

SOLO

Users manual



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Thank you for your purchase of the AAG CloudWatcher "Solo"!

The "Solo" has been designed to improve the overall usefulness of the AAG CloudWatcher, monitoring it, adjusting the heater, and constantly publishing information accessible in a variety of ways.

1) Physical installation

The "Solo" has to be installed indoors. The installation cannot be more easy:

- unplug your CloudWatcher from the power supply (if applicable)
- using the same power supply, power the "Solo" - any of the two plugs will do
- with the included (short) cable, join the other jack plug in the "Solo" with the CW
- Attach the SubD-9 (serial) from the CW to the "Solo"
- and, of course, connect the Solo to your local network using a standard RJ45 cable (not supplied)

... that's it. In a few seconds the "activity" LED in the "Solo" will start blinking (slowly), showing it is communicating with the CloudWatcher

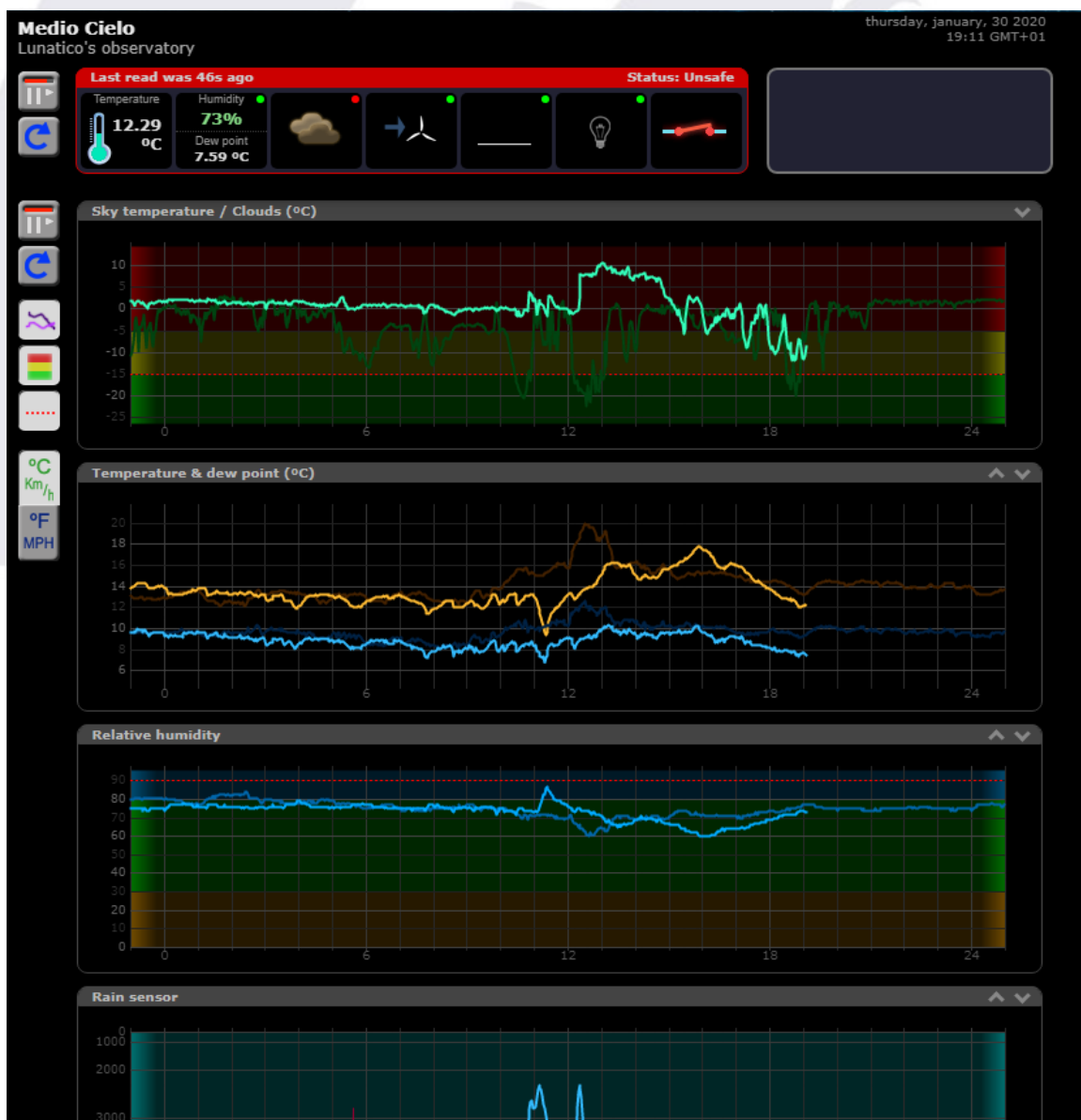
2) Accessing the data

Now that the "Solo" is up and running, and connected to your local network, it will fetch an IP address (automatically, using DHCP, as standard in the vast majority of networks) and start publishing information in a variety of ways.

There is a separate document explaining the procedure to enable your Solo being accessed from the internet.

2.1) Main web page

From your web explorer, now you can type: "<http://aagsolo>" (in the address bar, *not in Google!*), and you'll see the main "Solo" page:



There are a few things worth explaining in this page:


- in the *upper left side*, the current readings are displayed. Hovering the mouse pointer over the icons will display the reading numerically.
- at its *leftmost side*, some buttons:



– stop / start auto update (will refresh every 60 seconds if enabled)



– reload data now

- in the *upper right*, a log pane with recent information
- covering the rest (and main portion) of the page, the graphs with information covering the current day and the day before. Note the arrows at the top right of each graph -
 You can use them to rearrange the graphs.

- Also at its *leftmost side*, some buttons:



– stop / start auto update (will refresh every 60 seconds if enabled)



– reload data now



– show / hide yesterday's data



– show / hide the three color background (matching the 3 levels of each reading)



– show / hide a dotted line at the current "unsafe" setting



– choose between metric and imperial units

Last, in the lower right side of the page the language can be changed, for the moment Auto, English and Spanish are available.

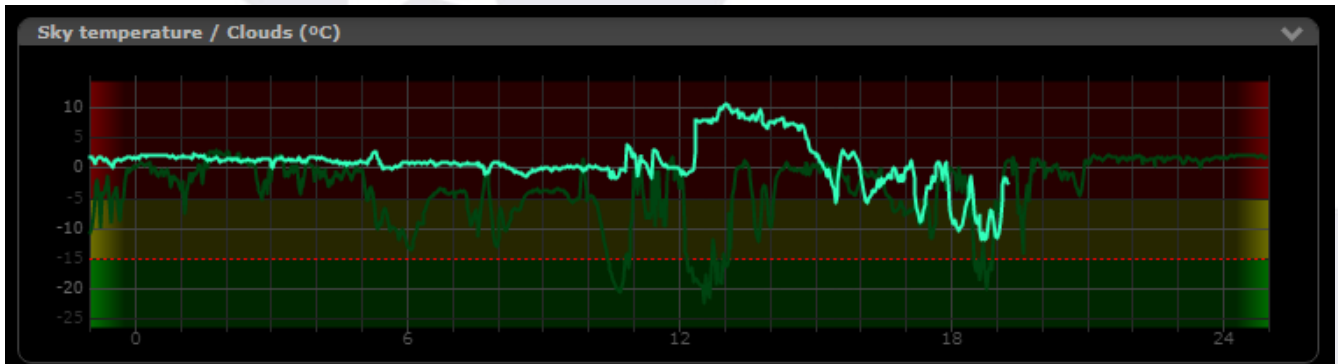
This page can be made accessible from the Internet; the way of doing so varies from router to router, but basically involves setting up a "NAT" rule for incoming connections at a given port to be redirected to the "Solo" – and of course the "Solo" needs to have a fixed IP address. You can check our running unit at:

<http://aagsolo.lunatico.es:10800/>

2.2) Graphs and information explained

The information displayed by the page depends on the sensors installed; currently, the relative humidity sensor and the anemometer are optional, so may be shown or not.

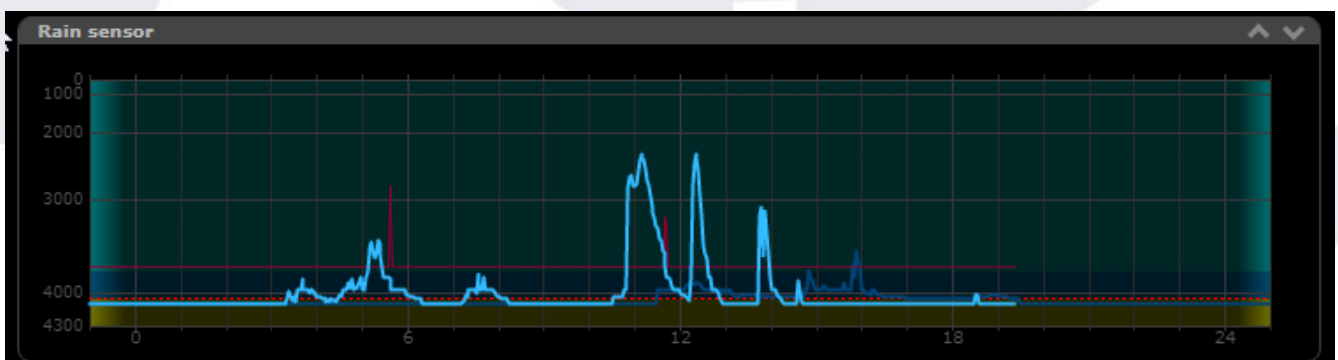
The elements of every graph are very similar:



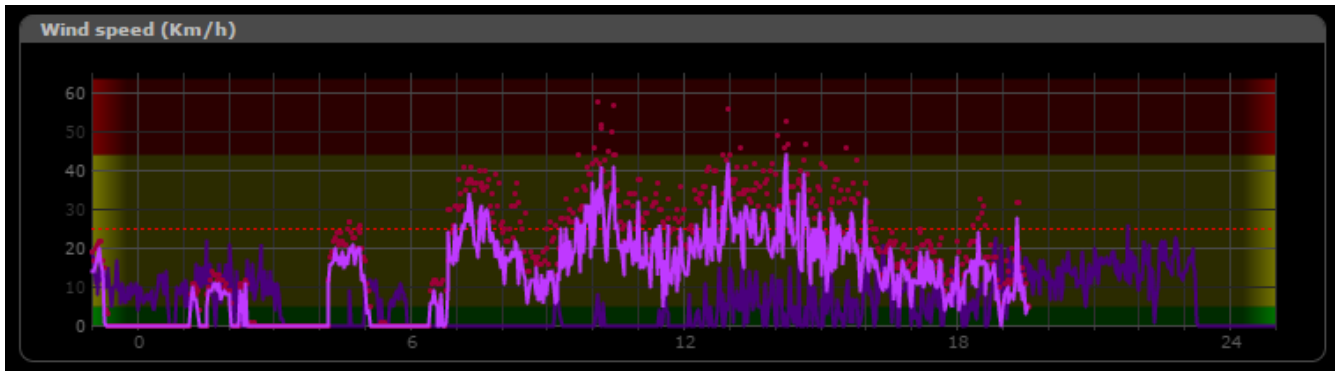
Current data is shown in a bright line (green for sky temperature), yesterday's as a more pale line.

A dotted orange line marks the boundary between safe and unsafe. Finally the three background colors match the three ranges specified (clear / cloudy / overcast, for sky temperature, etc.)

Some graphs however have some specificities. The rain graph, apart from the rain value (lower values indicate rain), also shows a red line reflecting the sensor heater behaviour.



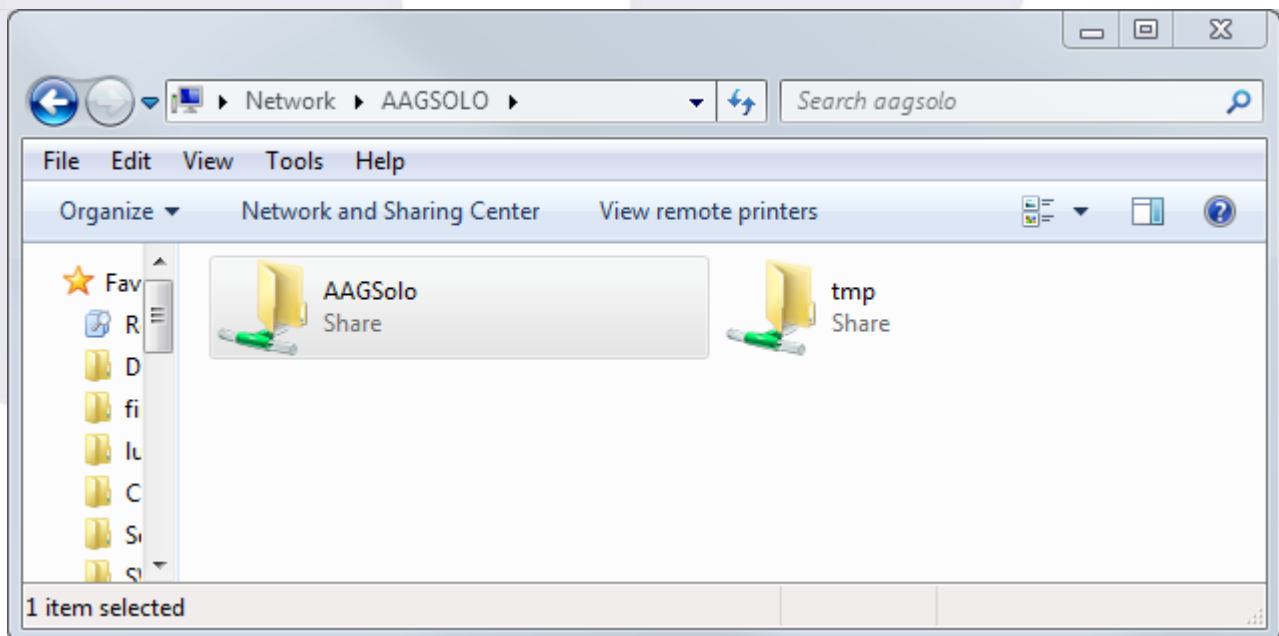
In this example can be seen the activity spikes of the heater matching the rain periods. The wind graph (and icon at the top), will show the average wind speed as a line, and the gust as a dot:



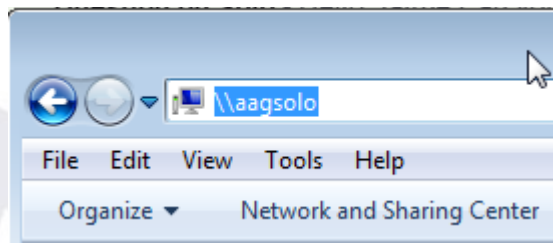
2.3) Single Line Data files

Some programs and drivers (at least CCDAutopilot and CCDCommander in remote mode, and also our own and Chris Rowland's ASCOM safety monitor driver), just need to access a file with weather data formatted in a specific way.

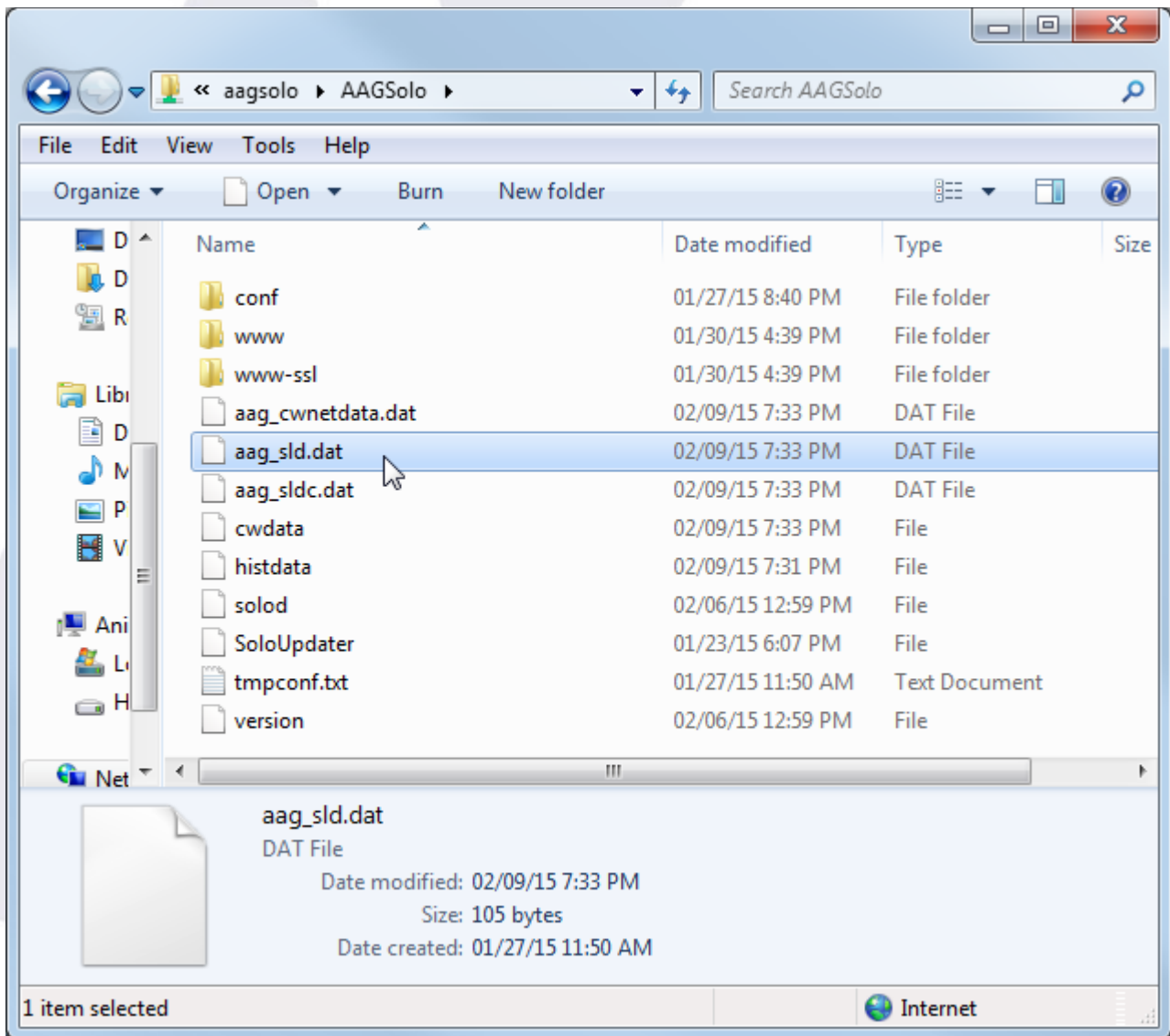
The "Solo" does publish this file, and thus you can add weather safety just accessing it from the network. Browse the network to the "aagsolo" computer (by the way, user "**pi**", password "**cloudwatcher**"):



If you can't find AAGSolo by browsing the network, just type "\\aagsolo" in the address bar:



Forget the "tmp" folder, and go to the "AAGSolo" one:



There are quite a few files, but it is "aag_sld.dat" (meaning AAG Single Line Data) the one we're looking for.

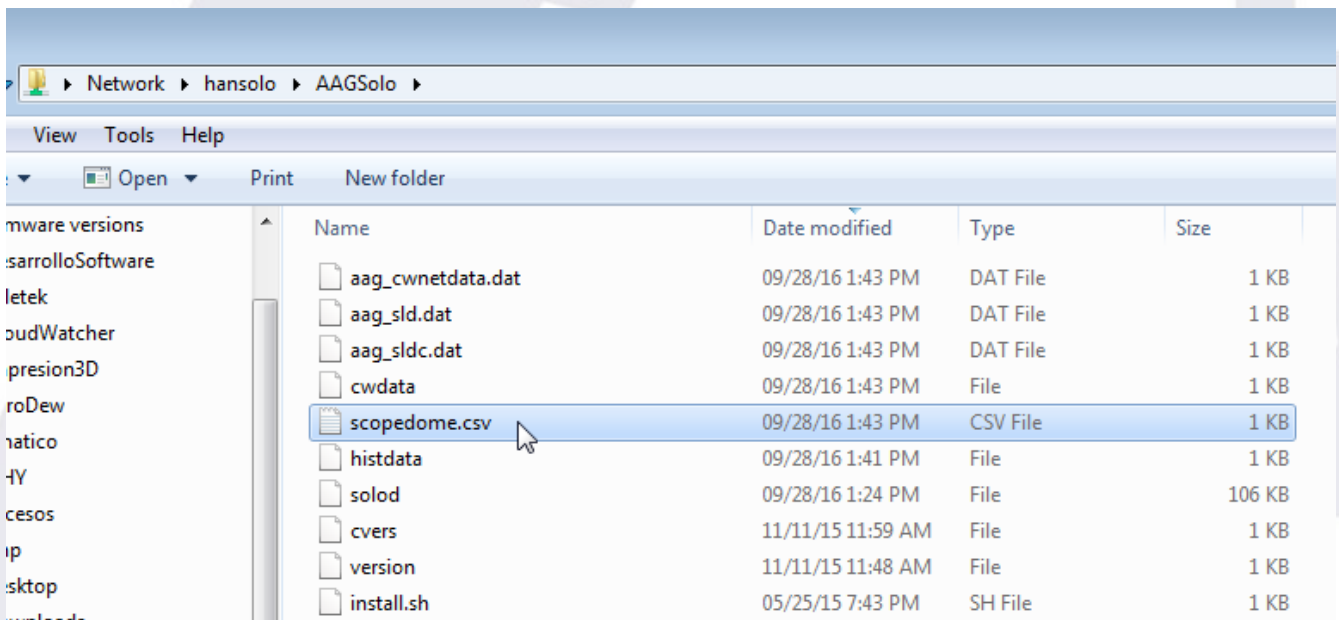
There's also a file called "aag_slc.dat", being the same but with a comma "," separating the decimal numbers. I've check that at least CCDAP, if installed in a machine with a locale using

that comma to separate decimal numbers, needs this file.

So, you just have to make your automation software (or ASCOM driver) point to this shared folder. Important, depending on the Windows version, you may have to connect to the "aagsolo" from the Windows explorer at least once at the start of every session.

2.4) ScopeDome data file

Accessing the network in the same way, we can find a special file for the ScopeDome software, namely "scopedome.csv":



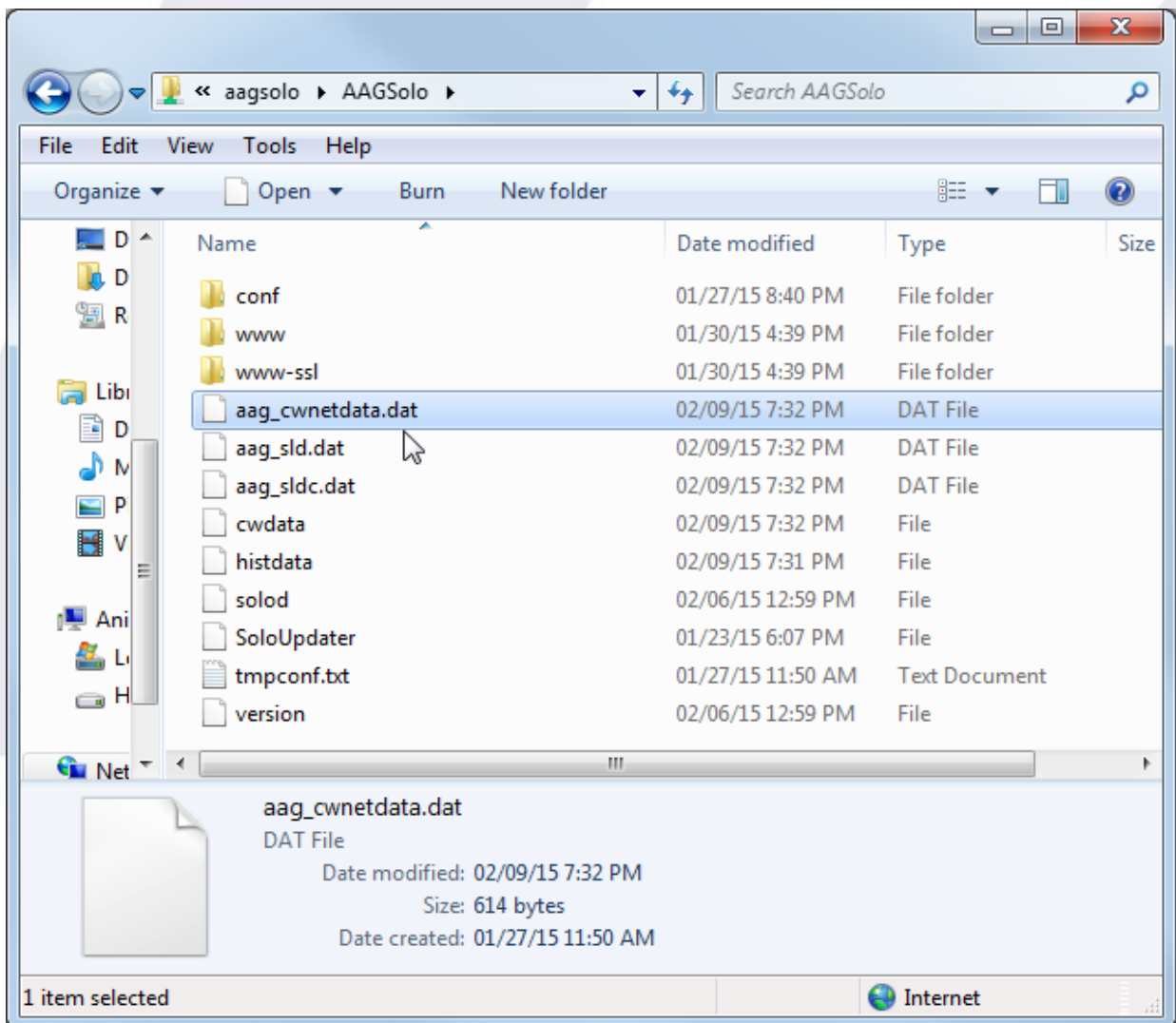
... just select this file in your ScopeDome software, Config, Cloud Sensor Config (Current Cloud Sensor Status File Name)

2.5) AAG CloudWatcher "Master"

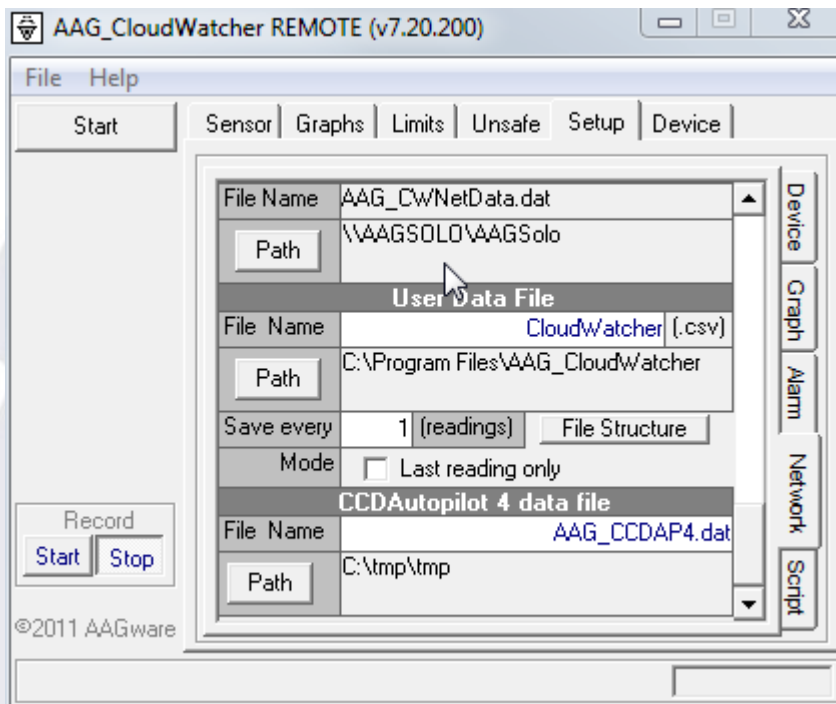
The "Solo" also behaves as a CloudWatcher Windows application in Master mode, so you can connect other instances of the Windows software, running as Remote, to the "Solo".

Note: to change your current Windows software from Master to Remote, go to the "Setup" tab, "Network" section, and select "remote".

The windows software running in remote mode needs a special file to read the data from the sensor; browse the network again to the aagsolo machine (reminder, user "pi" password "cloudwatcher"), and you'll find the AAG_CWNetData.dat file:



This is the file your "remote" AAG programs will need to operate. Selecting, from those remote mode applications, the folder containing it, will allow them to run.



As said before, depending on the Windows version, you may have to connect to the "aagsolo" from the Windows explorer at least once at the start of every session.

2.6) Data Logger

An useful feature of the Solo is its ability to record a CSV file in a user supplied USB stick. You just need to insert, in one of Solo USB ports, a suitably formatted USB memory stick (suitably formatted means FAT – other formats may work if you know what you're doing...).

Once the stick is inserted, the Solo software will detect it, mount, and start adding information to a CSV file (userdata.csv) in the base folder of the stick – so you just have to insert the stick for the logging to start.

However, to remove the stick, you have to “unmount” it (similar to the Windows “safely remove” operation) – there is an option in the configuration pages to do so.

Final note: the software will append information to the file if it exists; if you have already taken the file in your computer and want to start afresh, just delete it from the USB stick before inserting it again in the Solo.

3) Configuration

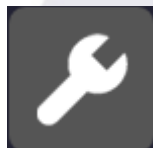
To access the configuration pages, please, again in your web browser, type:

<https://aagsolo/config/>

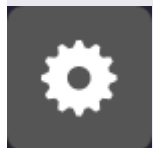
notice the “**s**” after http – this means it is a secure protocol. You'll get a warning, or maybe several, about the site not being secure. You are in your local network, so please trust you're accessing your “Solo”. You'll be asked for user and password, in this case the user is “**solo**”, the password the same as before, that is, “**cloudwatcher**”.

The reason for this warning is we're using a custom certificate that allows all information to be encrypted, for safety, but the certificate itself is not registered in a certification authority; that's a more complex and expensive step unneeded here.

Once you've agreed to proceed to the site, you can access three pages:



– **configuration**, where you'll be able to setup your “Solo” in a very similar way to the CloudWatcher Windows software.



– **system details**, where you can make some adjustments, set the time / date, network configuration, change the default password¹ (“cloudwatcher”), reboot the system (just in case), and also shutdown it.

– For the shutdown process, and given it will take you a trip to the observatory to start it again, you'll be challenged to confirm your selection.



– **USB status**, it may be unmounted, as shown, or mounted. Clicking the button will check the USB status again (if unmounted) or unmount it prior to a safe removal (if mounted)



– Last, **update the system**. From here you can check if there's a new version and, optionally, update to it.

Just a few notes about the configuration – please consult the [online documentation for the Windows program](#) for more specific data.

1 Please note the password you can change here is the one to access this configuration section of the web. It does not affect the password used to access the files using the Windows network.

Load current config UNITS
Load previous config °C & Km/h
Load default config °F & MPH

Observatory

Title:

Subtitle:

Timezone:

Status limits

Clouds sensor

Clear: < °C Cloudy: < °C Overcast: < °C

Wind sensor

Calm: < Km/h Windy: < Km/h Very windy: < Km/h

Anemometer model:

Relative humidity sensor

Dry: < % Normal: < % Humid: < %

Rain sensor

Dry: > Wet: > Rain: >=

Max. rain graph: >

Lightness sensor

Dark: > Light: > Very Light: >

Max. light graph: >

Switch & limits

Use switch: Unknow is unsafe: Delay after unsafe: s

Clouds: > °C Rain: < Light: <

Wind: > Km/h Humidity: > %

Cloud detection delay: s

K factors

K1: K2:

K3: K4: K5: K6: K7:

Misc. temperature settings

Ambient temp offset: °C IR temp. offset: °C

Source of ambient temperature:

Heater

Temp low: Delta low: Temp high: Delta High:

Min. heating: High temp: High durat.: High cycle:

- **Units (°C Kmh, or °F MPH):** choose your favourite units.
- **timezone:** you have to select your time zone so the readings are accurate and match your local time, for the automation programs. The data in the web pages will match the local time of the place you're connecting from.
- **load previous / default configuration:** options to let you recover from errors or tests.
- **max rain graph / max light graph:** defining the upper limit of the graphs, so they look pretty. The other graphs (cloud, temperature, wind speed) adjust themselves in the current data range.
- **Ambient and IR temperature offsets,** used to compensate for the electronics heating and other factors; the offsets will be subtracted from the raw readings of the sensors.
- **Source of ambient temperature:** rule of thumb, if you have the external RH sensor installed, select it as source of ambient temperature.
- And last, **the “unsafe” limits;** here you can specify the limit exceeding which a reading will be considered unsafe. This is a difference from the Windows software, where you had only 3 options (matching the 3 ranges) for setting unsafe. So, for instance, you can define wind speeds 0 to 5 Kmh to be calm, 6 to 25 to be windy, and above that to be very windy, but set the unsafe wind limit to, say, 20 Kmh.

The System page contains settings of a more computer nature, network, date and time, etc.

If several “Solos” will share the same network (as it happens in observatory hosting places), then it is generally advised to change the name, so each one is unique in the network.

System name

In case several Solos share the same network, each one should have its own name.
A single word, no whitespace.

New name:

In the network config...

Network config

Change your network configuration

DHCP (full automatic)
 DHCP + static (semi automatic)

Eth:

IP DHCP:

IP static:

... here we can specify if we just want the address of the Solo to be obtained automatically for our router (full automatic), avoiding any problem, or if we prefer to also specify a static (fixed) address, which is useful to make the Solo accessible from the internet.

If your Solo fails to access the internet (more noticeable if the software updates fail to work), then you may need to adjust the DNS (name server):

DNS config

If your Solo is unable to reach the internet, please set the proper DNS servers here. The servers are provided by your ISP - or alternatively you may use OpenDNS ones.

DNS 1:

DNS 2:

... the suggested one (208.67.222.220) is a good option, free to use, from FreeDNS. Another popular server is one from google, easier to remember, 8.8.8.8.

Filling the ZeroConf data will make the Solo publish, every few minutes, summary data to our cloud server. At this moment is useful for users of our android widget.

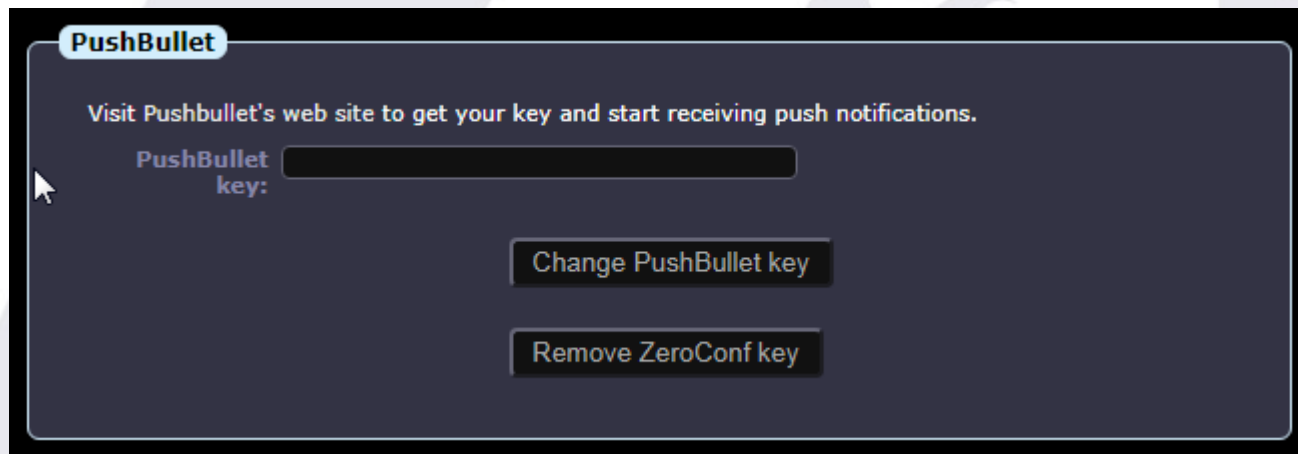


If you want the Solo to send push messages to your smartphone, PC, or whatever, now there is support for this using [Pushbullet](#), a great and free system but not available for iOS, and also [Pushover](#), almost free (very low, one time only payment), and available in every platform.

You'll need to open a Pushbullet or Pushoveraccount; then you'll have the option to install a client or you can check your notifications in the website; the client program is available for many platforms, and quite useful IMHO. With your account you'll be able to generate a token (or key), a long string of characters, that identify your account.

To activate the sending of messages when the weather changes from UNSAFE to SAFE (and vice versa), just copy your token here, adding "pb-" if it is a pushbullet token, or "po-" if it is a pushover one.

So if your key is "asdf123ljasd89j123j12", and it is from Pushbullet, you'll have to type "pb-asdf123ljasd89j123j12". If it's from Pushover, "po- asdf123ljasd89j123j12". No quotes!



Suggestion: activate it only in imaging nights.

The rest of the page is truly self explanatory (date and time, reboot, shutdown).

4) "Hidden" features

New features are added to an ugly page before going "official". You can access this page from <https://aagsolo/ExtraConf.html>

As of current version, 2.4, it allows the user to specify a fully static IP address (not the safe, semi-static method in the normal configuration page), and to return it to its normal, DHCP-enabled state. **Use with care.** A wrong IP address may render the unit network invisible. You may have to replace the SD card in that case.

This is the current page:

Extra configuration for the Solo

This page provides easy access to some non-standard features, or new ones not yet included in the default configuration pages. Please exercise care.

Static IP address

Static IP: Network mask: Gateway:

*4 dotted number format (192.168.1.10, 255.255.255.0, 192.168.1.1, for example).
Please double check the values are correct - once set, if wrong, you won't be able to access your Solo.
The system will reboot immediately after.*

Dynamic IP address (DHCP)

Just click activate:

*Default network configuration for the Solo. You can also set an additional static address from the [standard configuration page](#)
The system will reboot immediately after.*

5) Other interesting facts about the "Solo"

- ✓ The "Solo" is based on the Raspberry Pi model "B", and has a really friendly power consumption of approx < 2 W.
- ✓ Inside the box there's a SD card acting as the hard disk of the device. It is mounted in "read only" mode, meaning that:
 - there's no problem at all unpowering the unit, the SD card will never become corrupt. It is only written, for a very short while, after configuration changes or a system update.
 - It will take a while (minutes...), after powering the Solo, for it to retrieve the correct time and date, please be patient!
 - Also, the SD will not "worn out"; these cards had a limited number of write operations, so being read only will extend its life almost indefinitely.
- ✓ You can get the last reading from the CloudWatcher easily to use in a program or a personal web: <http://aagsolo/cgi-bin/cgiLastData>
- ✓ In a similar way, you can get the historical data for up to 48h: <http://aagsolo/cgi-bin/cgiHistData>
- ✓ The system is quite hacker friendly; you can, *under your responsibility*, login via ssh and tweak the web pages or whatever. For ssh connections, the user is "pi", the password "cloudwatcher".
- ✓ ... and, as always, your suggestions are most welcome.

6) For more information

The Solo is a data visualizer for the AAG CloudWatcher. For more in-depth information, the AAG CloudWatcher documentation should be checked. Specifically, some items we think are of special interest:

Cloud detection, K-factors, calibration:

- [Some notes on cloud detection](#)
- [Sky temperature model](#)

Rain sensor heater settings:

- Available in the [online manual, here](#) (same values as in the Solo configuration)

And of course all the information that is published in the web page of the [CloudWatcher](#).
