Site Configuration and Authentication

InterNews can be customized for a particular site. If you intend to distribute InterNews to other people at your site, you can first set a few default parameter values that will make it easier for your users. If you are the only InterNews user at your site, you will have to set these parameters for yourself. Try the defaults first if you do not know the proper values; they may work just fine.

A fresh copy of InterNews obtained from Dartmouth College will not be configured for your site. The first time it is run, a configuration dialog will appear. You can set the default parameter values at this time. You can change them at a later time using the Configure for Your Site… command in the Edit menu. This menu item is enabled when there is no subscription file open. Changes in these parameters are applied to InterNews itself rather than to a subscription file. All copies that you make of the configured original will have those changes.

Some of the site parameters can be overridden by users through the Set Host Addresses… and Preferences… commands in the Edit menu. (Others can only be set with the Site Configuration dialog.) The parameters are described here.

About Authentication

InterNews prefers that users be authenticated before posting an article and requires that users be authenticated before sending a mail reply. This is a security feature to ensure that all mail sent from the program is identified with a username that is recognized by some host at the site. Posting, since it is not directed to individuals, is considered to be less serious in nature and therefore does not need such strict accountability.

To achieve some form of authentication, each copy of InterNews can be configured to check a name and password on some sort of local host system. It always uses NNTP for news and SMTP for mail, but it may use any of a number of services to authenticate a username with a password. The current list of possibile authentication methods is described below. Others will be added to the list in the future.

The best way to determine which authentication method makes sense for you or your site, consider what program on what sort of machine you and/or your site population uses. Here is a quick reference guide:

If your newsHost uses the INN software and it requires authentication, use the INN choice. It has nothing to do with mail directly.
If you use Eudora for mail or Kerberos for a network login, try the POP method.
If you use Pegasus for mail, also try POP. We do not have a direct Pegasus method yet.
If you use IMAP to log into mail, use IMAP.
If you use Unix mail, use the Unix choice.
If you use Vax Mail, use the VMS choice or the VMS-NC choice.
If you use CMS or another host that is not represented by this list, try the FTP choice.
If you use MicroSoft Mail, we do not have a choice for that yet.

Site Configuration Dialog

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Authentication Method: This is a pop-up menu that presents a list of choices for how users will be authenticated. InterNews will not allow a user to post articles or send electronic mail without being authenticated by one of these methods. They are:

  - None: it does not really authenticate; it simply asks for a user name to display on articles and an e-mail address for responses returned by mail. It also asks for a password that the user can make up. This password identifies articles so that other users cannot cancel them. If you use this method, you will not be able to send electronic mail with InterNews, but you will be able to post articles.

- POP: it requires a user name and password that will be accepted by a POP Mail server specified in the Authentication Host parameter described below. This option works for some sites using Kerberos authentication. If you are using Eudora   for electronic mail, this is the correct choice. If you are using Pegasus   for electronic mail and your site has the Mercury   POP software installed, this is also the right choice.

   - IMAP: it requires a user name and password that will be accepted by an IMAP server specified in the Authentication Host parameter described below.

   - DND: it requires a user name and password that will be accepted by a DND (Dartmouth Name Directory) server specified in the Authentication Host parameter described below. This choice is useful only if your site is running the BlitzMail™   electronic mail system, also available from Dartmouth College.

   - INN: it requires a user name and password that will be accepted by the INN news software. Use this if your site is running INN with the AuthInfo switch turned on. Check with your new administrator to find out if this is the case. The user name and password are likely to be the same that you use for electronic mail but may be different.

   - VMS: this is the correct choice if you use Vax Mail for electronic mail services. This choice requires that a user enter their VMS login name and password before posting or mailing from InterNews. When this authentication method is chosen from the popup menu, an additional field appears in the dialog labeled "Shell Prompt". InterNews needs to know the exact prompt that the VMS mail host system uses on it's command line. The default is "@ ". (Note the trailing space.) If the prompt varies, enter some part of it that is always present. If each user has a customized prompt, retain the default and instruct users to enter their custom prompt in the box provided in the Set Host Addresses… dialog after they create or open an existing subscription file.

- VMS-NC: this is an optional choice if you use Vax Mail for electronic mail services. It works the same as the VMS choice except that the "Shell prompt" is not needed. This method assumes that your VMS system supports the /NOCOMMAND option at login time, an option that causes the shell prompt to default to $.

   - Unix: this is the correct choice if you use Unix Mail for electronic mail services. This choice requires that a user enter their Unix login name and password before posting or mailing from InterNews. When this authentication method is chosen from the popup menu, an additional field appears in the dialog labeled "Shell Prompt". InterNews needs to know the exact prompt that the Unix mail host system uses on it's command line. The default is "% ". (Note the trailing space.) Some systems use their domain name followed by an angle bracket such as "mailhost.dartmouth.edu> ". If the prompt varies, enter some part of it that is always present. If each user has a customized prompt, retain the default and instruct users to enter their custom prompt in the box provided in the Set Host Addresses… dialog after they create or open an existing subscription file.

   - FTP: this choice can be used in some cases to authenticate a username and password using any host that supports an FTP service. This may include Unix, VMS, and CMS machines as well as others. Macintosh FTP servers may not be used. System administrators may not like it if you use this option at your site because it will generate login events in the FTP log and will skew the statistics derived from that log.

If your site uses an authentication method that does not appear on this list, send a message to internews@dartmouth.edu with information about it. We will see if we can add it to the list.

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News Host: This is the name or IP address of the host computer at your site that manages the Usenet News (i.e., it is running NNTP). The default name is "newshost," which will work for many sites. If your NNTP service does not use the standard port number, enter the port number after the host name with a space between them.

- Mail Host: This is the name or IP address of the host computer at your site that manages electronic mail (i.e., it is running SMTP). The default name is "mailhost," which will work for many sites. This item will be disabled if the None authentication method is chosen. If your SMTP service does not use the standard port number, enter the port number after the host name with a space between them.

- Authentication Host: This is the name or IP address of the host computer at your site that manages authentication (i.e., it is running POP Mail, IMAP, etc.). The default name is "mailhost," which will work for many sites. This item will be disabled if the None authentication method is chosen.

- Shell Prompt: This box will appear if you are using the Unix or VMS authentication method. Enter the most common shell prompt for the authentication host. If that prompt varies, enter any part of it that may remain constant for most users. InterNews needs a string that it will see on the host to indicate a successful login.

- Organization: This is the name of your site: college, university, company, etc. It will appear in article headers.

- Local Newsgroup Prefix: If your site has local newsgroups, enter their hierarchy prefix here. For example, at Dartmouth College we have a number of local groups that start with the prefix "dartmouth." If you fill this in, InterNews will create an automatic subscription containing those groups. You might want to experiment with this before distributing the program.

- Text File Creator: InterNews lets you save articles as text files. This parameter lets you specify which program will be launched when one of those files is opened from the Finder. Enter the creator signature of the Macintosh word processor or text editor most widely used at your site.

Distributing the Program

Changes made in the Configure for Your Site... dialog are stored in InterNews itself. If you are going to configure the program and then distribute it to other people at your site, make sure that you do the configuration with a master copy and then distribute copies of that rather than the orginal.

If you are distributing InterNews for the first time, you can save your users some startup time by creating a basic subscription file and distributing that with the program.