

MacLayers 1.30 Frequently Asked Questions

Update: May 7, 1993

This file contains answers to frequently asked MacLayers questions as well as discussion of often-requested new features. Please take the time read through it before emailing us. MacLayers is a freeware project, mostly the work of one person. We would like people to find it useful, but we have limited time to devote to support. We'd love to hear from you, but answering emailed questions that are addressed in the documentation is not an efficient use of available time.

List of Questions

- How do I get help with MacLayers, report bugs, or make suggestions?
- Where can I get the latest version of MacLayers?
- How do I save my communications settings?
- Can I use 1.20 settings, or earlier, with 1.30? (No).
- Can you help me compile layers on my machine?
- Is there a version of MacLayers for systems other than the Macintosh?
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- Why do I get the message "encode request not received"?
- What is VI mode, and how do I get rid of it?
- Why doesn't "TypeIt4Me" (and some other utilities that provide macro facilities) work?
- Why is downloading slow under System 7?
- Why doesn't emacs mouse support work?

Often Requested New Features

- Communications toolbox support.
- File uploading.
- zmodem (or some sort of faster file transfer).
- File transfers that work with 7 bit communications.
- Automatically create, size, and place windows upon protocol start.
- Allow reconnection to windows after a disconnect.
- Keyboard macros.
- Scripting.
- Tektronix graphics emulation.
- Support for non-USA keyboards.
- Use an error correcting protocol.
- Automatically limit the length of the scroll back text.

- Clear scroll back text on exit.
- Support multiple phone numbers in one setting file.
- Support for non-Hayes compatible modems.
- Save the download folder in the settings file.
- Improved terminal emulation.

Questions

- How do I get help with MacLayers, report bugs, or make suggestions?

First, read this document. The issue may be addressed. Better yet, read all the documents! Second, you might want to see if there are other MacLayers users at your site. They may be able to help you better than we can since they will have site-specific knowledge. If none of these approaches work, then send e-mail to layers-reply@rascal.ics.utexas.edu.

- Where can I get the latest version of MacLayers?

The authoritative site for MacLayers is rascal.ics.utexas.edu (128.83.138.20). This is an anonymous FTP Internet site. Whatever is on rascal is the latest official release. If you have trouble transferring rascal _bin files, look in its readme directory for hints. If you do not know what "FTP" is you probably cannot access rascal.

Rascal does not have a mail server and we are reluctant to manually e-mail MacLayers to people. However, there are internet sites that will accept email requests for FTP services. We do not know much about this. Try reading the USENET newsgroups news.answers and news.announce.newusers. (Please don't ask us. We don't know.) We will try to keep MacLayers on the archive site mac.archive.umich.edu which does have a mail server.

- How do I save my communications settings?

First run MacLayers by double clicking on the MacLayers icon. Change the settings to what you want by manipulating the various dialog boxes: Communication, Preferences, Terminal, Phone Settings, etc Select "Save" or "Save As" from the File menu and save your settings into a file. When you run MacLayers by double clicking on this new file in the Finder, it will use the settings you saved in it. When not in layers mode, you can open a layer (with its settings) using "Open" in the File menu.

- Can I use 1.20 (or earlier) settings, or earlier, with 1.30?

You cannot. You will have to rebuild your settings files. Sorry!

- Can you help me compile layers on my machine?

In general, no. Beginning with v1.30, the UNIX side of MacLayers compiles on the most popular BSD, SVR4, and System V platforms. Examine the makefile included with the UNIX side; These are the only machines we are able to support at this time, but you may be able to figure out what flags to define by examining the layers.c file.

If you are able to compile MacLayers on a system not listed in the makefile, please let us know.

If you have ported MacLayers to a system not listed in the makefile, please let us know.

- Is there a version of MacLayers for systems other than the Macintosh (e.g. Windows, Next, X-windows...)?

There are no MacLayers client programs for systems other than Macintoshes. Ports would be difficult, and we have no plans to do any.

There is a Macintosh program called "uw" (for Unix Windows) that is similar to MacLayers. We have been told that uw clients have been ported to DOS, Windows, and AmigaDOS. Here are some FTP sites to try for uw. The beta of the latest Windows version also supports ZModem downloads.

uw 4.2 (the server) with the Macintosh "client" can be found at wuarchive.wustl.edu, as /mirrors/unix-x/macintosh/uw42.tar-z; three different client programs (for Mac, DOS and Windows) can be found at pc.usl.edu in the /pub/unix/uw directory; the server alone can be found at ftp.cica.indiana.edu as /pub/win3/util/uwserver.zip (or something like that).

There is also another program called Mutex (completely separate from uw) which only has a DOS "client". The version at wuarchive.wustl.edu:/mirrors/msdos/modem/mutex102.zip only supports two windows and no downloads, but apparently the registered version (Mutex is shareware) will allow up to 32 windows (I think) and YModem downloads.

Thanks to Ngo Bach Long for the uw update and the information on Mutex.

There is also a very interesting Amiga system called D-Net. I have no idea where to get it.

Finally, SLIP, PPP, or both are available for many systems including Macs. These allow telnet, ftp, and other TCP/IP protocol programs to communicate over serial lines. You better have a fast modem or connection since overheads are high.

- Why doesn't downloading work for me?

Possibly because you are using 7-bit communications. The modified XMODEM file

transfer protocol used by MacLayers requires an 8-bit data link. If you are dialing in via some sort of modem switch, you should check to be sure that all escape characters are disabled. Talk to your system administrator about this.

Also, be sure that you use the macbput distributed with 1.30.

Xmodem-based programs other than macbput will not work.

There is a long discussion of downloading in the MacLayers manual; see the chapter entitled "File Transfer".

- Why do I see funny characters when I start the layers protocol?

Possibly because you are using inconsistent versions of MacLayers and layers. Compare the version number in the about box with the result of `layers -v`. Version 1.10 of layers works with MacLayers version 1.30, but .layersrc features will not be available, and it is recommended that you use version 1.30.

- Is the source to MacLayers available?

The UNIX-end source code is distributed with MacLayers. Compiling it is part of the installation process.

The MacLayers Macintosh source is not available.

- Why do I get the message "encode request not received" when I try to start the layers protocol?

Your communications parameters (especially parity and word size) may not be agree with your actual connection. Check this first.

You may also not be running a recent version of the MacLayers UNIX side. Be sure you are using version 1.30 of MacLayers and version 1.30 of layers.

- What is VI mode, and how do I get rid of it?

VI mode is an heuristic attempt to disallow window resizing when programs that cannot handle it (such as some versions of the editor vi) are running. If "vi" appears in the lower right corner of a window, you are in vi mode. You should get out of it when you hit a carriage return after exiting a screen-oriented program. Also, you can override the heuristic and resize a window at any time by holding down the shift and option keys.

We are already aware that many people believe that vi mode should be removed from MacLayers.

- Why doesn't "TypeIt4Me" (and some other utilities that provide macro facilities)

work?

These utilities don't work because they make invalid assumptions about how MacLayers reacts to keyboard input.

Under System 7, you can avoid the problem by turning off "Local KCHR Translation" in the Terminal dialog under the Control menu. Make certain, however, that you have installed the MacLayers Keyboard in your System file (simply drag it onto the System folder); otherwise you will lose most MacLayers keyboard translation capabilities (such as meta-key support, remapping Control to [option] or [command], etc ...).

The authors of these incompatible utilities should fix them so that they work with applications (like MacLayers and NCSA Telnet) that perform local translation of keystrokes using a private KCHR resource, as documented in Inside Macintosh V.

- Why is downloading slow under System 7?

Downloading is much slower under System 7 than it is under System 6. We are not sure why. A major overhaul of MacLayers file transfer is a high priority item that is being worked on.

- Why doesn't emacs mouse support work?

You must select "emacs cursor position" in the terminal settings dialog, and you must "load-file" macmouse.el in gnu emacs. Explicit directions are given earlier in this documentation.

Discussion of Often-Requested New Features

What follows is a list of features that have been requested to be added to MacLayers. At this time, we do not know which we will implement or in which order we will implement them. These ideas are mentioned here so that you do not have to write in and suggest them!

- Improve terminal emulation.

This is considered a high priority item. Currently, work is focusing in this area.

- Communications toolbox support.

We are undecided. The connection tools would be useful, but the details of using the file transfer and multiple terminal tools over MacLayers' multiplexed link are complex.

- File uploading.

This is a high priority and should appear in a new release of MacLayers in the near future.

- zmodem (or some sort of faster file transfer).

We agree that it would be very nice, but no promises. It is not clear that a streaming protocol like zmodem can easily be "attached" to the layers protocol without reducing the responsiveness of interactive windows. Perhaps other approaches to speeding up transfers are more appropriate.

Like file uploading, this is considered a high priority item and improvements are underway.

- File transfers that work with 7 bit communications.

We agree that it would be nice, but no promises.

- Automatically create, size, and place windows upon protocol start.

Beginning with v1.30 of MacLayers, this is a reality. See the sample .layersrc file included with the UNIX side.

- Allow reconnection to windows after a disconnect.

This would require some significant improvements to the protocol. It's being considered, but is considered a lower-priority item than improving terminal emulation and file transfer.

- Keyboard macros.

Some simple macro facility will probably appear soon. For now, use something like MacroMaker or QuickKeys.

- Scripting.

We are undecided. For automatic login now, try DialScript (anonymous ftp to rascal.ics.utexas.edu).

- Tektronix graphics emulation.

We are undecided. This might appear as a result of improvements to the existing terminal emulation capabilities in a future version.

- Support for non-USA keyboards.

This would clearly be good, but we cannot promise anything. We are unfamiliar with the

details of foreign keyboards and have no way to test enhancements ourselves.

- Use an error correcting protocol (Only file transfer is error-checked now).

Unlikely. An idea whose time has passed. Buy error-correcting modems (i.e. v.42bis).

- Automatically limit the length of the scroll back text.

We are undecided. This is a low priority item.

- Clear scroll back text on exit.

Beginning with v1.30, this can be accomplished by not saving logfiles. Examine the "Preferences" dialog box under the Control menu.

- Support multiple phone numbers in one setting file.

Each settings file should be associated with one host (phone number). If you have multiple phone numbers for the same host, we suggest using multiple setting files.

Support for queue-dialing based on multiple setting files might happen, but it is considered a low priority item.

- Support for non-Hayes compatible modems.

Very unlikely.

- Save the download folder in the settings file.

Beginning with v1.30, this is a feature.