WinpScape Help

What WinpScape Does

WinpScape only works with WinPack V6.2 or later.

When you run WinpScape it makes what is called a DDE link to WinPack (which MUST be running before you start WinpScape). It then monitors all the text received by WinPack, looking for HTML documents (web pages). It captures any it finds and automatically displays them using your web browser.

Not only are they captured and displayed, but, if your browser is Netscape, then you can click on specially configured links in the pages and WinpScape will automatically download the corresponding documents. Links can also me configured to automatically download files using YAPP.

If there are any graphics included in pages, WinpScape can fetch them using YAPP. The limitations of the DDE links mean that fetching graphics works differently to when you are using the internet. When the page has been fetched it is displayed, then the graphics are fetched. After each graphic has been fetched the page is redisplayed. If "Use Speech" is enabled, WinpScape will tell you when it is fetching graphics and when it has finished.

WinpScape will hold a cache of recently downloaded pages, so if you select a link to a document that has been downloaded within the last hour, it will display the copy in the cache rather than downloading it again.

At this point you are probably not understanding what I am saying! Here's an example:-

A BBS puts some web pages in a directory in its files area. You start WinpScape, connect to the BBS using WinPack and   "GET INDEX.HTM". WinpScape will capture the document as it is received and display it using your configured web browser. Let's say INDEX.HTM has a WinpScape-compatible link in it to BBSINFO.HTM, if you are using Netscape and click on that link, WinpScape will automatically fetch the document from the BBS and pass it to Netscape for viewing. If INDEX.HTM has a link in it configured as a YAPP link to TEST.EXE, then clicking that link in Netscape will cause WinpScape to automatically fetch TEST.EXE using YAPP.

Of course, the web pages don't have to be on a BBS, they can be in someone else's PMS.

The single line window at the bottom of the WinpScape screen allows you to key in commands that are passed to WinPack.

Chicken And Egg!

There's one big problem in all this - before you can download web pages, someone has to set some up! So it will need several people in an area to co-operate before WinpScape can be used... Oh well, there's always hope!

Setting It Up

You need to tell WinpScape a few things for it to be able to work.

Firstly, you need to tell it the full path to your web browser. If you have configured a VIEWER for HTM files in WinPack's PACKET.INI, then WinpScape will ALWAYS use that viewer as the browser. Otherwise you must edit WINPSCAP.INI and make an entry in the [SETUP] section for a BROWSER. Here's an example:-

[SETUP]
BROWSER=C:\NETSCAPE\PROGRAM\NETSCAPE.EXE

PLEASE NOTE - if you are using Win95 and the path to your web browser has long directory names, you MUST use the short, DOS compatible directory names.

Secondly, you need to tell WinpScape the file "get" command for the BBSs and other stations from which you are going to download html files.

For example, the command for an FBB BBS is GET, the command for a WinPack PMS is /GET. You put these commands in the [GET_COMMANDS] section of WINPSCAP.INI. For example:-

[GET_COMMANDS]
DEFAULT=/GET
G4IDE=/GET
GB7SKG=GET

The default is used for any station for which there is no specific entry.

You also need to tell WinpScape the YAPP download command for the BBSs and other stations from which you are going to download files.

For example, the command for an FBB BBS is YGET, the command for a WinPack PMS is /YGET. You put these commands in the [YAPP_COMMANDS] section of WINPSCAP.INI. For example:-

[YAPP_COMMANDS]
DEFAULT=/YGET
G4IDE=/YGET
GB7SKG=YGET

The default is used for any station for which there is no specific entry.

Finally there are to Options you can set:- If you enable "Fetch Graphics", WinpScape will try and fetch any graphics in pages from the remote system. (See "Creating Some pages"). If you enable "Use Speech", WinpScape will tell you when it is fetching the graphics.

Creating Some Pages

The sucess of WinpScape will depend on people making web pages available on packet! So, why not make some yourself that other WinPack users can read?

Included with WinpScape is a ZIP file called SOMEHTML.ZIP. It contains three very simple pages - INDEX.HTM, LINK1.HTM and LINK2.HTM. It also contains a YAPP test file - YAPPTEST.EXE. The pages were created using Netscape Gold and give an example of how to make WinpScape compatible pages.

If you can persuade your BBS sysop to put these files somewhere in his download area, or persuade a friend to make them available on his PMS, then you will be able to test WinpScape!

There are two important rules for WinpScape compatible pages:-

1. If you include graphics in your pages, make the size suits your local network conditions(in the UK that normally means make them small!) Also, the graphics files must be in the same directory as the page, if the image file name includes a path, WinpScape will not attempt to fetch it. WinScape understands graphics references of the form IMG SRC="filename.xxx" and it also understands BACKGROUND="filename.xxx" on the <BODY> tag. WinpScape will cache graphics for a period specified by the user, but the caching isn't very intelligent. If you use a graphic called FRED.GIF and someone else also uses FRED.GIF, one will overwrite the other in the cache,   so try and use names for the graphics files that are likely to be unique.

2. Any links that WinpScape needs to process MUST have a protocol type of "ax25", "yapp", "command", or "request". E.g. in INDEX.HTM you will find "ax25:link1.htm". If your html editor doesn't let you put in non-standard protocol types, simply put in normal links and then edit in the "ax25:" or "yapp:" with a text editor. The meaning of the protocol types is as follows:-

ax25: - WinpScape will fetch the file as ASCII text.

yapp:- WinpScape will fetch the file using YAPP.

command:- the text following "command:" will be sent back to the system from where the page was loaded, WinScape does not expect to receive anything back.

request:- the text following "request:" will be sent back to the system from where the page was loaded, WinScape expects to receive a file.

Technical Notes

WinScape works by establishing a DDE link to WinPack, which is used to receive all the text that WinPack receives.

All text is monitored for the HTML start and end markers <HTML> and </HTML>. If a pair of markers has been received, and WinPack is connected to a station at the time the end marker is received, then the document is displayed by calling the configured web browser.

An attempt is made to call the browser using the Netscape WWW_ShowFile DDE command. If that fails, then the browser application is shelled with the captured html file name as a command line argument. Internet Explorer V3, but not earlier versions, also supports this DDE command.

WinpScape attempts to register four special protocol types - "ax25", "yapp", "command" and "request" - with the browser using the WWW_RegisterProtocol DDE command. ONLY NETSCAPE SUPPORTS THIS - it has never been implemented in Internet Explorer

 Iif a link is clicked which has a protocol type of "ax25" or "yapp", Netscape passes the link information to WinpScape, the file is fetched and then WinpScape passes it back to Netscape to display it. If it is YAPP, then it is captured with WinPack's Auto-Yapp feature. When WinPack has successfully received the file, it sends an html document to WinpScape saying that the file has been received.

A description of the "command" and "request" protocol types is given in "Creating Some Pages".

To minimise downloading time, WinpScape holds its own very simple cache of html documents. It keeps a record of the "owner" of each file and the time when it was downloaded. The default lifetime for documents in the cache is 24 hours, but this can be changed by editing the CACHE_LIFETIME parameter in WINPSCAP.INI. Housekeeping of the cache occurs every time WinpScape is started or terminated. Graphics are also cached, the default life time is 7 days (168 hours), but this can be changed with the IMAGE_CACHE_LIFETIME parameter in WINPSCAP.INI.

Pages downloaded by means other than clinking links in Netscape are still put in the cache, but are given names based on the date and time and are never reloaded. This is because WinpScape does not know the correct name for the document (think about it!) They will eventually be expired by WinpScape's cache housekeeping.

Introduction

WinpScape does things that no other AX25 packet application has ever done! So, you MUST read this help. You will never work out what it does by simply "playing" with it.

A starting point for using WinpScape is that you have WinPack working properly and you have Netscape installed and working on your PC. I cannot offer help regarding installing Netscape! You can also use Internet Explorer V3, but it is inferior to Netscape in terms of DDE support and so most of WinpScape's features aren't usable.