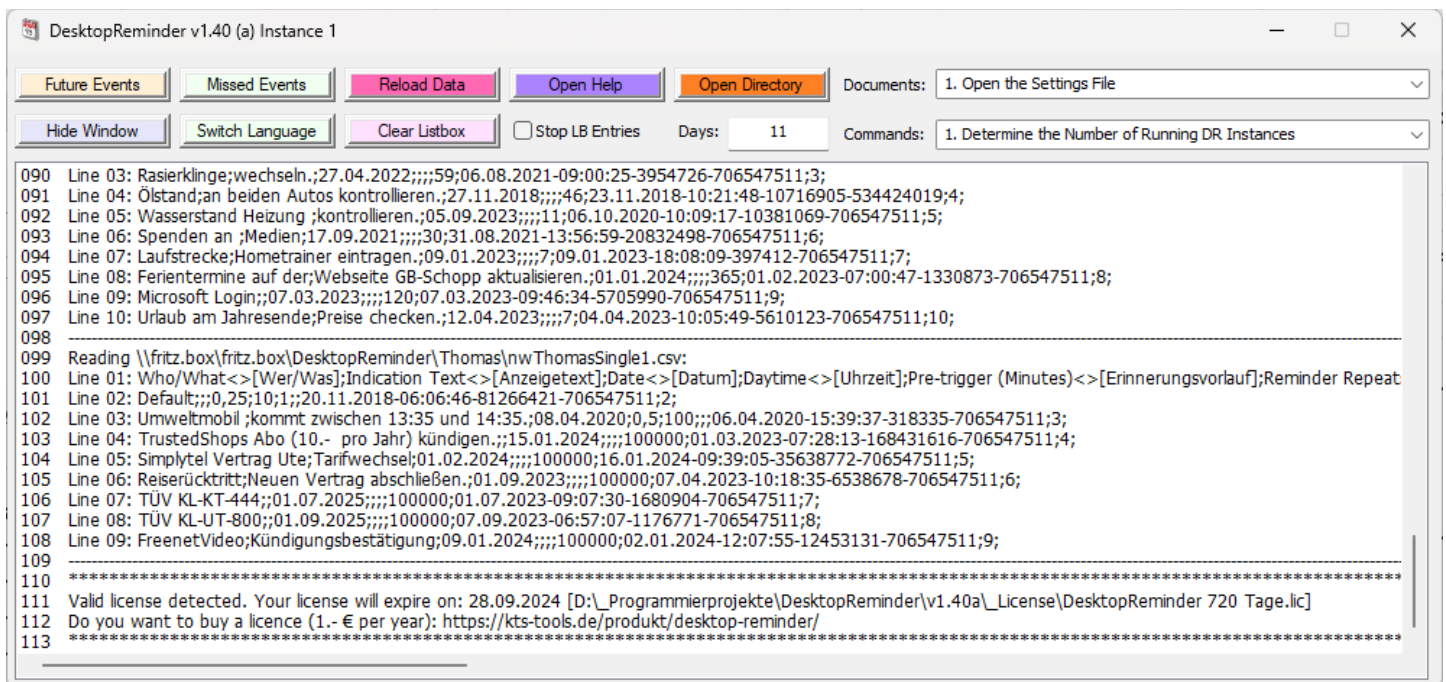


# DesktopReminder User Guide

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# DesktopReminder User Guide

## 1. Used Abbreviations and Introduction

The following abbreviations are used in the DesktopReminder DR Manual:

Abbreviation	Description
DR	DesktopReminder
CSV	A common file format of text files
INI	Initialization(s)
PDF	Portable Document Format
XLSM	Microsoft Excel file format as of Office 2007
ZIP	The most popular compression format

The DesktopReminder is a portable Windows program, i.e., it makes and needs no entries in the Windows Registry. It monitors the user appointments entered in CSV files and issues a reminder when an appointment is due. DesktopReminder runs on Windows 7 or higher in 32- and 64-bit versions. The DR is delivered in ZIP format. The ZIP file must be unpacked into a user selected directory. After that, a shortcut with the DesktopReminder.exe file has to be inserted into the Windows AutoStart folder (see own chapter below), because the DR has to run permanently to be able to perform its calculations.

The program interface consists of a list box in which all outputs (reminders, error messages) are entered, as well as control buttons and two combo boxes. The program can be controlled via the control buttons and the combo boxes. In total, more than 30 commands are available, which are described in detail in a subsequent chapter. If you check the Stop entries checkbox, no more entries will be made in the list box. If you uncheck the box, the entries will be continued.

In the input field Days, you can enter a value of up to three digits, which will then be used for a preview or review in days when pressing the two buttons Future Events/Missed Events. For example, if you are returning from a 14-day vacation, you can enter 14 in the input field and then press the Missed Events button. Then the missed events within the last 14 days will be displayed. All types of outputs (reminders, notes, errors) are done in the listbox on the program interface. Additionally, the reminders are output in a message box or a text editor window.

The DesktopReminder is bilingual, German and English. The language can be switched during operation.

The DesktopReminder uses so-called Windows tooltips for assistance during operation. When moving the mouse over a button, the respective tooltip pops up to explain the button function.

When moving the mouse over one of the buttons, its color changes to red to indicate that the button is now "armed" and its associated command will be executed when the left mouse button is pressed.

### Notes on errors in the appointment configuration:

A line in an event configuration file defines a single event, but it is allowed to repeat. However, repeating events are not allowed to overlap each other. This is easy to achieve in that, for example, you could configure a daily event with the default post-trigger of 72 hours. This would already result in three overlaps without a pre-trigger. Therefore, such overlaps are checked when the files are read in, overlap errors are output via message box and corrected. The corrective action is as follows:

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First, the post-trigger is reduced as much as necessary, down to zero if needed. If this is not sufficient, the pre-trigger is reduced as much as necessary. Reducing the PreTrigger down to zero is never necessary.

The possession of a Microsoft Office version for opening Excel files in XLSM format (e.g., PeriodicEvents.xlsm) is highly recommended for generating the CSV files (\*.xlsm → Export Button → \*.csv), since the alternative generation and/or editing of CSV files in a text editor is very cumbersome and error-prone (for details see next chapter).

## 2. Purchasing a License

Without a valid license, DesktopReminder will only run for 6 hours. However, there are no restrictions beyond this. A license costs €1 per year. A 10-year license (quantity 10 in the store) therefore costs 10.- € and also entitles to updates until one day my secret key has to be replaced by me, which is by no means planned (only after compromising the previous secret key). A license always runs from the date of purchase, i.e., you cannot extend a license. This means: wait until it expires (or shortly before) and then buy a new one. Licenses are available in my store:

<https://kts-tools.de/produkt/desktop-reminder/>

A purchased license file is sent by e-mail within 5 seconds after payment with PayPal. The e-mail is typically delivered in less than 5 minutes. When paying by bank transfer, the license is also sent by e-mail immediately after receipt of the payment.

The license sent by e-mail (a text file with the extension lic) must be copied or moved to the subdirectory ...\\_License. After the next program start, it will be checked and the check result will appear in the list box.

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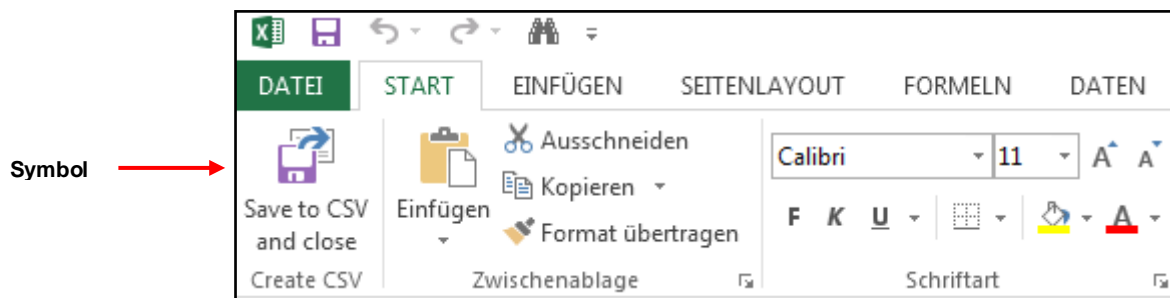
## 3. Description of the Directory Structure and Files

After unpacking the ZIP file into any directory, the following subdirectories as well as the INI and help files are available.

Subdirectory	Content
\_EmittedReminders\	Reminders sent out. To avoid repetitions of already completely processed reminders.
\_Exports\	The DR offers several commands for creating text files. These files are stored in \_Exports.
\_Help\	The two help files (German and English) are stored there.
\_IniFile\	The initialization file for user settings is stored there.
\_License\	The license file is stored there.
\_PeriodicEvents\	The periodic event configuration files (user input) are stored there.
\Settings\	The selected language, the last DR window position and the number of preview/review days are stored there.
\SingleEvents\	The one-time event configuration files (user input) are stored there.
\_UserDocuments\	The user can "park" documents there. The DR does not use this subdirectory.
DesktopReminder.exe	The DR program file.

The division of the event configurations into was chosen for convenience, although the user does not have to adhere to it. The user can store as many event files as desired in each of the two subdirectories.

**All** files to be edited by the user are in Microsoft Excel XLSM format. The user should open these files with Excel, edit them and then save them in CSV format. The DR reads the files in CSV format. So, the processing chain is XLSM → Export CSV → Read in by DesktopReminder. All XLSM files contain an icon in the Excel Start menu ribbon to save the file in CSV format. Clicking the icon saves the file in CSV format and closes both the XLSM and CSV files immediately after the button is pressed.



It is recommended to always open the Excel file from the CSV/XLSM pair because it is much better readable and also contains detailed comments that are lost in the CSV export.

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## 3.1. Description of the Settings File

The settings file is automatically saved each time the application is closed. It contains the last used language, DR window position and the last day value for the preview and review.

When the program is started, the values last used are read in and applied.

## 3.2. Description of the Initialization File

The initialization file contains configuration options for the period duration of the calculations, the reminder output (message box or via a text editor), the DR window size after startup, DR window linking defaults, the preview, review and administration time spans, and the network path for additional schedule files.

The initialization file contains four columns (INI value, keyword for the program as well as a German and an English description column). The description columns contain detailed fill-in help (if it is necessary to deviate from the default settings at all). Please read the detailed descriptions of the INI configuration labels in the IniFile.xlsm file.

## 3.3. Description of the Event Files

The user has to enter his appointments in appointment files with arbitrary names. Please do not forget the CSV export after editing the XLSM file. Every single line leads to the output of a reminder at the configured time. Therefore, only one single line is shown below as a representative for all reminder entries:

Who/What	Display text	Date	Time	Pre-trigger [min]	Repeats	Interval	Dictionary Key
Thomas	has a birthday. On %dat at %tim he turns %diff years old.	01.02.1957	06:00:00	67	3	365	

Only the red column must be filled, otherwise no reminder can be issued. The grey and yellow column contents can be assigned by default (description see below) and can basically remain empty. The user should not make any entries in the dictionary key column. An Excel macro generates a unique key (for storage in a dictionary in DR.exe) during CSV export. **Caution:** When copying/pasting entire rows in the XLSM file, the key in the pasted row must be deleted because it is already used in the copied row.

The individual cells in a reminder line are to be filled as follows:

Headline	Description of the content
Who	The first two cells are combined into a reminder sentence in the case of the sentence created by the DR. In the concrete example, the sentence would read: Thomas has a birthday. He will be 61 years old on 02/01/2018 at 07:00. The use of the placeholders %dat, %tim and %diff is explained below.
Display text	
Date	Enter the original date, e.g., the birthday to be remembered. Provided that you do not attach importance to a difference calculation (in order to output the new age in the reminder), you may of course also enter 01.02.2018. For a one-time reminder, the exact reminder date must be specified.
Time	The time at which the reminder is to be output. The cells are formatted as time in the Excel table and must remain so.
Pre-trigger	How long before the event should the reminder be issued? The specification is made in minutes. Entries of up to one million minutes are permitted, which corresponds to approx. 277 days.

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Headline	Description of the content
<b>Repeats</b>	The number of reminder repetitions <u>before the event</u> . The value 0 results in no repetition, i.e., a single output at the time of the event. The <u>maximum possible number of repetitions is 30</u> .
<b>Interval</b>	At what interval should the reminder be issued? The entry is made <u>in days</u> . <u>There are several special treatments of entered values</u> , which are described later in this chapter.

The three placeholders %dat, %diff and %tim can be used as follows:

Placeholder	Description of the application
<b>%dat</b>	The DR replaces %dat in the reminder window with the date specified in the event file, but in which the year (e.g., 1957) is replaced by the current year. <u>Example 01.02.1957</u> : Thomas has birthday on %dat is then displayed as Thomas has birthday on 01.02.2022 in the reminder window.
<b>%diff</b>	The DR replaces %diff in the reminder window with the difference between the original date (e.g., 01/02/1957) and the current date (e.g., 01/02/2018) in years. <u>Example</u> : Thomas becomes %diff years is then displayed as "Thomas becomes 61 years" in the reminder window.
<b>%tim</b>	The DR replaces %tim in the reminder window with the time specified by the appointment file. <u>Example</u> : The meeting starts at %tim is displayed as "The meeting starts at 10:00:00" in the Reminders window.

## Default settings by default:

After starting the DR, the internal default settings, which are not visible to the user, are loaded first (time: 00:00:00, pre-trigger: 0, repeats: 0, interval: 0). Therefore, the entries in the yellow fields are not mandatory, since the DR always has default settings. The user has the option to overwrite the program default settings by making an entry in the schedule file. This is done simply by adding a line under the keyword "Default", as shown in the following example:

Who/What	Display text	Date	Time	Pre-run [min]	Repeats	Interval
<b>Default</b>	has a birthday (%diff).		07:00:00	0	3	365

Each line under the keyword "Default" overwrites the previous user defaults. The number of default lines is not limited. The defaults are always valid until the next default line or until the end of the term file. You can also specify a default for the first column by following the keyword Default with = and the input, e.g., Default = SHIT-Meeting. The SHIT meeting is then used as the default for column A.

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## Special treatment of certain interval values:

The DR offers the possibility to be reminded only on certain weekdays in certain months, for example on every second Sunday of a month. Several keywords are available for this, which are described in the table below:

Keyword	Example	Description
abs	120 abs	abs = absolute value. The value 120 is divisible by 30 and would result in a reminder every 4 months without the addition of abs. An entry 120 on March 20, 2022 would result in a reminder on <u>July 20, 2022</u> . An <u>entry</u> 120 abs on the same day in March would result in a reminder on <u>July 18, 2022</u> .
mwd	120 mwd -3	month2weekday. Every 4th month (120) on the third last weekday (-3), e.g., Friday. The <u>day of the week must be taken from the source date</u> , because the two values that can be passed are already occupied by the month and the third last. The right value may be <u>positive or negative</u> .
mmd	150 mmd -11	month2monthday. Calculated every 5th month (150) on the 11th day back from the end of the month. The day of the original date is irrelevant. Both, <u>positive and negative values</u> are allowed, although positive values make no sense (can be achieved without special treatment; compare with a normal birthday entry).

### 3.4. Description of the EmittedReminders File

The DR stores the reminders already issued in the EmittedReminders.txt file to prevent cyclical repetitions. When the file is read back after the DR has been started, only the first three entries (each separated by <@@@>) are relevant, namely the dictionary key, the reminders already issued and the time of the last reminder (number of days since 1.1.1900 as a decimal number). The remaining information is only a control option for the user or programmer and is not used by the DR.

The EmittedReminders.txt file is intended purely for use by the DR and not for editing by the user. But of course, the user is free to look at the file content.

### 3.5. Description of the Export Files

After entering some user commands, the DR creates text files in the \_Exports directory. Files are written, for example, when the FutureEvents or MissedEvents button is pressed. If the user has configured via the INI file that all reminders are to be output in the text editor, then this text file is also created in the named subdirectory. The content of these files is easy to read and needs no further explanation.

### 3.6. Description of the User Guide Files

Two manual files (user manual in German and English) are available in PDF format in the \_Help subdirectory. When executing the Open command, the respective file is opened in the standard PDF reader of the respective PC, depending on the currently active language.

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## 4. Description of the Button Commands

The commands described below are executed when the respective button is pressed. The buttons are provided with a tool tip describing the action of the push button. The following buttons are available:

Button	Description of the command
<b>Future Events</b>	Generates an appointment preview, the length of which can be specified in <u>days</u> via the Days input field. If the input field is empty, the value from the INI file (e.g., 72 hours = 3 days) is applied.
<b>Missed Events</b>	Creates an appointment review, the length of which can be specified in <u>days</u> via the Days input field. If the input field is empty, the value from the INI file (e.g., 72 hours = 3 days) is applied.
<b>Reload Data</b>	Re-reads all event files in the corresponding directories.
<b>Open Help</b>	Opens the help file in the standard PDF editor.
<b>Open Directory</b>	Opens the DR directory in Windows file explorer.
<b>Hide Window</b>	Sets the DR window to the Windows show state SW_HIDE, i.e., the DR window disappears without a trace. Use a combo box command to make the window visible again (via a DR instance to be restarted). Alternatively, use the key combination <b>SHIFT CTRL d r</b> . Press the keys one after the other with a short pause between each entry.
<b>Switch Language</b>	Switches between German and English each time you press it.
<b>Clear Listbox</b>	Deletes the contents of the list box.
<b>Stop LB Entries</b>	Stops entries in the list box or continues them after the check mark is removed.
<b>Days:</b>	Enter a daily value for preview/review of future or missed events.



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## 5. Description of Combo-Box 1 (Documents)

The following combo box commands for opening documents are available:

Combo Box Entry	Description of the command
1. Open the Settings File	Opens the named file.
2. Open the Initialization File	Opens the named file.
3. Open the Emitted Reminders File	Opens the named file.
4. Open the _SingleEvents File	Opens the file whose name is missing here (but is shown in the DR window). Since the user can add as many Single Events files as desired, from here on the concrete numbering depends on the number of existing files.
5. Open the _PeriodicEvents File	Opens the file whose name is missing here (but is shown in the DR window). Since the user can add as many Periodic Events files as desired, from here on the concrete numbering depends on the number of existing files.
6. Open the Help.pdf File	Opens the named file.
7. Open the Hilfe.pdf File	Opens the named file.
8. Open the DesktopReminder Main Directory	Opens the named directory in Windows File Explorer.
9. Open the _EmittedReminders Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
10. Open the _Exports Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
11. Open the _Help Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
12. Open the _IniFile Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
13. Open the _SingleEvents Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
14. Open the _PeriodicEvents Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
15. Open the _Settings Sub-directory	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
16. Open the _UserDocuments Sub-directory",	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.
17. Open the configured Network Path	Opens the named directory in the Windows file explorer.

The numbering of the commands in the DR window is most likely different from the numbering in the table above, since the numbering depends on the number of Single/ Periodic Events files present.

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## 6. Description of the Combo-Box 2 (Commands)

The following Combo Box 2 commands are available:

Combo Box Entry	Description of the command
1. Determine the Number of Running DR Instances	Lists the currently running DR instances including their process ID.
2. Pop-up all Hidden DesktopReminder Instances	Makes the first DR instance pop up again, since only it can be made invisible. The invisibility of all subsequent instances is rejected. Alternatively, the first DR instance can be made visible again using the <b>SHIFT CTRL dr</b> key combination. Press the keys one after the other with a short pause between each entry.
3. Reload the Settings File	Reloads the settings file.
4. Reload the Initialization File	Reloads the INI file.
5. Reload all Data Files	Reloads all event configuration files.
6. Listbox Content, copy it into the Windows Clipboard	Copies the contents of the list box to the Windows clipboard.
7. Listbox Content, show it within Standard Text-Editor	Copies and opens the contents of the list box in a text file.
8. Show the last Reminders in a Message Box	Shows the last reminders since program start in a message box. The number of reminders is limited to 256. If this limit is exceeded, the oldest reminders are overwritten.
9. Show the last Reminders in Standard Text-Editor	Shows the last reminders since program start in a text file. The number of reminders is limited to 256. If this limit is exceeded, the oldest reminders are overwritten.
10. Show the complete Reminder Input Dictionary in Standard Text-Editor	Each configured event is internally transferred into a C++ structure. This command shows all configurations in a text file.
11. Show the today's Reminder Input Dictionary in Standard Text-Editor	Configured events are only loaded into RAM if an event is pending today (including pre- and post-trigger). This command typically shows only a small percentage of the configurations compared to the command above. If the PC is powered on at a day change (24:00→ 00:00), all configuration files are re-read to keep today's dictionary up to date.
12. Select a Reminder File in the Listbox and create a File Preview	The user can click on a file name in the list box and then execute this command. An event preview is generated only for the selected file, taking the entered day value into account.
13. Select a Reminder File in the Listbox and create a File Look-back	The user can click on a file name in the list box and then execute this command. An event review is generated only for the selected file, taking the entered day value into account.
14. Select a Reminder Key Line in Listbox and open corresponding File	The user can select a line in the list box that contains a valid key (e.g., [10/13/2022-12:07:33-1695117825-1980003252]). The key can be in an event line or in a reminder that was just issued. The command opens the associated file and names the exact line.
15. Select a Reminder Key Line in Listbox and determine next Event	The user can select a line in the list box that contains a valid key (e.g., [10/13/2022-12:07:33-1695117825-1980003252]). The command calculates the next event of this entry, no matter how far in the future it is.
16. Select a Reminder Key Line in Listbox and determine last Event	The user can select a row in the list box that contains a valid key (e.g., [10/13/2022-12:07:33-1695117825-1980003252]). The command calculates the last event of this entry, no matter how far in the past it is.
17. Create a Test-Reminder	A tester reminder is generated for the purpose of "look & feel".
18. Simulate a Date (Input of Date in the Days Edit Box)	The user can simulate a date to check whether an expected reminder is issued or not.

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## 7. Inserting the Desktop Reminder into the Windows Autostart

The user probably wants the Desktop Reminder to start automatically together with Windows (or only a few seconds afterwards). This is not as trivial as you might think, because the logged-in Windows user on the C:\ drive only has full access to a few subdirectories or does not have to answer any Windows queries ("You must confirm administrator permissions to continue").

All subdirectories with full access without administrator rights are located in C:\Users\Public or C:\Users\Logged-inUser, e.g., the Downloads folder (C:\Users\LoggedInUser\Downloads). If you have not installed an additional hard disk (typically drive D:\) in your PC, you must copy the DR to one of the two folders mentioned, e.g., to C:\Users\Public\DesktopReminder\. Now right-click on the DesktopReminder v1.40 (a).exe file and select the Windows command "Create shortcut".

This DR shortcut must now be moved to the Windows Autostart (Startup) folder. There are the following options for this:

- 1) Hold down the Windows key (between Ctrl and Alt) and press the R key (R for Run). A small window opens with the title Run. This window allows you to execute one of the many C:\Windows\System32 utility programs. Now type in the Run window: shell:startup. This opens the subdirectory C:\Users\LoggedInUser\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup in Windows file explorer. Now insert the DR shortcut at this point.
- 2) Click in the Windows file explorer at the specified location (... \Startup). The problem here is that at least the AppData subdirectory is invisible as part of the complete path in the Windows default settings. Open the Windows Explorer. Click on Options (Windows 10: View ▢ Options, Windows 11: Dot Dot Dot Options). A window with the title Folder Options opens. In this window, select: View → Hidden files and folders → Show hidden files, folders and drives. You can then click through to the subdirectory ... \Startup and insert the DR shortcut here.
- 3) Alternative way to make the hidden files and folders visible. This can be done via Windows → Windows Tools → Control Panel → Explorer Options → View → Hidden files and folders → Show hidden files, folders and drives. You can then click through to the subdirectory ... \Startup and insert the DR shortcut here.

The trick of simply leaving AppData invisible and typing C:\Users\LoggedInUser\AppData\RETURN or entering the complete path and ending with RETURN does not work. You then get a Windows error message "... was not found". Invisible is also invisible for Windows.

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## 8. Revision List

Date /Version	Chapter	Detailed description of the change or extension
<b>v1.20</b>		Very extensive changes with the aim of reducing processor load. From this version onwards, only entries that are due on the current date (minus PreTrigger plus PostTrigger) are checked (via pre-sorting at each day change).
<b>v1.30</b>		Simplification of the user settings. After each restart, the settings from the last session are loaded. Exception: Last window position. If this is outside the visible area (due to different monitor configurations), the start position of the window is corrected to 0/0.
<b>v1.40</b>		Flashing message box when a reminder is output: Shortened output for better readability. However, the long version is shown both in the list box (DR interface) and in the generated and opening text file.