Lab 1.1 Exploring Person-to-Person Services

Lab Overview

Objectives

After completing this lab, you will be able to use Microsoft's News client to browse a Network newsgroup.

Scenario

After electronic mail (e-mail), Network news is the most popular form of person-to-person contact over the Internet. Here, the form of communication is one-to-many, with a single person's message being available to an entire newsgroup's readership. Discussions often continue over many related messages, called threads.

Lab Setup

This exercise assumes that you have Microsoft Internet Explorer installed and have Internet access. If you have not installed Internet Explorer, see Getting Connected in the Library.

To read Network news, your Internet connection provider must also provide a Network news (NNTP) service. If it does, then you must know the name of its news server; this information will be used to set up Internet Explorer in first part of this exercise.

Estimated time to complete this lab: **30 minutes**.

Warning This lab was developed with the early development version of the Microsoft Internet Mail and News clients, code-named "Athena". Changes to the product introduced after this writing may result in some of the lab directions being obsolete.

Exercise

The following exercise provides practice working with the concepts and techniques covered in this chapter.

Exercise 1: Reading Network News

In this exercise, you will set up the Microsoft News client to read Network newsgroups. Then you will browse the list of newsgroups, read several messages from the Usenet group news.newusers.questions, and post a test message to alt.test.

Exercise 1: Reading Network News

In this exercise, you will install and configure the Microsoft Internet News client to read network newsgroups. Then, you will browse the list of newsgroups, read several messages from the Usenet group news.newusers.questions, and post a test message to alt.test.

➢ Install the Microsoft Internet Mail and News clients

At the time of this writing, the Microsoft Internet Mail and News clients are contained in a separate package, code-named "Athena". If you have a more current version of Internet Explorer, it may already have these clients built-in. Search the Internet Explorer menus for a newsgroup-related command, such as Read Newsgroups. If this command brings up the newsreader, you can skip this section.

1. Read the overview for Internet Mail and News Clients in the Resources section of the Library.

2. See Internet Mail and News Clients in the Microsoft Tools section of the Library for instructions on installing from this CD.

   This lab only requires you to install the Internet News client. If you run e-mail directly through an ISP, you may also want to install the Internet Mail client. It is a faster, lighter-weight reader than the Exchange client that is built into Windows.

➤ Configure the News client to read network news

The first time you run the Internet News client, an installation Wizard will configure your newsreader. If this is not successful, manually configure the application. In either case, you must know the name of your ISP's network news server and whether it requires logon validation.
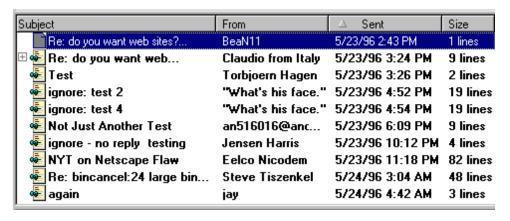
1. If it isn't already running, start the Microsoft Internet News client.

2. From the News menu, choose Options.

3. In the Options dialog, select the Server tab.

4. Verify or fill in the edit boxes with your name, organization, and email address. Also supply a reply address if it is different from your standard email address.

5. Configure your news server. If there is not an entry in the News Server(s) list box, choose the Add button. If there is an entry, select it and choose the Properties button. Verify or fill in the news server name and, if required, the user logon information.

6. When you are finished, choose OK to save the changes.

➤ View the list of supported newsgroups and enter the WWW Announcements newsgroup

Your Internet access provider determines which network newsgroups will be supported. These groups are generally selected from those available on USENET, Clarinet, Fidonet, BITNET, local news sources, and other news sources.

The Microsoft News client newsreader's primary window is divided into three panes. The top pane contains a list of messages; by default, they are sorted by time posted. The bottom pane is a quick-view pane of the currently-selected message. The left pane functions as a toolbar.

1. Click the Newsgroups button in the left pane, or choose Go To Newsgroup from the Newsgroups menu. The Go To Newsgroup dialog box will appear. There may be a slight delay while the newsreader downloads the entire list.

2. Scroll down the list until you see **news.newusers.questions**. This is the newsgroup for questions and answers for new network news users.

3. Click this entry. The newsgroups most recent list of articles appears. It will look something like this (but more recent):

Subject	From	△ Sent	Size
Re: do you want web sites?...	BeaN11	5/23/96 2:43 PM	1 lines
Re: do you want web...	Claudio from Italy	5/23/96 3:24 PM	9 lines
Test	Torbjoern Hagen	5/23/96 3:26 PM	2 lines
ignore: test 2	"What's his face."	5/23/96 4:52 PM	19 lines
ignore: test 4	"What's his face."	5/23/96 4:54 PM	19 lines
Not Just Another Test	an516016@anc...	5/23/96 6:09 PM	9 lines
ignore - no reply testing	Jensen Harris	5/23/96 10:12 PM	4 lines
NYT on Netscape Flaw	Eelco Nicodem	5/23/96 11:18 PM	82 lines
Re: bincancel:24 large bin...	Steve Tiszenkel	5/24/96 3:04 AM	48 lines
again	jay	5/24/96 4:42 AM	3 lines

➢ **Browse some of the recent postings**

1. Select the first (topmost) item. Note that a preview of the highlighted article appears in the lower pane. (If the preview pane is not showing, from the View menu, choose the Preview pane cascading menu item, then the Split Horizontally menu command.)

2. Double-click the first message. This message appears in a separate child window. Note that, like an e-mail message, the item contains a header with the sender's online name, a timestamp of the posting, newsgroups that it was posted to, and subject of the message. Briefly browse the contents of the message.

3. On the toolbar, click the down arrow button to view the next message.

4. Close the message window to return to the primary window. Note that the items you have visited are denoted by a non-bold font, indicating that they have been read.

5. Select the next message with the mouse, or use the DOWN ARROW key. Let the message remain highlighted for about a minute. Notice that the message entry is automatically changed to a non-bold font, marking it as read.

6. Using the mouse, click on the Subject column heading of the top pane. This will sort the listed messages alphabetically by subject. (Clicking this heading a second time will sort in reverse alphabetic order.) You may find it more productive to read messages by related topic.

7. Locate a message in the list with a plus sign to the left of the listing. Click on the plus sign to expand it. Note that the newly-revealed, indented message has a subject that begins with the prefix "Re:", which is an abbreviation for "Reply."

   All replies to an original message, and all subsequent replies to those replies, form a hierarchical structure represented by this tree structure in the top pane. This collection of related messages is called a *thread*.

➢ **Set properties to manage the message list**

Because the traffic on a newsgroup can be quite heavy, Internet Explorer's newsreader has a number of built-in features to help you manage the message list. Note that your news service will probably retire messages older than a certain date, according to its policies.

1. From the View menu, choose Unread Messages Only. All the read messages, denoted in a non-bold font, will be removed from the list in the top pane.

2. Select multiple unread messages in the top pane. (Range selection is performed by selecting an item, holding down the SHIFT key, and selecting another item.) Click on the Mark Message As Read toolbar button. Note that the selected items are now marked as read.

3. Again from the View menu, choose Unread Messages Only. The messages you just marked as read will also removed from the message list. To view all the messages of this newsgroup, choose All Messages from the View menu.

4. Select a another unread message. Click the Mark Topic As Read toolbar button. All the related messages in this thread will be marked as read.

   The toolbar has a third related button, labeled Mark Everything As Read. As the name implies, this marks every message currently in the newsgroup as read. Use this button to initialize a listing so that only brand new messages are shown.

➢ **Send a posting to a newsgroup.**

In this step, you will learn how to post a message, or reply to another posting. Use the newsgroup **alt.test** to post these messages; this newsgroup has purposely been set up for trial postings.

When using interactive Internet services, you should observe proper consideration for others, called *netiquette*. When you enter a new newsgroup, you should first silently read the contents of a newsgroup (*lurk*, in Internet jargon). Wait until you have something relevant to add to the group before you post messages. Unfortunately, netiquette is often violated on network newsgroups.

Before you send a message, you will change your electronic signature.

1. From the Message menu, choose Options. In the Options dialog box, select the Server property page. If you have not already done so, enter your name, organization (if applicable), and e-mail address.

   Select the Signature property page. Click the Text radio button, and type a short signature that will be appended to your messages; for example:

   ```
   - John Doe, Web Systems Analyst
   ```

   Check the box titled Add Signature To The End OF All Outgoing Messages. Choose OK to save your changes.

2. Back in the primary window, click the Newsgroups button. In the Display Newsgroups Which Contain text box, type **test**. From the subsequent list of newsgroups, select alt.test and choose Open.

3. Select a message in the upper pane and then click on the Reply To Group button in the left pane. A new message window will appear. Note that the subject line begins with the prefix "Re:", indicating this is a reply message. Also note that the body contains an automatically generated header line of the form:

   ```
   On Sunday, May 28, 1996, John Doe wrote...
   ```

   The header line is followed by the original message, where each line is indented and preceded by the right angle bracket (>) character.

4. At the top of the message, type a test line, such as:

   ```
   This is a test response to John Doe.
   ```

5. Click on the Post Message button in the far left of the reply window toolbar. You should be able to see your reply message by expanding the plus (+) sign to the left of the original message. However, depending on your service and newsreader, your message may take several minutes or hours to be posted and distributed.

6. Click the New message button in the left pane. A new message window appears. Click on the Subject line in the top pane of the window, and type the following:

   ```
   Test Message from an MID Student
   ```

7. For the body of the message, type in the lower pane:

   ```
   This is only a test...
   ```

8. Click on the Post Message button. Again, your new message should appear in the message list after a propagation delay.

   If you have properly entered your e-mail address in Step 1 above, you will also receive automatically-generated e-mail messages confirming your posts to **alt.test**. Only a few newsgroups perform this confirmation function.

➢ **If time permits, browse other interesting newsgroups**

The following is a list of network newsgroups that you may find informative.

- **news.announce.newusers** - Information for new users to network news
- **comp.infosystems.www.announce** - Announcements and information on WWW products and technologies
- **comp.infosystems.www.authoring.html** - Discussion of HTML authoring techniques
- **comp.internet.net-happenings** - News of the Internet community
- **comp.lang.basic.visual.basic** - Discussion of Microsoft Visual Basic techniques

Also, look at the many groups beginning with **ms.prog** or containing the strings **windows** or **microsoft** for information about Microsoft products, technologies, and application development.