What is Rosebud?

Rosebud is a Windows-based utility that automatically logs on to CompuServe at specified times and retrieves specified information, then lets you look at the retrieved information.

That's the short answer.

But short answers don't tell the whole story.   So let's take a closer look at what Rosebud does, and you'll see why it's a useful addition to your collection of utilities.

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You can move through this five-minute get-acquainted tour by clicking the browse buttons at the top of the screen, or by clicking on any underlined term.   If there's a scroll bar at the right edge of the window, scroll down to see the rest of the page.

What do you mean, exactly?

OK, here are some examples.

A typical Financial reporter . . .

In the Assignment Desk you might set up one financial reporter to retrieve stock quotes for your Home Depot stock, your Microsoft stock, and your five mutual funds.   You assign the reporter a name; say, My Securities.   You tell the reporter how often to retrieve those financial quotes.   Hourly?   Every four hours?   Once a day?   It's your choice.   You can even enter portfolio information about each of the securities, even instruct Rosebud to alert you when your Microsoft stock goes down by more than 10% in a day.   Or in an hour.   Rosebud comes with some sample financial reporters already set up.

. . . and some News reporters . . .

Similarly, you might set up a news reporter to retrieve all the AP news stories that have the word Bosnia in the headline, or the word Earthquake, or Simpson.   Another news reporter might retrieve Jack Anderson's column and Miss Manners.   Another one might retrieve sports stories that contain the words Mets and Series, or the words Charlotte and NBA, in the same headline.   You tell the reporters when to do their assignment: hourly, daily, weekly, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, whatever.   They can collect from any news source available on CompuServe.   (By the way, the news sources that cost extra on CompuServe still cost extra when Rosebud does it.)   Rosebud comes with some sample news reporters already set up.

. . . and Weather reporters . . .

The Weather topic works in much the same way; you request maps or text or radar for particular cities. Rosebud comes with some sample weather reporters aleady set up.

. . . and Mail . . .

As you might imagine, the Mail topic doesn't involve as much "what" as the other three topics do.   All it requires, essentially, is a "when":   you tell Rosebud how often to get your mail off CompuServe.

Note that Rosebud comes with mail retrieval disabled; that gives you the opportunity to decide whether you want to handle your e-mail within Rosebud, or the way you've been doing it.   Look in the Assignment Desk on-line help under Mail Settings for how to enable mail retrieval.

Yesssssss!

The way cool part of all this--the whole point of Rosebud--is that once you've assigned your reporters, they do their job automatically, by means of the Collection Agent.

To help you get up to speed with this reporter and folder business, we've shipped Rosebud with several sample (or default) reporters and folders, so that the very first time you start Rosebud, you'll see something happen.   You'll get some stock quotes, some news, some weather items, and a real-life look at how Rosebud works--without doing any setting up yourself.

Rosebud Viewer

Once the Collection Agent has collected the information you asked for in the Assignment Desk, you go to the Viewer to look at it.

In the Viewer, the first step in looking at any information is to set up a *folder* for it.   Let's look at how that might work for the information your own reporters (or our sample reporters) have retrieved so far. Rosebud comes with some sample folders already set up for the sample reporters.

A closer look

In general, you can break the retrieval of information down into three steps:

1. You specify what information you want, and when you want it.

2. Somebody goes and gets it.

3. Once it's been retrieved, you look at it.

Rosebud consists of three components, each handling one of the steps.

 The **Rosebud Assignment Desk** is the part of the program that lets you say when and what to retrieve.

 The **Rosebud Collection Agent** is the part of the program that does the retrieving, or collecting.

 The **Rosebud Viewer** is the part of the program that lets you look at what's been retrieved, and handle e-mail.

Rosebud Assignment Desk

The part of Rosebud called the Assignment Desk lets you set up what we refer to as **reporters**. You can have any number of reporters, and you can currently retrieve information in four general areas (we call them **topics**):

- Mail

- News

- Financial

- Weather

Rosebud comes with some sample reporters already set up, to give you the general idea. A reporter is simply a set of instructions--a virtual entity, if you will--that's been assigned to collect certain information at certain times.

What do you mean, exactly?

Rosebud Collection Agent

The Collection Agent is the part of Rosebud that actually does the logging on to CompuServe to retrieve what you've asked your reporters to get.   For the most part, you don't interact with the Collection Agent, except to start it each day--and that part can be done by putting a Collection Agent icon in your startup group.

The only time you'll even think about the Collection Agent is when you hear your modem dialing out automatically; it'll be a bit disconcerting the first few times it happens.   (Tip: You may eventually want to turn your modem's speaker off; look in the reference guide or the on-line help under "Speaker" for details.)   If you're working in another Windows application at the time, you may notice a moment or two of sluggishness in the way your program responds; that--and your external modem's lights--are the only other clues that the Collection Agent is doing something.

Because we've already set up a number of default reporters, the very first time you start the Collection Agent, a retrieval will take place (assuming all your CompuServe connection information is correctly entered).   The Collection Agent will retrieve the news, weather, and stock items "our" default reporters asked for.

The Collection Agent gathers the information the reporters ask for, and stuffs it into special databases on your hard drive.   It's from these databases that the Viewer gets the information it shows you.   Our sample (or default) folders in the Viewer are already set up to let you look at the information the default reporters asked for.

Incidentally, other applications can get to the information in those databases too; interesting potential there.

But but but . . .

You say the Collection Agent isn't doing anything on CompuServe that you couldn't do for yourself? True.

But the Collection Agent doing it *regularly*, *automatically*, and *many times faster* than you could do it yourself.

Folders in the Viewer

📁 *Some typical financial folders . . .*

Remember the Home Depot and Microsoft and mutual fund information you asked for?   A single *reporter* gets all that stuff--but you don't have to have a single *folder* for all of it.   *There's not a one-to-one relationship between reporters and folders.*   That's why Rosebud stores the information in databases; you can look at the information in any number of ways.

You can set up a folder called "Home Depot."   Within that Home Depot folder you can set up several **pages** and tell the Viewer to display the same stock information in different ways.

- The first page might display the stock quotes in a graph of the <u>daily</u> closing figures.

- The second page could show the same information as a <u>text</u> table.

- The third page might show a graph of the <u>weekly</u> summary figures.

Another folder could show the Microsoft quotes.   Another folder could hold all three of your mutual funds, each on a separate page; or you could put each fund in a different folder if you wanted to.

📁 *. . . and news folders . . .*

You can do the same things with the news you asked for.   You have a single reporter retrieving Jack Anderson and Miss Manners; but you don't have to put them in the same folder.   Make a Jack Anderson folder and a Miss Manners folder.

📁 *. . . and mail folders . . .*

Mail?   It's sort of in a category by itself, as you'll see, with the obvious folders already set up for you. Rosebud comes with mail retrieval disabled, in order to let you decide whether you want to handle your CompuServe mail within Rosebud, or to stay with whatever you've been using for e-mail.   Note that *sending* mail in Rosebud (as opposed to *receiving* mail) does work in any case.

<u>More on topics and folders</u>

# More on topics and folders

- *Topics*

In the Viewer, each topic (remember, there are four: Mail, News, Financial, and Weather) is represented by a toolbar button at the top left of the screen.

Click the Financial button, and the Viewer screen lists your financial folders at the left and displays the first page of the first folder in the viewing area.   Pages titles are listed at the top of the viewing area; click on the title of a page to display it.

Click the News button, and the Viewer screen changes to list your news folders at the left and the first page of the first story in the viewing area.   And so on.

- *Folders*
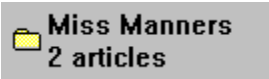
In the Viewer, a folder is represented by a label next to an icon of a file folder at the left edge of the viewing area.

When you click on the label, the first page appears in the viewing area.   The titles of all pages in this folder are listed at the top of the viewing area; click on the title of a page to display it.

Rosebud - the last word

Rosebud - the last word

On-line information is a great resource . . . if you can figure out how to get to it.

Similarly, e-mail opens new doors to the world of business and personal communication . . . if you can remember to go get it.

Rosebud takes these tasks off your to-do list.   It automates the retrieval, does it regularly, and speeds up the process enormously.   Hey, it even lets you know when bad weather's coming.

Ready to move on?

Load the first of the three Rosebud components--the Assignment Desk--and browse its extensive on-line help to learn how to begin setting Rosebud up.   Or if you normally use WinCIM, just start the Collection Agent (Rosebud will already have the necessary dial-in information) and sit there and watch it do its thing.

Have fun!