

# Configuring PingThemAll Options

September 1, 2022

PingThemAll (PTA) uses a **config.ini** text file for options that you can modify. You can modify this file using Windows Notepad or another text editor, but it must remain in plain text format for PTA to read and use it.

When you start PTA, you will see a header that looks something like this:

```
PingThemAll Free v2.0.1.4 (c)2021 WJAiv License number ABCDEFABCDEF (10 devices) expires 20231201.  
Registered to Free Version. Please visit www.PingThemAll.com for more information.  
=====PRBHXCS  
=====23015010
```

Notice the letters and numbers we highlighted in red. On your screen, they will be light blue. Those letters and numbers tell you what options are set for this cycle of PTA. They will remain that way for every cycle unless you change options in the config.ini file, which you can do while PTA is running – there is no need to stop PTA to change these options. New options will go into effect at the start of the next cycle, and you will see the numbers change.

## What do the letters and number mean?

*Here's a short summary of what each letter corresponds to. More detail is found in the next pages.*

**P** is Ping. This is the number of times a device will be pinged (default is 2).

**R** is Retry. This is the number of seconds after the first failure of a device to ping that PTA will wait to try the same device a second time (default is 5).

**B** is Bell, as in the 'ding' sound. 1 means when a ping fails, the computer will beep. 0 (default) means no beep.

**H** is Hosting. 1 means that PTA Results are echoed on the pingthemall.com website, where you can monitor them from any Internet-connected device, anywhere in the world. 0 means they are only on your computer. The default is 1, but that only applied to licensed versions of PTA – the trial version does not support hosting.

**X** is eXit. This is the number of seconds you are given to press the 'X' key at the end of cycle to exit PTA. The default is 4 seconds.

**C** is Change. This setting enables or disabled e-mails for status changes. The default is 0, meaning that e-mails will never be sent when a device changes status, such as failing to ping, even if the **email** option is specified for that device in the pingthese.txt file. This is different than the (S)ummary option.

**S** is Summary. This is whether or not PTA will e-mail a Daily Summary after midnight on each day. The default is 0, which means a summary will not be sent.

**D** is Debug. Used for troubleshooting, setting this to 1 will add lots of extra screen output, and it's not very pretty. We recommend you leave this at 0 (default) unless PTA Tech Support asks you to change it.

## Details About Each Option:

### (P) Ping:

Ping is set to 2 as default, with a valid range of 1 thru 9. A setting of 2 means that each host is pinged twice, 4 means each host is pinged four times, etc. The more pings, the longer PTA takes to process each device. Setting this to 1 will significantly increase the speed of PTA.

**Faster is always better, right?** You may even be asking yourself, “Why not always set ping=1 and run really fast?” Well, all networks are different, and you may have network links or devices that are not as robust as you would like. When PTA pings each device twice, it lessens the chances of falsely reporting a live device as not responding. For example, you may have experienced in the past that sometimes the first ping to a device fails, but then subsequent pings succeed over and over again. While there are a few possible reasons for this, ARP Table Absence could very well be the culprit. This means that the ARP table of the router or switch between your computer and the device does not have an entry for that device. It’s a techy, nerdy thing that happens. It doesn’t mean that anything is wrong – it’s just something that happens.

**For most folks, ping=2 is the optimal setting.** PTA takes a little more time for each device it is monitoring, allowing you to read the real-time output of pinging each device as it happens. Also, as stated above, with this setting, PTA is less likely to falsely indicate a device as down due to slow network links, slow devices, or ARP Table Absence.

All that being said, if you have lots and lots of devices, keeping in mind that PTA has already been used with over 10,000 devices monitored, ping=1 may better meet your needs. This setting allows PTA to get through the [pingthese.txt](#) list substantially faster, which may be crucial for timely reporting when you have a very large number of devices. Know that PTA will automatically retry a device when it fails for the first time (see the Retry option), which also helps reduce false positives.

### (R) Retry:

The first time a device fails to ping, PTA will retry that device. This option tells PTA how long to wait before retrying that failed device. We recommend the default of 5 seconds, but you can set it from 0 (retry immediately) to 60 (wait 60 seconds before retrying.) You may wish to adjust this number if you have devices that are especially slow to respond.

### (B) Beep:

Beep is set to 0 as default, with the only valid settings being 0 or 1. A setting of 0 means that PTA runs quiet, while a setting of 1 means that when a device fails to ping, the system will beep for that device. If another device fails, you will hear another beep, and so on. Also, when the currently cycle is complete, and PTA starts over again, it will continue to beep every time it encounters a device that fails to ping. This beeping is only on the computer running the PTA engine (pingthemall.exe)... not the computers that are just monitoring the ptaresults webpage.

When we say the system will beep, what really happens is the Windows *Default Beep* sound is played. For most folks, this will be what some call the “Windows Chime” sound. If you wish to change the Windows *Default Beep* sound, go to Windows 10 Settings... System... Sound... Sounds Control Panel... Sounds tab... Default Beep.

## **(H) Host:**

Host is set to 0 as default, with the only valid settings being 0 or 1. A setting of 1 means that at the end of each PTA cycle, in addition to the local ptaresults folder being updated with the status of your devices, this information is transferred to a page dedicated to your license on the [www.pingthemall.com](http://www.pingthemall.com) webpage. This allows you to monitor your PTA status on any Internet-connected device anywhere in the world. For example, you can use your phone to take a quick look at your device status before heading into the office.

Host is only valid for liveness versions of PingThemAll. Trial versions do not support hosting, however, you can go to [www.pingthemall.com/results/AABBCCDDEE/ptapage.htm](http://www.pingthemall.com/results/AABBCCDDEE/ptapage.htm) to view live results from a running PTA system.

Note that ptaresults files are transferred via FTP each host is pinged twice, while a 4 means each host is pinged four times. The more pings, the longer PTA takes to process each device. Setting this to 1 will significantly increase the speed of PTA.

Faster is always better, right? You may even be asking yourself, “Why not always set ping=1 and run really fast?” Well, all networks are different, and you may have network links or devices that are not as robust as you would like. When PTA pings each device twice, it lessens the chances of falsely reporting a live device as not responding. For example, you may have experienced in the past that sometimes the first ping to a device fails, but then subsequent pings succeed over and over again. While there are a few possible reasons for this, ARP Table Absence could very well be the culprit. This means that the ARP table of the router or switch between your computer and the device does not have an entry for that device. It’s a techy, nerdy thing that happens. It doesn’t mean that anything is wrong – it’s just something that happens.

For most folks, ping=2 is the optimal setting. PTA takes a little more time for each device it is monitoring, allowing you to read the real-time output of pinging each device as it happens. Also, as stated above, with this setting, PTA is less likely to falsely indicate a device as down due to slow network links, slow devices, or ARP Table Absence.

All that being said, if you have lots and lots of devices, keeping in mind that PTA has already been used with over 10,000 devices monitored, ping=1 may better meet your needs. This setting allows PTA to get through the [pingthese.txt](#) list substantially faster, which may be crucial for timely reporting when you have a very large number of devices.

## **(X) eXit:**

Exit is set to 4 as default, with a valid range of 1 thru 9. A setting of 4 means that PTA will wait 4 seconds for you to press the “X” key before beginning the ping cycle all over again. This option allows you to gracefully exit PTA after a cycle is complete. If you launched pingthemall.exe from Windows Explorer, the PTA box will close and return you to Windows. If you launched pingthemall.exe from a Windows Command Prompt, the command prompt window will remain open.

## **(C) Change:**

*The (C) Change option has no bearing on the (S) Summary option and vice-versa.* The E-mail option controls whether or not PTA will send an e-mail when a device that is flagged as “email” in the pingthese.txt fails to ping. Think of it as a master ON/OFF switch for the per-device e-mail feature. E-mail is set to 0 as default, with the only valid settings being 0 or 1. A 0 means e-mails will never be sent when a device fails to ping, even if the pingthese.txt file denotes “email”. A 1 means that, for any devices with the word “email” specified in the

pingthese.txt file, an e-mail will be sent the first time it fails. Subsequent failures will not trigger additional e-mails, but if the device successful pings after that initial failure, the status is reset, and a later failure will indeed trigger a new e-mail.

### **(S) Summary:**

Summary is set to 0 as default, with the only valid settings being 0 or 1. This option controls whether or not PTA will e-mail a daily summary after midnight on each day. The summary includes a snapshot of devices that failes and devices that recovered from failing.

### **(D) Debug:**

Debug is set to 0 as default, with the only valid settings being 0 or 1. This option controls whether or not PTA runs in debug mode, adding lots of extra output to the screen. We recommend that you only enable this option if instructed by PTA tech support.

## **Changing Options**

You can leave PTA running while you change these options – they will take affect when PTA starts a new ping cycle.

To change any of the options, locate the config.ini file in your PingThemAll Pro (PTA) directory, and open it using your favorite text editor. You will see the options laid out like this:

```
ping=2
retr=3
beep=0
host=1
exit=5
emal=0
summ=1
debu=0
addr=youremail@yourcompany.com
```

The **ADDR** option is where you specify the e-mail address to which you want any status change alerts and daily summaries sent. **Be sure to change this to a valid e-mail address.**

Change the option values as desired, then save the file. The next time PTA starts a new ping cycle, your new options should go into effect. You can verify this by the PRBHXESD fields displayed in the header.