

**NewsCoaster**

COLLABORATORS

	TITLE : NewsCoaster		
ACTION	NAME	DATE	SIGNATURE
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REVISION HISTORY

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# Chapter 1

## NewsCoaster

### 1.1 main

NewsCoaster Version 1.26

(c)1999,2000 Mark Harman

Contents...

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**Installation** Getting started

**Registration** NewsCoaster is Shareware!

**Introduction** What are newsgroups?

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**Killfiles** Ignoring people you don't like..

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available NNTP servers

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**ARexx Commands** NewsCoaster's ARexx port

**Frequently Asked Questions** Please read before asking me  
questions

**Credits** Who's responsible for this  
program?

**History** What's new in this version

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**Future** And what's to come!

**MUI** MUI and additional custom classes

were used for this program

Check out the NewsCoaster website! <http://newscoaster.tripod.com/>

## 1.2 Requirements

NewsCoaster requires:

68020 CPU or better

MUI

Hard Disk Space - approximately half a megabyte for install, lots more for storing news items

OS3.0 or above

About 4 MB Free RAM (Recommended minimum)

An Internet connection with TCP/IP stack

BetterString.mcc, TextEditor.mcc and NList.mcc are also required by the program, but these are included in the archive, and automatically installed.

NewsCoaster also works fine with UAE (just enable BSDSockets emulation) -

\*however\* I have found that Release 8 of version 0.8.8 has extremely slow network access - Release 7 and before work fine.

## 1.3 Installation

Please run the installer script to install NewsCoaster onto your system.

Run NewsCoaster by doubleclicking on the 'NewsCoaster' icon in the folder also called 'NewsCoaster'. You may also run NewsCoaster from a Shell, but a large stack is needed (70000 bytes should do).

No assigns are necessary to get NewsCoaster working, but note that NewsCoaster automatically sets up the assign NewsCoaster: pointing to its home directory - you shouldn't need to worry about this.

Manual Installation:

Copy the NewsCoaster folder to wherever you like on your hard disk.

If you do not have any of the MUI custom classes on your system, then copy the relevant files from the MUI/ drawer into MUI:Libs/MUI/ on your system.

Note that calling NewsCoaster with the 'DATA' option from the command line no longer works - you can choose to store news messages wherever you like now, with the new users options.

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## 1.4 Registration

NewsCoaster is shareware! Limitations of the unregistered version are:

A maximum of two newsgroups.

Annoying requester when starting.

There are various ways to register:

Directly with me, in UK Pounds: Please send 10UKP, either as cash or preferably a cheque (made out to Mark Harman), to the address below. Cash is sent at your own risk.

Directly with me, in foreign currency: I will also accept 18US Dollars, or 34 German Marks. This should be as cash, but I can also accept money orders (made out to Mark Harman). Please send to the address below. Cash is sent at your own risk.

Online Ordering: Not yet available, but hopefully soon. If you are reading this in February 2000 or later, please email me if you wish to pay this way, as I may have set up such a system by then. In the meantime, if any shareware authors out there know of online registration services that they can recommend, please let me know :)

You must supply your email address! I will then send you a keyfile.

Addresses:

Up until June 2000:

Mark Harman

Trinity Hall

Cambridge

CB2 1TJ

(UK)

or in the months of December and April, or from June 2000 onwards:

Mark Harman

3 Highlea Close

St. Leonards on-sea

East Sussex

TN37 7SS

(UK)

Up until June 2000, either will eventually reach me, but my university address may not be valid from then onwards, so please send to the East Sussex address instead!

Please make sure you include my name in the address, otherwise it will not reach me! You can also email me at <mdwh2@hermes.cam.ac.uk> if you have any queries.

Please specify your email address of course for me to send to. You will automatically be notified when new versions are released (alternatively I can post via disk, but in this case you must also include a blank disk for me, and this option

will be a *\*lot\** slower than email).

New versions of NewsCoaster will be compatible with the keyfiles, so you only have to register once for all future upgrades (you must download the new versions yourself, of course).

Distribution of keyfiles is illegal! Each keyfile is individually personalised, so I will be able to track down where pirated keyfiles have originated from. Additionally, NewsCoaster will insert into the X-Newsreader header of each message sent, identifying whether it is a registered version.

## 1.5 Introduction

Newsgroups (or Usenet - the collective name for newsgroups) are basically discussion groups conducted on the Internet. There are groups for just about every interest (examples include comp.sys.amiga.misc, alt.dreams.lucid, alt.books.poppy-z-brite, and so on). A newsserver is a server which contains the data for these newsgroups, and you connect to one of these in order to download messages for newsgroups that you have specified (you are said to be 'subscribed' to these newsgroups). Newsservers exchange data, so if you post a message to a newsgroup (more on that later), it will be copied to all other newsservers that host that newsgroup. Note that not all newsservers carry information of all newsgroups, but a typical newsserver will have at least 30,000 groups, some are in the region of 60,000. It is possible to download a list of available newsgroups on your newsserver (but you don't have to do this if you know the newsgroup name, and are willing to assume it is on your newsserver).

NewsCoaster can now either read offline or online. Offline means it connects to your newsserver and downloads news to your machine, for you to read later at your leisure. Online reading lets you browse through the articles whilst online, which is generally more costly for those paying 'phone bills, but means your hard disk is filled with only the messages you choose to read, and is generally better for those with free connections. You can specify online or offline reading for each newsgroup individually.

Please note that NewsCoaster's online reading is current experimental, and may contain bugs. Originally NewsCoaster was an offline-only newsreader, and this is the most tested feature.

When NewsCoaster downloads news from a newsgroup for a first time, it will download a certain number of the most recent ones. From then on, it will either download all the messages since you last downloaded, or alternatively you can set a maximum number of messages to download. As well as reading messages, you may write some yourself - this is referred to as 'posting' to that newsgroup. It is possible

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to post to more than one newsgroup (known as 'crossposting') - although this is generally discouraged.

For every newsgroup you wish to read, you create a 'new newsgroup' for it in NewsCoaster - this means a folder on your hard disk is created for storing news items locally, and an entry appears for it in the window. You don't have to download news for a particular newsgroup everytime you go online - you can temporarily 'unsubscribe', which means the messages you have already downloaded are not deleted and can still be read, but new news won't be downloaded when you 'fetch news'.

Lastly, if you are new to usenet (or even if you aren't:), you should at some point look at the [netiquette](#) section, which describes what is considered 'acceptable' behaviour on usenet. Read it if you don't want to upset people!

## 1.6 Configuration

Once you have [installed](#) NewsCoaster, run it by doubleclicking on its icon.

Firstly, virtually every gadget has a 'help bubble'. If you want to find out what something does, move the mouse over it, leave it still, and after a few seconds a bubble will pop up, telling you what it does. This is sometimes easier than continually consulting this documentation.

When loading NewsCoaster for the first time, you will be asked to set up a new user. Users are covered in more detail [here](#), but for now, enter in a user name for yourself (eg, your name or initials - must be at least 3 characters long), and click 'Okay'. If you are going to be the only person using this program, you need never worry about users again, but it is possible set up NewsCoaster for multiple users, each with their own news messages, settings, and optional password protection.

(Note 1 - you may decide to set up a password for yourself. If so, simply tick the 'Use Password?' box, and then enter a password (at least 4 characters). Everytime you run NewsCoaster in future, you will be required to enter your login and password. Your password (and whether the password protection is on or off) can be changed by selecting the 'Change Password' option from the 'Preferences' menu.)  
(Note 2 - NewsCoaster as a default stores its news messages in the NewsCoaster directory (designated as 'PROGDIR:'). You can change the directory by selecting any folder for 'News Directory'.)

(Note 3 - If you are upgrading from a version previous to 1.23, then you will already have new messages being stored in 'PROGDIR:', so do *\*not\** change this if

you still want to access your old news items and settings. If you wish to store news items elsewhere, then see [later](#).)

After this, the NewsCoaster main window will open.

You now need to set up your account details so the NewsCoaster can operate properly. To do this, select Program Settings from the Preferences menu, and enter the following information:

bAccounts pageub

Your Name: Your name which will appear in the 'From' field of outgoing messages.

Your Email: Your email address; again this will appear in the 'From' field. This doesn't have to be a correct one, in particular, you may wish to apply a 'spam block'. Eg, my address is mdwh2@hermes.cam.ac.uk, but I enter

mdwh2@NOSPAM.hermes.cam.ac.uk - the reason for this is that readers of the newsgroup can realise that you have to edit the 'NOSPAM.' out (and it is wise to put instructions to do this in my .sig - see later), but I avoid automatic spamming.

If you are unsure, just put your real email address. Whatever you do, you must specify an email address of the form user@domain (ie, it must have the '@' character).

NNTP (News) Server: This is the server that NewsCoaster will use to read news off of. You will probably have been given one to use with you ISP. Alternatively, there are [public ones](#) available.

If your newsserver requires authentication (most don't!), the tick the 'NNTP-Auth?' box, and enter your user name and password into the relevant boxes.

Select your time zone, and tick the BST ('British Summer Time') if relevant (or for other countries, if you have some sort of 'Daylight Saving Time' such that you are currently one hour ahead of your normal time zone, then this box should be ticked.

Now go to the bMessages pageub.

If you wish, you may specify some signatures ('.sigs'), you can have up to eight.

Signatures are automatically appended at the end of every message you write, and you can specify a default one for each individual newsgroup. This might include your name, address, URLs, quotes or whatever. You should avoid making .sigs too big, in particular, it should be smaller than 80 characters wide, and 4 characters deep - people don't want to have to download you .sig everytime you post a message!

You don't have to specify .sigs if you don't want to - you can always add/edit them later. The other options in this window aren't essential for now, but you can read about them [here](#) if you wish.

When you are done, select 'Okay' - the changes are automatically saved to disk (under the file '.prefs' in the NewsCoaster folder).

You now need to subscribe to some newsgroups. Either you will know the name of

the newsgroup you want to subscribe to (eg, comp.sys.amiga.misc), or you can download an entire group listing for your newsserver. Note that newsservers don't carry every newsgroup, but if it is a common (as in comp.sys.amiga.misc), you can be reasonably sure of it existing on your server.

Read [Downloading a group list](#) before continuing, if you wish to do so.

To subscribe to a newsgroup, you must set up a folder in the NewsCoaster settings (and on your hard drive, to store messages). Select New Newsgroup WIN\_NNG}, and enter the newsgroup name in the 'Newsgroup Name' field. If you want to limit the number of messages downloaded each time, then change the cycle gadget which says 'Unlimited Messages per Download' to say 'Maximum # of Messages to Download', and then enter the number in the text box below this gadget. I usually prefer a value of 30 to 40 (depending on how much I like that newsgroup). Make sure the 'Subscribe' checkbox is ticked (it is by default), and click 'Okay'. An entry for your group will appear in the groups listing on the left hand side of the main window. An 'S' in the right-most column means you are currently subscribed to that group, ie, news items will be downloaded when you select 'Fetch News'. To change the newsgroup settings, doubleclick on its entry, or select it and then select 'Edit Newsgroup' from the Newsgroups menu, and the Edit Newsgroup" link WIN\_ENG} window will appear. If you decide later you want to stop downloading news messages for this group, but don't want to delete the messages you have already, you simply untick the 'Subscribe' box. If you wish to delete the newsgroup entry, along with all the news messages it contains, then select 'Delete Newsgroups' from the Newsgroups menu.

Lastly, I should point out that you should never turn off your computer whilst NewsCoaster is still running. Okay, it won't be a disaster if you do, but some settings may be lost. Always select 'Quit' from the Project menu (or click the close button of the main window).

## 1.7 Downloading a Group List

Go online, and then select 'Fetch Group List' from the Project menu. NewsCoaster will then download the entire list of newsgroups carried on your newsserver. Please note that this takes time, depending on the number of newsgroups and the speed of your connection. My machine took around ten to twenty minutes to download over 56000 newsgroups on a 33.6k modem.

The file is saved in text format under the name \*.gl, where \* is the name of your newsserver, in the NewsCoaster folder.

You can now select [Group Manager](#) from the Newsgroups menu to examine the available newsgroups (or view the file in a text editor yourself).

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## 1.8 Fetching and Reading News

Once you have set up your account and newsgroup settings, you are ready to fetch some news. Go online, and then select 'Fetch News' from the Project menu. A status window appears giving you information on the progress. You may choose to abort at any time. If this is the first time you have downloaded for one or more newsgroups, you may be asked how many messages you wish to download. In particular, if you set the group to 'Unlimited messages per Download', then you will be asked whether to download all available messages, or just the 100 most recent ones. In this situation, you are strongly recommended to choose the latter, since there are be hundreds or even thousands of messages on some newsgroups at any one time.

From then on, each time you fetch news, NewsCoaster will download the ones which have appeared since you last downloaded (for that newsgroup). Either all of these messages will be downloaded, or if you set a maximum which is less than the number of new messages, then only the most recent of those new messages will be downloaded.

When you select a newsgroup in the left hand list of the main window, the messages inside appear in the right hand list. A 'N' indicates the message is new, ie, you haven't read it yet. By default, messages are sorted by date; most recent are at the bottom. By clicking on the column headings, you can change the sorting, eg, click on 'Subject' to sort by subject.

To view a message, simply doubleclick on it (or select it, and select 'Read Message' from the Messages menu). The View window appears displaying the message, see here for a description of the various buttons.

At the top is the message header, which contains information about the message. The message itself (the 'body') is given below that. A '>' at the left of the message indicates that what follows is quoted text, ie, it was written not by the author of this message, but by whoever she replied to. For example:

Hello, what is written here is written by the author of the message you are reading.

> But this was written by the person the author

> was replying to

> > And this is text quoted for the message before that

and back to the author of this message again.

Sometimes it can be difficult to work out who said what when there is lots of different levels of quoting, especially when text has over spilled. For example:

blah... blah

> Written by the person being replied to

> > The person before that. But this line is a very long line, so when

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> quoted it spilled over. So

> > all of this is still the 'person before that'!

So be careful you don't accuse someone of writing something that they didn't!

NewsCoaster (well, TextEditor.mcc actually) attempts to colour in the quoted text in different colours, but of course it will get confused in examples such as those above, so don't assume the colouring to be correct either - it's only going by the number of '>'s on each line.

## 1.9 Writing and Posting News

There are two ways to create a message. You will either want to create an entirely new message, or you will want to reply - or 'follow up' as it is called - to a message already posted.

To create a new message, select the newsgroup you wish to post to, then select 'Post New Message' from the Messages menu (if you wish to crosspost to several newsgroups, then select one of the newsgroups, and you can add the rest when writing the message). To follow up to a message, either select the message and select 'Followup Message' from the Messages window, or select the 'Followup' button on the View window.

The Write window now appears. If following up a message, the message is automatically inserted and quoted (ie, the '>'s are inserted), and an attribution line inserted ('On some-date, so-and-so wrote:').

See the [Write window page](#) for a detailed explanation of all the options here (including how to send attachments), but the general idea is you type your message, and then hit 'Send to Queue' when you are finished to place the message in your 'outgoing' folder. Postpone means the message is placed in 'outgoing', but it won't be sent when you select 'Send News' (postponed messages are denoted with a 'H' next to the in the message list - 'H' for 'Held':) And Cancel cancels the message entirely.

To send the (non-postponed) messages that are in outgoing, go online and select 'Send News' from the Project menu. The messages are then moved across to your 'sent' folder.

You can also edit messages, simply select a message in your outgoing or sent folder, and select 'Edit Message' from the Messages menu. A few things to note: If you select Cancel here, only the changes you made are lost, the original message remains intact. If you edit a message in outgoing, when selecting 'Send to Queue' or 'Postpone', the original message is overwritten with the edited version. When editing a message in sent, the original message is not overwritten (after all, it has already been sent!) and the edited version is placed in outgoing (so in fact, here it can be used to resend a message).

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## 1.10 Users

As of version 1.23, NewsCoaster comes with support for multiple users. Even as a single user, you can now choose where you want to store news messages on your hard disk, and have password protection to protect from prying eyes! If you followed the instructions under **Configuration**, you will have set yourself up as a single user, with news items being stored in 'PROGDIR:' (the NewsCoaster directory) - unless you specified elsewhere - and optional password protection. As the first user, you also have 'Supervisor' privileges. This means you can view the users that have been set up, and add and delete more users. To do this, select 'Users' from the 'Preferences' menu. You will see the users that have been set up, along with where their news messages are being stored, whether their login is password protected (but you don't see the password!) and whether they are a supervisor. At the moment, only you will be listed here.

To add a user, select 'Add New User' and enter in a username, password if required, and location to store news, just like before. Things to note:

- The user name must be unique
- The location to store news must be unique

You will be notified if this isn't so. For location of news, it would be suggested you create a news directory somewhere, eg, 'DH0:work/news', and then have a directory for each user, eg, 'DH0:work/news/mark'. (Note that if you specify a folder which doesn't exist, then the folder will be created, if possible). If you tick the 'Copy Prefs' box, then your preference settings (Account settings, but not .sigs, killfiles or newsgroups setup) will be copied across to the new user. If you wish the new user to be a supervisor also, then tick the box. Supervisors can add and delete users, and view users on the system.

To delete a user, simply select the users, and press 'Delete User'. You will be asked for confirmation, and also whether you wish the preference data to be deleted.

Note that you cannot delete yourself (that is, the current login cannot be deleted, you must login as someone else first).

Any user can change his password. Select 'Change Password' from the 'Preferences' menu. You can turn the password protection on or off, and if on, specify your new password, then click 'Okay'. If you decide you want to keep your old one after all, click 'Cancel'.

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## 1.11 Killfiles

Killfiles are a way of not having to download messages that you know you don't want to read. Supposing you were on a newsgroup, and there was someone you didn't like, and didn't want to read his messages. Then you can set up a killfile so that his messages won't be downloaded, thus saving you download time (and money, for those paying 'phone bills). Let's suppose the newsgroup is comp.sys.amiga.misc, and the person is 'Mr Annoying <person@annoying.com>'. Select 'KillFile' from the Preferences menu. Type 'From:' (don't type the quotes!) in the 'Header' box, type 'Mr Annoying <person@annoying.com>' in the 'Text to Kill' box, and in the 'Newsgroups' box, type 'comp.sys.amiga.misc'. Now select the 'Add/Replace' button. The details should appear in the list. Click on the close gadget of this window, and the killfile will be automatically saved. If you ever want to delete a killfile, simply select it in the list, and click on 'Delete'. [Click here for a detailed explanation of this window, and how to do other types of killfiles.](#)

## 1.12 Exporting and Viewing Files

There are times when you may wish to save a file to disk, or view it with an external program. In particular, when people send attachments, you need to save or view to see them, as they won't appear automatically in the View window. To do this, either select 'Export Message' from the Messages menu when the message is selected, or select the 'Export' button on the View window of a message. A window appears displaying the various parts. There will always be 'Raw Text' and 'Header', and then all the parts. Usually there will just be one, but multipart MIME messages will contain several parts. Select the part you wish to save or display, and then click the appropriate button. You should configure the external programs in the **'Program Settings' window** (under MIME).

## 1.13 Netiquette

Here are some general 'rules' regarding posting messages.

- bKeep to the topic of the newsgroup. There are newsgroups for just about every conceivable interest, so at least make sure you post to the correct ones.
- If you feel an off topic post is necessary, then at least mark it as 'OT' in the subject.
- You don't want to be one of those annoying people that ask 'Where can I get Amiga ROMs?' on comp.sys.amiga.emulations...
- bRead the FAQ. Many newsgroups have a FAQ (Frequently Asked

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Questions) which is posted periodically (usually every two weeks or so) which includes information such as what it on-topic for the newsgroup, and answers to commonly asked questions on that group - so it is a good idea to read it before asking a generalised question.

Only quote those parts which are relevant to what you are saying when replying or following-up a message. Don't write your message and then leave the entire message quoted below! This is just a waste of bandwidth.

Limit signatures to a maximum of four lines of eighty characters. Again, longer .sigs just take up space and waste bandwidth.

Do not send binaries to text-only newsgroups! This is a complete waste for the many people who will not wish to receive whatever you are sending. Many people have to pay by the minute for their 'phone calls, and will not appreciate spam. If people want to receive a binary, either email it to them individually, or place it on a website and post the URL to the newsgroup.

Stick to the correct language of the newsgroup. In most cases, this will be English, but not always.

Do not crosspost to a large number of newsgroups. If you feel that your message is appropriate in several newsgroups, then set a 'Followup-To' so that the replies only go to one newsgroup.

In general, don't ask for private replies. Don't ask for private replies simply because you can't be bothered to read the newsgroup. There may be other people with a similar question who would like to read the replies, and it defeats the whole point of a general discussion group. If you expect people to take the time to answer your message, you should take the time to read the newsgroup. There are exceptions to this (in particular, buying/selling newsgroups), and in this case, you should type 'poster' into the 'Followup-To' gadget when typing your message. When following up a message that has 'Followup-To: poster' in the header, you will be warned that the poster intending email replies, but you may decide to post to the newsgroup if you feel that it is appropriate (for the reasons I have given). A possible compromise is to use the 'Reply & Followup' menu option so that it goes to the newsgroup, and to the poster via email.

Don't generally use capitals. Capitals are taken to mean shouting, so only use them unless you need to. Emphasis can be created by putting words in asterisks (\*) which is taken to mean bold. Similarly, use slashes (/) for italics, underscores (\_) for underlining, and hashes (#) for coloured. NewsCoaster interprets all of these when displaying messages (unless in Plain Text mode).

It is difficult to convey meaning across emails and news postings, in particular sarcasm could go unnoticed. Use smileys such as ':)' to help avoid this - or maybe ';)' to convey irony.

## 1.14 Acronyms

It is common to use acronyms on usenet and email. Here is what some of them mean:

AFAICS As Far As I Can See

AFAICT As Far As I Can Tell

AFAIK As Far As I Know

AIUI As I Understand It

ASL Age, Sex, Location?

B4 Before

BBL Be Back Later

BCNU Be seeing you

BRB Be Right Back

BSF But Seriously Folks

BST But Seriously Though

BTDT Been There Done That

BTW By the Way

CLM Career Limiting Move

CU See You

CUL See You Later

DWIM Do What I Mean

DWISNWID Do What I Say Not What I Do

EOF End Of File

EOL End Of Line

F2F Face To Face

FAQ Frequently Asked Question

FOAF Friend Of A Friend

FOC Free Of Charge

FWIW For What It's Worth

FYA For Your Amusement

FYE For Your Entertainment

FYI For Your Information

<g> Grin

IAE In Any Event

IIRC If I Remember Correctly

IME In My Experience

IMHO In My Humble Opinion

IMO In My Opinion

IOW In Other Words

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IRL In Real Life  
ISTM It Seems to Me  
ISTR I Seem to Remember  
ITRO In The Region Off  
ITRW In The Real World  
ITWSBT I Think We Should Be Told  
IYSWIM If You See What I Mean  
JAM Just A Minute  
KISS Keep It Simple, Stupid  
L8R Later  
LOL Laughs Out Loud  
MFTL My Favourite Toy Language  
MORF Male Or Female?  
MOS Member Of Opposite Sex  
MUD Multi User Dungeon  
NALOPKT Not A Lot Of People Know That  
NRN No Reply Necessary  
OAO Over And Out  
OBTW Oh, By The Way  
OEM Original Equipment Manufacturer  
OIC Oh, I See  
OTOH On The Other Hand  
OTT Over The Top  
PD Public Domain  
POD Piece Of Data  
RFD Request For Discussion  
ROTFL Rolls On The Floor Laughing  
ROTFLMAO Rolls On The Floor Laughing My Arse Off  
RL Real Life  
RSN Real Soon Now  
RT Real Time  
RTFAQ Read The FAQ  
RTBM Read The Bloody Manual  
RTFM Read The Fucking Manual  
RUOK Are You OK  
SITD Still In The Dark  
SMOP Small Matter Of Programming  
SO Significant Other  
TIA Thanks In Advance

---

TIC Tongue In Cheek

TLA Three Letter Acronym

TNX Thanks

TPTB The Powers That Be

TTFN Ta Ta For Now

TTYL Talk To You Later

TVM Thanks Very Much

VC Virtual Community

VR Virtual Reality

WIBNI Would It Be Nice If

WRT With Respect To

WYSIWYG What You See Is What You Get

YHBM You Have Bin Mail

YHM You Have Mail

## 1.15 Public Newsservers

Here are some public newsservers (ie, ones which anyone can use). You should only need these if your ISP doesn't have its own newsserver.

gate.or-computers.de

news.ausmail.com

news.okidata.com

news.spar.ca

news.tin.it

news.uov.net

news-reader.wcg.net

nnrp.news.uk.psi.net

piggy.rz.tu-ilmenau.de

pub.news.uk.psi.net

sion1.bathspa.ac.uk

Note that not all newsservers allow posting - some are read only. You will be informed if this is the case when trying to post to such a newsserver.

## 1.16 Menus

buProject Menuuuub

bFetch Newsub: You must be online to use this option. NewsCoaster

will log on to the newsserver specified in the 'Program Settings' window

WIN\_ACC}, and download the newsgroups you are currently subscribed to (those

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listed in the Groups list, with an 'S' next to them).

**bSend Newsub:** This makes NewsCoaster post any messages in your 'outgoing' folder, that are not 'Held' (ie, have a 'H' next to them in the messages list).

**bFetch Group Listub:** This downloads all the available newsgroups on your newsserver into a file. Once you have done this, you can view, find and subscribe to groups by selecting the 'Groups Manager'. The groups list is saved as a text file under the name 'x.gl' (where 'x' is the name of the newsserver) in the NewsCoaster program directory, so you may examine it separately if you wish. Also, you don't have to download the group list to subscribe to groups, eg, you may already know the name of the newsgroup and assume it exists on your newsserver. Note that downloading the newsgroup will take some time (around 56000 newsgroups took about 20 minutes on my 33.6k modem).

**bFetch New Groups Listub:** This downloads all the newsgroups which have appeared since you last selected this option, or the 'Fetch Group List' option. Note that if you were using a version of NewsCoaster before this option was introduced, then you won't be able to use it until you redo a 'Fetch Group List' - even if you've already downloaded the group list (sorry).

**bDisconnect From Newsserverub:** When in online mode, NewsCoaster will keep open the connection to the newsserver for speed. This connection will be automatically closed when you quit NewsCoaster, but this option will force a disconnection (NewsCoaster will automatically reconnect whenever it needs to next do so).

**bIconifyub:** Makes NewsCoaster 'disappear', and an icon appears on your Workbench screen. Doubleclick on this icon to make NewsCoaster reappear.

**bQuitub:** Quit NewsCoaster. You should always use this option rather than merely switching your computer off, to make sure that settings are correctly saved!

**buNewsgroups Menuuuub**

**bNew Newsgroupub:** Opens the New Newsgroup window  
WIN\_NNG} for you to enter in details for a new newsgroup for you to subscribe to. As default, you are automatically subscribed to newly created newsgroups.

**bEdit Newsgroupub:** Opens the Edit Newsgroup window  
WIN\_ENG} for you to edit the currently selected newsgroup.

**bDelete Newsgroupub:** Deletes the currently selected newsgroup.

Warning! This will delete all the messages contained in that group. If you wish to keep the messages, and just want to unsubscribe, select 'Edit Newsgroup', and untick the 'Subscribe?' checkmark box.

**bArchive Newsgroupub:** Writes out all the articles into a single text file,

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complete with all headers. If you have an email or news client which stores/reads in such a format, then this will allow you to export to those programs easily.

bView - Listub: Views the folders as a simple list.

bView - Treeub: Views the folders in a tree structure. This is fairly basic at the moment and I would recommend you keep to the List view. There are no resizable columns or horizontal scrollbars (and until someone produces an MUI tree class that subclasses NList, you won't see them), no doubleclicking or drag-sorting (these may be unimplemented in the Listtree class, so again a big problem.. for now select the 'Edit Newsgroup' menu instead of doubleclicking). In future it will hopefully be possible to define your own hierarchy structure, at least, so you can group similar newsgroups into a parent 'folder' for example.

BSort Groupsub: Sorts the newsgroups list alphabetically.

bSearch Groupsub: This allows you to search for particular messages.

See '[Search](#)' [window](#) for more details.

bReset Group Article Pointerub: This resets the article pointer that NewsCoaster maintains for the currently selected newsgroup - so next time you download it will be as if you are downloading for the first time. Note that duplicate articles will not be downloaded, since NewsCoaster checks the message IDs of downloaded messages against those you already have. This option is useful if you change newsservers, since different newsservers will have articles stored with different ID numbers - in fact, you change the newsserver, you will be asked if you wish to reset the article pointers of all groups - see Program Settings WIN\_ACC}.

bReset All Groups' Pointersub: As above, but for all newsgroups.

bGroups Managerub: You must have selected 'Fetch Group List' for your current newserver for this to work. This option opens the Group Manager window" link WIN\_GMAN}.

bUpdate Groupsub: This option should only be used in dire circumstances if your preferences file ('.prefs' in the NewsCoaster root folder) as got corrupted or deleted (possible if a crash happens at a bad time). In this case, no groups will be listed, but the data will still be available on your hard disk. This option scans for all folders and messages, and corrects the situation. Note that various settings (the group name, and basically all settings you can enter in the '[Edit Newsgroup](#)' [window](#)) are lost, so only use this option if you have to (and then re-edit all the groups).

bUpdate Indexub: This option is also used for correcting mistakes for the messages contained in a particular group (as stored in '.index' files). This is not such a last resort in that there is no harm in using this option when everything is okay (ie, no settings are lost). This option scans the folder of the currently selected

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newsgroup, and rechecks the '.index' file to keep information on the messages that are actually in that group.

**bImport Messagesub:** This should be used to import messages from elsewhere, particularly of use if you are switching from another newsreader. To use, firstly set up all the groups that you wish to read in (eg, so if you were subscribed to 'comp.sys.amiga.misc' and 'alt.tarot' in your old newsreader, you should open up groups for these in NewsCoaster too before using this option). Then select this option, and select the drawer containing the messages. Alternatively, if messages are stored in multiple sub-directories, you can just select the folder containing the sub-directories, as this option scans all sub-directories. There is a known bug concerning crossposted messages in that if you are subscribed to more than one group that the message was posted to, it will only be copied to one group.

**buMessages Menuuuub**

**bRead Messageub:** Displays the currently selected message in the

**View window**. You can only view one message at a time.

**bEdit Messageub:** This is used when you have already created a message (ie, it must be in your .outgoing or .sent folders). The Write window link WIN\_WRITE} is opened for you to enter the message. Clicking cancel will not lose the original message. If you keep the changes, and are editing a message in .outgoing, the original message will be overwritten. If you are editing a message in .sent, the original message will not be overwritten, instead a new message will be copied to .outgoing (ie, it acts as a resend).

**bSupersede Messageub:** This is like editing a message, but you can only do this to messages you have sent (ie, in your sent folder). This is special in that when you send a superseded message, it tells the newsserver that this new message is to replace the old one. (Note that this feature hasn't been properly tested, so please let me know of any problems).

**bDelete Messageub:** The currently selected messages are (after confirmation) moved to the Deleted folder. If you select this option on messages in the Deleted folder, then they are deleted permanently (or alternatively, the contents of the Deleted folder are cleared when you exit NewsCoaster).

**ubUndelete Messageub:** For messages in the 'deleted' folder only. The selected messages will be moved back to their original folder (note that any messages downloaded with a version of NewsCoaster prior to v1.24 will not function properly with this option, and will be moved to an incorrect newsgroup).

**bExport Messageub:** Use this to save a message to an external file, or view with an external program. See [here](#) for details.

**bPost New Messageub:** This opens the Write window WIN\_WRITE} for you to create a new message. As a default, it will be posted to the

newsgroup that you have currently selected (and you must select one - this option won't work if the Sent or Outgoing folders are selected), but you may change them (or crosspost to more than one).

**bFollowup Messageub:** Followup to this message - ie, you want to post a response to the newsgroup. This again opens up the Write window `WIN_WRITE`}, but is a followup to the currently selected message. The original message is quoted with `'>'` put before every line, and your .sig (if a default one is selected) is placed at the end. Note that NewsCoaster will attempt to rewrap the text before quoting, to avoid unsightly line overspilling.

**bReply via Emailub:** Reply to the author of this message via email. Otherwise, the same as above.

**bFollowup and Replyub:** Followup to the newsgroup, and reply to the author via email.

**bPermanently Delete - Selected Messagesub:** 'Permanently delete' means that messages are deleted straight away, and are NOT copied to the 'deleted' folder. Although you can't change your mind, there is the advantage that this method is much faster. This option deletes currently selected messages.

**bPermanently Delete - All in this Groupub:** Permanently delete all the message in the current folder.

**bPermanently Delete - ALL Messagesub:** Permanently delete all the messages in every newsgroup (messages in 'outgoing' or 'sent' will not be deleted by this option). Be careful with this option!

**bSelect - Allub:** Select all of the messages in the current folder.

**bSelect - Noneub:** Deselect all of the messages in the current folder.

**bSelect - Toggleub:** Toggle the selection of all the messages in the current folder.

**bSelect - All From This Posterub:** Select all of the messages in the current folder that are from the same person as the currently selected message.

**bSelect - All With This Subjectub:** Select all of the messages in the current folder that have the same subject as the currently selected message.

**bMark As - Unreadub:** Mark this message as being unread.

**bMark As - Readub:** Mark this message as being read.

**bMark As - Heldub:** Mark this message as being held (outgoing only).

**bMark As - Queuedub:** Mark this message as being queued (outgoing only).

**bMark As - Normalub:** Message will be displayed as normal (ie, default).

**bMark As - Importantub:** Message will have the subject line highlighted in the messages view list.

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bDownload Bodyub: Downloads the bodies of all the currently selected messages, if they haven't already been downloaded (online mode only). - NOT YET IMPLEMENTED!

buPreferences Menuuuub

bProgram Settingsub: This opens the Program Settings window  
WIN\_ACC}.

bKillfilesub: This opens the **Killfiles window**.

bUsersub: See the **users section**. Only available if you  
are set up as a Supervisor.

bChange Passwordub: See the **users section**.

bMUI Settingsub: This opens the MUI Settings window, where you can  
change the MUI preferences specifically for NewsCoaster.

## 1.17 Windows

Windows NewsCoaster are:

**Main**

**New Newsgroup**

**Edit Newsgroup**

**Groups Manager**

**View Message**

**Write Message**

**Program Settings**

**KillFile Settings**

**Search Window**

## 1.18 Main Window

This window is split into two sections - on the left is a list displaying the newsgroups you have opened, and on the right are the messages inside the currently selected folder (either a group, 'sent' or 'outgoing'. The columns in each list may be resized, and their order rearranged.

bGroups list:ub

This has three columns. Name (either the Description entry, or the actual newsgroup name if you left Description empty); Messages is the number of messages in that folder; the third column shows an 'S' if you are currently subscribed, and is blank if not. You can change the selected group by clicking on an entry (the messages list will update automatically).

Doubleclicking on an entry opens the **Edit Newsgroup window**

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for that group (you cannot edit 'sent' or 'outgoing'; you can only doubleclick on newsgroups).

bMessages list:ub

This has four columns. The first one is a status column - it displays 'N' in newsgroups if the message has not been read yet, messages in 'outgoing' display 'H' if they are Held (ie, will not be sent upon selecting 'Send News') - a '\*' indicates that the message was downloaded in online mode, and the body has not yet been downloaded; the second column is the Subject of the message; the third is the Date; the fourth is the From field of the message if you are currently viewing a newsgroup, or if in 'outgoing' or 'sent', it shows the Newsgroup(s) that the message will be posted to.

You can choose how messages are sorted by clicking on columns (not the first, 'Status' column, though); the messages will then be sorted by that column. By default, messages are sorted by date.

## 1.19 New Newsgroup Window

bNewsgroup Name:ub The actual name of the newsgroup, eg, 'comp.sys.amiga.misc'.

bDescription:ub A field for your own use, eg, 'c.s.a.misc' or 'Amiga misc'. If this entry is blank, the newsgroup list shows the Newsgroup Name; if the description is not blank, then it will be shown instead.

bDefault .sig:ub The .sig (as defined in Program Settings WIN\_ACC}) that you wish to be placed in messages that you post to this newsgroup. You can always change it when actually **writing** a message, this is just the default choice.

bMessage Limit Cycle Gadget:ub 'Unlimited Messages per Download' means that NewsCoaster will download all the messages that have been posted since the last time you downloaded news. When you download for the first time, you will be asked if you wish to download all available messages, or just the last 100 messages (the latter is recommended, as at any time there could be anything from tens to hundreds or thousands of messages in each newsgroup). 'Maximum # of Messages to Download' means that NewsCoaster will not download more messages than the number you enter in the box below this cycle gadget; if there are more messages, only the most recent ones will be downloaded. If the number you enter is greater than 100, then upon downloading for the first time, NewsCoaster will prompt you whether you wish to download this maximum number, or just the most recent 100.

bLines KillFile:ub This is a special type of killfile based on the number

of lines in the message. 'Download messages of any length' turns off the killfile for this newsgroup. 'Skip messages longer than this # of lines' means that messages will not be downloaded if they have more lines than the number given in the string gadget below this gadget. This is useful for avoiding huge messages.

bDiscard Messages Cycle Gadget:ub By default this is set to 'Don't Discard Messages', which means that messages will never be automatically discarded - they will only be deleted if you delete them. If you select 'Discard after x Days', you can then select the number of days you wish to keep messages for in the string gadget below. So if you entered '30', then messages would automatically be deleted 30 days after the date given in the 'Date' header. Note that deletion here is permanent (ie, messages are *\*not\** copied to the 'Deleted' folder first, they are deleted straight away). Also note that if you enter a value of '0', then auto-deletion won't happen (as a safety-feature - better than all messages immediately being discarded!)

bOnline/Offline Reading:ub Originally, NewsCoaster was just an offline reader, that is, you downloaded all the messages online, and then could read them later offline. This is generally cheaper since you spend less time online, and can read them at your leisure. Of course, not everyone has to pay for their online time, and so reading online can be preferable. If you select 'Online Reading' for a newsgroup, then when you download messages for that group, only the headers will be downloaded - which will be much quicker than downloading the entire messages. When you open a message to read, NewsCoaster will then download the message body automatically - thus you need to be online all the time you are reading messages. This method means that your hard drive is filled up less quickly, since only messages which you choose to read are downloaded. Please note that as of version 1.19, reading online is *\*EXPERIMENTAL\** and may still contain bugs, so be warned!

bSubscribe:ub If you are subscribed to a group, then messages will be downloaded for that group when you select 'Fetch News'. This is set as default. You may wish to turn it off if you don't wish to download news, but you don't want to delete the newsgroup (this way you still keep and can read the messages already downloaded, without having to download more continually).

bOkay:ub Create the newsgroup folder.

bCancel:ub Close this window without creating it.

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## 1.20 Edit Newsgroup Window

This window allows you to edit the settings for this newsgroup folder. See the [New Newsgroup window](#) for details, since the interface is the same.

There is an additional 'Last Download Date' label, which just gives the date and time when you last downloaded news for this newsgroup, and the 'Folder Location' label, which is where the messages for this group are stored (the folder given is in the folder pointed to by the NewsCoasterData: assign).

## 1.21 Group Manager window

This window displays all the available newsgroups for your newsserver. It may take quite a while to read in all the entries into the window.

To find a group, enter in some text into the string gadget, and press enter, and the next group with that text in the name will be displayed. Sort does an alphabetical sort (but takes time, be warned). Download Group List downloads the group list from the newsserver again.

To subscribe to a group, either doubleclick on an entry, or select it and press 'Subscribe'. The [New Newsgroup window](#) will then open for you to set the settings for that group.

## 1.22 View window

The top area shows the important headers, below that is the message body. You can resize the size of these two areas by clicking on the line dividing them, and dragging up or down.

bFollowup/Reply:ub Post a followup to the newsgroup and/or reply via email to this message. You will be asked which you wish to do, and then the [Write window](#) is opened.

bExport:ub Export this message. See [here](#) for details.

bEmail/Plain Cycle Gadget:ub In 'Email Format', the characters \*, /, \_, # and > are taken to represent bold, italics, underline, colour and quoted respectively. Sometimes, these characters may be used to mean different things (in particular, if someone posts source code). Selecting 'Plain Text' displays the raw text of the message without converting.

bPrevious Message:ub Go to the previous message in this newsgroup (in terms of the current sorting, as displayed in the Main window WIN\_MAIN}).

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bPrevious in Thread: Moves to the previous message in this thread, ie, the message which the current message is replying to. If this button is disabled (or disables when you select it), it means either it is a new message, or the previous message was not downloaded, was deleted, or was downloaded with a version of NewsCoaster prior to version 1.24.

bDelete/Next: Deletes this message (ie, moves to the Deleted folder) and then moves to the next message in this newsgroup.

bNext Message: Go to the next message in this newsgroup (in terms of the current sorting, as displayed in the **Main window**).

## 1.23 Write window

bMessage Page

bTo: If you wish to email this message to someone (either instead of, or as well as posting to the newsgroup) then enter their email address in this field. Multiple email addresses should be separated by a comma. Note that when you select to 'Reply' to a message, the author's email address is inserted here automatically. Leaving this field blank means that the message is posted only to newsgroups (and this is what you would normally do).

bNewsgroups: The newsgroup or groups you wish to post to. The currently selected newsgroup is entered here as standard, but you may change it. Multiple newsgroups should be separated by a comma, eg:

'comp.sys.amiga.misc,comp.sys.amiga.hardware'. If this field is blank, then the message won't be posted to any newsgroups (so you can send a message by email only). Click on the '+/-' button to bring up a menu to easily add or remove newsgroups.

bSubject: The subject for your message. This will already be set if replying to a message, and in this case you should only change it if the topic of your message is no longer related to the subject already there. NewsCoaster will not let you post a message without a subject.

bMain Text Area: Here you type your message.

bAttachments Page

Here you can attach files to your messages, eg, text files, pictures, sound files and applications. Note you should *\*never\** post binaries (ie, anything except text) to a newsgroup unless it is a newsgroup which allows them (signified by having 'binaries' in its name). If you want to send binaries to people on the newsgroup, then either place it on a webpage and post the URL, or ask who wants it, and email it to them individually.

NewsCoaster supports the MIME Version 1.0 standard for attaching files, and uses

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base64 encoding to attach files.

To add an attachment, select 'Add Attachment', and choose the file using the file requester. NewsCoaster will attempt to 'guess' the file type from the extension, and set the popup box on the right accordingly. You should make sure that it is set correctly; if not, click the popup gadget, and choose the correct file type ('MIME Type').

'Delete Attachment' removes the attachment from the list (it doesn't delete the original file!)

If you are editing a message that had attachments, NewsCoaster will do its best to reconstruct the attachment list from the message. It should get it right, but it might be worth quickly checking this page to make sure!

bOptions Pageub

bFrom:ub This is what will appear in the From header field (it also appears in the Message-Id header). As a default it is set up with what you entered in the [Program Settings window](#).

bFollowup-To:ub If you are crossposting to lots of newsgroups, you should specify one of the here for the discussion to continue on. When people follow up to a message, if this field is blank then the new message goes to the newsgroups that the original message was posted to. If the Followup-To field is not empty, it will be sent to the newsgroup listed there. Also, you can type 'poster' here to indicate you would prefer replies via email. Click on the '+/-' button to bring up a menu to easily add or remove newsgroups.

bBottom Panelub

bSend to Queue:ub When you have finished the message, this button sends it to outgoing, ready to be sent next time you click 'Send News'.

bPostpone:ub Use if you wish to finish the message later. It is still copied to outgoing, but marked with an 'H'. Such messages won't be sent when you select 'Send News'. Select 'Edit Message' from the Messages menu to continue a postponed message (and then click 'Send to Queue' or 'Postpone' again when you are done).

bCancel:ub Either cancel the message entirely if this is a newly created message, or cancel the changes if you are editing a message (ie, the original will not be lost).

bSignature Cycle Gadget:ub Select which signature you wish to be added at the bottom of your message (as defined in Program Settings WIN\_ACC}. The signature will automatically be inserted into the text window (of the Message page), and the signature that was there (if any) removed.

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## 1.24 Program Settings widow

bAccounts Pageub

bYour Name:ub Your name which will appear in the 'From' field of outgoing messages.

bYour Email:ub Your email address; again this will appear in the 'From' field. This doesn't have to be a correct one, in particular, you may wish to apply a 'spam block'. Eg, my address is mdwh2@hermes.cam.ac.uk, but I enter mdwh2@NOSPAM.hermes.cam.ac.uk - the reason for this is that readers of the newsgroup can realise that you have to edit the 'NOSPAM.' out (and it is wise to put instructions to do this in my .sig - see later), but I avoid automatic spamming. If you are unsure, just put your real email address. Whatever you do, you must specify an email address of the form user@domain (ie, it must have the '@' character).

bYour Real Email:ub This is for email sending - some email servers allow you to put anything in the 'From:' header, in which case leave this blank and the above email address will be used. So servers require a correct address however, in which case, enter your correct email address here (note that which address actually appears in the 'From:' address of your emails depends on the server). If in doubt, simply stick your correct email address here.

bNNTP (News) Server:ub This is the server that NewsCoaster will use to read news off of. You will probably have been given one to use with you ISP.

Alternatively, there are **public ones** available. If you change this after already having been using NewsCoaster, then when you click Okay, you will be asked if you wish to reset the article pointers to all newsgroups. You should do this if you are changing newsservers, since different newsservers store their messages with different article IDs - please see the 'Reset Group Article Pointer' and 'Reset All Groups' Pointers' **menu options**.

bSMTP (Mail) Server:ub If you wish to reply to messages via email, then you must enter in the name of you SMTP (ie, mail) server here, along with your domain in the next box.

bDomain:ub If you wish to reply to messages via email, then as well as entering your SMTP server, you must here enter your domain. This will usually be whatever you have been given as a user-ID.

bUse NNTP-Auth?:ub Some newsservers require you to authenticate. If this is the case, then you should tick this box and type your user name and password in the relevant boxes. If your newsserver doesn't require authentication (most don't), then this box should be unticked! Please note that I have been unable to test this feature - if you have a newsserver that requires authentication, please let

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me know if it works or not:)

**bTime Zone:**ub Select the time zone you are living in. This is necessary so that your messages appear in the correct order when people view messages by date.

**bAdd Adjustment for DST?:**ub This should be ticked if you live in the UK and it is during British Summer Time. Alternatively, other countries may have some sort of Daylight Saving Time where you are one hour ahead of normal. If so, then this box should be ticked. Remember to change this when you enter/exit the period of DST!

Note that the NewsCoaster assumes the your machine's clock is set to the local time, in accordance with the settings you make here.

**bWrite Page:**ub

**bSignatures:**ub The cycle gadget and text area allow you to choose your signatures. You can have up to eight. Select the signature you wish to edit with the cycle gadget, and then enter the signature in the text area. You should make sure your signature is no bigger than 80 characters wide, and 4 lines deep. If the cursor reaches the end of the text area, the line will spill over to the next line, but note that this text is wrapped, ie, a line break is not inserted. You should specifically press Return to start a new line. Also note that you don't have to enter the '--' signature break; NewsCoaster does this for you (similarly, you shouldn't start your signature off with a line created with hypens '-----etc', since you should inserted make use of the '--' signature break which NewsCoaster inserts for you).

**bLine Length:**ub When you finish writing a message, NewsCoaster will insert the line breaks at an appropriate line length. Here you can specify the line length - it should really be between 60 and 80 (preferably, 70 to 76).

**bAuto. Rewrap:**ub If this is ticked, when following up to messages, NewsCoaster will attempt to rewrap the lines before quoting, to make everything look nicer. Note that it doesn't always work, since it's difficult to know whether a line break is a result of the text spilling over, or whether the author wanted a new line (ie, he explicitly pressed Return).

**bUse 'x-no-archive' Header?:**ub If the line 'x-no-archive: yes' is included into the header, then your message will not be included in news archives (eg, [www.deja.com](http://www.deja.com)). You can set NewsCoaster to never do this, to always do this, or to only do this if following up to a message which had 'x-no-archive: yes' in its header (if an author didn't want his message to appear in news archives, then he wouldn't want its replies to be either, since some or all of his original text might be quoted in the new message).

**bUse Shortened X-Newsreader header:**ub As a default, NewsCoaster places an X-Newsreader header which says something like 'NewsCoaster [Amiga,

020] by Mark Harman'. Ticking this box shortens it to 'NewsCoaster'. This is if you want added anonymity (thinking that what with the rather small number of Amiga users these days, if you were posting on a newsgroup where there was someone who knew you had an Amiga, but you were posting under a false name, not wanting them to know who you were...) Actually, I created this option for my use - I can hardly post anonymous messages when my name's being placed in the X-Newsreader header! :)

#### bRead Pageub

bHeader:ub You can choose which headers are to be displayed when you are viewing a message. 'None' means no messages are displayed. 'Full' means all headers are displayed. 'Selected' means that the headers listed in the Text gadget to the right are displayed. You should enter in the headers, without the ':', with different headers separated by a '|'. It is set by default to:

From|To|Newsgroups|Date|Subject|Followup-To|Reply-To

(actually it is case-insensitive, but I put capital letters for neatness).

The next options set colours used by the view window. Note they only take effect if you are viewing a message in 'Email Format' mode; in 'Plain Text' mode, everything appears in the default text colour. To change a colour, simply click on the colour and select a new one with the MUI colour chooser which appears.

b2nd Level Quoting:ub This is the colour used for alternate levels of quoting, ie, 2nd, 4th, 6th etc.

bColoured:ub Any text in a message that is surrounded by '#' characters (eg, '#coloured#' will appear in colour. This is the colour to use.

#### bMIME Pageub

Here you can choose the external programs used to display attachments (see [here](#) for details on displaying attachments).

To add support for a new viewer, click on 'New' - a default entry will be added to the list, which you can now change. 'MIME Type' is the attachment type (eg, image/jpeg). Select a viewer for it - you should make sure the viewer you specify is in the command path, or you should specify a full path. You should use "%s" to indicate the filename. So suppose you had specified image/jpeg, and wanted to use the program 'vt' to display jpeg attachments. In the 'Viewer' box, you would enter:  
vt "%s"

Hit return, and the list will be updated. To remove a viewer from the list, select it, and select 'Delete'.

Default Viewer will be used to view all MIME Types that you have not specified in the list.

Finally, 'Okay' will save your changes to disk, and 'Cancel' will abort any changes you have made, reverting to the previous settings.

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## 1.25 KillFile window

bTo enter a new killfile:ub Click 'New', enter the text into the three boxes, and then hit 'Add/Replace'.

bTo edit an existing killfile:ub Select the killfile from the list, and it's details will appear in the text boxes. Edit them, and then select 'Add/Replace' to confirm the changes. If you wish to cancel the changes, then instead either select 'New' (ready to enter a new killfile), select another killfile entry (to edit it instead), or simply close the window.

bTo delete an existing killfile:ub Select the killfile from the list, and click 'Delete'.

bTo duplicate an existing killfile:ub Select the killfile from the list, and click 'Duplicate'.

bKillfile Detailsub

bHeader:ub This is the header you wish to kill on, eg, 'From:'. It should be an exact match (ie, this is not a substring search), but it is not case-sensitive. Alternatively, leave blank to kill on any header. The colon will automatically be added if you forget to.

bText to Kill:ub If the header specified contains this text, the message will be killed. This is a substring search, and it is case-insensitive.

bNewsgroups:ub The newsgroups you wish to set this killfile for. This is a substring search, so you can do 'comp.sys.amiga.' for all the newsgroups that start off with that name, and leave blank to kill on all newsgroups. This is case-insensitive (but all newsgroups have lower-case names, anyway).

b'Advert' Killfileub

This is a special type of killfile. Often, you will see people posting adverts or other off-topic spam to a newsgroup, but sometimes they will put a number as the last word in the subject, eg, 'Make lots of money 774'. If you enable this killfile, then Newscoaster will check the last word of the subject of each message; if it is a pure number, with three or more digits, then that message will be killed (the reasoning being that a one or two digit number is more likely to be an on topic message). Of course, if there is an on-topic message with the last word on the subject being such a number, then this message will still be killed, so it's up to you whether to use this feature or not!

When you are done, close the window and the changes will automatically be saved to disk.

Also, remember that there is a special additional killfile on the number of lines in a message - see the [Edit Newsgroup window](#) for details.

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## 1.26 Search Window

Here you can quickly search through all folders for messages. Simply select the newsgroup(s) you wish to search from the list (select more than one by holding down Shift), then use the Cycle gadget to select where you wish to search in, and enter the text you wish to search for below that (the search is a substring one). Select whether you want a case-sensitive search or not. Click on 'Start Search', and the results will be displayed in the list at the bottom. Doubleclick on an entry to highlight it on the main window.

If you select a header to search in (ie, anything other than 'Header', 'Message Body' and 'Entire Message'), then NewsCoaster will make use of the internal indices. Note that this means that headers will be truncated at some length (128 chars for MessageID, 64 chars for subject, and 32 chars for the other headers), so anything beyond this length will not be search.

If you select 'Header', then the entire header will be searched (including the header field names, eg, searching for 'From' in the header will return all messages searched!) 'Message Body' searches after the header (including attachments), and 'Entire Message' searches the entire raw text of the message. Note that these last three options are much slower than searching in specific headers, since NewsCoaster needs to scan each message individually.

## 1.27 ARexx Commands

NewsCoaster now has an ARexx port (called 'NEWSCOASTER'). It's very simple at the moment, so hopefully more commands will appear here soon. Please let me know if you want particular commands to be added. If you write any ARexx scripts for NewsCoaster, you are of course free to distribute as you wish. I'd also like to hear if you write anything particularly useful (hmm, not very likely with the current set of commands I know, but anyway) - I may include them in the NewsCoaster archive, or at least put them on the NewsCoaster homepage.

bCommand Summary:ub

(See the end for explanations of terms)

bBUSYub Forces NewsCoaster to go into 'busy' mode, and not accept any user input. You must call NOBUSY to allow user input again.

bFOLDERINFOub Returns a string giving information about the currently selected folder, in the format 'groupID name description number\_of\_messages\_in\_folder messageID\_of\_nextMessage subscribed max\_download\_limit' (subscribed is 1 if you are subscribed to that group, 0 if you are not).

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bHIDEub Hide or Iconify NewsCoaster

bIMPORTFOLDER [folder]ub Scans a folder for messages, and imports them into the groups appropriate for the newsgroups specified by their 'Newsgroups:' header.

bIMPORTMESSAGE [message]ub Imports a message into the group appropriate for the newsgroup specified in the 'Newsgroup:' header.

bISONLNEub Sets RC to 1 if NewsCoaster is currently doing online activity (eg, fetching or sending news), but sets RC to 0 if not.

bMESSAGEFUANDRub Followup and reply to the currently selected message.

bMESSAGECOPY destinationub Copies the selected messages to the folder named 'destination'.

bMESSAGEDELETE [FORCE]ub Deletes the currently selected messages (which means they are copied to deleted, unless they are already in deleted, in which case they are permanently deleted). If you specify 'FORCE', then the confirmation requester is not displayed.

bMESSAGEEDITub Edit the currently selected message (must be in outgoing or sent).

bMESSAGEEXPORTub Export (Save or Display) the currently selected message.

bMESSAGEFOLLOWUPub Followup the currently selected message.

bMESSAGEGETHEADER [header]ub Returns the data in a particular header ('header' should include the colon, but is case-insensitive, eg, 'from:' or 'subject:').

bMESSAGEGETPATHub Gets the filename with path (NB, will make use of the NewsCoasterData: assign).

bMESSAGEINFOub Returns information about the selected message in the form 'messageID From Newsgroups Subject Date Content-Type'.

bMESSAGEKILL [type [THISGROUP]]ub Sets up a killfile on the currently selected message. If you give no parameters, the user will be asked, otherwise, type can be 0 for 'Kill this author', 1 for 'Kill responses to this message', and 2 for 'Kill messages with the same subject'. By default the killfile will be for all newsgroups, but specifying THISGROUP makes it the current newsgroup only.

bMESSAGEMOVE destinationub Moves the currently selected messages to the folder named 'destination'.

bMESSAGEREPLYub Reply to the currently selected message.

bMESSAGESUPERSEDEub Supersede the currently selected message.

bNOBUSYub Cancel the effect of BUSY.

bSELECTMESSAGE type [ALL]ub Controls selection of messages in the

current folder. Set type to: 1 to select, 0 to toggle, -1 to deselect. This sets the selection of the currently active message, unless you specify ALL, in which case all messages in the folder are set.

bSETFOLDER posub Selects are folder, where pos is the position in the folder listing.

bSETFOLDERBYID idub Selects the folder whose folderID is id.

bSETFOLDERBYNAME nameub Selects the folder whose name is name.

bSETMESSAGE posub Selects the message at position pos in the message listing.

bSHOWub Show or un-iconify NewsCoaster.

bExplanationsub

bFolder Namesub When you specify a folder by name, it should be 'outgoing', 'sent', 'deleted', or if it is a newsgroup, the full newsgroup name (eg, 'comp.sys.amiga.misc').

bgroupIDub Every folder has an internal ID number. This is -1 for outgoing, -2 for sent, -3 for deleted, and a number equal or greater to 0 for newsgroup folders. The messages are kept in the folders outgoing/, sent/ or deleted/, or folder\_x/ for newsgroups, where x is the groupID. These folders will be in the folder pointed to by the NewsCoasterData: assign (which, by default, is the NewsCoaster folder).

bmessageIDub Every message has an ID, which is unique for the folder it is in. The filename of the message will be news\_x where x is the messageID.

bnextMessageub A term for the next message which might be created in this folder. eg, if messageID\_of\_nextMessage is 14, then the next message created in that folder will have a messageID of 14.

## 1.28 Frequently Asked Questions

(Under Construction)

### 1. Initial Problems

#### 1.1 Help! NewsCoaster doesn't run at all!

NewsCoaster needs a stack of at least 60000 bytes to run. If running from Workbench, trying selecting 'Info' on the icon, and making sure that the stack is set this high. If running from a Shell, run the command 'stack 60000' before hand. If running from some launcher utility, look in the settings/docs to see how to set the stack for an application. In the latter case, does NewsCoaster run from Workbench?

#### 1.2 Nope, it still doesn't work!

NewsCoaster needs MUI, version 3.8 minimum, along with the MUI custom classes BetterString, TextEditor and NList. Check out Aminet for these if you haven't got them. Also, make sure you have plenty of RAM free (4MB minimum free, or thereabouts), and are running at least OS3.0, with a 68020 CPU or greater.

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## 1.29 Credits...

NewsCoaster was written by Mark Harman in C++.

Thanks go to:

Alan Graham for suggesting the name NewsCoaster;

Stephen Graham for supplying most of the acronyms list;

Luca Longone for the NewIcons, bug reports and suggestions;

Thomas Csadek, Olivier Fabre, Dave Fisher, Markus Goettler, Pam Jones, Jari

Karjalainen, Piotr Kompa, Michael Luense, Jim Maciorowski, Bernd Rakel, Javier de las Rivas, Richard Tapp for bug reports, suggestions, etc.

(and others - apologies to anyone I haven't mentioned, I've had a lot of people write to me!)

Feel free to write to me at the following addresses:

Mark Harman

Trinity Hall

Cambridge

CB2 1TJ

(UK)

Or in December or April:

Mark Harman

3 Highlea Close

St Leonards on-sea

TN37 7SS

(UK)

(but either address will reach me eventually).

Or better still, email me on <mdwh2@hermes.cam.ac.uk>

Visit <http://newscoaster.tripod.com/> for up to date news on NewsCoaster.

Check out my homepage: [http://mark\\_harman.tripod.com/](http://mark_harman.tripod.com/)

Also check out the DoubleClick Homepage for loads of articles, news, tutorials, etc:

[http://members.xoom.com/dc\\_home](http://members.xoom.com/dc_home)

(Though this last one is \*very\* out of date!)

## 1.30 History

New for version 1.24: (16.1.00)

- Groups list can now be viewed either as a list or a tree (the latter is fairly simple atm, though - doubleclicks and dragsorting don't work), go to 'View' menu under 'Newsgroups'

- Sorting type of messages is now saved

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- Option to trace back through the thread (will not function on messages downloaded with a version previous to v1.24)
- Undelete option (will not function correctly on messages downloaded with a version previous to v1.24)
- Deleting messages is quicker
- Option to 'permanently delete' messages (messages are deleted straight away rather than copied to 'deleted', but this method is much quicker) - either selected messages, all messages in a group, or all messages in all groups
- Option to mark messages as 'Important' - these messages are highlighted
- Messages that have been downloaded in online mode, and the body has not yet been downloaded, are marked with a '\*'.
- When downloading, status window displays newsgroup currently being downloaded
- Bug fix; if the body of a message wasn't found, the file opened for message was not deleted, and left 'Open'
- Reports that some other newsreaders interpret 2 digit dates as being in the 1900s
- NewsCoaster now outputs 4 digit years (NewsCoaster has itself always assumed two digit dates of less than 78 to be in the 2000s).

New for version 1.23:

- Multiple users allowed, each with their own location for storing news, and optional password protection
- Specify different newsservers for posting and reading
- Last used settings for expire type/time on killfiles are remembered and used as defaults
- Toolbar buttons are disabled when appropriate (and some menuitems too)
- Bug fix; hang whilst parsing dates

New for version 1.22:

- Index reading \*much\* faster (about 2.5-3.0 times:)
- Sizes of messages displayed (only for messages downloaded from now on)
- New Logging Option - virtually all function calls logged to 'newscoaster.log' if you wish (shouldn't be used in general, but if you are experiencing bugs/crashes, sending a log will make things a lot easier for me:)
- Bug fix; dates were parsed incorrectly in rare circumstances
- Bug fix; enforcer hit when an empty message is composed

New for version 1.21:

- Bug fix; random characters sometimes appeared at end of messages written by the user

New for version 1.20:

- Wordwrapping on quoted text is set to a longer line length than on new text
-

- A Killfile can be set to expire a certain number of days either since being created, or since it was last used
- Killfiles editor now works a bit more intuitively
- Killfiles editor displays creation and last used dates of each killfile
- Option to archive newsgroup messages into a single text file
- More resistance to crashes (before if there was a crash between having downloaded, and before quitting, vital information would not get saved meaning next time you downloaded, the old messages would be overwritten! There were other similar problems.

Now this information is saved immediately after downloading, and other vital places.

Additionally, even if something still messes up, messages should now never overwrite existing files.

- Slight improvement in speed when downloading bodies of articles in online mode
- Repeated clicking on column headings switches order of sorting
- Bug fix; crashes related to online viewing
- Bug fix; autorewrap sometimes didn't work correctly
- Bug fix; the line below 'References:' in the header was ignored in some circumstances
- Bug fix; headers which have line breaks in are now parsed correctly
- Bug fix; enforcer hit when downloading news
- Other minor improvements

New for version 1.19:

- Faster downloading! (Possibly up to 2x speed on a fast connection)
- Online viewing - NB This is \*EXPERIMENTAL\* and may have a few bugs in it..
- Option to discard messages after a certain number of days
- Select All/None/Toggle/With From/With Subject option
- Rot13 encoding option (decoding to follow..)
- Other minor improvements and bug fixes

New for version 1.18:

- Bug fixes; under some circumstances, NewsCoaster would crash upon downloading certain messages
- Other minor improvements and bug fixes

New for version 1.17:

- New 'supersede message' item, to overwrite your old posts on a newsserver
  - New statistics feature!
  - Better multithreading when download news; items appear as soon as they are downloaded; you can delete messages whilst downloading too
  - Option to download news for the currently selected newsgroup
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- Very simple ARexx port (more commands to come!)
- Doubleclick on URLs to launch in a browser (via external ARexx script)
- Can now locate news messages elsewhere (ie, doesn't have to be in NewsCoaster folder)
- Copying to the same folder (ie, to duplicate message) is now allowed
- Slightly faster moving/copying/deleting routines
- Hopefully a bug fix in moving/deleting for some systems
- Other minor improvements

New for version 1.16:

- Configurable colours for Message View window :)
- Can configure which headers are to be displayed
- Toolbar on main window

New for version 1.15:

- Bug fix - corrupted messages downloaded when a killfile was used, or messages with duplicate messageIDs found
- Bug fix - dates may have been written incorrectly when posting messages using a machine with non-English language

New for version 1.14:

- Faster downloading.
- Improved searching - in headers, body or entire message.
- New option to add to the killfile based on a message (eg, kill on author, responses, etc), to make creating new killfiles much easier and quicker.
- Option to reset article pointers in newsgroups.
- Option to read in text from a file into the message you are writing.
- Option to read in signature from file.
- Bug fix - duplicate messageIDs weren't always being ignored.
- Bug fix for dates on machines with non-English languages (you must select 'Update

Index' on you newsgroups for this to take effect on old messages).

- Aborting during move/copy/delete messages now works.
- Option to update all indices. You can also abort updating an index, too.
- Faster moving/deleting routines.
- Other minor bug fixes and improvements.

New for version 1.13 (7.8.99):

- Bug fix - when downloading from groups, in rare cases the article ID information was parsed incorrectly.
  - Group list is now not automatically sorted, allowing you to rearrange them as
-

you wish (though you can do a sort if you wish)

- Bug fix - now when you change the ordering of the groups list, NewsCoaster doesn't reread in the messages for groups unnecessarily.
- Faster copying/moving/deleting routines.

Version 1.12 (2.8.99):

- New killfile - will detect a number given as the last word in Subject, eg, 'Make lots of money 1206' Such numbers usually indicate an advert or other off-topic announcement. You can now tell NewsCoaster to avoid these (when the number is 100 or greater).
- Recognises '!' as a quoting character (before was just '>', ':', and '!')
- Bug fix when copying from a view window and pasting into a write window

New for Version 1.11 (29.7.99):

- Added 'Deleted' folder
- Added button on View window to delete current message and move onto next message
- When a new message is created, the folder no longer changes to 'Outgoing' (thus speeding things up, too)
- Move/Copy doesn't require a folder change to the destination folder (speeding up things again)

Version 1.1 (23.7.99):

- Email SMTP support! You can now reply to authors by email aswell as or instead of following up messages
- Search facilities
- 'Pop up' window on Write window to easily add/remove newsgroups to post and followup to
- Recognition of 'Followup-To: poster'
- Move and Copy messages to any folder
- Colours for quoted text have been set to something more sensible (no pink! - configurable colours will hopefully follow shortly..)
- Fixed Authentication bug
- Fixed Move bugs when sending messages
- Changed shortcut of 'Close Window' on View window from 'c' to 'w', so you can copy text! (oops..)

- Left and right cursor keys now move between messages on View window

Version 1.01 (14.7.99) - Fixed fatal MIME Prefs bug, faster index reading times, removed 'welcome' requester for registered users

Version 1.0 (6.7.99) - First public non-beta release

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## Beta History

4.7.99: Fixed problems with MIME Types preferences, added Amigaguide documentation,  
fixed fatal bug in View window, made other minor changes

2.7.99: Fixed date problems on machines using non-English languages, improved attachment features, removed fatal bug (doubleclicking on view message window)

12.6.99: Stack increased to fix crashing bug (whoops)

11.6.99: Rewritten 'Fetch News' routine - should now work with all newsservers, Killfile on any header, fixed multithreading when fetching news, base64 encoded attachments (experimental! - may contain bugs), x-no-archive option

31.5.99: NewIcons (thanks to Luca Longone) added, clearer error messages given,

30.5.99: Too-long Header bug fixed, Number of messages displayed in groups list, messages in group count

29.5.99: Export/Followup bug removed, new 'Lines' killfile added, other bugs fixed, Iconify option

28.5.99: All Known Enforcer hits fixed, References bug fixed, .sigs bug fixed

27.5.99: First beta release

## 1.31 Future

What may appear in future versions of NewsCoaster.. (remember that once you register, your keyfile will work with all future versions).

- 'Change Subject' option
- Rot13 decoding
- Use of Multiple sockets
- Posting immediately when online
- Graphical toolbar
- Multiple newsserver support
- Handling of different language ISOs
- Cancelling messages
- Launch external editor for writing messages
- Launch external editor for editing .sig

(see <http://newscoaster.tripod.com> for more up to date information)

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## 1.32 Additional Programs Used and MUI Readme

This application uses the following software:

Magical User Interface (Stefan Stuntz)

BetterString.mcc (Allan Odgaard)

TextEditor.mcc (Allan Odgaard)

NList.mcc (Gilles Masson)

MUI Readme follows:

This application uses

MUI - MagicUserInterface

(c) Copyright 1992-97 by Stefan Stuntz

MUI is a system to generate and maintain graphical user interfaces. With the aid of a preferences program, the user of an application has the ability to customize the outfit according to his personal taste.

MUI is distributed as shareware. To obtain a complete package containing lots of examples and more information about registration please look for a file called "muiXXusr.lha" (XX means the latest version number) on your local bulletin boards or on public domain disks.

If you want to register directly, feel free to send

DM 30.- or US\$ 20.-

to

Stefan Stuntz

Eduard-Spranger-Straße 7

80935 München

GERMANY

Support and online registration is available at

<http://www.sasg.com/>

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