LOGIX SYSTEMS - GOCIS VERSION 1.01

THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What's a view? Or why not call it a group or a ...

I don't know if there is any term that is best. However, once you get used to the idea of a view it's fairly straight forward. A view is nothing more than a logical collection of forums. On your hard disk, files are grouped or organized under directories. In GoCIS forums are organized under a view. On disk, a file can only reside in one directory unless you make a copy of it in another directory. In GoCIS forums can belong to more than one view but unlike your hard disk they are not copies. The same forum can be accessed by different views. Why? Because CIS keeps online one set of statistics associated with your user id. For example, you only have one high message counter. So why have views? Well it simply lets you organize forums in a manner that makes the most sense to you regardless of how they are named or organized on CIS. For example you can create views for software forums, hardware forums, vendor forums, or forums that you access once a week, once a month, or once in a blue moon.

2. What's the point of the radio buttons VIEW or FORUM above those strange looking buttons?

The Do View or Do Forum radio buttons control the scope of the ACTIONS or MESSAGE buttons. When you bring up GoCIS it displays a list of forums within a view. When you press the ACTIONS or MESSAGE button GoCIS will attempt to perform some automated functions by logging on to CIS. The radio buttons indicate to the program if you want to perform those automated functions against a single forum or for all of the forums currently listed in the view.

3. What's the difference between the MESSAGES, ACTIONS, and MAIL Buttons?

All of these buttons perform some automated functions by logging onto CIS and executing a script.

MAIL simply logs on and read or sends mail through your personal file area on CIS. This, of course, depends on whether you have received mail or have created mail to be sent. After doing this the program logs off. No forums in the view are entered.

MESSAGES will also read and or send any outgoing mail. It then will go to each forum listed in the view (or to a single forum depending on the state of the do view/forum radio button) and read any waiting messages addressed to you, read any new messages, and/or scan for new messages in specific message sections.

The message sections that are to be read or scanned for new messages is determined by three fields you set in the FORUM/PROCESSING options screen (you can also double click on a forum to bring up this screen). There you will find three fields in a frame which contains a icon that looks suspiciouly like the icon on the message button. The message sections that you list in the read or quick scan fields will be searched for new messages. Obviously the ones specified for read will be read and the ones specified for quickscan will only retrieve headers that you intend to peruse and mark later.

ACTIONS will only perform the automated functions listed for each forum or view (again this is

based on the scope defined by the do view/forum radio button). As you select options to be performed, such as library scans, reading message thread, etc you'll note that the forum list will be updated with descriptive text such as Lib(Scan) to indicate which action needs to be scheduled and performed. The scheduled actions can be overridden using the FORUM/PROCESSING screen. In any event, the options that are checked will be performed by the program when this button is pressed.

4. What is the stuff in the GoCIS.INI file?

The **[PGM OPTIONS]** section of the GoCIS.INI contains parameters that control the behavior of GoCIS and might be useful in the event you are experiencing problems. The following describes parameters which are not controlled by the application and which may be modified using any simple text editor, such as NOTEPAD:

A set of these parameters control the communication timing routines:

CommandRecognitionTime=.25

GoCIS recognizes certain character sequences as being prompts from CIS. For example, most CIS prompts end with an exclamation mark, as in "Forum!" If the program finds a string that satisfies it's requirement for a CIS prompt, it pauses slightly to see if CIS sends more data before accepting the string as a valid CIS prompt. The CommandRecognitionTime parameter controls the length of that pause.

Why the pause you ask? Well if, for example, a message contains a character sequence that the program recognizes, then the pause should be long enough such that CIS will continue sending data within this timeout period. In version .94 this could only effect email since, when in a forum, GoCIS can further filter the prompts by the special character it sets in the Forum OPT command.

MinimumModemCharDelay=.25

Some modems cannot correctly respond to local commands if they are sent too quickly to the port. This parameter controls the delay between characters when sending commands to the modem.

MaximumModemResponseTime=10

As you might gather from the name - How long should the program wait for the modem to respond to a command.

MaximumCISResponceTime=90

How long should the program wait for CIS to respond to a command?

ErrorMessageDelay=4

If an error is detected in the script file how long should the pause be for you to review it before continuing to the next script command?

AnnimateDelay=.5

The terminal screen has an option labeled Animate. When selected the program will pause for this amount of time between each instruction. If you also specify the debug option, then each script command is displayed in the status area of the terminal screen.

LogonCisType="INT"

This is appended to your userid at logon time to indicate the terminal type to CIS. The default, if not specified, is TTY.

ForumDirectorys=0

In version .93 the default directories could be overridden at the forum level. When editing the forum there was a settings menu option that would allow you to specify overriding directories for the given forum. In case you didn't specify the overrides the program would copy the default directories to the forum defaults. Then, if you moved the GoCIS files to a new directory and deleted the old directories, you would have to change the program defaults as well as the individual forum defaults in order for GoCIS to correctly operate.

As a default<g> in .94 it is only necessary to change the program default directories. The forum level default directories are no longer examined. However for those of you who prefer the old method you can set the ForumDirectorys value to 1. and the old .93 rules will be in effect.

MsgMaxTtlLen=24
MsgMaxLine=70
MsgSplitAtLine=94
MsgSplitAtChar=2000
MsgSplitChars=0123456789*-+=_><\/{}][?#;'.,!|

MailMaxTtlLen=24
MailMaxLine=70
MailSplitAtLine=950
MailSplitAtChar=40000
MailSplitChars=0123456789*-+=_><\/{}][?#;'.,!|

These parameters control the formatting of email and messages when sending to CIS in standard format.

Messages that are sent to CIS in standard format can seem to behave strangely until you understand what is occurring.

The Message editor in GoCIS allows you to enter free form text without the concern of where lines begin or end. The text is word wrapped as you enter it. Different screen resolutions and fonts allow you to enter more text than can actually be sent in a single line to CIS. Because of this, the program needs to have some rules when actually posting the message on CIS.

MsgMaxTtlLen and MailMaxTtlLen define the maximum number of characters that may be entered as the subject of a message. As distributed these are the maximum values defined by CIS.

MsgMaxLine and MailMaxLine define the maximum line length to use on CIS. GoCIS will word wrap lines of your message to this line length when actually posting a message sent as standard.

MsgSplitAtLine and MailSplitAtLine define the maximum number of lines that can be contained in a single message. The program will split a message containing more than this number of lines into two or more messages.

MsgSplitAtChar and MailSplitAtChar define the maximum number of characters that can be contained in a single message. The program will split a message containing more than this number of characters into two or more messages.

MsgSplitChars and MailSplitChars define special characters to control when lines can be

concatenated. Basically, the program will concatenate lines until it sees a blank line. So if two or three lines appear without an intervening blank line then all of the lines are concatenated and word wrapped into lines of MsgMaxLine length.   However, when your message contains information to be presented in a columnar format, then you don't want those lines to be concatenated to the preceding lines. In this case you would want GoCIS to send each line separately. To allow for this, the program will recognize any line that begins with one of these characters as a line that should not be concatenated. In addition, the program always considers a line that begins with a blank to be a line which should not be concatenated.

Finally, you should know that when the recipient of your message reads that message from CIS it may be again reformatted by CIS. Herein lies another possible problem. The recipient's screen width as defined by CIS is based on user settings. This of course can be larger or smaller than the line length that was used to actually post the message. If it's larger, there is no problem and the format will look normal to the recipient. If the width is smaller, the message will appear a little strange to the recipient.   Here's a common scenario:

User A sends a message to User B.   The message contains 80 character lines that look something like this:

This is a long line that can contain up to 80 characters which is exactly what it doesn't.
This is a long line that can contain up to 80 characters which is exactly what it doesn't.
This is a long line that can contain up to 80 characters which is exactly what it doesn't.

User B logs on as a TTY terminal and CIS assumes that the maximum line length is 72 characters per line. When User B reads the message CIS sends it as a series of 70 character lines followed by 8 character lines. In other words the message looks strangely like this:

This is a long line that can contain up to 80 characters which is exactly what
it doesn't.
This is a long line that can contain up to 80 characters which is exactly what
it doesn't.
This is a long line that can contain up to 80 characters which is exactly what
it doesn't.

You can control your line length in CIS by adding a line to the GoCIS.TPL as described later in the document. For example, you may want to define your CIS line length as 80 while leaving your MsgMaxLine set at 70. In this way you can properly see messages sent at 80 while insuring that those who receive your messages at 72 will see them correctly. However, keep this in mind as well, in order for you to properly see 80 character lines with a fixed pitch font you must run at a high screen resolution (800X600 for example). At 640X480 windows can only display about 78 characters per line when using a fixed pitch font.

; These values are the defaults required for WinFAX Profession Version 3.0 for Windows.

FaxCheck=1
FaxStatusDDE=REQUEST|FAXMNG|CONTROL|STATUS|
FaxEnableDDE=EXECUTE|FAXMNG|CONTROL||GOACTIVE|
FaxDisableDDE=EXECUTE|FAXMNG|CONTROL||GOIDLE|
FaxActive=ACTIVE|
FaxBusy=BUSY|
FaxIdle=IDLE|REQUEST_ACTIVE|
FaxTimeOut=5
FaxBusyDelay=5

GoCIS can share a FAX modem with programs that support DDE commands such as WinFAX Pro version 3.0. Such programs allow GoCIS to establish a DDE session to acquire and release

the modem in order to perform it's online functions. GoCIS will only use the modem to perform its online functions; thereafter, it will release the modem to the fax software to allow incoming and outgoing faxes to be sent and or received. GoCIS will not interfere with a FAX in progress. Instead you will be informed that the fax is busy and be requested to try again later.

FaxCheck enables or disables checking within GoCIS for fax software that allows modem sharing via DDE conversations. If you are using WinFAX Profession Version 3.0 for Windows you should set the value of this parameter to 1. If you set the value to 1 and are not using this type of software no harm will result since GoCIS recognize that the session cannot be established.

FaxStatus, FaxEnable, and FaxDisable represent the DDE commands GoCIS must issue in order to enable, disable, or determine status from the fax software. The format of these entries is such as to allow different commands to be issued for different software. The defaults in the GoCIS.INI are those required by WinFax Pro Version 3.0.

FaxBusy, FaxIdle, FaxActive are all strings that represent different states of the fax software.

FaxTimeOut is the DDE timeout value in seconds.

FaxBusyDelay is the amount of time (in seconds) that GoCIS should wait in case the software is busy when it is requested to release the modem.

The **[WINDOW SIZING]** section of the GoCIS.INI contains parameters that control the screen fonts and size used for certain areas of the program. There are two types of entries in this area. One defines the screen size of specific panels. The screen size entries are updated each time you resize a window so that the next time you enter that panel it is displayed at that size.   The other type of entry describes the text font to be used for specific controls.   The only type of entry that can be changed are the ones that control fonts. Using these entries you can control the font displayed for the Terminal Window, Message Editor, and Forum Description.

The format of these entries are described in the GoCIS.INI file.

The **[MAIL BUTTONS]** section of the GoCIS.INI contains parameters that control the icons used by GoCIS to display the "MAIL" button under the "DO COMPUSERVE" frame of the main panel. This button changes icons based on the presence of new mail received from CIS as well as if you have created any mail to be sent. There are four possible states and hence only four entries:

NoMail=E:\VB2\ICONS\MAIL20A.ICO
Show if no mail has been received and no mail is to be sent. The DEFAULT is an empty mailbox with the flag down.

SndMail=E:\VB2\ICONS\MAIL20D.ICO
Show if no mail has been received and there is mail is to be sent. The DEFAULT is an empty mailbox with the flag up.

RcvMail=E:\VB2\ICONS\MAIL20B.ICO
Show if mail has been received but there is no mail is to be sent. The DEFAULT is a mailbox with letters and the flag down.

SndRcvMail=E:\VB2\ICONS\MAIL20C.ICO
Show if mail has been received and there is mail is to be sent. The DEFAULT is a mailbox with letters and the flag up.

5. What is this stuff in the GoCIS.TPL file?

GoCIS automates CIS online functions by interactively allowing you to define the actions that you

want to perform offline. As you specify those actions the program records them in various control blocks and files. Prior to going online it reads the actions and generates a script file of commands.   The script file that it generates is named GoCIS.SCR. The Terminal program reads the script file and executes the commands to be executed in order to honor your requests.

In order to build a script file, we could have chosen to place all of the generated commands internally in the program. Unfortunately, this means that you would have very little control in what those commands could contain. It also would mean that if CIS changed the format of it's commands we would have to change the program before you could take advantage of them.

Instead we opted to make the command structure of CIS commands external to the program and so we created a file called GoCIS.TPL. This file serves as a template of the CIS commands to be issued in order to perform online actions. In many ways is looks just like an .INI file and in fact you can modify it with a simple text editor such as Notepad. It contains a number of [sections] and within each section a number of script commands. Each action or function that you specify in GoCIS has an associated [section] within the GoCIS.TPL file. The program identifies an action, locates the appropriate section and merges parameters with the template in order to generate a script of commands. For example, in the preceding Q&A we talked about changing the CIS screen width after logging onto CompuServe. The PROLOG section contains commands that are to be generate immediately after logon to CIS. By adding a line here we can change the terminal width to say 80 characters per line as in:

[PROLOG]
...
; Wait for a prompt
WAIT !
SEND SET WIDTH 80^M

There are a lot of examples of the script commands available in GoCIS contained in the GoCIS.TPL file. So, if you are looking for a way to code your own GoCIS scripts you may want to look here. Also, you can look at the script generated as a result of performing online actions by checking the GoCIS.SCR file.

6. What is syntax of the GoCIS Script Language?

Well, the syntax is actually a superset of the TAPCIS language. This means that, if you already have a TAPCIS script, you can probably use it as is in GoCIS. However, GoCIS contains quite a few additional capabilities not found in the TAPCIS script language. Your best bet at this point is to look at the notes contained in the GoCIS.TPL file for the structure of GoCIS scripts. Otherwise, you'll have to wait for the docs.

7. (MESSAGE/SELECT) How do I look at Messages after they have disappeared?

Messages don't actually disappear in GoCIS.   GoCIS always appends messages to the FORUM.MSG file.   The problem may be in how you access those messages.   The FORUM/MESSAGE/LATEST menu item only displays the messages that were successfully downloaded from the last online access.

Since the message file is nothing more than a large text file, there needs to be a way to scan them to locate the messages that you are interested in finding.   To that end, there is a FORUM/MESSAGE/SELECT menu option that allows you to specify selection criteria in order to access the message files.

The selection screen can certainly be considered daunting.   But, it gives you quite a bit of flexibility considering that it allows you to perform wildcard searches. While bringing up a list of message titles is certainly possible, once the messages have been selected the subjects are in a

pull down list sorted within sections anyway.

The wildcard searches are similar to DOS file wildcards. For example:

> To Scan for messages containing the word "GOCIS" in the subject:
>
> > *GOCIS*
>
> To Scan for messages beginning with the word "GOCIS" in the subject:
>
> > GOCIS*
>
> To Scan for messages ending with the word "GOCIS" in the subject:
>
> > *GOCIS
>
> To Scan for messages containing G??CIS in the subject:
>
> > *G??CIS*
>
> To Scan for messages containing GOCIS or COMM or SCRIPTS in the subject:
>
> > *GOCIS*;*COMM*;*SCRIPTS*

The program must scan sequentially through the file to locate messages unless it is searching on an indexed field. Currently the only indexed field is the Date Received. Therefore, to perform the fastest searches include this field as part of the selection criteria.

Finally, the message file can contain more messages than is possible to display in it's pull down list. Therefore, the program will display at most 1000 messages at a time. If you have a need to select more than this many messages, you many need to run multiple selections.

8. (MESSAGE/PURGE) I have deleted messages but the .MSG file is still the same size.

The MESSAGE/PURGE option physically deletes records from the file. When you delete a record it is simply flagged in the .MSG file. Once deleted you cannot recall the message. However it still occupies space on disk. In order to reduce the size of the .MSG file you must occasionally purge deleted records.

Purging records consists of setting specific selection criteria and then sequentially passing the file to remove records. If you don't specify any additional selection criteria the program will only remove records that you have flagged for deletion from the message editor. If you do specify criteria, any records who meet that criteria will be deleted as well. The format of the selection criteria is the same as described above for selecting message via the MESSAGE/SELECT option.

The program always creates a .BAK file of the original input so that if a problem occurs you can rename the .BAK file and recover your messages.

9. I tried to do a library scan in forum XYZ and when GoCIS tried to enter Library 1 it got an error because the library is private; so, the program stopped and logged off CompuServe.

Most forums on CIS allow the use of library 1. However, a few do not. GoCIS attempt to reduce the number of script commands by always selecting a single library in order to perform library scans from. Since the new CIS commands allow you to specify the libraries in which you want

the scan to occur, there is no longer a need to switch libraries between catalog scans. As a default, the program always chooses library 1 from which to perform its scan.   This can be overridden in those few instances for which a sysop has opted to restrict the use of library 1. Simply edit the FORUM.INI file using a simple text editor such as NOTEPAD. This file looks and behaves just like any other Windows .INI file. Each [section] defines a forum and within a given section are parameters for a given forum. In this case, you'll need to add a parameter to the forum having a problem with library 1. Begin by locating the forum section and then add a line as follows:

[FORUMNAME]
...
...
DefaultLibrary=2

In this example we change the default library used by GoCIS for FORUMNAME to library 2. Since this is tied to a specific forum, it only affects the named forum. All other forums continue to use library 1. The order in relation to the other forum option is not important. Neither is the case in which you enter the option.