

# Converting Software Use into a Profit Center

Software Usage Billing for Windows®-based Software

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# Corporate Background

Integrity Software has been continuously developing SofTrack since its initial creation in December 1987. Our first release in April 1988 was under the name SiteLock and was later renamed SofTrack in 1993. Through the years SiteLock and SofTrack have been marketed by various publishers included Brightwork Development, ON Technology and Elron Software.

Initially, SiteLock and SofTrack both exclusively performed software metering. In July of 2002, SofTrack's Software Usage Billing or *Timekeeping* functionality was first released. In April of 2003, SofTrack's Quick Inventory was released, it added software and hardware inventorying for Windows®-based workstations and servers. In October of 2003, SofTrack's Smart Inventory feature was introduced, it accurately details usage of inventoried software. Integrity Software has applied for a patent to protect its advanced software inventorying and usage detection methods.

Throughout its existence, SofTrack has been developed and updated by the same core programming team.

Over its lifetime, SofTrack has cumulatively saved 14,000+ organizations worldwide over \$1 Billion dollars in software related expenses.

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## Overview

Software is usually thought of as an expense, a means to an end. Once purchased, software often requires periodic update and/or license fees to ensure its continued usability. A revenue opportunity exists for organizations where Windows®-based software is used to serve the needs of its clients. Clients include those billable entities outside the organization and those within. By implementing a robust and generic software usage billing solution, your organization will receive discrete usage data that can be utilized for billing of specific software use.

This document has been prepared to clearly show the benefits of implementing SofTrack's Timekeeping functionality to provide a software usage billing solution for the use of *any* Windows®-based software.

# Introduction

Workers throughout your organization use Windows®-based software everyday to solve problems and create opportunities. Discrete accounting of each software use requires an attention to detail that many users would find tedious. Instead of relying upon users to independently record what software was used, for what purpose and how long they actually used it we created SofTrack's Timekeeping functionality. Exposing discrete software use with SofTrack's Timekeeping provides a robust and reliable accounting of software usage details that enable software usage billing.

We define software usage billing as the process of acquiring discrete software usage data for the specific purpose of charging for its use. Our product, SofTrack, employs the use of the term, *timekeeping*, to indicate software usage billing.

SofTrack's timekeeping functionality includes the ability to automate the collection of client and other specific codes before allowing selected software use. Optionally, you may elect to silently watch discrete software use. Discrete software use means tracking of each instance of software use. With most Windows®-based applications you may launch them several times. A discrete use occurs each time software is launched. Thus, if you launch Excel® 5 times on the same workstation, there are 5 discrete uses, each can be separately tracked for timekeeping purposes.

SofTrack's timekeeping reports include:

- Software being tracked
  - ⇒ Indicated by a profile name you select
- Username
  - ⇒ Windows login name or eDirectory/NDS login name
- Workstation name
  - ⇒ Windows workstation name
- Workstation network address
  - ⇒ TCP/IP or IPX address
- User's response to the timekeeping prompt
  - ⇒ May be defined as silent which means no prompting occurs
- Time use began
  - ⇒ Subsequent to answering the timekeeping prompt
- Time usage was complete
  - ⇒ If defined, intermediate progress records will be included
- Number of seconds software was in-use overall
  - ⇒ Includes active plus idle time
- Number of seconds of active use
  - ⇒ Indicated by the software being the current focus of the desktop

# Timekeeping Setup

Implementation of SofTrack's Timekeeping is simple and quick. It involves the following 5 steps:

1. Install the SofTrack Server Agent.
2. Install / Push the SofTrack Local Workstation Agent to all Windows®-based workstations and terminal servers. SofTrack's Timekeeping fully supports thin client configurations.
3. Identify the software, by filename, for timekeeping.
4. Via the SofTrack Administrator's Console, create a profile for each software to be tracked with timekeeping.
5. Select timekeeping options.

## **Step 1: Installation of the SofTrack Server Agent**

The SofTrack Server Agent provides control for the Local Workstation Agents and a common repository for storage of all configuration and report data.

## **Step 2: Installation of the SofTrack Local Workstation Agent**

The presence of the SofTrack Local Workstation Agent at each workstation provides:

- a. The generic ability to interrupt the launching of software to enable the timekeeping prompt to be presented prior to software use.
- b. The generic ability to gracefully terminate software use when the timekeeping prompt is cancelled.
- c. Accurate recording of active and idle software use.

## **Step 3: Identify software for timekeeping**

Implementation of timekeeping requires the filename of each software to be tracked.

## **Step 4: Create a profile**

The term *profile* identifies a unit of configuration within SofTrack. The term profile within SofTrack is also known as a License Profile.

## Step 5: Select Timekeeping Options

Options for timekeeping include:

- a. Designation of silent mode or not. During silent timekeeping the user will not be presented with a timekeeping prompt. Reporting will include all details except for the user's response. During silent mode, the user will likely be unaware that usage is being tracked.
- b. Defining the timekeeping prompt to present to the user. The prompt's text allows for languages other than English.
- c. Selecting whether a response to the timekeeping prompt is mandatory or optional. If mandatory, use of the designated software is not allowed unless a response to the timekeeping prompt is provided.
- d. Defining whether the user's response to the timekeeping prompt must be a fixed number of characters in length or may be a variable length with a minimum number of characters.
- e. How often to update the report log with timekeeping data. The default value 0 indicates there will only be one timekeeping entry per discrete software use. Reasons you would not set this value to zero include:
  - Users who do not want timekeeping data to be recorded might reboot their workstation or otherwise attempt to logoff before properly exiting the software's use.
  - If a user's workstation locks up or crashes no timekeeping data will be recorded.
  - If you require very accurate detailing of software use.

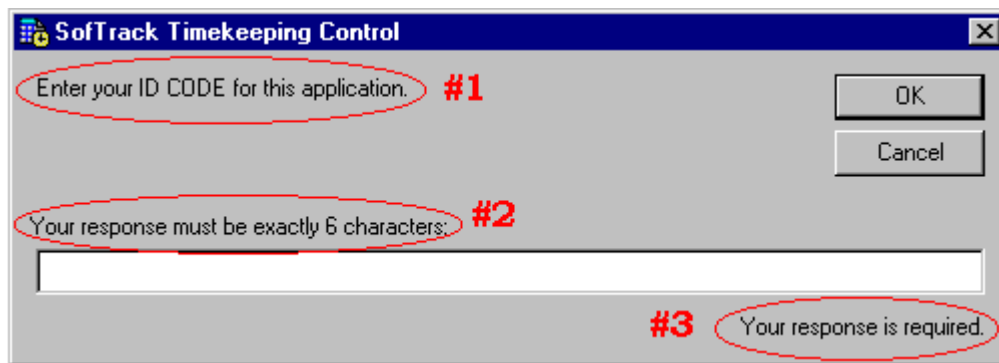
Timekeeping options configuration screenshot:

The screenshot shows a configuration window titled "Activate Timekeeping Code Prompt for this License Profile". It contains several options and input fields:

- Activate Timekeeping Code Prompt for this License Profile
- Response is Optional
- Minimum Input Length: [input field]
- Fixed Input Length: [input field]
- Silent - No Prompt
- Timekeeping prompt: [text input field]
- During use, update Timekeeping Log every [input field] minutes (range: 1-60; 0=update only at exit of usage).

# Timekeeping Use

Use of SofTrack's timekeeping is generic for the Windows®-based software it monitors. Timekeeping may be applied to **any** Windows®-based software. No changes to your software are required to engage SofTrack's timekeeping functionality. This means software configured for timekeeping is completely unaware of SofTrack's presence or control. Only the SofTrack Local Workstation Agent (LWA) is required for timekeeping to be performed. The LWA is able to generically work with any Windows®-based software because it directly interfaces with the Windows® operating system. Thus, all software launched by your users is first processed by the LWA before it is allowed to run. When software configured for timekeeping is encountered, the LWA prompts as directed:



Highlight **#1** is the Timekeeping Prompt. The text you designated is displayed here. It may be up to 110 characters in length and includes support for many international languages.

Highlight **#2** is the length of the response that you want the user to enter. If, in the profile you selected a fixed length, the text shown in the figure above will be presented to the user. Alternately, if the minimum length option was specified, the text would reflect the minimum length required. The maximum timekeeping response allowed is 50 characters.

Highlight **#3** indicates whether a response is required before allowing use of the selected software.

In the example shown in the figure above, a response *is required*. If the user clicks on **Cancel** the software launch will be cancelled. If the prompt is configured to *optionally require* a response and the user clicks on **Cancel** the software will be allowed to launch and no timekeeping data will be recorded for that discrete use.

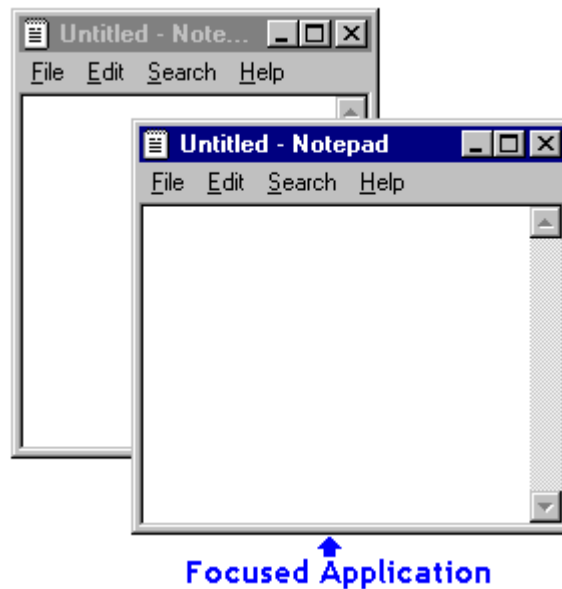
If timekeeping has been configured with the **Silent - No Prompt** option the user will not be presented with a timekeeping prompt at all. Since there is no

prompt to cancel, silent mode timekeeping records will *always* be logged. Reports of silent mode timekeeping will always define the user's response as:

**\*\*\*SILENT\*\*\***

**Note:** When providing a response to a timekeeping prompt, the user's response is *not a password*. Instead, it is a code to associate with the particular use of the selected software.

Timekeeping differentiates between overall amount of time the software was in-use and the amount of time it was actively in-use. Timekeeping determines active use to be occurring when the monitored software is the current focus.



As shown the figure above, the focused software or application has its caption bar highlighted. The caption bar of those applications not currently the focus are grayed.

# Timekeeping Reporting

The end result of timekeeping setup and use is its event data. Event data recorded identifies discrete software use. Reporting of these events enables software usage billing. The SofTrack timekeeping log is stored in a secure directory at the server hosting the SofTrack Server Agent.

Facilitating simple and quick use, timekeeping events are stored in CSV format. The following is a sample entry from the timekeeping log:

"NOTEPAD_LOCAL",	Profile Name
"Administrator",	User Name
"85110",	Timekeeping response
"12/26/2003 9:10",	Start Time
"12/26/2003 9:12",	End Time
"120",	Overall seconds in-use
"45",	Overall seconds active
"XP_PRO_1",	Workstation name
"198.206.217.229",	Workstation address

Each entry has the same format.

When you correlate software use with its purpose you can identify the cost centers associated with its use. This information can be then used to justify billing of software use.

## Conclusion

This document has been prepared to clearly show the benefits of implementing SofTrack's Timekeeping functionality to provide a software usage billing solution for the use of *any* Windows®-based software.

SofTrack is available for a free 30-day evaluation. To find out more, please visit:

<http://www.softwaremetering.com>

today!