Remote Echo Control (REC)
Version 2.00

Revision History

Below is the list of the important changes in REC development. This information is intended for those that are upgrading from a previous version of REC, and indicates what sections of the Sysop's documentation you should refer to when planning the upgrade.

2.00
Improved security flexibility
Direct support for multiple mail processors
New batch commands added
Rescan list added
LockIn feature added

Overview

Caution!! This release is a major change in nearly every area of REC's processing. It is NOT a plug-and-go update. You will have to make changes to your control file before REC will operate correctly.

The syntax of the configuration file has been expanded.   Instead of separating all fields on a line by commas, you can separate them with one or more spaces.   Do not use both spaces and commas, or any TAB characters. See the SAMPLE.CFG file for an example.

The ENTIRE security scheme of REC has been totally REDESIGNED. You will need to read the Security section of the doc's for more details. The new format is both easier and more flexible.

REC now directly supports 5 different mail processors: ZmailH 1.25, Qecho, ZmailH 2.00, Squish 1.0, and Qmail.

BUGS FIXED

An incompatibility between my compiler and Netware caused REC to believe that any network directories didn't exist. I have changed the routine that was suffering from the incompatibility, and REC will now recognize Novell Netware directories.

In some cases, REC would repeated add Zmail flavor codes to each node receiving an echo. This problem has been fixed.

REC will only process net-mail messages that have a number in the 8-character part of the file name. Any non-numeric character will cause REC to not recognize the file as a net-mail message.

CONFIGURATION

Passthrough, PrivateNet, and MsgBaseStyle configuration statements removed. They have been replaced by the new MailProcessor statement. This statement allows REC to work with 5 different mail processors. See the Operation section for more details.

MsgDisposition statement renamed to MsgDisp. The possible dispositions have also changed to be Kill, Keep, Copy, and Move. "Move" will put the message in the specified holding directory. "Copy" will do both the "Keep" and "Move" functions. The messages placed in to the holding directories will have the extension of .MSG.

CrossZone statement replace by Gateway statement, which should rarely be needed except by true gateway systems due to the new security scheme.

SortName and SortBoard have been replaced by a single Sort statement which has greater flexibility.

EchoHub, EchoNode, and Lockout statement have been modified for the new security scheme.

LockIn, DefaultSecurity, and EchoSource statements added to support the new security scheme.

AutoCancelDelay statement added to allow cleanup of echos from systems that have a turnaround time of over 1 day, such as long distance systems.

WorkDir statement added to specify an alternate directory for REC's temporary files, such as sort-work files. Ideally you should use this to point to a VDISK drive for fastest operation.

LogFile statement added to allow you to specify an alternate LogFile path and name.

ForceForward statement added to allow forwarding of requests to your echos hub when you do not have a valid echo list for that hub. This is a last resort statement, and it is HIGHLY recommended that you use valid echo lists if you allow your downlinks to get echos from different sources.

Rescan support has been added to REC in two different flavors. The List mode will generate a list of echo tags that are to be rescanned. The command mode, designed for Squish users, will create a batch file with the necessary command lines to rescan echos for the desired node and tag combinations.

The SquishFlags statement will allow you to put flags on an echo area when certain addresses are added to that echo area or REC creates the echo area. This is intended for the " -P<address>" and "-X<node>" flags but can be used for any flag you wish.

The EuroDate config statement has been added, which will alter the format of the date portion of REC's log entries. The date will appear in the standard European format instead of the default American format. This will have no affect on the date field of the messages that REC's creates as the data format is a FTSC requirement.

As well as using the AutoStart statement to automatically add new echos from your Echo Hubs, you also can automatically pass these new echos on to your own downlinks. Read the Sysop doc's for details.

The NotifyOptions will allow the placement of additional security information and echo-tag descriptions on the notify reports.

The ReportOptions statement will allow the adding of echo descriptions to the Active, Available, and Forwardable reports.

The ExemptCleanup statement will permit an automatic echo-hub to be excluded for any automatic cleanup of dead-end echos.

MsgAttr statement controls the attributes placed on REC generated messages.

The Location statement has been added, and is a required statement.

CleanUpDelay statement added to give specific echo-hubs more than one day between the stopping and dropping of dead-end echos.

The MsgSize statement specifies the approximate limit of a message before it will be continued on to the next message. The default is 10,000 bytes.

Wildcard echo-tags can now be applied to LockIn, LockOut, and EchoSecure configuration statements.

OPERATION

     Parameters

     A /O (alpha "O", not zero) parameter will force the echo control
file to be completely resorted. This is not intended for regular use,
but just occasional use in such situations as significant manual
changes to the ECF.

     A /V parameter will create a REC_DUMP.RPT in the   RECDIR
directory. This report is designed to help resolve any security
questions or problems, as well as verify that REC is interpreting the
echo control file properly. It is described in the Security section
of the sysop doc's.

     Batch Mode

     Create batch command has a completely different syntax to allow
use with multiple mail processors. Read the sysop doc's for more
information.

     Feed batch command has been dropped since it no longer serves any
purpose.

     3 new batch commands added: Unlink, Change, and Relink. Read the
sysop doc's for more information.

     Processing

     A completely new security scheme is employed with this version.
Instead of security levels, REC uses a series of flags to indicate
which echos a node is allowed to obtain. Echos are assigned security
flags at either the EchoList or EchoHub levels, with additional
security being assigned by the EchoSecure statement. The entire crux
of the new security scheme is determining the true source of an echo.
There are several different levels of complexity that can be used.

The security section in the sysop doc's describes this process in great detail.

REC now allows for multiple echo lists to be assigned to a single echo-hub. Each list is an independent entity and can have it's own security assignment. Local echo-lists can also be defined for those systems that are the "top-star" in an echos distribution (ZEC, REC, NEC systems). The format of the file hasn't changed, but how REC uses it has changed. WARNING - Each echo-list filename must be unique, regardless of the path or extension.

Minor changes in the result messages for both the sysop and the user.

The ReAddress statement will now check EVERY part of the incoming address, and you will have to account for that on the ReAddress statement. In many cases, a net-mail will come with a no INTL statement, and thus not have a zone specified. REC will consider this zone 0 for the purposes of the ReAddress statement.

The Forwardable report now indicates which echos are available immediately, already active, or are sourced from the address receiving the report.

REC will sets the RECV bit on any message that it processes when the message disposition is set to "Keep" or "Copy". In the case of the "Copy" disposition, only the message in the net-mail directory has the RECV bit set. The message placed in the holding directory does not. The RECV bit is checked when the message is loaded, and the message will not be processed if this bit is set.

The Exit Errorlevels have been slightly changed.

There is a "Help" text file that is sent to a user upon request. This basic text file can be fully edited. It is sent upon the receipt of a "-H" subject-line parameter, or the message commands ":HELP" or "%HELP". This is the ONLY "%" command implemented at this time.

The INTL kludge line is put on any message that is going to or coming from an address which has a zone other than 0.

Leading and trailing spaces are ignored on the message's to and from names as well as the subject lines. They are also ignored in the message text. Multiple echos or commands can be placed on a single line in the text of the message.

Sorting of the downlinks and echo-tags has been optimized significantly. It will also only occur when necessary instead of anytime there is a change.

The ECF and Echo-lists files are only read when needed. If REC does not detect any processing to be done, it will not read the files.

REGISTRATION

The registration process for REC has been automated to a great degree. Instead of filling in a form and net-mailing it back to me, you can just run the REGISTER program that is in the distribution archive. You should read the REGISTER.PRN file for full details on how this program will work.

In order to recognize my registered users, REC now has a config statement called RegstrationKey.   THIS STATEMENT DOES _NOT_ ALTER REC'S OPERATION IN ANY WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM.   NO EXTRA FEATURES ARE ACTIVATED WHEN THIS FIELD HAS BEEN COMPLETED.   However, with the registration confirmation message you will received will be a registration number. You put this number in to REC's config file and the tear line on all messages that REC's creates will change from "Eval" to "Reg". Read the REGISTER.PRN file for more information.

I have discovered that people will steal something that doesn't cost anything. To prevent people from forging registration keys, the entire key generation routine has been completely changed. Refer to the REGISTRATION.PRN file for instructions on how to obtain a new registration key.   The list of currently registered users still appears as part of the REGISTER.PRN file.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The support echo REC_SUPPORT is now available on the FidoNet, MetroNet, and MXBBSNet echo backbones.   As such this echo is considered the primary means of technical support. Routed net-mail will still be used to send reply messages to net-mail queries for FidoNet. Replies to all other networks will be placed on hold.

UTILITY PROGRAMS

        The AreaList and AreaRpt program have the same mail processor
interface as REC. Run the programs without any parameters to see the
new syntax.

        End of document.