

# Conferencing

Conferences are special interest bulletin boards that you can browse□□□□ and submit items to. With conferences you can:

- Browse conferences
- Contribute items to a conference
- Search for posted items
- View the list of subscribers

All of this is presented in the familiar Macintosh graphical user interface so you don't have to learn a new system in order to enjoy FirstClass.

## Browsing a Conference

All users have a "Conferences" icon on their desktop. By double clicking on this icon you can see all the public or "open" conferences. You may freely browse any of these conferences by double clicking on the one that interests you. When you open a conference by double clicking, all the current items are summarized in a list. The summary shows the author of the item, the subject and the date that it was submitted. To view the item simply double click on it.

A conference may have sub-conferences, i.e. special areas of interest within the general topic of the conference. These are displayed in the upper half of the conference window as icons, and can be opened in the same way as the main conference by double clicking.

The conference summary also shows a black flag against each item that you have not yet read. You can read the items in any order, and FirstClass will remember which items you have opened, and remove the flag on those items.

## Contributing to a Conference

FirstClass uses its mail system to submit items to conferences. To add an item to a conference you simply send a message addressed to that conference. FirstClass makes this easy by providing automatic addressing:

If you wish to submit an item to a conference, and you are currently in that conference, then simply pick "New" from the Message menu. A new message is created and automatically addressed to the Conference you are in. If you are not in the conference you wish to submit to then open your MailBox and select "New". Enter the name of the conference in the "To:" field and press ENTER or RETURN.

The message is now addressed to the conference. Fill in the subject and the content of your message and when you are finished pick "Send" from the Message menu. Your message will arrive in the Conference and a copy will also be retained in your MailBox.

## Replying to a Conference Item

You may wish to respond to an item in a conference. To do this, first select the item that interests you by clicking on it once with the mouse. Now pick "Reply" from the Message menu and FirstClass will create a reply message addressed to the Conference with the subject already filled in. You need only add the content of the message and then send it by picking "Send" from the Message menu.

## What are Conferences?

Conferences are special interest bulletin boards that you can browse□□□□ and send items to. Conferences are used to allow a group of people with a common interest exchange ideas, questions,

information and files. You can "send" an item to a conference using the mail system, and you can browse a conference using the point and click technique of the Macintosh.

If you use a conference frequently you can make an "alias" to it on your desktop.

### Browsing a Conference

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*The conference summary also shows a black (red) flag against each item that you have not yet read. You can read the items in any order, and FirstClass will remember which items you have opened, and remove the flag on those items.*

### Participating in a Conference

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You may wish to respond to an item in a conference. To do this, first select the item that interests you by clicking on it once with the mouse. Now pick "Reply" from the Message menu and FirstClass will create a reply message addressed to the Conference with the subject already filled in. You need only add the content of the message and then send it by picking "Send" from the Message menu.

### Making an alias to a conference

If you participate in a particular conference frequently then you may wish to create an "alias" to that conference. There are a number of advantages to aliases; first the conference appears on your desktop for convenient access and second you are notified of any new items in the conference by a flag which appears beside the conference icon, when on your desktop.

To create an alias to a conference, select the conference by clicking on it once, pull down the Conference menu and choose Make Alias. The conference will now appear on your desktop. If you decide that you are no longer interested in the conference you can remove the alias from your desktop by pulling down the File menu and choosing Delete.

### *About Public Conferences*

Any conferences under the "Conferences" icon are considered to be Public Conferences, since anyone on the system may browse and contribute to them. The administrator can create a new public conference in Conferences for you. You may freely browse and submit items to a Public Conference and you can delete any item which you have contributed, however you may not delete items contributed by others.

### ***About Private Conferences***

Private Conferences are not accessible by all users. If you are granted access to a private conference then it will appear on your desktop. If you do not have access then there is no way for you to browse or contribute items to it. The administrator can set up private conferences and grant access to a particular group of individuals.

If you do have access to a private conference then you can do anything that you can do in a Public Conference, including browsing, contributing, deleting and downloading.

### *Supervised Conferences & Permissions*

Some conferences have restrictions as to what can be posted and who can post items. A conference may have no restrictions, it may require that items with attachments require approval or it may be that all items require approval.

If you post an item to a conference and it requires approval then the item will be displayed in italics until the conference Administrator approves it. No-one may open the item until it has been approved. Once approved you may open it and/or save any attached files.

To check the permissions of a conference, select the conference from the conference list, pull down the Conference menu and choose Permissions. A window will appear showing the permissions for the conference you have selected.

### *Conference Info*

Conference Info is similar to the résumé feature for users. It provides information about the purpose of a conference. You can view the conference info file by selecting the Conference, pulling down the Conference menu and choosing Conference Info. You can also double click on a conference name in a directory list or in the address part of a message to get the info file.

### *About the READ ME! Conference*

It is very important that you look in the READ ME! conference on every call, this is where IMPORTANT **Channel Z** information is posted. The flag system is still in need of work (SoftArc, the makers of FirstClass is working on making it "Just Right") but for now don't depend on seeing them.

### **Message Threading**

When you reply to a message, FirstClass **threads** the reply to the original message. As discussion progresses on a topic, a message thread is automatically constructed by FirstClass, consisting of all the messages on that topic. A conference may contain a number of different threads, all under the general topic of the conference itself.

When you open a conference, FirstClass displays all of the messages in that conference. If you want to follow a particular discussion thread you can use the **Open Thread** feature of FirstClass. If you have a message open, you can open the next message in the thread by pulling down **File** and choosing **Open Thread**. To go to the previous message in the thread, hold down the option key while choosing **Open Thread**. These two functions are also available on the FirstClass Palette as buttons. When you reach the

end of the thread you will hear a beep.

Threading can also be used in your mailbox, to find the original message when you receive a reply. If you receive a message which is a reply to something you have sent, use the Previous in Thread (Option Open Thread) feature to find your original message.

## Using the Directory to address messages

The user directory contains the names of all registered users and all public conferences. This allows you to address a message using only the person's normal name. To address a message simply enter the name of the person or conference in the "To:" or "Copies" field and FirstClass will search the directory for the name and fill in the full name.

Example : John Appleby

If you are unsure of the spelling of this name you can just type a few characters of the first or last name and the system will display any names that start with the characters you have typed, so you can pick the one you want. For example, typing:

ap

Might result in a list of names (or conferences):

John C. Appleby  
Susan Apton  
AppleSoftware

You can select the name you want by clicking on it with the mouse, and closing the directory window. Names can also be abbreviated so you can type "j appleby" or simply "appleby" to match John C. Appleby. You can also abbreviate either name, for example "jo app" would match John C. Appleby in our example.

### Browsing the Directory

You can browse the directory by pulling down the Message menu and selecting "Directory...". This will present you with a dialog box where you can enter a name or the first few characters of the name(s) you want to look for. Click on the Search button to get a list of all matching names.

### Addressing mail via a Gateway

If you are allowed to use gateways, you may address mail to other sites and systems. To do this you simply add a comma (,) to the name and follow it by the site you wish to send to. For example if John Appleby is on the system "Crystal Systems" then his address would be:

John Appleby,Crystal Systems.

If your system is equipped with a gateway to a non-FirstClass system (e.g. the UNIX Internet), the you may address mail using the name of the foreign system:

jappleby@soft.com,Internet

In this case the format of the address preceding the comma is determined by the addressing conventions of the non-FirstClass system.

### Sending to a Mail List

If your system has mail lists defined, you may send mail to a group of people by using a mail list which contains their names. Simply enter the name of the mail list in the **To:** or **Cc:** list. Example: Technical Support.