

Quitting Homer

When you quit Homer, you will be prompted with the dialog box above. It's more or less your final word before you leave. When you log off, it will display a message to the channel for others that will say you have logged off followed by whatever you type in parentheses, although you won't see it.

Example of a parting comment:

List of Shortcuts/Commands

When you precede any command with a slash (/) you tell IRC that you are going to enter a command.

Typing `/help` --> gives full help now for IRC (not Homer)

Typing `/list` --> will list all channels that are currently active and a digit behind that number represents the number of individuals currently on the channel.

Typing `/names` --> will list all channels currently active with a listing of the names of the users who are on each channel.

Typing `/whois ***` --> Will display information on any specific user. The *** can be any users name that you want to see information on. For example `/whois Corum`. This can also be accomplished by using the 'View' button on your Homer control panel.

Typing `/who #***` --> Will display the people that are currently on a specific channel. To check who is on #macintosh, type `/who #macintosh`. Remember you must include the pound symbol.

Typing `/ctcp *** version` --> Will display the persons version of a IRC client program they are using.

Typing `/ctcp *** finger` --> Will display information about a person and their computer. In the case of Homer, you won't get any 'real' information because it's not a true unix client.

`Command-Left Arrow` & `Command-Right Arrow` --> Will cycle through the saved list of users in your 'Link' list.

`Command-Up Arrow` & `Command-Down Arrow` --> If you have someone highlighted in the user list, you can cycle upwards and downwards through the users with these keys. You must first have someone highlighted.

Command-Return --> Sends the text in your input window as an action.

Control-v --> By using control-v, you can send underlined text. Place a control-v character around both sides of the text you want underlined.

Homer FAQ

Read these and maybe you'll be enlightened about something. Remember, these are just some clues for commonly-asked things, they're no substitute for the full manual.

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"There's three buttons in my user list floating window. What do they do?"

The leftmost button (the one that looks like a man) is "View." Select a user in the user list, press the view button, and you'll receive some information about that user.

The middle button (the thumbs-down) kicks the selected person off the channel (if you're an op on that channel, that is).

The rightmost button (which looks like a present) lets you op the selected person if you're an op on that channel. If the selected person is already an op, the button changes to a handicapped symbol. Clicking on it in that state un-ops the selected person.

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"Why the Console window? It seems to be a waste!"

The console window is a catch-all for all the things that don't belong to a specific channel. This includes server information, and you can configure Homer to send additional types of text there using "Control What Goes Where..." in the Options menu. An extremely handy thing to do, I find, is to have all my private messages sent to the console. I just keep my console at the bottom of my screen with a few lines exposed, and it works great as a place to look for important messages. The console is also a vital part of the channel list feature (see below).

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"Homer seems to be running slower than normal. Why?"

There's two major contributors to slowdown. The first is having any floating windows overlapping any part of your frontmost channel window. Overlapping floaters cause the scroll speed of the channel windows to degrade significantly.

Secondly, the channel list feature (see below), while very handy, receives a big chunk of data occasionally, and you won't receive much channel text while this information's coming in. The first time this data is transferred is immediately after Homer starts (assuming you're using the channel list feature), so there will be a delay when you first join IRC.

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"What's the LINK button do?"

The button on the left side of your text input floater is called the LINK button. You can toggle it by clicking on it or by pressing your tab key. When it's in (the light turns red), whatever text you type gets sent to whoever's name is currently in the LINK field (the little black box below the LINK button). You can control who's in the link field by either clicking on the link field (which will bring up a pop-up menu allowing you to change things) or by selecting someone in the user list (the other floating window). Do yourself a favor, make sure your LINK button is in the position you want before hitting the return key to send text, or someday you'll send something embarrassing to someone you didn't mean to.

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"I turned cursor focusing on and my LINK button's spazzing. What gives, G?"

Cursor focusing is a weird little feature that's only really handy if you're on multiple channels a lot. The idea is that it changes the link text/button to allow you to send text to whichever channel your mouse is on top of, without having to bring that window to the front. If the mouse is over the console window, the link box changes to whoever most recently messaged you (same as hitting cmd-L, "Reply to last messenger"). If you still don't get it, check out the full manual, there's a better explanation there. And by all means, if you don't understand it, don't use it, you'll just be confused.

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"Clue me in on the whole DCC thing, please."

DCC is a file-transfer protocol that allows IRC users to swap files. People familiar with the unix ircII client (or the Macintosh client ircle) might be distressed to find that there's no /dcc command. There is DCC though. Just press cmd-D to bring up the DCC window. The interface should be self-explanatory. Leave the transfer mode on "Automatic" for most things. Set it to "binary" to send or receive JPEGs and GIFs. Set it to "text" to send something like a teachtext file to someone not on a Mac.

If the "Send" button is dimmed in your DCC window, it's because:

1. You're running the serial version. Serial Homer cannot DCC. And no, sorry, but it never will, either. Due to the DCC protocol, it's impossible to do it using Serial Homer.
2. You have no DCC lines available. Homer allocates as many DCC lines as it can, based on the memory allocation you've given Homer. The default allocation will give you 4 DCC lines. If you're running the Speech Manager, you'll get 0 or 1 lines. You can increase Homer's memory partition to get more DCC lines (up to 10). You can see how many DCC lines you have available by looking at the first line of console text. Homer tells you how many DCC lines have been allocated.

NOTE: DCC chat is NOT yet implemented. I'm aware of the interest in it, but it's going to have to wait.

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"Homer sometimes loses its connection?"

PINGing is something that clients do with servers. It's kind of the electronic equivalent of light petting. Servers have a lot of data to be sending around, and they don't want to be sending it to any more people than necessary. Therefore, every couple of minutes, servers send out PING commands to all clients which are connected to them. The client software is expected to return a PONG command in a timely manner. If the client fails to send a PONG within a reasonable amount of time, the server will disconnect that client. Since the Mac isn't a true multi-tasking machine, this will definitely happen to you if you do something with your Mac that causes Homer to not get any CPU cycles for about 5 minutes, such as playing Maelstrom (if you're good enough to last 5 minutes, that is.)

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"I heard that Homer can speak. How?"

Homer is friendly with Apple's new Speech Manager software. If you have the new Speech Manager and some voices installed, Homer will let you use them to speak the incoming text. Look in Sound Options... and Voices in the Options menu to set things up. You can look at the first line of text in the console window to see if Homer thinks the Speech Manager is present. If you don't have the Speech Manager, you can get it by FTPing to ftp.apple.com. Don't ask me for it or ask me how to install it; I don't distribute it or maintain it.

A little little-known feature that you'll now know because you were patient enough to read this entire file: if you select a person in the user list and hold down the option key while clicking on the view button, a dialog box will appear which will allow you to assign a specific voice to just that person.

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"How can I get a list of all the channels on IRC?"

The normal text-based way to do this is to type a /list command and watch scads of text scroll by. In the Options... menu, you'll find a "Channel List Options..." item. Select it. You get a dialog box. At the top is a checkbox labelled "Use Channel List Feature." By default this is off. If you turn it on, Homer will automatically maintain a list of all the channels on IRC, and update it at periodic intervals. This interval is set in the "Update list every ___ seconds" field. 300 seconds (5 minutes) seems to be a good value. You don't want it to update too terribly often, because every time it updates it receives a LARGE amount of data from the IRC server, during which time you won't be able get much else done. The other fields in this dialog let you specify what kind of channels you're interested in.

So where does this fabled list show up? Well, I didn't want to create yet another floating window, and the user list is more or less useless for the console window (it's not a channel, so there's no users), so I decided to put the channel list in the console's user list. If you have the channel list feature turned on, bring the console window to the front and you'll see a list of channels in alphabetical order in the user list (you might see it changing, too, if you happen to look at it during an update). You can use the view button to see who's on a selected channel, or double-click on a channel name to join that channel.

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"Will Homer run under System 6?"

Uhhhhh, huh-huh, huh-huh. Uhhh, we have chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry. It kind of does. It doesn't save its preferences correctly though, I've heard. I have no access to any System 6 machines, so I can't really test things out on that front. If it works, bully for you.

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"What's a net split or why do people keep coming and leaving the channel?"

NET SPLITS (or net burps) are an annoying IRC phenomenon which will make you feel very unpopular if you don't know what's going on. Occasionally an important link between two main servers will go down. This means that whichever side of the link you are connected to, suddenly, pow, everybody connected to any server on the other side of the link will (in your eyes) just vanish. What you'll see happen is a lot of signoff messages right in a row, and the person's signoff message text will just be the names of two servers. If you just wait it out, eventually the link will be restored and all those people who suddenly disappeared will just as suddenly reappear.

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"Homer is acting real strange now and seems to be bombing a lot lately!"

Sometimes if your computer crashes a few times and Homer was running, your Homer Prefs file could get corrupted. If things become unbearable and Homer won't run correctly, your first measure to remedy the problem is to trash your Homer Prefs file located in your preferences folder in your system folder. When you do so, you'll lose all the info (friends, notifies, etc.) but in most cases it resolves your problems.

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"What's a Homer client?"

This is a bit of confusing terminology is what this is. Homer is an IRC client, but Homer can act as a server for HOMER clients (it CANNOT act as an IRC server!). Perhaps a more appropriate name is Homer "assistant." They're separate programs which extend the functionality of Homer. If you're lucky, this Homer distribution came bundled with HomerPaint, which allows you to share a real-time color drawing board with other Homer users running HomerPaint, and Codpiece, a program that allows you to record and send sounds to multiple other Homer users (who are also running Codpiece). I heartily endorse both of these programs, but I had no part in writing either of them, so sending me mail about them will get you nowhere.

If you're interested in writing a Homer client and have a good knowledge of creating Mac programs in C, drop me a line.

Bombs? (Nah, couldn't happen.)

BUG NOTE: if Homer happens to bomb your machine and you use Macsbug, please type the following in Macsbug:

```
log bugReport  
ip  
sc6  
sc7  
log
```

This will display a lot of information, and save a file on your drive called 'bugReport'. So if Homer bombs and you send me a copy of this bug report, including info about the type of machine you're using and what you were doing when the bomb happened, this will help me squash the little beastie more quickly.