Exchange Group Calendar Free / Busy viewer.

The free/busy viewer is a free Gantt style viewer of the Exchange group calendars. It is useful for receptionists, project managers, team leaders etc to display team calendar information in a Gantt planning style fashion. It can be used to display calendar information of projects, resources like meeting rooms and cars but also staff availability in the form of a in/out board or free/busy schedule. The tool does not need Outlook to be installed on the pc but interfaces with the Outlook calendar directly on the exchange server.
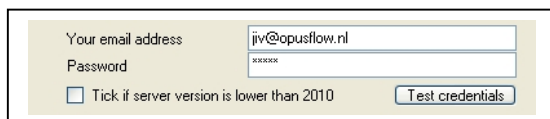
For more information: http://www.exchangegroupcalendar.com/index.htm?Free_Busy%20viewer.htm

Configuration

The free/busy viewer is a useful add-on for EGC 3.0 licensees to display the group calendar content in a Gantt style schedule.
It connects to the Exchange server in the same way as MS Outlook which it locates automatically thru the use of the Autodiscover service.

For authentication it needs a valid email address and password. This can be the email address of the current user or that of an account that the network administrator provides.

After entering the account information a click on the 'Test Credentials' button will validate the account and give feedback about that in a yellow box at the bottom of the form. For error fix suggestions see the end of this document.

In order to be able to select and view group calendars they have to be listed in the big box below the credentials. In Ms Outlook you can locate the Group Calendar after displaying the 'Folder List' (in most Outlook version this is a small icon at the left hand side bottom).
In the Outlook folder list at the bottom is a node called "Public Folders". Under that you will find 'Favorites and 'All Public Folders'.
Open the 'All public Folders' node and you will see a list of all the calendars and other folders your organization uses. You may have to expand folders with a Plus sign in front of them to locate your group calendars at a deeper level.
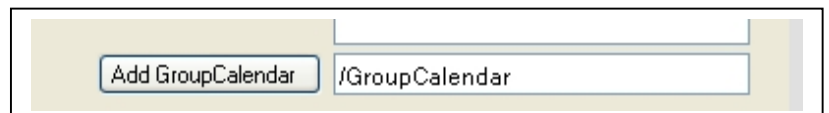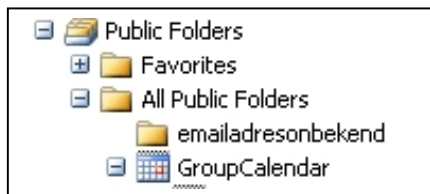
In the picture above, the path to the folder called 'Group Calendar' is visible. To configure the free/busy tool with this folder we would enter **/GroupCalendar** in the box behind the 'add groupcalendar' button and click that button.
Repeat this step for all the group calendar folders that you want to view and the free/busy viewer is ready for use.

Viewing or refreshing a group calendar
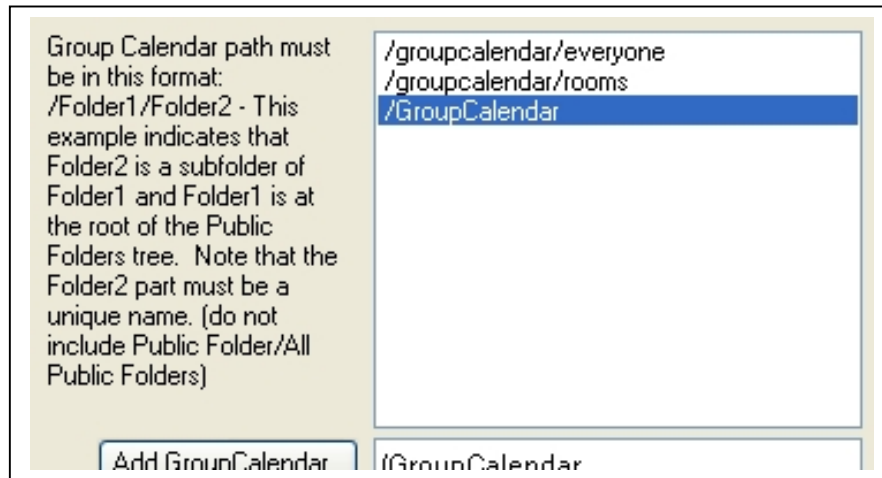
Select a line within the list of group calendars to display it's content. Once a line is selected here, clicking anywhere in the list will reload the group calendar content.
By default, today's date will be selected. You can select another date in the calendar control or multiple dates by the use of the shift key and selecting first date in the range and last date in the range. You can also select multiple dates by keeping the mouse button pressed and move it from first date to last date.
Selecting a new date in the calendar will reload the calendar content automatically.

The checkbox "Auto refresh every 2 minutes" will reload the calendar content every 2 minutes so any changes in the calendar will automatically become visible.

Day View hours
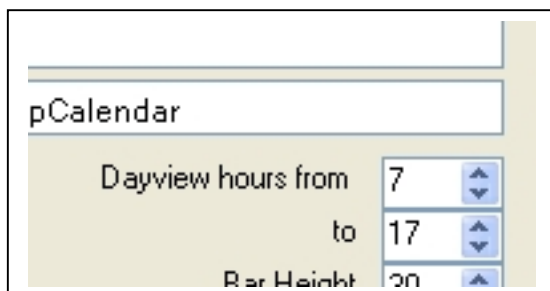
Most events occur during business hours. To limit the time period of what the calendar shows when a single date is selected, change the start and end time in the selection boxes below the calendar list.

Bar Height / Resizing the schedule

The bar height selector will influence the vertical size of the bars. Lowering this number will help you show more users (rows) in the available schedule size.

Another way to increase the available vertical space is by maximizing the tool to full screen mode. This can be useful when 2 displays are attached to the computer.

To maximize the available horizontal space, the settings can fold away by a click on the button in the centre left of the tool.
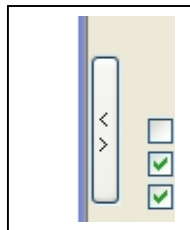
Kiosk Mode
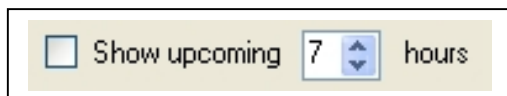
Selecting the 'Show upcoming X hours' setting, together with the 'Auto refresh' option will show the selected number of today's hours. By maximizing the screen and hiding the settings, a full screen and up to date schedule will become available which has many uses like:
-   In the lobby to display visitors a schedule of meetings and room, availability of consultants, planned jobs in a workshop etc.
-   On the desk of the receptionist to see who's in and who's out.
-   On a department floor as a job planning

Snap Shot

The snap shot button will output the schedule to jpeg file and open it in the default viewer for that file type, ready for printing.

Bundle Users

This file records all the user names that have ever been displayed in the calendar schedule.
By default every user name shows information on one line in the schedule but you can change
that so the information of two usernames is bundled together on one line.
For example if you want to display the information of user name 'John Doe'
on the line where the information of 'JD' is displayed then you
type behind the name JD '=John Doe' so it reads 'JD=John Doe'

Hide users

This file records all the user names that have ever been displayed in the calendar schedule.
You may want to hide some user names from the schedule.
By default a user has the word SHOW behind the name.
If you change that into HIDE then that user will no longer be visible in the schedule.

Alternatively you can RIGHT-CLICK a BAR in the schedule, on the row with the user name
that you want to hide and select the context menu option "Hide User".

Error fixes

Check credentials gives : "The Autodiscover service couldn't be located"

If you have Outlook 2007 or higher
1). Open the Outlook client
2). Hold down the CTRL key on your keyboard and click the Outlook icon in the notification
area of the Windows taskbar.
3). in the menu that appears, click Test E-mail AutoConfiguration.
4). Enter your E-mail Address and Password (if not logged into the domain) in the respective
edit boxes.
5). Choose the desired auto configuration methods with Use Autodiscover, clear other
selection.
6). Click Test.If there any errors please check the log tab for more information.

Another method is to open the gcadmin.exe software on the server and click the Test SCP
button there. It will show you an url where the Autodiscover service is located. You will see
something like https://server.domain.loc/autodiscover/ etc.
When the domain part "domain.loc" is different from what is used in the "Your email
address" box of the free/busy viewer then the error can often be fixed by giving the user a
second email address in the "domain.loc" domain and use that as credentials.