

PCB Freedom version 1.50

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What is PCB Freedom ?

PCB Freedom v.1.50 is a mail server, for handling and managing mail packets from multiple bulletin boards. I deal with mail packets on several bulletin board systems, and wanted a script which would allow me to upload REP files and download QWK files from all of the systems I deal with, as automatically as possible.

The result is PCB Freedom. It will manage mail on any PCBoard system running a Qmail, Cam-Mail, MarkMail, Kmail or Rosemail mail door, or on a WildCat system running a TomCat mail door. It will automatically upload any REP file, and delete it for you after a successful upload (so that you don't try to upload the same messages later), and, if so requested, will download a new QWK, storing it in a selected directory after it is downloaded, renaming it in the process to one of two different renaming schemes.

Version 1.50 adds the ability to create a download list of files while offline, consisting of up to 10 files per system. When Freedom does the next mail run on that system, it will automatically get the files listed for that system, along with managing the mail on it.

Thus, the name Freedom, since I hope that it will free a user from dealing directly (at least, 90% or more of the time) with systems set up under it.

Support and questions :

Technical support is available at no charge by sending electronic mail to 72537,552 on CompuServe, or to Gregg Hommel on various e-mail nets (Intelec, RIME, ILink) in the ProComm conferences or Window conferences, or by sending regular Mail to :

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I am also available by phone irregularly at (519) 745-9717 (mostly evenings).

This same phone number, from 11:30 PM to 6 AM, Eastern Time, will give you access to my BBS. This is set up using another script application which I wrote with Toby Simkin, called GHOST BBS (v.2.00). This is a freeware replacement for the Datastorm provided Host script, with many features, enhancements and improvements (at least, in my opinion <G>). I offer support for both PCB Freedom and GHOST BBS here, and the latest release files and updates for both are always available here first.

Registered users have priority for support but I will try to answer all questions from everyone.

System Requirements :

- Windows 3.0 or Windows 3.1, with ProComm Plus for Windows 1.00 or 1.01. The preferable requirements are Windows 3.1 and ProComm Plus for Windows 1.01. PCB Freedom also requires VGA (640x480) resolution or better to run.

Operational requirements :

PCB Freedom files contained in FREEDM15.ZIP are:

- README.1ST introductory notes
- README.NEW information for new users
- README.UPD quick installation information for upgraders
- HISTORY.TXT version history information for Freedom
- LICENSE.WRI License Agreement
- FREEDOM.WRI documentation for installation, registration and operation (this file)
- LICENSE.TXT plain ASCII text version of LICENSE.WRI
- FREEDOM.TXT plain ASCII text version of FREEDOM.WRI (this file)
- FREEDOM.WAX the compiled main script file
- FREEDOMR.WAX a compiled support script
- FREEDOMD.WAX a compiled support script
- FREEDOM.NIL an icon library file needed for the toolbar
- FREEDOM.ICO a single icon to be used as the desktop icon.
- FREEDMxx.HLP help files used in various dialogs. The xx is a number which Freedom uses to find the help file.

PCB Freedom files contained in FREE15UP.ZIP are:

- README.UPD quick installation information for upgraders
- HISTORY.TXT version history information for Freedom
- LICENSE.WRI License Agreement
- FREEDOM.WRI documentation for installation, registration and operation (this file)
- LICENSE.TXT plain ASCII text version of LICENSE.WRI
- FREEDOM.TXT plain ASCII text version of FREEDOM.WRI (this file)
- FREEDOM.WAX the compiled main script file
- FREEDOMR.WAX a compiled support script
- FREEDOMD.WAX a compiled support script
- FREEDM0.HLP a replacement for the version 1.xx main help file

PCB Freedom related files created and maintained after installation :

- FREEDOM.INI a private INI file stored in the default ASPECT subdirectory
- FREEDOM.CFG a configuration file listing all systems currently set up for operation under PCB Freedom
- FREEDIAL.CFG a configuration file listing those systems currently set up to be dialed by PCB Freedom
- FREEDOM.DNL used to store the download file lists.

These first "created" file (the INI) will be found in the same directory where you install and run PCB Freedom from (i.e. in most cases, the default \PROWIN\ASPECT subdirectory). This file, and the two CFG files (which will be created in your defined support directory) are critical to correct operation of PCB Freedom, and should never be deleted or edited manually. The files are maintained by PCB Freedom as necessary, and manual editing should not be necessary.

The fourth file will be created and saved in the directory which you have defined (during set up) as the support file directory. This file (DNL) is an "INI" formatted file, and is used to store the names of files to be downloaded from each system. It should never need to be edited manually, as it is maintained by Freedom.

There is another file that is temporary, being in existence only during the current "session" of PCB Freedom. This is the file, FREEDOM.LOG, also found in the defined support directory. It is a log of the on line activity during the current "session" and is deleted at the end of that session, however, since as it stands now, with timed dials, etc., a "session" might last for days, you just may notice the file. If you do, please don't delete it, or try to manually edit it.

A note about WildCat/TomCat systems :

On some WildCat/TomCat systems, there are two "quick" log in features available at the sysop's discretion. These are "codes" which precede your name, and force WildCat to quickly go to corresponding areas. These two codes are the characters, " * " and " ! " preceding a user ID. PCB Freedom will work with the first of these (" * ", i.e. *Gregg Hommel), which is the equivalent of the "N Q NS" command in PCBoard, and skips the news and other log in files, going directly to the main menu. The other code (" ! ", i.e. !Gregg Hommel), goes directly to the TomCat menu, bypassing all WildCat menus,

and will NOT work with PCB Freedom, since Freedom must "see" the main menu in WildCat in order to set certain flags allowing it to continue.

In addition, PCB Freedom will operate best if you set your user settings on a WildCat system to an EXPERT Help level, and set the default WildCat "hot keys" off (this is necessary, since Freedom sends a return with each response. If hot keys are left on, the entire sequence of commands sent to the WC! system will be unrecognizable to it). More problems have resulted from not configuring a WildCat system to EXPERT help, and hot keys off, than from any other single cause.

Installation :

(for updates of Freedom 1.00 installations, please see the file README.UPD)

Installation of PCB Freedom 1.50 is as simple as I could make it.

- 1) The first step is to simply copy the compiled script file, FREEDOM.WAX, and the two icon files, FREEDOM.NIL and FREEDOM.ICO, to your ProComm for Windows Aspect subdirectory. FREEDOM.ICO may optionally be placed in the support directory, if you have chosen to use one.
- 2) If you intend to use a separate directory for the Freedom supportfiles, copy all of the FREEDMxx.HLP files into that directory.
- 3) After you have copied the files to the appropriate directories, I would recommend setting up an icon for PCB Freedom on your desktop. You could put this in your Datastorm group, or Accessories, or wherever you'd like. NDW users can place it right on their desktop. To do this, select File...New from the Program Manager menu (NDW users, from the main NDW menu), or simply "drag" the FREEDOM.ICO file from File Manager to your desktop.
- 4) Once the icon is on your desktop, you will need to set it up properly to run PCB Freedom. To do this, select File... Properties from the Program Manager menu. In the first box, labeled "Description", type in something like "PCB Freedom". Then, in the "Command line" box type "C:\PROWIN\PW.EXE FREEDOM.WAX", replacing the "C:\PROWIN" with whatever is appropriate for your system. Then click on OK, so that Program Manager will save the information. This should result in a PCB Freedom icon on your desktop.
- 5) Double click on the PCB Freedom icon. This should start ProComm for Windows, with PCB Freedom running on top of it. You should be able to tell that Freedom is running because it will replace the ProComm icon bar with it's tool bar, and change the window title to "PCB Freedom 1.50".
- 6) The first thing that will happen when PCB Freedom loads, is that it will scan your system for various files it requires to run. There are three of them, an INI file in your \PROWIN\ASPECT subdirectory, and two CFG files in your support directory.. If Freedom cannot find these, it assumes that you are a new user, and will create them with the correct default data.
- 7) Freedom needs to know certain default directory information, and will now ask you for it. Here you can set up the default directories for your REP storage, QW? storage, and so on.
- 8) Next, Freedom will bring up a dialog box which will ask you for certain information, such as your birthday, etc. This information is stored in the INI file, in case a WildCat system which you use requires any of it for validation. WildCat systems will, on occassion, ask for the city you are calling from, your voice telephone number, your birthdate, or your mother's maiden name. To take care of answering these validation requests, PCB Freedom will ask you for the data via this dialog box, and then store it in it's INI file for future reference.
- 9) As a last bit of "information", Freedom will ask if you would like to register your copy. If you are evaluating the software, simply answer no to this dialog. You can always enter any registration information (your name and number) later via the HELP screen (if Freedom is not registered, it has a button labelled "Register" that you can use.) If you are newly registered and wish to enter your registration information now, simply click on YES and then follow the prompts. Registration information from 1.xx installations will be automatically recognized, and is valid for PCB Freedom 1.50 and all future versions of PCB Freedom.
- 10) The last item for an initial running of the software will appear after the "Do you want to register" dialog... a help dialog box. This will show a basic help file for PCB Freedom, which you can scroll through and read to learn some basic information on the "care and feeding" of Freedom. When you are finished with this help dialog, click on the Done button, and

you will be in the main PCB Freedom Window.

"Un"Installation:

Although I can't see any reason why you might wish to <GGG>, "un" installing PCB Freedom is quite as simple as installing it, if not more so.

You will need to remove the following files to "un"install Freedom :

1) In the \PROWIN\ASPECT subdirectory (or wherever you store your script files) -

- FREEDOM.WAX
- FREEDOM.NIL
- FREEDOM.ICO **
- FREEDOM.INI

(** optionally in the support directory)

2) In the directory which you defined as the support directory for PCB Freedom (the default ASPECT sub-directory if you did not set a support directory) -

- FREEDOMR.WAX
- FREEDOMD.WAX
- FREEDMxx.HLP
- FREEDOM.CFG
- FREEDIAL.CFG
- FREEDOM.DNL

That's it. With those files removed, PCB Freedom will be completely "un"installed from your system.

Running PCB Freedom

When you start PCB Freedom by clicking on the icon you created during installation, it also starts ProComm Plus for Windows. However, ProComm will not start with the normal screen usually seen, but with PCB Freedom's screen, which replaces the "standard" ProComm icon bar with PCB Freedom's tool bar.

This PCB Freedom tool bar contains several icons, each representing some action taken by a user in PCB Freedom, or an indication of what Freedom is doing or has done.

The first six icons are actually icon buttons, and are actions that you, the user can take. These icon buttons are :

#1 - ADD - the white plus sign on a green circle is the icon you click on to add a new system to your PCB Freedom configuration. This routine will scan your dialing directory and prepare a list of all systems contained in it, so that you might decide which ones to configure under PCB Freedom.

When you select the ADD icon button, you will see a dialog box containing several items. At the top is a help file which you may scroll through for information on adding a system. Below that will be two list boxes. The one on the left will show a listing of the names of the entries found in your dialing directory.

The first time that you select the ADD icon button, the list box on the right will be empty. This is a list of systems which you have configured for use under PCB Freedom, and since this is the first time, there should be nothing there. To add a system to your Freedom configuration, simply select it in the left side list box, and then click on the Add push button.

This will bring up another dialog box. It is this dialog where you will configure the settings under PCB Freedom. When it appears, you will notice that sample entries are made in each edit box. Study these as long as you'd like, as they are only samples. You will also notice that they are "grayed" out, meaning that the boxes are inactive.

Actually, the only thing active in the dialog at this point is the icon button reading "UserID" under it. To begin setting up a system under PCB Freedom, you must first click on that icon button, and enter the UserID which Freedom will send to that board during log in. Once you have done this, the edit boxes will clear and become active. I find it useful to immediately

click on the icon button reading "Password" under it, and enter my password for that board. This will be stored in Freedom's INI file, however, it is stored in an encrypted form which only Freedom can read. This is one of Freedom's security features, to prevent your password being stolen and used by someone else.

After this is entered, you can begin entering the rest of the data needed, such as mail storage directory, conference to join, etc. There are help files which will appear in the left hand help box when certain selections or actions are taken. You can refer to these for help in setting up the system data. When you save the data recorded, PCB Freedom will ask you in a separate dialog, for a default language to use if the system is a PCBoard system. This allows you to set a language number for those systems where "English" prompts are not the default.

#2 - REMOVE - the white minus sign on a red circle is used if you want to remove a system from your PCB Freedom configuration. Once you have done this, you cannot use PCB Freedom for that system unless you ADD it again. However, any settings made prior to removing a system will remain stored in Freedom's INI file. Thus, if you do ADD the system back into your configuration, you won't need to reset all of the data for it.

#3 - EDIT - this is the poor disembodied hand writing a note. Clicking on this icon will call up a dialog box where you may pick a currently installed PCB Freedom system, and modify the settings for it. The dialog box here will be the same one you saw in ADD, however, the drop down box at the top will list all of your configured systems, and when you select one, the entries you have previously made for it (setting up the parameters for Freedom to use when calling that system) will appear in the various edit boxes, so that you make any changes necessary.

One example of needing this icon might be if you change your password. You would then use the "EDIT" icon to call up the settings for that system, and click on the Password icon to change PCB Freedom's stored password for that system. You also might want to use edit if you decide to change the directory where you want Freedom to store mail for that system.

#4 - DIAL CONTROL - the icon which looks like a Rolodex card holder is used to tell PCB Freedom which of the configured systems you wish to dial in a run. The dialog consists of several items, the first being a HELP box at the top of the dialog. As in other dialogs, this box will tell you a little about what you can do here, and how to do it. Below this are two list boxes (again) beside each other. The box on the left lists all of the systems configured to run under PCB Freedom. The box on the right lists those systems currently set up to be dialed. To add a system to the DIAL LIST, simply click on it's name in the left box (if you click on the name of a system already in the right box, nothing will happen). When you click on a system in the left box, it will be added to the DIAL LIST. To remove a system from the DIAL LIST, simply click on it's name in the right box. This will remove it from the current list.

There are two other items of interest, a checkbox and a small edit box. The checkbox is labelled "Dial minimized". Checking it will cause Freedom to dial your DIAL LIST in an iconized state. When iconized internally (such as by checking this box), Freedom turns off the dialing box and any dialogs which appear while on line with a system. If it didn't, these would pop up over whatever you are doing in Windows, and be very annoying.

The small edit box is labelled "Dial Time :". This box allows you to set Freedom to do your next run (and all runs thereafter) at a pre-set time. The time entered in this box must be in 24 hour format, and must contain all 5 "digits", including the colon (i.e. 6 AM is "06:00", 10:30 PM is "22:30"). If you decide later that you do not want the run to be "timed" simply delete everything from the box, or enter the word "now". Either entry will cancel a dial time.

No matter what you have the "Dial minimized" checkbox set as, if you preset a dial time, Freedom will do the run in a minimized state, with dialing boxes and dialog boxes turned off. Thus, when you preset a dial time, and tell Freedom to dial (the dial time is not active until you tell Freedom to dial), Freedom will get itself and it's boxes out of your way while it waits for, and does the run.

After a timed run is completed, Freedom will automatically begin another, waiting once again for the dial time to arrive. To cancel a running "timed" dial, click on the comm status icon (see below... the standard ProComm icon of a telephone). You can tell when a timed dial is "running" because the working status icon (see below also) will be a clock.

There is also a new push button in version 1.50, labelled "Get Files". Pressing this will cause the Dial Control dialog to disappear, and a new one to appear. In this new dialog, you may select a system from the list set earlier in the Dial Control dialog, and enter a group of up to 10 files to be downloaded after the next mail run. You can also use the checkboxes in the lower left to tell Freedom to skip getting the mail (when Freedom is getting a file list, the default System Options dialog at log on will not appear, so you must set this option here) or to tell it to join the default conference (for those systems, like CRS, where one may only download files from a conference, not from Main).

After you have saved your file lists, or deleted any which you have changed your mind about, select the Done button to return to the Dial Control dialog box.

Once you have set everything for your run as you want it, either click on Done to save the settings and return to PCB Freedom's main window, or click on Dial to start a "run" (based on the settings made here) immediately.

Once a run is complete, the information remains on file until next you run the "DIAL CONTROL" utility (with the exception of the file download list. This is cleared after each download run). As a result, once you have set a particular run, you only need use the "DIAL CONTROL" icon if you want to change the systems that you are calling, how the call is to be made, or if you want to create a file download list.

#5 - DIAL - Guess what the icon of a somewhat funny looking telephone (actually, it is a "Contempra" style desk model, but I'm not known for my artistry <G>) is for? Clicking on this icon will start a run based on the boards you last set using the "DIAL CONTROL" icon.

#6 - STOP - Again, this one is fairly straightforward. When you are finished working with PCB Freedom, and want to exit, either back to ProComm, or completely back to Windows, click on the "STOP" icon. You will see a dialog asking what you want to do, exit just Freedom, or exit ProComm altogether. Select one of the buttons, then click on OK. That's all there is to it.

After this group of six icons, there are three "status" icons....

The first only appears after you have begun a dialing run, either timed or not. It is the log status icon (the log contains details of what Freedom did during a run, including the fact, if set, that it waited for a particular time to begin the run), and will show in one of two forms. The first, with a page of text viewed through a magnifying glass, means that the log file exists, and can be viewed by clicking on the log status icon. The second form is also a magnifying glass over a page of text, but this time with no text visible in the glass, and a red X drawn through it. This one means that the log file is present, but can't be viewed because it is being frequently written to. Clicking on this icon will do nothing. When it returns to the non-X'ed magnifying glass, you will once again be able to view the log file.

The second icon is the working status icon. This will show a representation of what you are doing in Freedom, or what Freedom is doing on it's own. It will be one either one of the other "major" icons (when you are doing something under that icon button), a clock (telling you that Freedom is delaying a run until a preset time), or the PCB Freedom icon (when you are in the "main" Freedom window, and you or Freedom are not doing anything). This icon is simply a status icon, and has no "hot spot" to click on, except in one single case. If the icon showing here is a clock (i.e. Freedom is waiting to perform a delayed run), clicking once on the clock icon will result in an immediate "Quick" dial of the current set up. It will not be minimized, and all dialing boxes and dialogs will appear. This will allow you to call your list outside of the scheduled time, with Freedom returning to waiting for the scheduled time after the "Quick" dial is done.

The third icon is the comm status icon. It will be either the "standard" ProComm telephone icon with the receiver hung up (when Freedom is off line), or the "standard" ProComm icon of a telephone with the receiver up (when Freedom is dialing or on line). Whenever the working status icon is either a clock or the Freedom "funny" telephone, there will be a "hot spot" under the comm status icon. When either of those two working status icons are visible, clicking on the comm status icon will stop whatever dial run Freedom is engaged in. If it is a timed dial run (the clock working status icon is visible), a mouse click here will stop the timer, and the scheduled run.

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY

WHEN A DIALQUEUE DIALING BOX IS VISIBLE IN THE FREEDOM WINDOW, THE BUTTON IN THAT BOX FOR CANCEL WILL NOT WORK. LIKewise, REMOVING ALL ENTRIES FROM THE VISIBLE DIALQUEUE BOX WILL NOT CANCEL THE DIAL EITHER. FREEDOM WILL SIMPLY START IT OVER.

THERE IS ONLY ONE METHOD OF CANCELLING A DIALING SEQUENCE IN FREEDOM, ONCE BEGUN. THIS IS THE METHOD MENTIONED ABOVE, I.E. CLICKING ON THE

COMM STATUS ICON WITH THE MOUSE.

The last iconbutton in the toolbar, HELP, is on the far right side of all the other icon buttons and status icons. This one does exactly what you might think... it calls up the main help file from within Freedom. At the bottom of the dialog box with this help file are two pushbuttons... "Done" will take you back to PCB Freedom's main screen, and "About..." will bring up another dialog with some information about PCB Freedom.

The EDIT dialog box

Some settings in this dialog box may require some explanation, so :

1 - "Mail Board ?" - checking this box will set up the system as one which Freedom will make mail runs on, i.e. Freedom will log on, open the mail door, and handle REP and QWK packets.

2 - "Graphics Board ?" - By default, this is checked. Leaving it set that way will result in a yes response to the PCBoard prompt about using ANSI graphics. If you uncheck this, PCB Freedom will respond to that prompt with a no. For best operation, it is recommended to set the system for NO graphics.

3 - "Conference to Join ?" - This is optional, and allows you to tell PCB Freedom that, on this system, if you elect to stay on line after handling the mail, you may also tell it to join a conference other than the "MAIN" one. If you leave it empty, that option will not be available to you.

4 - "QWK packet name ?" - Every system has a particular "name" for the mail files it sends and receives. This "name" is the same for both QWK files and REP files. As example, one system that I use is Canada Remote. It's mail files are called CRS.QWK and CRS.REP. So, for the "QWK filename" field, I would enter "CRS" (case is not important here, as PCB Freedom will take care of that).

5 - "Open door # (name) ?" - Every system has a door name or number that must be "opened" in order to get your mail. PCB Freedom needs the name or number of that door entered here. PCB Freedom will add the "open" command to whatever you enter here, so please don't include it with the door name or number.

6 - "Mail directory ?" - This is the directory where you want PCB Freedom to "store" your packets after they have been downloaded and renamed. The default "standard" renaming option requires that the mail directory and the ProComm download directory be different. On my box, the ProComm download directory is F:\DOWNLOAD, and I have set my mail reader to look for mail packets in F:\MAIL. For my setup, I would enter F:\MAIL in this box. If the directory you have entered does not exist, PCB Freedom will ask you if you want it created.

Some last things to remember :

There are a couple of things to remember while running PCB Freedom....

1) A timed, or delayed dial, is ALWAYS done minimized, with the dialing box and dialog boxes hidden. This means that a delayed dial can only be done with default settings of a) upload any REP found, b) download a new QWK, and c) log off the system once b) is done. The setting of the "Dial minimized" checkbox does NOT affect this.... a delayed dial is done minimized no matter what setting is in the "Dial minimized" checkbox.

2) If you check the "Dial minimized" check box, like a delayed dial, the next and future runs will be done minimized, with all dialing boxes, and dialog boxes hidden and default settings in effect. Any dial run will be done this way, until you uncheck the "Dial minimized" check box.

3) The "quick" dial feature will interrupt a delayed dialing run, and dial the current list of systems in "default" mode, i.e. dial right now, not minimized, with all dialing boxes and dialog boxes enabled. Once the "quick" dial is completed, the system will go back to waiting for the next scheduled delayed run.

4) When you have defined a download list for a particular system, the standard Freedom "System Options" dialog will not appear when you log on to that system. By setting the file download list, you also set the log on options.