ProChat

Version 0.7 BETA

Please not that although ProChat is Beta software this manual is Alpha - as in its very rough and unfinished. This will change very shortly.

1.0 What is ProChat?

There is a world out there with hundreds of thousands of residents all talking about topics ranging from the mundane to the bizarre. Its called Internet Relay Chat and it the first and the biggest chat network there is. ProChat is the Pocket PC software that will allow you to enter this world and talk on it with whoever you want, whenever you want.

1.1 How Internet Relay Chat Works

We suggest you read the following sections if you are not familiar with IRC, otherwise just jump ahead to section 2.

Servers

The world of IRC is divided into different servers, these are like individual regions of the entire network. You can talk to anyone who is on the same server as you. The most common two servers are Undernet and Dalnet but there are thousands of servers for which specialise on more focussed topics, such as OZ.org and USAChat.

ProChat comes with a list of the most common servers so you can join them easily, or if you want to you can easily add the server details from any server you choose.

Channels or Rooms

Each Server contains hundreds or even thousands of rooms (many people also call them "channels") that are where people interested in a certain topic will hang out to chat. So if you are interested in Philosophy you might go to the Philosophy room, if you are in London you might go to the London room. You get the idea.

One of the central areas of the network is the Room List. This is a list of all of the currently live rooms on the server you are on. Once you have the room list you can join the different rooms and generally navigate your way around the network. The room list may contain thousands of rooms so most IRC

software, including ProChat, allows you to filter the list to your needs. For example you may only want rooms that are related to "bikes".

Once you are in a room you will see a list of people who are currently in that room chatting. You can send messages to the room, read messages sent to the room by others or you can start private chats with members of the room (You can start private chats with anyone on the server, being to find them you will generally need to go to the rooms)

Your Nickname

The IRC network identifies its chatters by their nickname. You can choose pretty much any nickname (though some servers have some restrictions) so long as it is unique. We don't recommend using your full name or email address.

2.0 Using ProChat

It has only been recently that an application like ProChat has been possible due to communications advances and the advances ion handheld technology. ProChat is intended to be used on a PocketPC with a connection to the internet. If you can get other application, such as Pocket Outlook or Internet Explorer to connect then there is no reason why you should not be able to get ProChat to connect.

Note: Many users will be on a GPRS or equivalent connection that charges by the amount of data sent and received. ProChat and IRC is very economical in this respect.

2.1 The ProChat Interface

ProChat uses a Tab Based interface as this is the best was to squeeze as much into the small screen of the Pocket PC. The four tabs are:

2.11 Status Tab

In most cases you won't need to look at the status window too often. It displays messages from the IRC server to you.

2.12 List Tab

This is where the room or channel list is displayed. The room lists displays the room name, the number of users currently in that room as well as a description of the room.

In order to display the list you will need to either download it from the server or, if you have already downloaded it in a previous session you can reload that list.

Downloading The List

The channel list for the popular servers can contain thousands of rooms and even on cable connection can take a while to download. Because of this we recommend that you download the list with your Pocket PC connected to your PC.

Note: ProChat uses the same format for its channel list as MIRC from (www.mirc.com) so if you want you can copy that channel list onto your Pocket PC and use that.

Reloading This List

Once a list has been downloaded it is automatically saved on your Pocket PC with the name server.txt. So if you download the list for Dalnet then "dalnet.txt" will be saved. You can then load Dalnet.txt just by selecting it from the dropdown.

Filtering the List

On the big servers like Dalnet and Undernet you are really going to want to filter the list for rooms that interest you. Once a list has been loaded click on the Filter button to setup a filter. The options are:

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- **Match Text:** Here you enter the text you want to filter for. So if you only want to see rooms related to sport and love then you would enter "sport love" in this box.
- **In Topic only:** Tick this checkbox if you only want to filter by text in the descriptive topic that most rooms have. The default and recommended settings is to leave this un ticked.
- **Minumum/Maximum Users:** You can set the minimum and maximum users with these two boxes.

- **Hide Channels:** If you want to filter channels out depending on their content then you can enter key words in this text box. For example you may not be interested in any channels about sport and love.

2.13 Rooms Tab

This tab contains the interface for all of the rooms you are currently a member of. You will be able to see who is in the room, talk to the room and such like all from this tab.

The tab is divided into three panels, each of which can be resized by dragging the borders.

The Bottom Panel

The bottom panel is the current room list. This is a list of all of the rooms that you are currently participating in. Each room in this panel has its name displayed, then the number of users in the room. Next is a display of how many messages have been sent to this room which you have not read. Finally each room has a red exit cross which will allow you to leave that room.

Note: ProChat, in this alpha version, automatically joins a room called ProChat when you connect. This is all part of our testing strategy. Don't be offended if one of the developers starts chatting with you☺

If there is more than one room that you are in then the highlighted room name is the currently active room – which means that it is the one being displayed in the top two panels.

The Left Panel

The leftmost panel displays the public text of the currently selected room (That's the one highlighted in the bottom panel). You can send messages into the room by writing them in the text box at the bottom of the screen. Its as simple as that.

The Right Panel

The rightmost panel displays a list of all of the chatters in the currently selected room. You can see who is here and chatting.

By double clicking on a users name you can then start a private chat with them, as described in the next section.

2.14 Chats Tab

This tab has the details for all of the private chats you are currently in. In its layout and function it is very similar to the Rooms Tab, except instead of managing Rooms it manages one-on-one private chats.

2.15 Tap And Hold

ProChat makes use of the PPC feature, Tap and Hold. For example, by tapping on a users name you can get information about them, a Who IS, or put them on your Ignore and Notify list.

2.2 The Toolbar

At the bottom of the screen is the toolbar which contains icons for the various features you will need or can use.

2.21 Connect/ Disconnect

This icon, will connect you to the current server (as setup in connection options) or disconnect you if you are already connected.

2.22 Options/Tools

This icon opens a menu from where you can change all of the options needed to use ProChat.

Setup Server

In order to chat on IRC you need to select a server to connect to.

We have provided a list of the common general servers, simply select one from the drop down and you should be able to connect. If you cannot then try another server. In non-alpha versions of ProChat the server list will be more extensive.

Note: Older Pocket PC devices, such as the Journada will have to use the IP address directly. We have included some of these for these users.

Setup User

This is where you setup your details as they will be seen by the servers and other users. All information entered here will be visible to all users:

- NickName: This is your unique nickname that will identify you to other chatters and the server itself.
- Alternative: This is an alternative nickname that will be used if your nickname is already taken.
- Full Name: This is where your name should go. But we recommend you put other text here, perhaps a description of yourself and your interests.
- Email Address: This is where your email should go. But we recommend you put other text here, perhaps a description of yourself and your interests.

Display options

Here you can choose the font and font-size for the displays. There is also an option, Line Space, check this if you want ProChat to insert blank lines between messages - this makes them easier to read but is less space-efficient.

Timer/Counter

ProChat has a session timer and a counter of the amount of data that has been sent and received – the idea being you can monitor usage in cases where you pay for calls by the amount of data.

We should warn you that the data counter varies in accuracy between different set-ups so don't rely on it just yet. We do intend to make it more accurate.

2.23 Predefined Messages and lists.

Predefined Messages

The messages feature of ProChat is used to allow you to store messages you commonly use so that they can be quickly "pasted" into a chat or room. We have provided a few sample messages but you can add, edit and delete these

messages either from ProChat or you can edit the text file directly (It is found in "Program Files/ProChat" on your Pocket PC)

Ignore List

An ignore list is a group of nicknames, which you define, such that any messages from them to you will be ignored. You can add someone to your ignore list by using the Tap and Hold feature on their nickname or directly from the ignore list menu.

Notify List

A Notify list is a group of nicknames, which you define, such that you will be alerted when that nickname is online. The notify list is essential if you want to keep in touch with someone on IRC.

2.24 Favourite Channels

Many users of IRC have a list of favourite channels and that is all they chat on. So they don't use the Room List at all.

If you want to use favourites then just click on the icon and then select "Edit". From here you can add, edit or delete favourite channels/

To join one of your favourite channels just select the icon and then the channel name from the menu.

2.25 Exit

This icon will allow you to exit ProChat and disconnect from the IRC server. Note that it will not disconnect the internet connection itself.

Thank you for testing this Alpha version of ProChat. Normally we do all of the alpha testing in house but this is an ambitious project and we need your help. If you have any comments or criticisms or any suggestions then please email them to prochat@proporta.com.