

# **Poppy**

Andrew Bennett

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<b>COLLABORATORS</b>
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	TITLE : Poppy		
ACTION	NAME	DATE	SIGNATURE
WRITTEN BY	Andrew Bennett	August 24, 2024	

<b>REVISION HISTORY</b>
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NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

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# Chapter 1

# Poppy

## 1.1 Poppy AmigaGuide document

Poppy v0.12 - Copyright © 1997 Andrew Bennett

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## 1.2 About

Author: Andrew Bennett

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WWW: <http://www.gauss.demon.co.uk/>

Status: Freeware

Poppy is a Pop3 client...

What! You need to know more than that ? Ok, if you insist.

It's job is to connect to a Pop3 server, and collect your email.

Any collected messages are then added to one or more **mailbox** files, which can then be used by your email software.

In addition to simply collecting mail, you can use it to automatically filter out unwanted mail by using a **config file**.

Unlike most email filters, Poppy isn't restricted to killing simply

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by the From, or Subject: lines... Any word or phrase from the message header and upper part of the message body can be used to kill or alternatively to prevent a kill. As far as I know the system Poppy uses is unique, certainly on the Amiga.

With the growing problem of Unsolicited Commercial Email (UCE) aka "spam" this feature is very useful.

Initially I thought that a GUI might be useful, but having experimented with one, I eventually concluded that it was more of a nuisance than it was worth... (Look in the Extras drawer if you want to play with it).

In case you're mad enough to want to see the gory technical details of the pop3 specification I'd better mention good 'ol RFC 1939 hadn't I... :)

Here's a URL, <ftp://ftp.demon.co.uk/pub/doc/rfc/rfc1939.txt>

nb. Poppy was written in 100% assembler, and no, I'm not a masochist. ;-)

### 1.3 Mailbox files

A "mailbox" is an ordinary file to which email is appended.

Each email begins with "From ", followed by the address of the sender.

Then comes a set of headers showing it's route, the subject, date etc..

After the headers, there's a blank line, then comes the actual "body" of the message.

If you're curious, you can examine a mailbox file with a normal text editor.

By default, all email which is collected will be placed in the default mailbox specified on the commandline/tooltype. If however, there's a successful match of an MBOX config entry, the message will be stored in the corresponding file.

This allows some of the functionality of an SMTP client. You can choose to collect each users mail into their own mailbox or, alternatively

**Leave** it for them to collect later.

### 1.4 Installation

It's up to you... You might wish to keep everything in the same drawer and use "progdir:filename" to refer to config files etc. Or you could put the executable in C:, AmiTCP:bin/ whatever...

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## 1.5 CLI usage

This is probably the best way to use Poppy. It allows you to create a script to collect mail and then start your email software for example. You could also start Poppy automatically on connecting to your ISP by including it in your "startnet" script (AmiTCP) or Miami equivalent.

The readargs template is as follows:

```
HOST,USER/K,PASS/K,PORT/K/N,LOG/K,MBOX/K,JUNK/K,CFG/K,SAFE/S:
```

HOST is the address of your pop3 server.

USER is your Pop3 username.

PASS (optional) is your Pop3 password.

PORT (optional) is the port number of the pop service. Normally you shouldn't need to specify this... (default is port 110).

LOG (optional) is the name of a logfile which records a brief description of the action taken for each email.

MBOX is the name of your main/default **mailbox** file.

JUNK is an alternative **mailbox** file which can be used to store potential spam so that it can be checked at a later date.

CFG (optional) is the path of a **configuration file** which can be used to filter out any unwanted mail, and do other weird and wonderful things.

SAFE (optional) Prevent deletion of mail (even after collection).

This is mainly intended for debugging/initial testing.

examples:

```
>Poppy sdps.demon.co.uk USER=gauss PASS=xxxx MBOX=uumail:ben JUNK=uumail:junk CFG=home:.poppyrc LOG=home:Poppy
```

```
>Poppy somewhere.com USER=wibble MBOX=ram:mail JUNK=T:junk CFG=progdir:my_config LOG=T:poplog SAFE
```

## 1.6 WB usage

The ToolTypes are very similar to the CLI arguments...

Remember that to temporarily disable a tooltype, you can simply enclose it in braces. eg "SAFE" becomes "(SAFE)".

HOST= is the address of your pop3 server.

USER= is your Pop3 username.

PASS= (optional) is your Pop3 password.

PORT= (optional) is the port number of the pop service. Normally you shouldn't need to specify this... (default is port 110).

LOG= (optional) is the name of a logfile which records a brief description of the action taken for each email.

MBOX= is the name of your main/default **mailbox** file.

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JUNK= is an alternative **mailbox** file which can be used to store potential spam so that it can be checked at a later date.

CFG= (optional) is the path of a **configuration file** which can be used to filter out any unwanted mail, and do other weird and wonderful things.

SAFE (optional) Prevent deletion of mail (even after collection).

This is mainly intended for debugging/initial testing.

WINDOW= (optional) A console specification.

eg WINDOW=CON:0/12/640/128/Poppy/AUTO/INACTIVE

## 1.7 Using config files

This is probably Poppy's USP (unique selling point), except for the fact it's freeware of course... ;-) It's also a real pain to document...

The best way is to examine the example config file, and then experiment.

Any errors in the config file will be displayed, along with their line-number, when you run Poppy.

There are 4 main filtering actions: **Leave**, **Accept**, **Delete** & **Junk**.

They all share a common syntax, namely:

command "quotedstring"

By default, these strings are case-sensitive, to use them in case-insensitive mode, put the command in all caps. The simple way to remember this is to think about how "strong" the word looks.

NB. Wildcards (?, #, \*, \*) are not implemented in the string matching for the sake of speed.

If the quoted string following the action is found anywhere within the header and first N lines of the message, then the corresponding flag is set.

If no flags are set, then the default action is to **Accept**.

(To make the default action **Leave** use: DefLeave)

If any of the flags are set then the highest priority action will be taken. The order of priorities is as follows: (safest first)

1. **Leave** - Leave the message on the server.
2. **Accept** - Collect the message, storing it in your "MBox" file. (\*)
3. **Junk** - Collect the message, but store it in the "Junk" file.
4. **Delete** - Delete the message without collecting it.

eg.

Delete "X-Mailer: Extractor Pro"

This will cause any email containing this string to be deleted,

(unless overruled by a higher priority action eg "Junk", or you're

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using SAFE mode...)

You can specify the number of lines of the message body to scan, using the command:

SCAN=nnn

To automatically leave any messages over a certain size (in K), use:

MaxK=nnn

The scoring system is simply for information purposes at present.

Eventually it will be possible to allocate an action to a range of scores, eg Delete any message scoring below -1000.

The following line is an example of a score command:

SCORE "cash" -20

This means that for *each* occurrence of the string "cash" (or "caSH", "CasH"... etc) 20 points will be deducted from the score for the message.

(\*) Finally, there's a feature (suggested by John Shiali) which lets you divert mail from the default **mailbox** specified in the command line. eg:

Mbox "Sender: owner-aminet" "uemail:aminet"

nb Only the first successful MBox match will apply... Any further matches are ignored.

## 1.8 Tips on filtering out UCE/Spam

The first thing to realise when it comes to filtering out spam is that:

killing by domain is usually futile! (With the notable exception of certain regular offenders such as savetrees.com etc). Many accounts are used on a one-off basis, and there's little to be gained in adding worthless (and time-consuming) checks after the horse has bolted.

A far better strategy is to kill using the message content.

It's a safe bet that UCE will always be concerned with the topics of money, marketing, advertising etc... A few well-chosen kill phrases will eliminate most of the rubbish!!

eg " OFFER", "OVER 18", "ONLY \$", "MARKETING", "1-800", "\$1", "\$2"...

You can set the number of lines of the message body to examine using the SCAN command in the **config file**. The more of the message body you scan, the better the chance of spotting a giveaway word or feature, but the greater the overhead involved.

It's up to you to decide where to draw the line between killing the rubbish and risking deleting a genuine message.

One way of ensuring that you never accidentally kill a friend's message, or those from a mailing list is to explicitly **Accept** their email

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address (or some other identifier).

Another useful strategy is to **Accept** certain key phrases such as "wrote:"

"amiga", "In article".. etc, which tend to indicate a genuine response to news/mail.

Remember, if there's a conflict between **Accept** and **Delete**,

**Accept** wins.

One type of junk mail which is easy to kill are those where the bulk-email software includes a header to advertise itself, eg:

**Delete** "X-Mailer: Extractor Pro....."

Another easy type is where the header contains a large list of recipients, usually all starting with the same letter. eg If your email address is wibble@something.com, you might see a huge list of other email addresses beginning with the letter "w".

Just **Delete** one of the other addresses (it's incredibly unlikely that you'll ever receive a genuine email from that person.)

## 1.9 Credits...

Paul Nott - For encouraging me to actually finish something for a change!

John Shiali - For \*lots\* of constructive criticism.

Paul Gooch - For moral support and suggestions.

Jane Barnes - For putting up with me for the last 15 years.

Dougal - For being a good hamster.

Alan Cox - For creating the best MUD ever (AberMUD).

I'd also like to thank Jonathon Jackson, John Girvin, Andy Macklin,

Damien McKenna and anyone else I've forgotten.

And finally (Cyril ?), I'd like to thank every Amiga PD author for making the Amiga such a delight to own.

## 1.10 Feedback, bug reports etc...

If you wish to get in touch, have any comments, suggestions, bug-reports or just want to say thanks, email me at: [poppy@gauss.demon.co.uk](mailto:poppy@gauss.demon.co.uk)  
( assuming you make it through my filter of course... :) )

You can also find the latest version of Poppy (and a few other bits & bobs) on my amiga page - <http://www.gauss.demon.co.uk/amiga.html>

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## 1.11 Version history.

Version 0.13 - 24/07/97

- o Fixed silly bug in Mbox option (caused by new multi-line feature..)
- o Much faster login sequence.

Version 0.12 - 22/07/97

- o Added a logfile facility at long last...
- o Multiple entry lines are now possible with the Leave,Accept,Junk & Delete Commands. eg DELETE "OVER 18","UNDER 18","SPECIAL OFFER"

Version 0.11 - 22/06/97

- o Added DefLeave option to make "Leave" the default instead of "Accept". This allows Poppy to be used purely as a UCE killer, leaving the actual collection to another program.

- o Modified behaviour when dealing with messages over MaxK in size. Now they are treated like any other message, except for an automatic setting of the Leave flag.

Version 0.10 - 22/06/97

- o Fixed and improved display of reasons for actions.
- o Fixed "From: ?" bug. (I hope).

Version 0.9 - 20/06/97

- o First Aminet release.

## 1.12 Leave

Leave "string"

This sets the leave flag if "string" is found.

LEAVE "string"

This sets the leave flag if "string", "STRING", "StRinG" etc is found.

If the leave flag is set, then the message will be left unharmed

on the pop3 server, ready for collection next time.

Eventually your ISP provider will probably delete or bounce the message if it remains uncollected.

## 1.13 Accept

Accept "string"

This sets the accept flag if "string" is found.

ACCEPT "string"

This sets the accept flag if "string", "STRING", "StRinG" etc is found.

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If the accept flag is set, then the message will be collected unless overruled by a the **Leave** flag.

By default it will be stored in your default **mailbox** (specified via the WB/CLI MBOX argument), but if there's a match with a cfg file MBOX entry, it will be routed to that **mailbox** instead.

After succesful collection, the message will be deleted from the server, unless you're using Poppy in SAFE mode.

## 1.14 Junk

Junk "string"

This sets the junk flag if "string" is found.

JUNK "string"

This sets the junk flag if "string", "STRING", "StRinG" etc is found.

If the junk flag is set, then the message will be collected into your "Junk" **mailbox** unless overruled by a higher priority flag such as **Leave** or **Accept**.

## 1.15 Delete

Delete "string"

This sets the delete flag if "string" is found.

DELETE "string"

This sets the delete flag if "string", "STRING", "StRinG" etc is found.

If the delete flag is set, then the message will be deleted unless overruled by a higher priority flag such as **Leave**, **Accept** or **Junk**.  
(Unless you're using Poppy in SAFE mode.)

## 1.16 Disclaimer

I'm neither rich, nor anal enough to need to bother with the standard legalese gunk. So, in brief:

This program is not guaranteed "safe". Nothing is...

You may for example, lose many, many opportunities to "make money fast".

Now wouldn't that be terrible... ;-)

Using killfiles carelessly can lead to losing a valuable piece of mail.

If you ever do see a valuable email being deleted, if you hit ctrl-c quickly enough you may be able to save it.

(If the pop sesssion is interrupted by a ^c or lost connection, the

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server should leave everything as it was at the start...)

If all else fails, the logfile should let you know who the sender was so you can mail and ask for the message to be resent.

On the plus side, I've been using it without a hiccup for 3 months now, so despite being the product of a hairy asm freak, it seems to be suprisingly free of bugs (touch wood).

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