

## **WinBiff 2.0**

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WinBiff is a Windows version of the well-known Unix mail notification program biff, designed for use in conjunction with mail delivery programs such as UUPC/extended, Waffle, Pegasus (PMail), FirstMail, Novell MHS, Mini-Host, FSUUCP, or sendmail (with PC-NFS). WinBiff requires Windows 3.1.

WinBiff is distributed as a shareware product. See **Registration**, below, for information on how to register your copy of WinBiff.

### ***Installing WinBiff***

Copy the files WINBIFF.EXE and WINBIFF.HLP to any convenient directory. Typically, users keep these files in a directory along with other small Windows utilities.

Add WinBiff as a new "Program Item" to an appropriate group in Windows Program Manager. Optionally, you may specify the name of a configuration file as an argument in the "Command Line". By default, WinBiff will create a configuration file with the name WINBIFF.INI in the "Working Directory". A configuration file must have the extension .INI, but the extension need not be specified explicitly. If you supply a file name without a path, WinBiff will place the configuration file in the "Working Directory". A path without a drive letter is considered to be on the same drive as the "Working Directory".

Sample command lines:

<u>Command</u>	<u>Effect</u>
WINBIFF	creates WINBIFF.INI in Working Directory
WINBIFF MYCONFIG	creates MYCONFIG.INI in Working Directory
WINBIFF C:\MYCONFIG.INI	creates MYCONFIG.INI in root dir of C: drive

### ***Installing WinBiff for multiple mailboxes***

You may run multiple copies of WinBiff to monitor multiple mailboxes. For each mailbox to be monitored, you will need a separate configuration file.

With some mail systems, you may already have a directory for each of your mailboxes; you can use these directories to store corresponding configuration files. For each mailbox, add a "Program Item" to a group in Program Manager, and specify one of the directories just created as the "Working Directory". WinBiff will create a WINBIFF.INI in each of these directories.

Otherwise, create a "Program Item" for each mailbox to be monitored, and explicitly specify a configuration file in each "Command Line". You may wish to name the configuration files after the accounts with mailboxes to be monitored. For example, if you have mailboxes for accounts *fred* and *sally*, you might use configuration files named FRED.INI and SALLY.INI.

### ***Network installation***

You may run WinBiff from a network server. You may use multiple configuration files stored on individual network nodes, or a single configuration file stored on the server.

If you use multiple configuration files, the configuration file at a given node provides the settings used by WinBiff when run by a user at that node.

If you use a single configuration file stored on the server, you can use DOS environment variables to specialize settings at each node. For example, the configuration file might give the **Mail file** specification as C:\MAIL\%USER%, which contains the environment variable USER. The AUTOEXEC.BAT file at each node should set the environment variable USER to an appropriate value. See your DOS manual on how to set environment variables. See **Required Fields**, below, for more information on using environment variables.

## **Configuring WinBiff**

To configure WinBiff for your system, start the program. The **Setup** dialog box will appear on the Windows desktop.

### **Required fields**

The following fields are required. Enter a suitable **Polling interval** (how often WinBiff checks your mail file), and the full pathname of the **Mail file** created by your mail delivery program.

The minimum polling interval is 5 seconds.

You may use DOS wildcard characters ("\*" and "?") in the mail file specification.

Unless running under Novell NetWare, Pegasus Mail users should use "\*.CNM" in the mail file specification. If you run Pegasus under NetWare, see **Configuring WinBiff for NetWare and Pegasus**, below.

Waffle creates two mailbox files, a text file with a ".F" extension, and an index file with a ".I" extension. If you use Waffle, specify the ".F" file.

Novell MHS mail systems create mail files without an extension, so MHS users should use "\*" in the mail file specification. You may use the SYS: volume name or a mapped drive name in the mail file specification. If you use the SYS: volume name, you may also specify a server.

You may click on the adjacent **Browse** button to choose a mail file from a Windows Common Dialog box. DOS wildcard characters, however, must be entered manually.

You may use a DOS environment variable in the **Mail file** specification by bracketing each variable name with dollar signs. For example, if the DOS environment variable LOGIN indicates a subdirectory where mail is sent, you might enter "C:\MAIL\%LOGIN%\\*.\*" as the **Mail file** specification. If you need to indicate a literal dollar sign, use two of them. For example, the specification "C:\MAIL\\$\$USER%\\*.\*" indicates that mail is sent to the directory C:\MAIL\%USER%. Environment variable names used by WinBiff may not contain dollar signs.

### **Optional fields**

The other fields are optional. You may enter a **Window caption** for the WinBiff title bar, the command to invoke your **Mail reader** (including any command-line arguments), and the name of a ".WAV" **Sound file** to play when mail is received. If you set the alarm (see **Alarm on**, below), you may choose an appropriate **Alarm interval**.

If no caption is specified, the mail file name will be used. The string "%s" in the mail reader specification will expand to the full pathname of the specified mail file. For the **Mail reader**, and **Sound file** fields, you can use the **Browse** buttons to pick files. You may use DOS environment

variables in the **Window caption**, **Mail reader** and **Sound file** fields, as described for the **Mail file** field, above.

### **Other options**

By clicking with the left mouse button in the appropriate boxes, you may choose the **Startup options**:

- o whether to display old mail left in your mailbox (**Show old mail**)
- o whether to position the WinBiff icon at its last location (**Last icon position**)

The following **Display options** are available:

- o whether to show mail headers (**Show headers**)
- o whether to sort headers by reverse order of their arrival (**Reverse sort**)

The **Reverse Sort** option is inapplicable, and its checkbox disabled, unless the **Show headers** option is selected.

The **Window action** choice tells WinBiff what to display when mail arrives. Normally, WinBiff shows an image of a mailbox with its flag down. When mail arrives, WinBiff will raise the flag on the mailbox and change the background. If the window is displayed and the **Show headers** option is checked, then up to 150 message headers will be shown. The **To top** option causes the WinBiff window or icon to remain visible even though other windows cover it. The **Restore** option causes the icon to become a window when mail arrives; when all mail has been read, the window again becomes an icon.

The **Activate** option makes WinBiff the active window when mail arrives. This option is not recommended for most users. If you are running a DOS program in full-screen mode, this option will activate WinBiff on the Windows desktop when mail arrives (but see the following restrictions). Otherwise, if the **Activate** option is not set, the DOS full-screen application remains active; hence, WinBiff will not change when mail arrives. In Windows standard mode (the mode used by 286-class machines), the **Activate** option has no effect when a DOS application is running. In Windows enhanced mode (the default mode for 386, 486, and Pentium machines), the **Activate** option has no effect if a DOS application is running and has the "Exclusive" option set in its .PIF file.

You can choose what sound WinBiff will make when new mail is received, by clicking on the appropriate radio button in the dialog box. Choosing **Beep** uses the Windows "Default Beep" sound. Choosing **Custom** plays the .WAV file given in the Sound file field. The **Test** button allows you to play the sound file during setup. (You must have appropriate hardware and drivers installed to play .WAV files. A Windows speaker driver SPEAKER.DRV which provides adequate results without special hardware is available at many shareware sites, and is available from the author on request.)

The **Alarm on** option enables the WinBiff alarm. When mail arrives, the alarm will sound repeatedly until turned off. The **Alarm interval** indicates how often the alarm should be sounded. Note that if **No Sound** is chosen, the alarm cannot be set. Similarly, if the alarm is not set, the **Alarm interval** cannot be chosen.

### **Customizing WinBiff colors**

Pressing the **Colors** button from the Setup dialog opens another dialog box. Using this dialog

box, you can change the colors used by WinBiff.

Pick which color area you wish to change by clicking on the list of areas, or by clicking in the appropriate color display box. For example, clicking on the words "From line" allows you to change the color of "from" text in mail headers. Adjust the red, green, and blue sliders to achieve the color you want. Note that moving all sliders to their maximum positions gives white, while moving all of them to their minimum positions gives black. As you adjust the sliders, the color changes will be displayed in the appropriate color display box.

Pressing **OK** closes the Colors dialog, and returns control to the Setup dialog. Pressing **Defaults** will restore the WinBiff default colors. Pressing **Cancel** will cancel the effect of any color changes, and returns control to the Setup dialog. The color changes you make will take effect only if you choose **OK** or **Save** from the Setup dialog.

### ***Finishing configuration***

If you press the **Save** button from the Setup dialog, a configuration file is created, and the values you have given will be recalled when the program is started subsequently. Choosing **OK** applies the setup to the current session only. Choosing **Cancel** cancels any changes to the setup.

### ***Configuring WinBiff for NetWare and Pegasus***

If you use the DOS or Windows versions of Pegasus (PMail) under Novell Netware, WinBiff provides a special macro to simplify setup. In the **Mail file** field, enter "<NW-PMail>", and WinBiff will figure out the full mail file specification on the preferred server, if any, else on the default server. In a multi-server environment, you may enter "*SERVER*/*<NW-PMail>*", where *SERVER* is the real name of the server. Since the macro relies on the NetWare bindery, you must be running bindery emulation in NetWare 4.x. See **Errors/Bugs/Problems**, below, if you use the macro but fail to receive mail notification.

You may instead enter the **Mail file** specification manually, which should be:

SYS:MAIL\<objid>\\*.CNM

or

*SERVER*/SYS:MAIL\<objid>\\*.CNM

where <objid> is the hexadecimal digit NetWare object id assigned to the user.

### ***Configuring WinBiff for use with PC-NFS***

If your PC is on a network with a Unix machine which can export directories using Sun Microsystems' Network File System (NFS), and you run PC-NFS, WinBiff can monitor mail sent to the Unix machine. Export the mail spool directory where your mail arrives so that it appears as a directory on a logical DOS drive on the PC. In the WinBiff **Setup** dialog, specify the file that is created on the logical drive when mail arrives as the **Mail file**.

### ***Configuring WinBiff for use with UUPC/extended***

UUPC/extended places new messages in a file in the mail spool directory as they are received. You should specify this file as the **Mail file**, so that you will be notified of new messages.

If you set the "Multitask" option, when the UUPC/extended mail reader MAIL.EXE (either the DOS or the OS/2 version) is started, messages are moved to another file in the account's home directory. If you wish to track old messages (those that remain after MAIL.EXE is run), you will need to run a second copy of WinBiff with the **Mail file** set to the mailbox in the account's home directory.

### ***WinBiff and WinOS2***

You may run WinBiff under WinOS2, the version of Windows built into the OS/2 operating system (version 3.1 or above). If you run WinOS2 in a full-screen session, you can run WinBiff as you would run it under Windows itself. Similarly, if you minimize windows to the Desktop, WinBiff may be run in a seamless mode session as it would run under Windows.

If you wish to run WinBiff in a WinOS2 seamless mode session, and you hide minimized windows, or you minimize windows to the Minimized Window Viewer, you need to exercise a little care. In this case, Windows icons are not visible in seamless mode. Therefore, you should either 1) run WinBiff as a window all the time (choose **To Top** or **No action**, or 2) choose the **Restore** option.

If you run WinBiff in a seamless mode session, and you pick WinBiff from the OS/2 Window List, the window may not be restored to the proper size. This is due to an idiosyncrasy of the integration of OS/2 and WinOS2. If you run WinBiff as described above, it should not be necessary to use the Window List. If the window is restored to a wrong size, simply resize the window manually.

### ***Using WinBiff***

After you have configured WinBiff, you should test the configuration by sending a mail message to the account being monitored. WinBiff should respond when the message is delivered.

To modify the configuration, select **Setup** from the system menu. You can pop up the system menu by clicking on the WinBiff icon, or, if WinBiff is running as a window, by clicking on the box in the upper-left corner. For either the icon or window, pressing ALT-SPACE will also pop up the system menu.

After mail has arrived, the user may force the appearance of the original, no-mail icon (or window) by selecting **Clear** from the system menu. If **Clear** is chosen, the menu item changes to **Show**. Choosing **Show** will re-display the mail window or headers. If mail is pending, but not displayed on startup (because the **Show old mail** option has not been selected), choosing **Show** will also display the mail window or mail headers for the old mail..

If you have set the WinBiff alarm, when mail arrives, the alarm will sound repeatedly until turned off. Any of the following actions will turn off the alarm:

- o Mouse-clicking on the WinBiff icon or window
- o Scrolling the WinBiff window (horizontally or vertically)
- o Restoring WinBiff from an icon to a window
- o Popping up the system menu
- o Launching the mail reader

To launch the mail reader, double-click with the right mouse button on the icon or window. If the window (not the icon) is displayed, you may also double-click with the left mouse button or hit RETURN. The reader is invoked whether or not you actually have mail pending.

You may freely move or resize the WinBiff window. WinBiff maintains two window sizes, one for when headers are displayed, and the other for the plain window. When WinBiff is started, the last window position and the two window sizes from the last WinBiff session are used.

You may also move the WinBiff icon to any location on the screen. If you select **Last icon position**, the next time you run WinBiff, the icon will appear at its location from the previous session.

### ***WinBiff Help***

The WinBiff help system can be called from the system menu, and from the **Setup** and **Color** dialog boxes. From the system menu, choose **Help** or press the F1 key. From either dialog, press the **Help** button or press the F1 key.

### ***Errors/Bugs/Problems***

To use the <NW-PMAIL> macro, NetWare must be loaded and a user logged in. If a dialog box pops up which says "No NetWare connection or invalid server", make sure NetWare is loaded and the specified server name (if any) is correct. If the dialog box pops up which says, "No NetWare user logged in", make sure a NetWare user is logged in. In either case, after correcting the error condition, you should enter the Setup dialog, and choose **OK**. When the macro is invoked successfully, either by loading WinBiff or exiting the Setup dialog, WinBiff writes an entry to the file NW-PMAIL.LOG in the Working Directory, containing the actual mail file specification used. Use of the <NW-PMAIL> macro has unpredictable results if you are not running NetWare.

In Windows standard mode (used by 286-class machines), all Windows applications are suspended while a DOS application runs. Therefore, in standard mode, WinBiff cannot check for mail while a DOS application is running. Similarly, in enhanced mode (used by 386, 486, and Pentium machines), if a DOS application has the "Exclusive" option set in its .PIF file, WinBiff will be suspended while the DOS application runs. Also, in enhanced mode, if a DOS application is running full-screen, WinBiff will check for mail somewhat less frequently than is specified by the nominal polling interval. All these effects are limitations of the Windows environment.

If you read some, but not all, of the messages in a mailbox, WinBiff may behave as if the remaining messages are new, so that the **Window action** is taken. This is because some mail readers temporarily delete mail files before writing the remaining messages back to the file. If WinBiff polls the file while the file is deleted, WinBiff will behave as if the mailbox is empty; when the remaining messages are written, these messages are considered new.

If you use the Elm mail reader under Unix, and you do not discard messages after reading them, Elm adds some information to mail files. This extra information increases the size of mail files, which, in some cases, causes WinBiff to react as if there is new mail.

If you play a .WAV file on the receipt of mail, use SPEAKER.DRV as your sound driver, and disable interrupts during playback, a serial-port communications program (such as UUPC/extended's UUIO) may lose characters. Normal operation of a single UUIO process should not be a problem, since mail delivery occurs after all files have been transferred.

### ***Credits***

A predecessor of the current layout for the Setup dialog was suggested by Tom Metro of Venture Logic, Newton, Massachusetts; Tom has also provided extensive testing of WinBiff for several

releases. Tim Ma of the University of Utah suggested techniques for querying the NetWare bindery. Rainer Schweigkoffer of the University of Mannheim tested the support for Pegasus under NetWare. David Harris, the author of Pegasus, assisted with information on mail file formats and directory locations.

## **Registration**

WinBiff is a shareware program. It is not free software. If you use the program in a commercial setting, or non-commercially on a regular basis, please submit your registration contribution (\$10 suggested) to:

Paul A. Steckler  
10 Harbor Point Blvd. # 405  
Boston, MA 02125-3212  
USA

For full-time students, the suggested registration contribution is \$5. Massachusetts residents should add 5% sales tax. Checks in non-US currencies are welcome.

You may submit your WinBiff registration contribution by credit card. Due to transaction costs, the minimum credit card contribution is \$10. To register using your MasterCard, Visa, American Express, or Discover card, call Public Software Library at 800/242-4PsL (800/242-4775); outside the US and Canada, +1 713/524-6394; FAX: 713/524-6398; Internet: [71355.470@compuserve.com](mailto:71355.470@compuserve.com). These numbers are for credit card registrations only. The WinBiff author cannot be reached at those numbers. To reach the author about site licensing, volume discounts, version information, or technical information, please contact the author at 617/436-9926, at the above address, or at [winbiff@blimpy.ci.net](mailto:winbiff@blimpy.ci.net).

Contributors will automatically receive updates as uuencoded .ZIP files by e-mail. When submitting your registration by credit card order, be sure to contact the author at [winbiff@blimpy.ci.net](mailto:winbiff@blimpy.ci.net) so your e-mail address can be placed on the update list.

## **Distributing WinBiff**

You may freely distribute the WinBiff executable WINBIFF.EXE as long as the executable file is not modified in any way, and as long as the Windows Help File, WINBIFF.HLP, and this file, WINBIFF.WRI, are distributed with the executable.

## **Disclaimers**

You use WinBiff at your own risk. All warranties expressed and implied are disclaimed. Any damages resulting from the use of WinBiff shall not result in any liability.

Except for those associated with the name WinBiff, all rights associated with names mentioned in this file and in the accompanying Windows Help File, WINBIFF.HLP, are held by their respective companies.

## **Contacting the author**

E-mail correspondence concerning this program may be submitted to:

[winbiff@blimpy.ci.net](mailto:winbiff@blimpy.ci.net)

Suggestions for improvements are particularly welcome.

### ***Obtaining WinBiff updates***

The latest version of WinBiff is available via anonymous ftp as:

*ftp.cica.indiana.edu:pub/pc/win3/util/wnbffXXX.zip*

where XXX represents the version number.

Users without ftp access may request a uuencoded .ZIP file of the latest version of WinBiff by sending a message to:

*winbiff-request@blimpy.ci.net*