

Mailboxes and Archives

BulkRate stores all mail in specially formatted text files which are called mailboxes. There are two formats, one for incoming mail and another for outgoing mail. Each service has an incoming mailbox and an outgoing mailbox associated with it. You can set up or change this relationship by choosing "Service setup..." under the Service menu.

In the Mailbox settings dialog are some fields and buttons that allow you to specify the name and location of the files you wish to use for Incoming and Outgoing mail. There are basically two strategies you can use. The first strategy is to use one incoming mail file and one outgoing mail file for all services. The second strategy is to use separate files for each service. For example, if you call LAMG BBS and DigitalPopcorn, you might have the following files:

LAMG BBS

Outgoing mail filename: LAMG Outgoing
Incoming mail filename: LAMG Incoming

DigitalPopcorn

Outgoing mail filename: DP Outgoing
Incoming mail filename: DP Incoming

There are two advantages to using separate files: one, better organization, since messages from multiple BBSs don't end up in the same list, and two; it's easier to use BulkRate to read and write messages for one BBS while BulkRate is exchanging mail with another BBS. The main disadvantages are that there are more files to keep track of, and it becomes easier to accidentally store replies or other outgoing mail in the wrong mailbox.

(A third strategy that would eliminate that last disadvantage would be to use separate Incoming mail files for each service, but a single Outgoing mail file for all services.)

Archives are identical in format to mailboxes. Archives can simply be thought of as inactive mailboxes. If you choose "Save a copy as..." or "Archive selection..." under the File menu, you can create archives to store mail for later reading or printing. "Save a copy as..." copies the entire mailbox to a new archive, "Archive selection..." copies the selected items to a new archive, and "Append to archive..." copies the selected items to the end of an existing archive. (Note that since archives and mailboxes are really the same thing, you can append items to an "active" mailbox if you wish. This might be useful for copying outgoing mail to be sent to several different BBSs.)

The Potentially Confusing but Vitally Important Relationship between Services and Mailboxes

It is very important to understand the relationship between Service files and Mailboxes. This relationship is defined under Service setup... under the Services menu.

Each Service can be thought of as "owning" two files or mailboxes: an outgoing mailbox and incoming mailbox. When you click on the "Incoming mail" or "Outgoing mail" icons in the Service window, BulkRate opens the file that is listed in the "Mailbox settings" dialog. If you are reading incoming mail and decide to make a reply, the reply is created in the Outgoing mailbox that belongs to the currently open Service file. This is a very important concept to understand: If you happen to be reading mail in an incoming mailbox that belongs to LAMG BBS, but you have the DigitalPopcorn service file open, the reply will be created in the DigitalPopcorn outgoing mailbox, which is probably not what you want. The moral is that you should insure that the matching Service file is open when you are reading mail from a BBS. (Again, it might be possible to minimize this problem by using the third mailbox strategy listed above.)