

Freeware Spotlight — Autorun Organizer

By Deanna McElveen, AskWoody Plus, Issue 18.47.0, 12/6/21

Making breakfast. Washing the dog. Getting a haircut.

If you have time to do any of these while your computer finishes starting, you may need Chemtable Software's free Autorun Organizer. It's one of those programs I would gladly pay for, but they won't take my money.

What is Autorun Organizer? It's a program that shows you what's automatically starting up when you turn your computer on. With each startup entry, Autorun Organizer tells you exactly how long the program took to load. It also gives you the ability to stop or delay it from loading. Don't know what a particular program is? Use Autorun Organizer to check it against the 71 antivirus engines on VirusTotal.

Let's get it downloaded and installed, and I'll show you how easy it is to use. Click this link to grab a copy:

OlderGeeks.com - Autorun Organizer.

Once you have **autorun-organizer-setup.exe** downloaded, just run the installation (Figure 1). It's not portable, because it needs to run in the background to alert you to new startup entries being added to your computer without your knowledge. Yep, another reason I would pay for it!



Figure 1. Setup. Nothing sneaky here. Just a regular setup routine with a vanilla licensing agreement.

Pause on the next screen for a minute, and let's go over your options. (See Figure 2.)

There are four boxes already checked for you.

- **Launch Autorun Organizer:** Leave this checked if you want to be alerted to new startup entries being added to your computer.
- **Enable functions requiring data transfer:** Leave this checked if you want the program to be able to upload files to VirusTotal for virus scanning. This also allows the program to upload anonymous information about what things users are disabling. This helps everyone who uses the program. More on that later.
- **I agree to VirusTotal's terms of service:** Leave this checked if you agree and want the previous selection to work.
- **What's new in this version:** Leave this checked if you want to view the changes since the last version of Autorun Organizer.



Figure 2. Choose what you want to allow Autorun Organizer to do.

The main window will pop up after the installation is complete (Figure 3). It looks a bit overwhelming, but it's actually pretty simple. As always, I'll help you navigate.

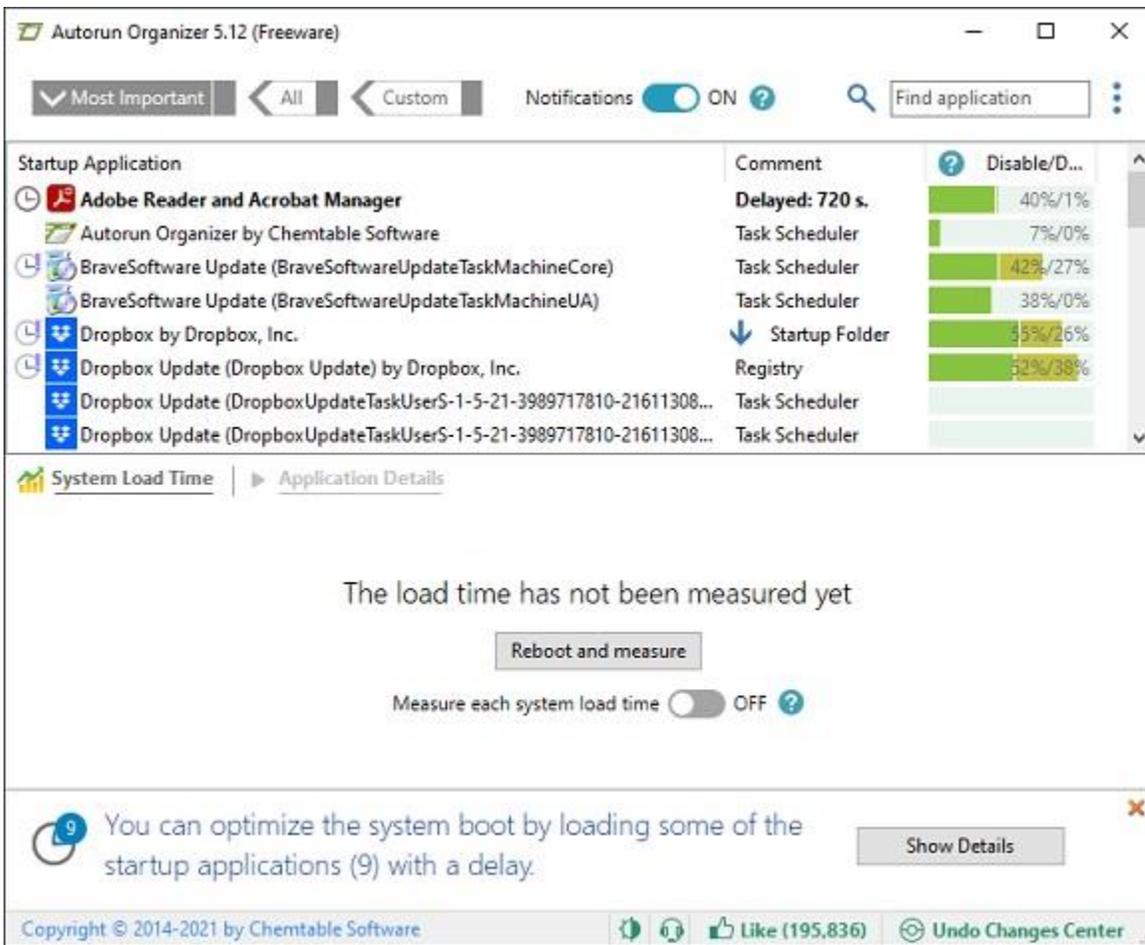


Figure 3. The main window gives you a lot of power over your computer.

Starting at the top, there are three ways you can display which programs are set to automatically run when your computer starts.

- **Most Important:** This is the default selection and filters out things such as drivers and programs' secondary processes. Like it says, it shows only the most important items.
- **All:** This shows everything except system items. Your list will be long but helpful in tracking down sneaky malware and spyware. Don't go nuts disabling things here, unless you know exactly what they are used for.
- **Custom:** In Figure 4, you can see various choices under Custom. By default, the program will display startup entries from the Windows Registry, the Startup Folder, and the Windows Tasks Scheduler. You can also check to include Services and Drivers. Uncheck anything you don't want displayed. Also, note that Hide System Applications is already checked; uncheck it to display these. **Warning:** Be extremely careful with what you disable or delay when these are visible. (You'll learn about disabling and delaying soon.)

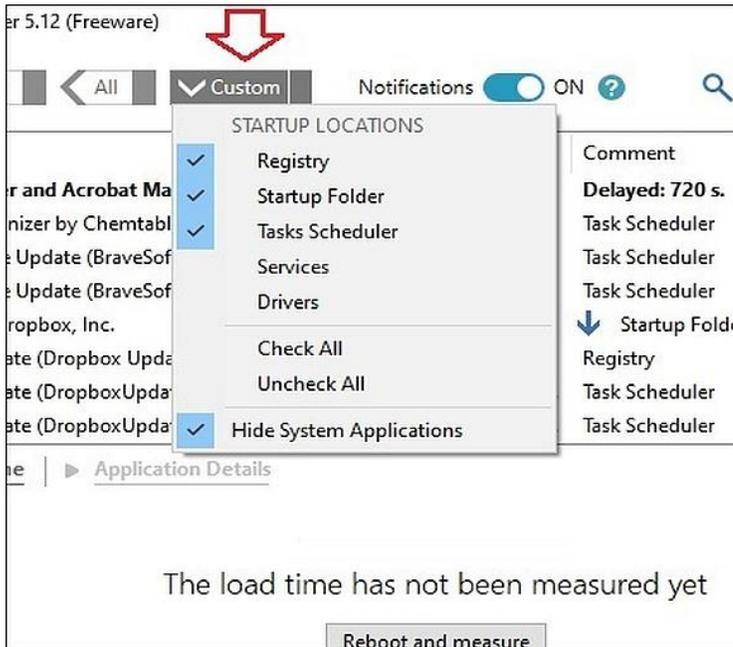


Figure 4. Under Custom, select what items to display.

To the right of your display choices are Notifications and Find application (Figure 5).

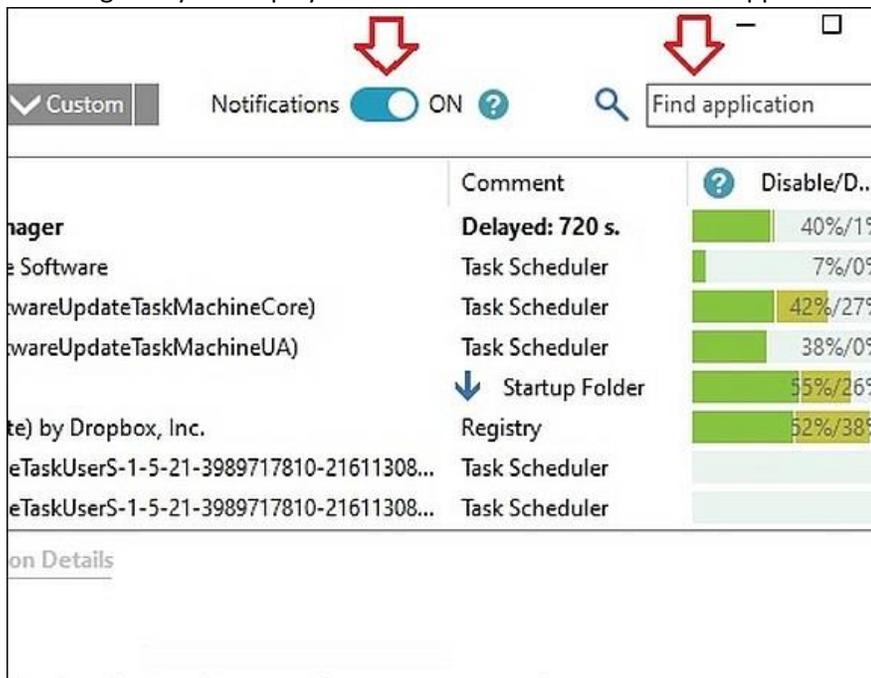


Figure 5. Turn Notifications on/off and find an application.

Notifications (on by default unless you disabled it during install) allows Autorun Organizer to alert you when a new startup entry is added. For example, if you install that sweet new screensaver from messupyourcomputerrealbad.com, Autorun Organizer is going to let you know that the screensaver also set a [cryptojacking](#) program to run in the background. **Find application** is simply a quick way to locate an entry. Example, you use Steam for gaming but you don't want it automatically starting. Just search for "Steam," and you can easily disable it, (We're getting to disabling. Hold your horses.)

Now let's look at the list of entries from left to right (Figure 6).

If the item has a little clock next to it, it's set to have a delayed start. In a bit, I will show you how you change this.

Startup Application: The name of the application, service, task or driver

Comment: Shows you the type of startup item.

Disable/Delay Frequency: Remember on install when I told you about "Enable functions requiring data transfer"? This is where that info comes into play and helps everyone. Under this column, you see two percentages. The first one is the percent of other users who have disabled this particular entry. The second number is the percent of other users who have delayed this particular entry. Example: I use the GOG Galaxy gaming platform because I love old games (Pharaoh Gold rules!!). Looking at the list, I see that 65% of users disable this startup entry, while 17% of them delay its startup. Well, by George, I'll disable it too!

Items in red: These are items that no longer exist on your computer but still have startup entries. You can safely remove these in most cases, but if you have a program on an external drive that is not currently plugged in, I think it might turn the entry red.

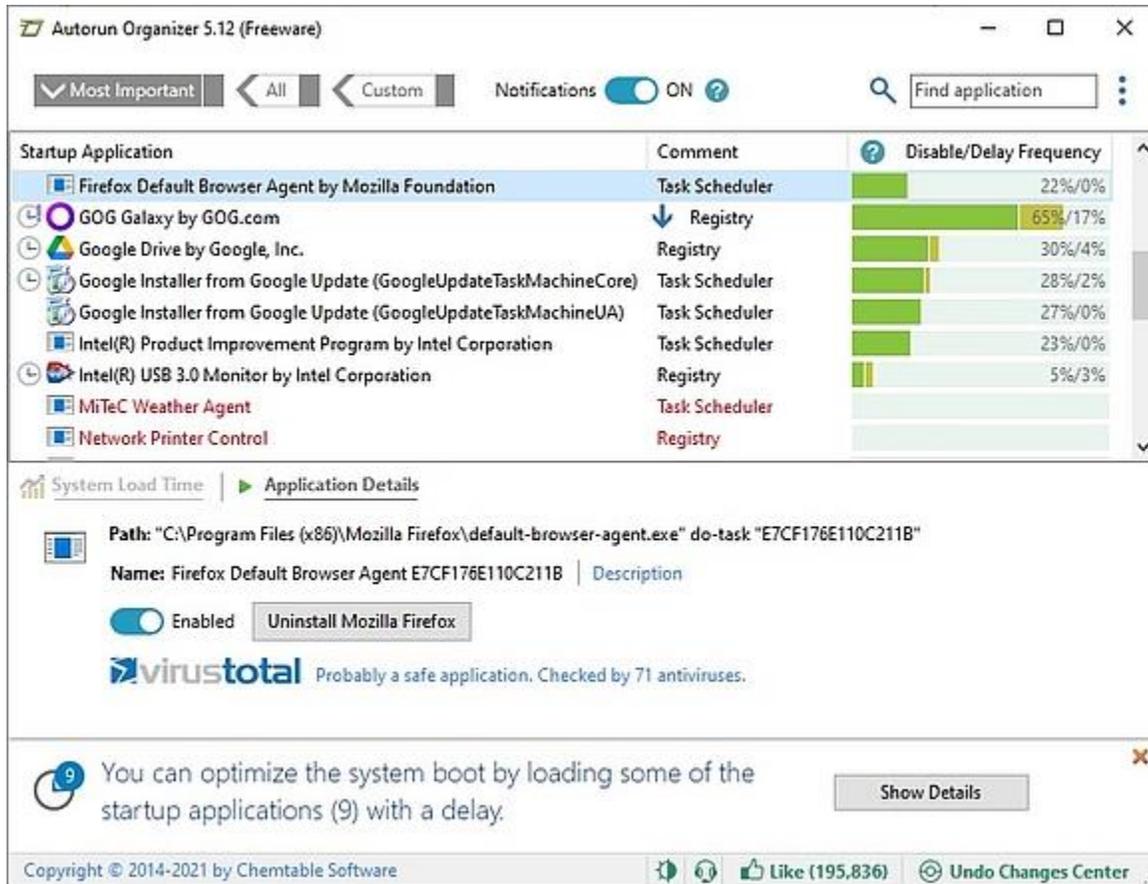


Figure 6. The entry list contains a lot of useful information.

To disable or delay the GOG entry (here's what you've been waiting for), there are two ways.

First, I can simply right-click an item (Figure 7). I can choose to **Disable** it, **Delay Load** it for 35 seconds, or **Delay Load for** an amount of time I choose. On right-click, there are some other things I can do.

- **Show the Startup Entry Location:** This opens the Registry, the folder, Services, Task Scheduler, or whatever is needed to show you how this item is loading.
- **Show the File Properties:** Opens the file properties window for the item.
- **Open the Containing Folder:** Opens the folder where the item's starting file resides.
- **Open the Uninstall Key:** Got me on this one. Seems to just open the item under the Computer\HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\ key, if it exists. Not really much you could do here, unless you are trying to manually rip a damaged program out of the Registry (not advised).
- **Search Online:** Pretty simple. It opens your default Web browser and "Googles" the item for you.
- **Mark as Recently Added:** Don't know why this would be useful. I guess you could mark it, so you're reminded about it on next boot.

- **Remove:** This not only removes the startup entry in the Registry, Services, Task Scheduler, etc., but it also deletes the file. Please be super-careful wielding this much power. You can seriously make a bad day for yourself if you delete the wrong thing. Unless you are experienced and killing some malware or something, stick with disabling.
- **Remove and Prevent Reappearance:** Speaking of malware, if you have something that keeps reinstalling itself, this is where you lock it out for good. Again — caution.
- **Do Not Notify Me about Adding to the Startup:** Useful if you are planning to uninstall and reinstall a program and don't want to be notified about its startup entry again.
- **Add to Startup...** : Huh? Someone explain to me how this is useful if the item is already in the startup list. If it's disabled, you just uncheck Disabled. Odd.

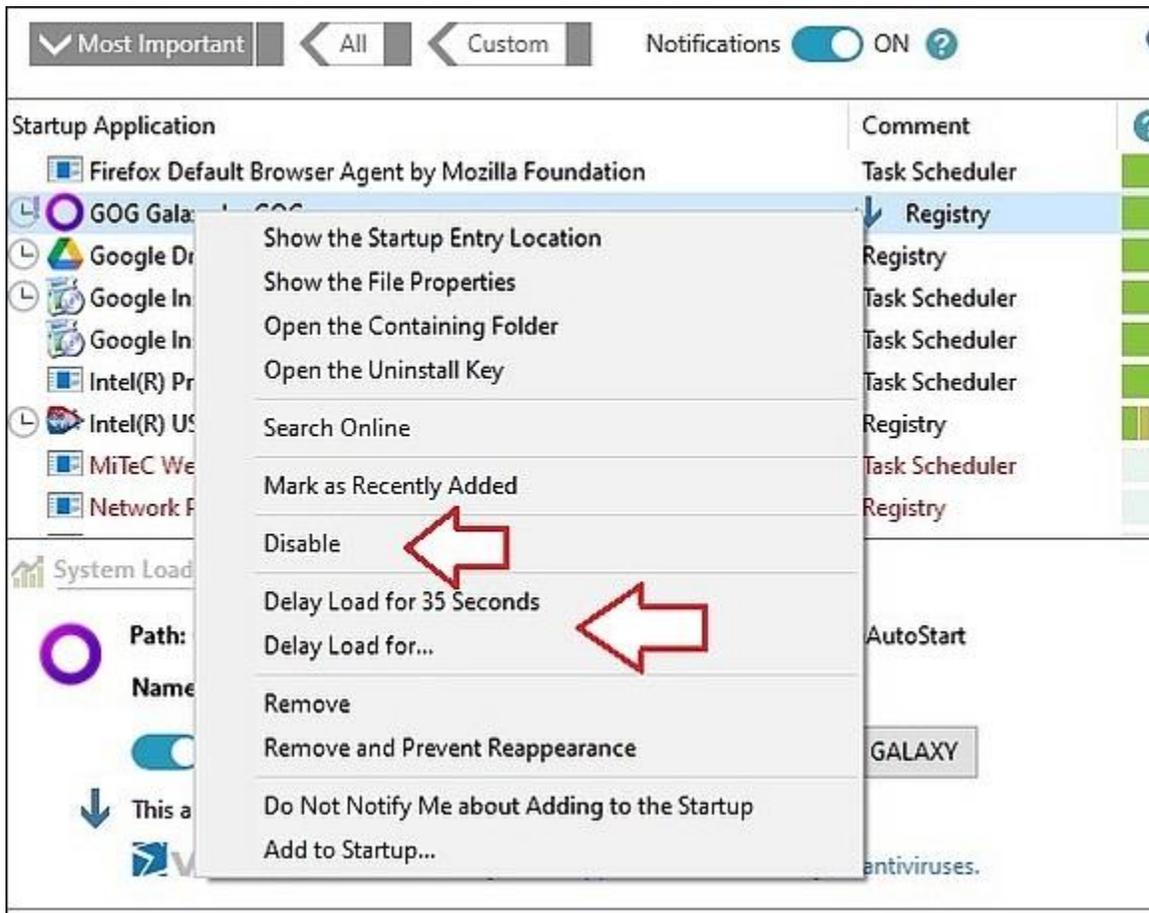


Figure 7. The first way to disable or delay an item is with a quick right-click.

Moving right along, the second way I can disable GOG is by going down to the bottom of the window and clicking the slider that currently displays "Enabled" (Figure 8).

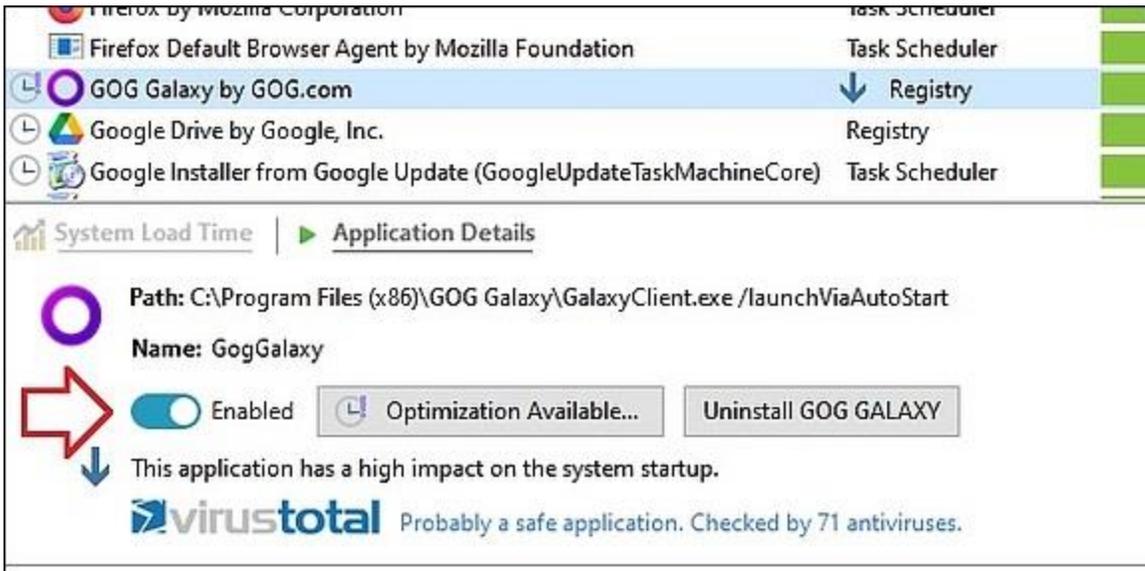


Figure 8. Click the slider at the bottom as an alternative way of disabling an item entry.

While we are looking at the lower area of the window, I'll go over the other features.

You will notice two tabs, **System Load Time** and **Application Details**. We'll come back to the first tab, since the program needs the computer to reboot in order to measure load times of the entries.

Under the Application Details tab (Figure 9), you have a few more choices. **Optimization Available...** brings up a box that suggests a recommended amount of time to delay this item's startup. For GOG, it's recommending five minutes. A bit of overkill for my system, running on an SSD.

Next to Optimization Available is a handy-dandy button to **Uninstall** the program, using the normal uninstall process. This button is not visible for certain types of items.

Right under these buttons, you will get the message "This application has a high impact on the system startup" if the program is known to slow down startup.

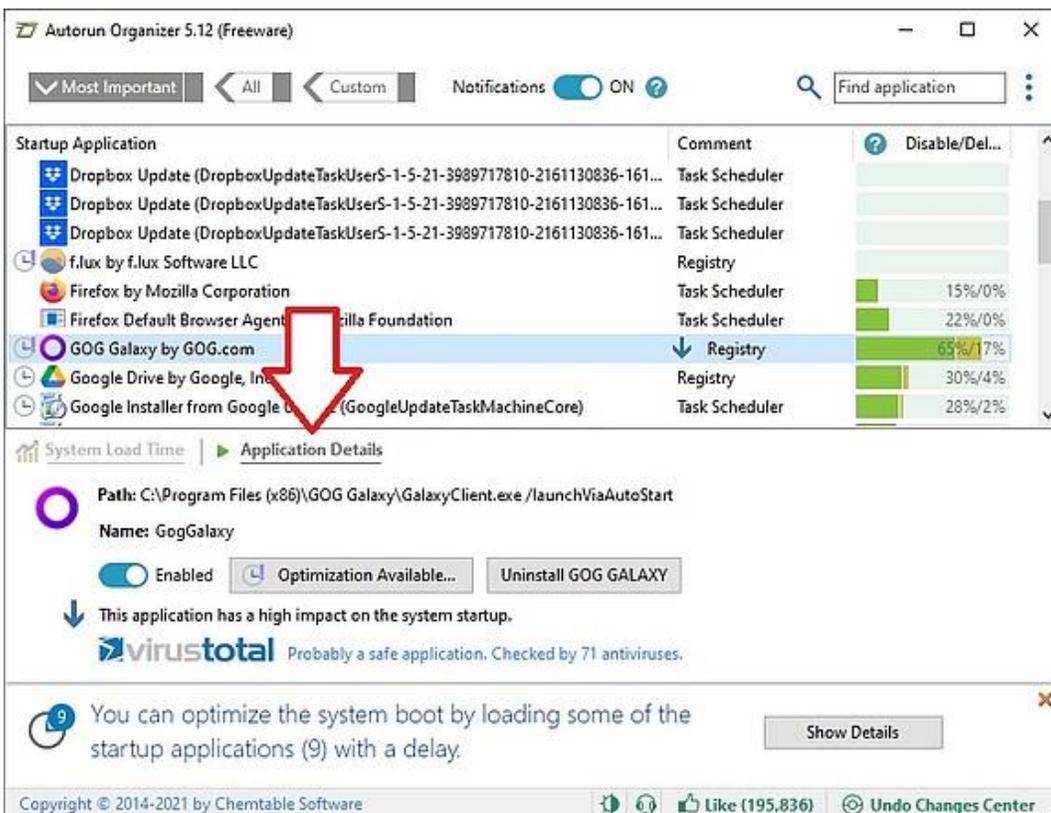


Figure 9. There is a lot more to this free program.

Next is my favorite part of the program, the ability to check an item with the 71 virus-scanning engines on **VirusTotal**. Next to the VirusTotal logo (Figure 10), the program gives you the historic reputation of this program. If it doesn't know it, you can click to upload the sample to VirusTotal for scanning. If it's found to have malware, your results will benefit everyone.

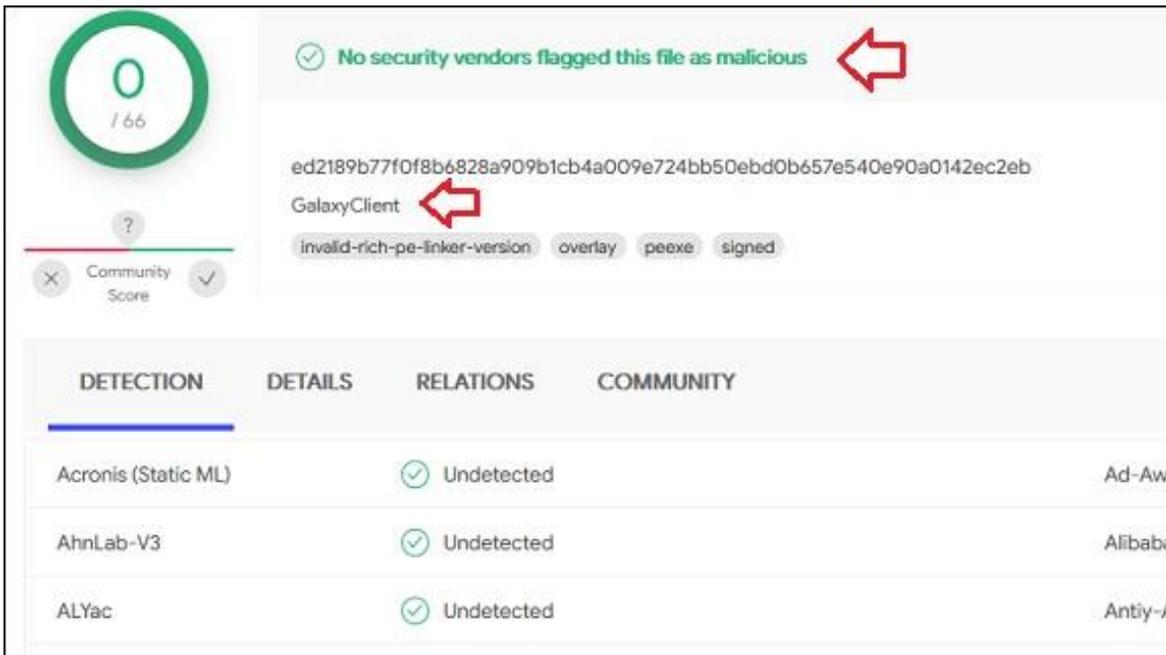


Figure 10. My VirusTotal results for GOG are clean as a whistle!

At the very bottom of the window, you see a little **sun/moon icon** to toggle between light and dark mode — for you dark, foreboding types (Figure 11).

The little **headphones** icon takes you straight to Chemtable Software's Support Center, where you can browse the knowledge base and FAQs, and also contact them via email or Facebook.

The **thumbs-up** icon takes you to where you can write a review of the software.

The **Undo Changes Center** is where you can undo everything you screwed up because you didn't listen to my warnings — if your computer still boots.

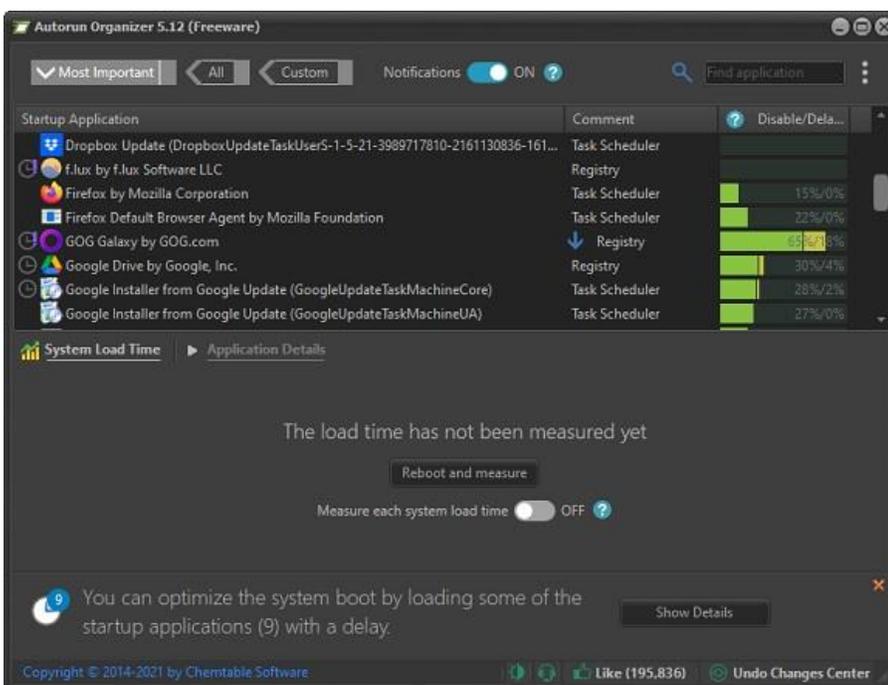


Figure 11. Dark mode. Very dramatic.

Now we come to the final part of the program, **Reboot and Measure**. Click on the **System Load Time** tab to see this button (see Figure 11). Before clicking this button, you will want to make sure you have closed and saved work in all other programs because — guess what — this is going to reboot your computer. After reboot, Autorun Organizer is going to measure everything. Don't do anything on your computer until it's done, or you won't get accurate results. You can, however, click the Windows Notifications icon to the right of the time and date in the Windows taskbar to view the progress (Figure 12).

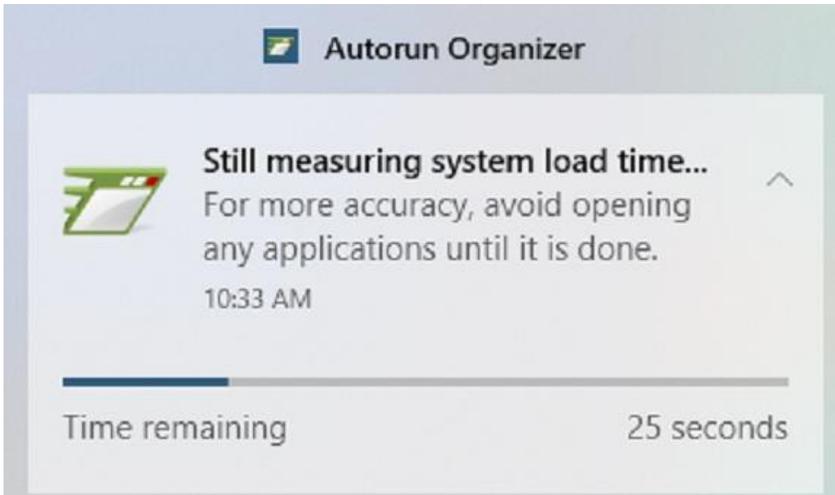


Figure 12. The program needs time to make a good assessment of your system load times.

Open Autorun Organizer again to see your results. Mine was 221 seconds. This is pretty embarrassing. Luckily, I can fix this by disabling and/or delaying startup items with my new program! I can also click **Show Details** to see suggestions on things the program can change to speed things up. (See Figure 13.)

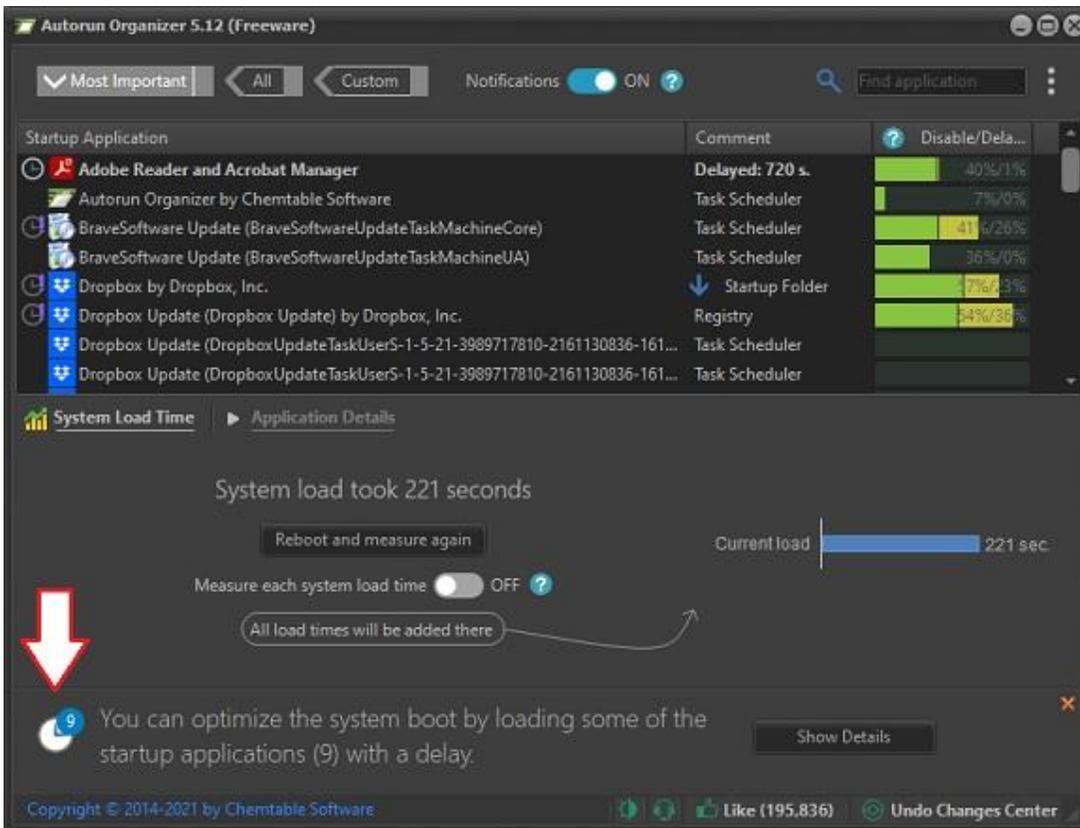


Figure 13. This is purely for demonstration purposes, not for making fun of Deanna's boot time.

I hope this helps your computer as much as it's going to help mine. Can you believe this thing is free!?