

Version 2.38

Copyright © 1990-94 — Bill Cramer

TheNews

**A Network News Reader
for the Macintosh**

Copyright © 1990-95 by Bill Cramer

This software is protected by the copyright laws of the United States and by international treaty provisions. It has been released as “shareware”—the author grants the right to use and copy the software on a trial basis not to exceed 30 calendar days. After such time, the right to use is revoked unless payment has been made to the author.

The author hereby extends permission for reproduction of this documentation by whatever means are at the disposal of the reader. Electronic modification of this document is permitted if the author’s copyright notice is maintained.

The product names mentioned in this manual are the trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective manufactures or license holders.

The author makes no warranty, express or implied, regarding TheNews, its documentation, its performance, its merchantability, or its fitness for any particular purpose, and will not be responsible for any incidental or consequential damages incurred while running TheNews. Some states do not allow the exclusion or limitation of incidental or consequential damages, so this language may not apply to you. You have certain legal rights which vary from state to state. So there.

Special thanks to Symantec Corporation for producing Think C, which was used to compile TheNews, to DataPak Software, whose Word Solutions Engine was used for extending the text editing environment, to Apple Corporation, for creating the best darn computer platform for hosting products such as this, and to the myriad of beta testers and users for their suggestions and complaints. Portions of this document were produced using Word and Canvas, so thanks go out to Microsoft and Deneba, respectively. Thanks also go the producers, directors, and members of the academy...

TheNews

Table of Contents

1) Introduction	1
Overview 1	
And Now, TheNews...	2
Requirements	2
Installation	3
Quick Start	3
2) Basics of Reading News	5
Startup	5
Setting Preferences—MacTCP Version	5
Creating, Opening and Modifying News Group Files	9
Reading a News Group	10
Reading a News Article	12
Saving an Article	13
Printing an Article	13
Posting a New Article	13
Posting a Followup Article	15
Mailing a Followup	15
Signature File Inclusion	16
3) Menu Reference	17
□ Menu	17
File Menu	17
Edit Menu	19
Groups Menu	19
Articles Menu	20
Windows Menu	22
Appendix A—Error Messages	23
Appendix B—Unix Compatibility	25

Appendix C—Gory Details	27
Network Debugging	27
Customization	28
Appendix E—UUPC/ToadNews Operations	31
System Requirements	31
Setting the Transfer Media Flag	31
Setting the Preferences	31
Using TheNews in an AppleTalk Network	33
Appendix F—CTB Operations	35
System Requirements	35
Setting the Transfer Media Flag	35
Setting the Preferences	35
Scripts	35
Appendix G—Posting Guidelines	39

1) Introduction

Congratulations! You now have the means of accessing hundreds of local, nationwide, and international bulletin boards directly from your Macintosh!

Overview

TheNews gives you a link to *net news* (also known as *USENET*), a large semi-structured set of messages written by folks from around the world. These messages, or *articles*, are organized into *news groups* whose contents cover a broad spectrum of interests, including:

- **Science.** Groups exist for the discussion of all fields of study, including physics, chemistry, the environment, mathematics, and biology. While most of these groups are aimed at the professional and educational communities, they often contain fascinating tidbits of information even lay people can understand.
- **Computers.** You'll find information about specific computers (there are several groups devoted to discussions about the Macintosh, for example), operating systems, programming languages, and other topics. Some groups even include public domain and "shareware" programs that you can download and run on your computer.
- **Recreation.** The recreation news groups cover a broad range of general-interest topics, including forums for the latest films and recordings, automobiles, cooking, games, hobbies, and sports. You'll even find a few groups for reading the latest jokes.
- **Society.** Under this set of groups you'll see discussions of cultures from around the world, politics, religion, and other special interests.
- **Local Interest.** These groups frequently discuss the latest happenings around town and around the state.

Other topics may be available. For example, many companies and schools maintain their own private news groups for keeping their staff or students up to date on the latest activities, upcoming events, and discussions of projects.

The available news groups may number into the hundreds, or even thousands. Since most people have neither the time nor the energy to read every article in every group,

news reader programs like TheNews allow you to *subscribe* to those groups which you are interested in. These news reader programs keep track of those articles which you have already read, so you can spend a few minutes every day or two to get caught up on the latest news.

Since so many people read net news, it's economical to set up *news server* sites throughout the country. Each of these news servers is connected to one or more other news server site; periodically, the sites exchange their latest messages. For example, a university in Chicago may exchange information with a business in Cleveland, which in turn passes along messages with another business in Pittsburgh, which in turn communicates with a college in Philadelphia. Through the magic of telecommunications, a news server site in Des Moines may get caught up with the latest news from Australia in a matter of days. To keep the storage space requirements under control, a news server may periodically purge old articles from its records.

And Now, TheNews...

If you've ever had the opportunity to use some of the news reader applications based on mini- or mainframe-computers, you've probably found the experience frustrating. Since these applications are traditionally meant to run on alphanumeric terminals connected over slow serial communications lines, the "user-hostility" of these applications is one of necessity — it's hard to throw around large chunks of data around at 2400 bps (bits per second), particularly when the terminal which receives this data has a limited capacity to store, process, and display this data.¹

TheNews is a different sort of animal. One difference with TheNews is in the way that it links your Macintosh with the news server computer. LocalTalk moves data around at approximately 230,000 bps, and if your lucky enough to have an Ethernet card in your Macintosh, data moves down the wire at 10,000,000 bps. This speed means that TheNews can receive and process a good deal of news data in a very short amount of time.²

Another difference is that it runs on a Macintosh, which, as you know, has a "user-irresistible" interface. TheNews exploits this interface to give you a good deal of flexibility in displaying and manipulating net news elements. News groups and articles appear as lists in scrollable, resizable windows; you can think of these lists as a sort of table of contents for net news. You make selections from these lists through the typical Macintosh mechanisms — by choosing a command from the menu bar, by using the keyboard shortcuts, or simply by double-clicking on a news group name or article title.

Requirements

Before you can tap into this wealth of net news information (and contribute your own wisdom!), you'll need some additional pieces, depending on what underlying news transfer medium you are using. If you are connecting to the world via a direct LocalTalk or Ethernet link, you'll need the following:

- A news server. The news server must have the appropriate software for servicing your requests; this software implements something called the *Network News Transmission Protocol* (or *NNTP*), which itself runs over a transmission protocol called *Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol* (or *TCP/IP*). The actual hardware varies between computer, but typically involves Ethernet or some other high speed media.
- A link to the server. Naturally, you'll need some means of connecting to the news server's hardware. You can connect directly to the server with Ethernet, or you can link to the server from LocalTalk via a *bridge*, for example, a GatorBox, FastPath, or other Ethernet⇌LocalTalk device.

¹This is a gross stereotype. Almost all user-intensive programs have benefited from the advent of graphical user interfaces (GUIs); however, the port of existing applications to GUIs has been slow.

²TheNews also understands how to read news directly off of your hard disk for users whose only connection to the Internet world is UUCP; if you ask it very politely, TheNews will also operate over a modem line via the Communications ToolBox. More about this later...).

- MacTCP. Unlike your local Macintosh network, which uses *AppleTalk* to send messages between individual workstations, you'll need a protocol capable of communicating with the non-Macintosh news servers. Since the NNTP servers run over TCP/IP, you'll need to run the same protocol on your machine. MacTCP is available separately from Apple, although

you may already have it (other applications, such as X-windows and certain mail programs also require MacTCP).³

- A mail server (optional). TheNews lets you respond to news articles by “posting” your article to the news group for all the world to see; however, sometimes an electronic mail response directly to the person who posted the article may be more appropriate. You can use a separate E-Mail program to send your response, but TheNews understands a small amount of *Simple Mail Transfer Protocol* (or *SMTP*) so if have access to a computer which speaks SMTP you can respond directly from TheNews.
- A Macintosh! TheNews has been successfully tested on a number of models, including the SE/30, the II, the IIfx, and the PowerBook. Depending on the number of news groups available on your server, you’ll probably need at least one megabyte of memory (more if you’re using MultiFinder). TheNews will run on a floppy or hard disk. Your Mac’s operating system must have a System file version 6.05 or later.

Appendices E and F describe the requirements for using TheNews with UUCP and CTB.

Installation

Simply load the application onto your hard disk (or onto another diskette if you don’t have a hard disk). If you haven’t yet installed the underlying news-transfer agent (either MacTCP, CTB, or UUPC/ToadNews), refer to its documentation.

Quick Start⁴

If you’re new to the world of net news, please take a few minutes and read the next chapter (it won’t take long—TheNews is a simple program). If you’re familiar with news reader programs running on other computers, you probably want to get started right away. (In fact, you’ve probably started up the program already!) However, have a little bit of patience and walk through the following steps—it won’t take but a few minutes and you’ll be on your way.

Start TheNews by double clicking on its icon; TheNews will present you with its menu bar. Under the entry “File” you’ll find an item called “Preferences.” When you select this item, TheNews will present you with a dialog made up of some checkboxes and text fields (it’s shown in the next chapter).

For the time being, leave the checkboxes checked and the first three blanks empty (being the experienced news reader you are, you can probably guess their functions). Move down to the “NNTP Server:” box and type in the network address of your local news server. This address will be composed four sets of digits separated by periods, for example, “192.42.98.1”, or else a domain name, for example, “penumbra.iex.com”. The address is significant only to the IP-layer network software; check with your system administrator for your server’s address. Now click on the “Save” button—you’re ready to open a session to the news server!

³Don’t worry about losing connectivity your Macintosh network—MacTCP and AppleTalk can co-exist quite happily.

⁴Please refer to Appendices E and F for details on setting up TheNews to operate with the CTB and UUPC/Toadnews.

Now return to the menu bar and select “New” under the “File” entry. You should see a message telling you that TheNews is trying to connect to the news server, and then you should see a message advising you that TheNews is getting a list of all news groups available on the server. (Note: If TheNews reports an error in connecting to the server, verify that the server address is correct. If the address is correct, go have a chat with your System Administrator to verify that the indicated machine is indeed running NNTP.)

If all went well, TheNews now displays a window titled “New Groups File”. You’ll note that the window is empty; before you can read articles from a news group you’ll need to “subscribe” to that group. To do so, select “Edit Group List” under the “Groups” menu. This will bring up a dialog showing you a scrollable list of all of the news groups available on the server. To subscribe to a particular group, select the group name and click on the “Subscribe” button, and then click on the “Done” button. (For the time being, just pick one or two groups; later, you can go back and select more groups. You’ll also want to save your customized groups list to a file—select “Save As” from the “File” menu) When you return to the group list window, you’ll see the group(s) you have selected and the number of articles which you haven’t yet read and the number of articles available on the server.

To see what’s available in a group, use the arrow keys to move the highlight bar to the group name, and press <return>. TheNews will then ask the server for a list of the articles; since this is the first time you’ve read from the group, this may take awhile—be patient! When it has completed, TheNews will display a list of the article headers—on each line you’ll see a “√” (which indicates that you haven’t yet read the article), some or all of the article’s subject, some or all of the sender’s name, and the date that the article was posted (if the window is big enough, you’ll see all of the information in each category).

To read an article, use the arrow keys to move the highlight bar to the desired article and press <return>. TheNews will fetch the body of the article and pop up a new window displaying the header and body.

That’s all there is to reading net news. Well, no, not really. TheNews has a number of additional features to help you manipulate existing news articles and post new ones. Have a look at the rest of this manual to get details on posting new and followup articles, mailing responses to the posters of articles, saving and printing articles, and

setting up multiple group subscription documents. Enjoy!

2) Basics of Reading News

This chapter describes the steps you need execute in order to do each of these functions. The next chapter provides basically the same information, but in a reference-manual format. (You may never actually need to read that chapter. In fact, we find it fairly astonishing that you're actually reading this chapter!)

Startup

You start TheNews about like you'd start any other Macintosh application, namely, by double-clicking on the program's icon. Alternatively, you can click once on the icon, and then select Open under the Finder's File menu. Once you have created a news group file, you'll probably find it simpler to double-click on the news group file's icon—this will start TheNews, make the connection to the news server, and download the latest news group information.

Setting Preferences—MacTCP Version⁵

We talked a bit about the preferences dialog in the previous chapter. TheNews lets you set up three types of standard information—display preferences, posting preferences, and the address of your news server. To set preferences, select “Preferences” entry under the “File” menu item. TheNews will bring up a dialog as shown below:

⁵This section describes the preferences for use with MacTCP—please refer to Appendices E and F for setting the preferences for use with CTB and UUCP/ToadNews.

☐ Show only groups with unread articles
☐ Show only unread articles
☐ Blind copy on mail followup
☐ Open with refresh on startup
☐ Use Eudora for mailing

Sort articles by: ☒ Subject ☐ Author ☐ Date
☒ Thread

From:
Organization:
Distribution:
NNTP Server:
User ID:
User Password:
SMTP Server:

Save as:

Font:

Let's talk a bit about each of the preferences in more detail now.

☐ Show only groups with unread articles

Normally, you'll want to see only those groups which contain new news articles. A check in this box tells TheNews to list a group only if it contains articles which you have not yet read.

☐ Show only unread articles

The news server may contain hundreds or even thousands of articles at any given time. Most of the time, however, you're interested only in those last few articles which you have not yet read. A check in this box tells TheNews to display only the new articles. (Note: TheNews must ask the server for information on each article, which takes some small but non-zero amount of time. Fetching information on several hundred articles will take a bit of time. Also, in order to display the article, TheNews must store its header information—if you request headers for hundreds of articles, TheNews may run out of memory before it collects all of the information it needs.)

☐ Blind copy on mail followup

Checking this box tells TheNews that whenever you mail a followup message, you'd like to receive a copy of it yourself. TheNews includes you as a "blind copy" recipient.

☐ Open with refresh on startup

By default, TheNews only looks for newly-added news groups when you expressly ask it to (by selecting "Open with Refresh" from the "File" menu). For news servers with heavy activity, this default may be preferable—running you through a list of new groups can be a nuisance (for example, unless you live in Dallas, you really don't care if you now have access to "dfw.forsale"). However, on less-active news servers, you may want to know about new groups immediate. Checking this box will tell TheNews to look for new groups whenever you launch the program by clicking on your news group file (the "Open" and "Open with Refresh" menu items still function as expected).

☐ Use Eudora for mailing

TheNews knows how to send followups and forward news articles via email. However, some people prefer the more-capable Eudora mail program. When you check this box, TheNews will present you with a standard file dialog—once you've located Eudora, click on the "Select" button. Thereafter, TheNews will launch Eudora (if it's not already running) and pass it the article and header information, and you can proceed with editing and enqueueing the mailing with Eudora.⁶

Sort articles by: ☒ Subject ☐ Author ☐ Date
☒ Thread

⁶Because TheNews requires AppleEvents, you'll need to be running at least System 7.0. Also, versions of Eudora earlier than 1.5.1 don't seem to have the logic to interpret the AppleEvents, so you won't be happy with the results. Finally, if you don't use the standard Eudora setup (that is, if you launch Eudora with a settings file not located in the System Folder), launching Eudora may fail—to work around this, launch Eudora from the Finder instead of through TheNews.

When TheNews lists article headers, it will sort them either alphabetically by subject, alphabetically by author name, or by the date they were posted. Click on the appropriate radio button to select the sorting method. If you've selected sorting by subject, you can also ask TheNews to "thread" the articles by checking the Thread box. When you've selected this option, TheNews only lists unique subjects—the display indicates the number of articles with a given subject to the immediate left of the subject text.

From:

Whenever you post a news article or mail out a followup article, TheNews tacks on your electronic address. This tells other users where you can be found should they want to respond to your posting via electronic mail. This field gives your address, which must follow strict Internet syntax; for example:

cramer@world.std.com
cramer@world.std.com (Bill Cramer)
Bill Cramer <cramer@world.std.com>

are all valid Internet mailing addresses. If you are unsure of what your address should be, please chat with your system administrator BEFORE you post articles.

Organization:

TheNews also automatically adds an *organization* header line whenever you post an article. Enter your company name, the department you belong to at school, or whatever you deem a fair description about your local environment.

Distribution:

Remember that the backbone of net news consists of many local news servers which periodically exchange news messages, and that these news servers reside all over the world. Since certain postings are meaningful only within a certain region, one of the article header fields defines where your articles will be sent. Since news readers in Brooklyn won't care about the pedigreed hamsters you have for sale in Fort Worth, you have the option of telling the news server to distribute your article within a specific region.

This preference works a bit differently than the other two posting preferences, in that it actually defines a *list* of possible destinations. Enter the names in this field, separating each by a space (you'll probably need to check with your administrator about specific names used by your news server). For example, "local texas usa na world" tells TheNews that there are five possible distributions for your postings. When you actually post your article, the first name (in this example, "local") will appear in the posting dialog. You'll be able to toggle to the other names at that point (more about this when we describe posting).

NNTP Server:

TheNews needs to know how to make contact with the local news server. The news server has an electronic address, either in the form of an IP address, or alternatively, in the form a domain name, which maps to an IP address. An example of the former is "192.42.98.1". An example of the latter is "news.std.com".

The bad news is that in either form, this address is rather obscure to mere mortals not versed in TCP/IP networking. The good news is that once you have defined it here, you can forget it. Visit your system administrator and ask for the address of the news server.

User ID:

User Password:

Some versions of the NNTP server only permit the posting of news by recognized users. Such servers “recognize” you by your user ID (also known as “login ID”) on the server computer. When TheNews connects to the server, it passes your user ID and password to the server, which verifies that it has a user of the same name in its user file(s). If you do not have a valid user ID on the server, it will still permit you to read articles, but it will reject any attempt to post news. If your server requires this “authentication”, enter in your user ID and password into these fields. For the sake of secrecy, the only time that you’ll actually see text in the “User Password” field is when you first enter the text or change the text. Any other time you bring up the preferences dialog, you see “•••••” in place of your actual password.

(Note: Many servers do not require you to have a user ID to post news. If this is the case with your server, you can simply leave these two fields blank.)

SMTP Server:

Sometimes when you are reading a news article, you’ll find that you’d like to send mail directly to the person who posted the article. To send a “followup” mail message to that person, TheNews needs access to an SMTP mail server. Most times, you’ll put the same address as you put in the NNTP server field; alternatively, you can put a different machine address, if that is appropriate.

Save as:

As you read articles, you may come across something that you want to save for later access, so naturally TheNews lets you save articles onto your disk. Since disk files all include a “creator” tag, this option lets you apply a specific tag to the saved file. Once a file bears this tag, if you double-click on the file’s icon the Finder will start up the creator application (as opposed to that annoying alert “The application is missing”). To set the creator application tag, click on the “Set” button. TheNews will bring up a standard file dialog with which you can select an application.⁷

Font:

TheNews can display its group and article lists and the news articles themselves in any font on your computer and in any of a number of sizes, depending on what values you set via these two pop-up menus. Click on the first box to bring up a popup menu of text sizes, and click on the second to bring up a popup menu of text fonts. (Remember however, that many of the articles you’ll see were written on a dumb terminal, and their authors may have used spacing and/or tabs to emphasize a certain point. You’ll probably have the best luck if you select either Monaco or Courier.)

Saving Your Preferences

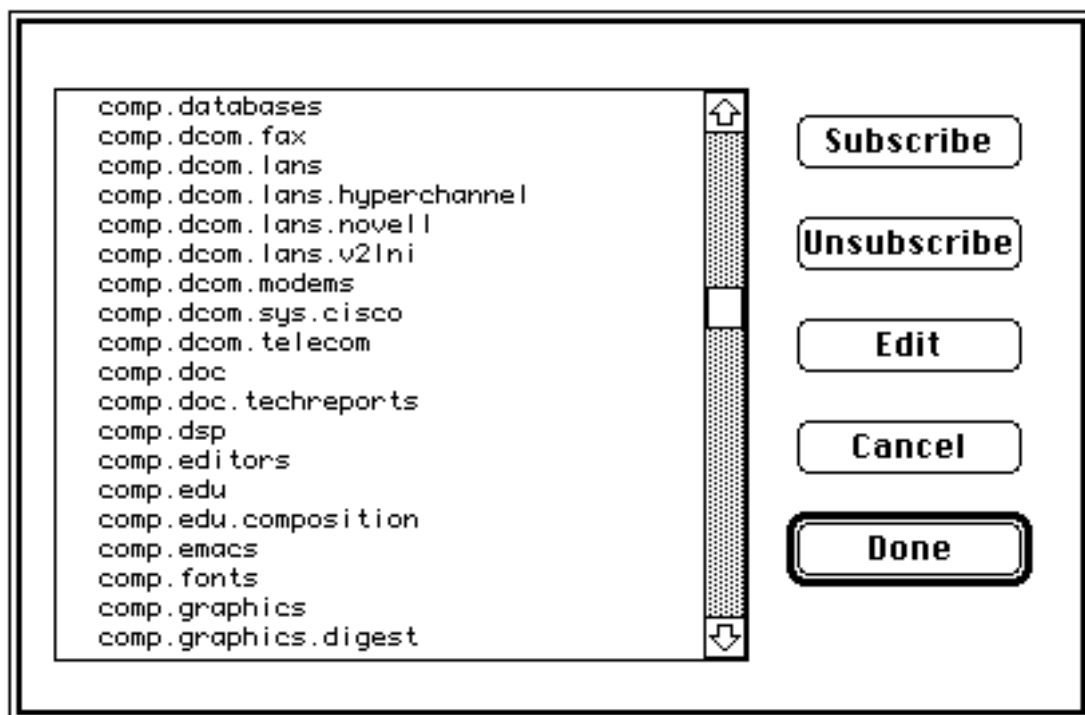
Once you have defined your preferences, you certainly want to avoid changing them each time you read net news. Sometimes however, you’ll want your changes to stay in effect only for the current session. You’ll see three buttons at the bottom of the preferences dialog—“OK”, “Save”, and “Cancel”. These do what you’d expect—OK records the preferences for this session only, Save records them for this session and will remain in effect every time you restart TheNews, and Cancel reverts the preferences to whatever they were before you entered this dialog.

⁷TheNews saves articles with the file type ‘TEXT’.

Creating, Opening and Modifying News Group Files⁸

TheNews keeps a local copy of the list of news groups available on the server in a separate file. This file also keeps track of which articles you have already read. To create a new groups file, select “New” under the “File” menu. TheNews will ask the news server to send a complete list of all news groups it has on file (this will take some time, perhaps as long as a minute if you’re using LocalTalk or if the server has several hundred news groups).

Once TheNews has received the list, you’ll see an empty window titled “New Groups File”. Under the “Groups” menu, select “Edit Group List”—TheNews will pop up a dialog like the one shown in the following diagram:



To select a news group, simply click on the desired group and then click the “Subscribe” button; double-clicking on the group name will have the same effect. To unselect a group, click on the “Unsubscribe” button (but, hey, I guess you probably figured that one out!). To select a range of groups, hold down the “Shift” key when you are making your selection (you can also “command-click” to select multiple, non-contiguous groups). When you have completed your selections, click on “Done”.

⁸Note: Unix users should refer to Appendix D for hints on converting news groups files to an Rn/Nn-compatible .newsrsrc format.
TheNews V2.38

You'll notice that there is an additional button titled "Edit". This function allows you to edit TheNews's idea of what articles are available on the server and which articles you have already read (or in Unix-type news reader vernacular, it allows you to edit the .newsrsrc file). Unless you have particularly unusual needs or unless you are feeling particularly masochistic, you'll probably never need to use this feature. Check out Appendix C if you're feeling masochistic.

When you exit from the “Edit Group List” dialog, the groups which you have selected will appear in the “New Groups File” window, as shown below:

New Groups File			
comp.sys.isis	16 unread	16 available	
comp.sys.laptops	163 unread	163 available	
comp.sys.m6809	19 unread	19 available	
comp.sys.m68k	33 unread	33 available	
comp.sys.m68k.pc	2 unread	2 available	
comp.sys.m88k	20 unread	20 available	
comp.sys.mac	24 unread	24 available	
comp.sys.mac.announce	10 unread	10 available	
comp.sys.mac.apps	506 unread	506 available	
comp.sys.mac.comm	325 unread	325 available	
comp.sys.mac.digest	16 unread	16 available	
comp.sys.mac.games	255 unread	255 available	
comp.sys.mac.hardware	640 unread	640 available	
comp.sys.mac.hypercard	229 unread	229 available	
comp.sys.mac.misc	4033 unread	4033 available	
comp.sys.mac.programmer	718 unread	718 available	
comp.sys.mac.system	727 unread	727 available	
comp.sys.mac.wanted	246 unread	246 available	
comp.sys.mips	60 unread	60 available	
comp.sys.misc	86 unread	86 available	

You’ll note three columns—on the left is the group name, in the center is the number of articles which you have not yet read, and on the right is the number of articles available on the server. Until you start reading articles, these numbers will be the same.⁹

At this point, you may want to save the group file list—select “Save As” under the “File” menu. TheNews will ask you for a name and folder for the new file using a standard Macintosh dialog.

(Note for sophisticated users: TheNews does nothing to prohibit you from building multiple news groups files. For example, you may want to create separate news groups files for corporate news groups, another for industry groups, and another for hobby groups.)

Reading a News Group

Now that you have created a news groups file, you’re ready to read the articles in each group. Move the highlight bar to the desired news group name and press <return> (or select “Read” under the “Groups” menu, or press ⌘-<G>, or simply double click on the group name). TheNews will ask the server for more detailed information about each of the articles in the news group and, unless you have selected the thread option, it will present you with a new window that will resemble:

⁹For reasons too sordid to describe in detail on some sites these numbers will be “lies”, particularly when you first subscribe to a group. Certain server configurations will indicate that the server has far more articles than it really has—for example, when you try to read a particular group that appears to have 400 articles available, TheNews will only find 50. Once you have read all of the articles available in a news group, use the “Catch Up” command under the Groups menu. The “available” count will continue to be false, but at least TheNews won’t tease you with claims of hundreds of unread articles.

comp.sys.mac.misc

✓	Question about TheNews	cramer	09/19/90
✓	How about that news reader for the Mac?	smith	09/20/90
✓	Re: How about that news	braun	09/21/90
✓	Re: tables in Word 4.0	jones	09/21/90
✓	Re: tables in Word 4.0	katie	09/23/90
✓	Comments about System 7	hatfield	09/22/90
✓	FTP sites	Mark Tho	09/22/90

There are four columns of data in this window. The far left column indicates whether or not you have read the article—a “✓” indicates that you haven’t yet read the article, and a blank space indicates that you have already read the article. The second column shows the subject of the article (from the “Subject” portion of the header). The third column indicates the author of the article (from the “From” portion of the header). The far right column shows the date the article was posted (from the “Date” portion of the header). Depending on the size of the article list window, some of these field may be truncated. TheNews will show as much of each field as it can; to see more, enlarge the window.

If you have selected the thread option, the window will look something like this:

under the “Articles” menu (or press ⌘-u). You can select multiple articles by holding down <shift> while you make your selection, and a non-contiguous set of articles by command-clicking. To mark (unmark) all articles in the group as read (or unread), select “Mark all read” (or “Mark all unread”), or press shift-⌘-m (shift-⌘-u). If you’ve selected threading, the operation works on all articles in the selected thread(s).

Reading a News Article

To read a particular news article, move the highlight bar to the desired article and select “Read” from the “Articles” menu (alternatively, you can double-click on the line, press <return>, or press ⌘-R). TheNews will fetch the body of the selected article (or the first article in the thread) from the server and then present you with another window which will resemble:

fusion breakthrough(1/3)

```
Subject: fusion breakthrough
From: Fred Powers <fred@vax.powerco.com>
Organization: PowerCo, Inc.
Date: 20 Nov 90 10:00:34
Newsgroups: alt.fusion
```

```
I've made some amazing discoveries here today concerning my
experimental research. It seems that I was going about it all
wrong -- if I reverse the fields on the flux capacitor, the
flow of energy increases exponentially with the volume of the
amount of sunlight. Get back to you soon with more details.
```

```
Fred P
PowerCo, Inc
uunet!powerco!fred
```

You’ll notice right away that the article body window has two scrollable panes. In the top pane TheNews displays the article header; in the lower pane it displays the article body. You can scroll each of the panes independent of the other, either by manipulating the scroll bar controls, by using the Page Up/Down/Home/End keys, or by using the cursor Up/Down arrow keys. (If you don’t have an extended keyboard, you can use ⌘-arrow and ⌘-shift-arrow keys to simulate the paging keys; pressing <space> will also page forward.) The window title consists of the article subject, along with the total number of articles in the current thread, and the relative index into the current thread.

To close the article, simply select “Close” under the “File” menu or click in the window close box. This action will return you to the article list window. Alternatively, you can move immediately to the next article (or to the previous article) by selecting “Read Forward” (or “Read Backward”) under the “Articles/Read” menu. Pressing ⌘-F and ⌘-B has the same effect.

Saving an Article

You can save a displayed article to a disk file by selecting “Save As...” under the “File” menu. TheNews will tag the article as type ‘TEXT’ with the creator set to whatever application you set in the preferences dialog (by default it’s set to TeachText). If you want to save the article to a pre-existing file, select “Append” under the “File” menu. Alternatively, you can also select “Save As” or “Append” directly from the article list window. This will tell TheNews to save all of the selected articles or threads to a disk file.¹⁰

Printing an Article

You can print the article by simply selecting “Print...” under the “File” menu.

Posting a New Article

You can post a new article whenever the articles list window is active¹¹. To do so, select “Post New...” under the “Articles/Post” menu. TheNews will present you with the dialog:

¹⁰TheNews adds enough of an “email” header to make the file readable by some mail programs. You may find this feature handy for organizing local archives. It has been tested with the excellent email program Eudora, and it will likely also work with other mail programs.

¹¹Note: Some groups are “moderated.” This means that all postings must be screened by a “moderator.” When you’ve selected a moderated group, the “Post” menu options will be disabled. To post to a moderated news group, mail your posting to the moderator (the moderator’s address will usually be found in each of the articles).

Post Article

Subject:

Group: Reply to:

Org: Follow up:

Summary: Keywords:

Distrib: ☒ Filter Output

251 West Central, Suite 142 | "The greed of the few
Natick, MA 01760 USA | outweighs the need of the many"
cramer@unixland.natick.ma.us | -- popular American theme

You'll see that this window has two parts—the top contains the article header information and the bottom will contain the text of your posting (and a user signature if you've defined one—see the section titled "Signature File Inclusion" for details). The header fields include:

- **Subject:** Type in a short description of your article (try to keep it under 20 or 30 characters). This is a required field.
- **Group:** TheNews will automatically fill in the name of the currently selected group. If you want to “cross-post” (that is, post your article to multiple groups), add the other group names after the current group name. This is a required field.
- **Org:** This field also comes from the Preferences dialog. This is a required field.
- **Summary.** If your article is rather long, you might want to type in some additional information here. This field is optional.
- **Reply to.** If you expect an electronic mail response to your posting, but want to specify a different address from the one given in the “From” field, type in the other address. This field is optional.
- **Follow up.** If you expect readers to post a news response to your posting, but you want the posting to go to a different news group, type in the name of that news group here. This field is optional.
- **Keywords.** If you don’t think your “Subject” entry was descriptive enough, type in a few additional keywords here. This field is optional.
- **Distribution.** TheNews will automatically fill in the first distribution target you specified in the “Preferences” dialog. If this is not what you want, you can select another by via this field’s pop-up menu.
- **Filter Output.** When this checkbox is enabled (the default), TheNews will perform certain character translations to ensure that the data posted to the news group will be 7-bit Ascii. This will convert things like “smart-quotes”, “em-” and “en-dashes”, and stray non-printable Ascii characters into reasonable, printable, 7-bit characters. (Refer to Appendix C to see how you can customize TheNews to handle international character sets.)

Once you have filled the fields in this dialog, move to the lower portion of the window and type in the text of your message. A few notes concerning data entry into this window: First, TheNews’s text editor gives you the basic Macintosh data entry functionality—cut, paste, and the like. For most postings, this is adequate. If however, you have already composed a long article with a different editor, you can go into that editor, copy the desired text into the clipboard, and then paste it into TheNews’s window. Do note, however, that net news understands text only—if you try to paste in graphics or a spreadsheet, you (and your fellow net news readers) will be disappointed with the results!

Secondly, TheNews uses the Macintosh’s word wrap feature while you’re editing, but before sending your article off to the network, it will chop paragraphs into one or more lines of up to 75 characters each (it will try its best not to break the line in the middle of a word). The point to catch here is that you needn’t press carriage return at the end of every line—TheNews will do it for you.

Once you’re satisfied with the contents of the article, click on the “Send” button. TheNews will submit the article to the server and then return you to the previous window. (Note: Some servers will take quite a while to respond to your submission. Be patient.)

A word of caution is in order here: Remember that your posting will be read by people all over the world, some of whom may not hold the same opinion as you. Be courteous, avoid foul language, don't post articles when your emotions are high, and don't post an article just because you want to see your name on the network! If you haven't read it yet, please read the articles in the group "news.announce.newusers". (A partial copy of this information is included in Appendix D; you can find more helpful hints in the news groups which begin with the prefix "news")

Posting a Followup Article

Posting a followup article follows the same basic steps as posting a new article, with a few exceptions. First, you must have the article body window active—TheNews must know what article you want to follow up. Secondly, after TheNews displays the article header dialog it fills in the subject line for you (by prepending the current article subject with "Re:"). Finally, when TheNews presents you with the article edit window, it automatically copies the contents of the original article to the edit window. It sets off the original text by prepending a reference to the original article (the article ID number and the poster's address) and it prepends each line of the original article with ">".

You can add your own comments at the end of the original text, or intersperse your input with the original text. (Again, we can't stress enough the need for professionalism in what you post, particularly when you include quotes from other news posters.)

Mailing a Followup

Sometimes you'll want to mail a news article response directly to the sender instead of posting to the news group. For example, if you want to inquire about the '68 Mustang you saw in dfw.forsale, a mailed response is more appropriate than a general posting to the news group. Also, some posters may specifically request that you respond via the mail.

To mail a follow up response to a news article, select "Mail Follow...". TheNews will present you with a dialog like:

Mail Followup

To:

Subject:

☒ Use Filter

Send

Cancel

In your posting you write:
>Who do you think you are posting such meaningless drivel and scurrelous
>remarks concerning my conduct on the net? If you have some legitimate
>beef, mail your reasoning directly to me, you scumbag!

251 West Central, Suite 142 | "Justice is always the aim of the
Natick, MA 01760 USA | law -- but only, I think, on a
70322.3412@compuserve.com | theoretical level." -- F. Lee Bailey

↑

↓

TheNews will automatically fill in the dialog fields for you, based on the original article header. You can change these, but most often you'll accept them as is. The "Filter Output" checkbox (which by default is enabled), instructs TheNews to perform certain character translations to ensure that the data in the mailing will be 7-bit Ascii. This will convert things like "smart-quotes", "em-" and "en-dashes", and stray non-printable Ascii characters into reasonable, printable, 7-bit characters. (Refer to Appendix C to see how you can customize TheNews to handle international character sets.) The lower part of the window contains the text from the original article, prepended with a ">", plus the text of any signature file you've defined (see the section below for details).

Once you have typed in your text, click on the "Send" button. TheNews will make contact with the SMTP server and send your mail, and if you selected "Blind copy on mail followup", a copy of the message will soon appear in your mail box.

A note: Some users find it useful to mail an article to themselves; one reason for doing so is so that they can use their favorite mailer program to store articles—sort of a private news archive. The "Mail Followup" function is less than optimal for this since it prepends the ">" prefix in front of every line, and appends a signature file to the end of the text. The "Forward Article" command functions almost identically to "Mail Followup", except that it doesn't include the ">" and signature to the text, and it defaults the "To" field to whatever user address. You may may not find this feature useful.

Another note: If you've selected "Use Eudora for mailing" in the preferences dialog, this section isn't relevant—refer to the Eudora documentation. Also, check out the limitations in footnote 6.

Signature File Inclusion

Normally, whenever you post an article or send followup mail, you'll append your message with your name, affiliation, mail address, and such. Before TheNews opens a text editing window for your message, it looks for a text file named "TheNews Signature" in the same folder as TheNews program.¹² If found, it will add this text to the window, and hence to your message. You can create this file with any standard word processor or text editor (but it must have the file type "TEXT"; for example, in Microsoft Word, select "Text only").

¹²Under System 6.0x, you can also store this file in the System Folder. Earlier versions of this User's Manual suggested that you could store this file in either the application folder or in the System Folder. For reasons too sordid to go into, when you run under System 7.0x, TheNews becomes confused when you put the signature file in the System Folder.

3) Menu Reference

This selection provides you with a complete reference on each of menu commands available with TheNews.

☐ **Menu**

About TheNews...

This option displays the version and copyright information about TheNews.

File Menu

The commands under this menu provide the standard Macintosh file manipulation commands—opening files, closing files and windows, saving files, and sending articles to the printer.

New (⌘N)

Create a new news groups file. This command is available only when no other news group file is open.

Open... (⌘O, Shift-⌘O, Opt-⌘O)

Open an existing news groups file. TheNews will prompt you for the file name using a standard Macintosh file dialog. This command is available only when no other news group file is open.

Normally, you'll probably have TheNews preferences configured so that when the groups list window appears, it will show only those groups with unread news articles. Sometimes however, you'll want to show all groups or at least all subscribed groups. You could go to the preferences dialog and make changes there, but TheNews offers a few shortcuts: If you press the option key while making this selection, TheNews will override the "Show only subscribed groups" preference and will display all groups found in the file. If you press the shift key while making this selection, TheNews will override the "Show only groups with unread articles" preference and show all subscribed groups in the file.

Open with Refresh...

Open an existing news groups file, and compare the groups in that file with those available on the server. TheNews will prompt you for the file name using a standard Macintosh file dialog. If a news group has been removed from the server, TheNews will remove it from the local news group file; if a new group has been added to the server, TheNews will ask you if you want to subscribe to the group. This command is available only when no other news group file is open.

Close (⌘W)

Close the currently active window. The actual function performed by TheNews depends on the currently active window:

- Group names window. Close the window and any other open windows. If the “been read” article list for any news group has changed, TheNews will ask you if you want to save the groups file before closing.
- Article list window. Close the window and if open, the article body window, the post window, and the mail window.
- Article body window. Close the window, and if open, the post window and the mail window.

- Post/Mail windows. Give you the option of discarding the article or message, editing it, or sending it.

Note that clicking in the window's close box has the same effect as selecting close from the menu.

Save (⌘S)

Save the news group list. This command is available only when the news group window is the only window displayed.

Save As (⌘E)

Save the news group list. TheNews will ask you for a file name using the standard Macintosh file dialog. This command is available only when the news group window is the only window displayed. Also, this command will save the currently displayed news article when appropriate. TheNews will ask you for a file name using the standard Macintosh file dialog.

Append (⌘Y)

Appends the currently displayed article to an existing text file. TheNews will ask you for a file name using the standard Macintosh file dialog. This command is available only when the article window is front-most.

Page Setup

Display the standard printer page setup.

Print (⌘P)

Display the standard print dialog. This command is available only when the news article window is active.

Preferences

Display TheNews's configuration dialog (see Chapter 2 for more details). This command is always available, however note that any changes made will not take effect until the next time the particular preference is required (for example, changing the font does not change any of the active windows).

Comm ToolBox

Display the Apple Modem Tool configuration dialog. Using this dialog, you can set the modem type, speed, and phone number of the remote machine. You can access

this menu command only when you have configured TheNews to use the CTB (see Appendix F).

Drain Input

Drain the CTB input buffer. Sometimes because of line noise or other unexpected input received over the serial line, TheNews will lose synchronization with the news server (this will be evident when you see a message indicating that the news server has “gone south” or when you attempt to read an article but get a blank window. Select this option once or twice to try to re-synchronize things. You can access this menu command only when you have configured TheNews to use the CTB (see Appendix F).

Quit (⌘Q)

Quit TheNews. If you have started any posting or mailing, TheNews will give you the opportunity to complete before it quits. Also, if the news group window is still active and you have not yet saved any changes, TheNews will give you the opportunity to do so.

Edit Menu

The commands in this menu let you manipulate text in the mailing and posting windows.

Undo (⌘Z)

This command is not used by TheNews, but is present for compatibility with desk accessories.

Cut (⌘X)

Erase the currently selected text and place it into the clipboard. This command is available only when the mailing or posting window is active.

Copy (⌘C)

Copy the currently selected text and place it into the clipboard. This command is available only when the article, mailing, or posting edit window is active.

Paste (⌘V)

Copy the contents of the clipboard at the currently selected insert point. This command is available only when the mailing or posting window is active.

Show/Hide Clipboard

Show or hide the clipboard window. This command is always available.

Groups Menu

The commands in this menu let you manipulate items in the news group window.

Read (⌘G, Opt-⌘G)

Read the currently selected news group. Double-clicking on the news group name has the same effect, as does pressing <return>. This command is available only when the news group window is the only window displayed. Pressing <tab> will open the next group with unread articles.

(Note: You can override the “Show unread articles” setting by pressing the option key while making this selection. This will retrieve the article headers for all available articles.)

(Another note: If you have asked TheNews to fetch more than 300 articles, the

program will remind you that your request will take some time to service and will offer you the opportunity to scale back your request to the first or last 200 articles. Unless you really want to read the whole set of articles, and have plenty of memory allocated, take its advice!)

Catchup (⌘K)

Mark all of the articles in the currently selected news group as “been read”, and moves the highlight bar to the next group. This command is available only when the news group window is the only window displayed.

Next Group (⌘J)

Leave the current group and move on to the next group. This is basically a short-hand way of closing the current article list window, selecting the next group, and fetching the article headers for the next group.

Edit Group List

Brings up a dialog containing a list of all available groups, through which you can subscribe and unsubscribe to news groups.

Articles Menu

The commands under this menu let you manipulate news articles. Three of the menu items have submenus beneath them (as indicated on the menu by the ► character). In the description below, the command is indicated, for example, as “Read: Read Forward”.

Read:Read This Article (⌘R)

Read the currently selected article. Double-clicking on the article subject line will have the same effect, as will pressing <return>. This command is available whenever the article list window is the front-most window.

Read:Read Forward (⌘F)

Mark the currently displayed article as “been read” and exchange it with the next article from the article list window. This command is available only when the article body window is front-most.

Read:Read Backward (⌘B)

Mark the currently displayed article as “been read” and exchange it with the previous article from the article list window. This command is available only when the article body window is front-most.

Read:Read Next Unread (⌘H)

Mark the currently displayed article as “been read” and exchange it with the next unread article from the article list window. This command is available only when the article body window is front-most. (Note: Pressing <tab> will have the same effect.)

Read:Read Unfiltered

Read the currently selected article without performing any of the standard character translations. For most articles, this will do little more than remove any stray Ascii control characters (backspaces, escapes, and so on). For users who have customized TheNews to handle international character sets, this command will prevent translations of, for example, “{“, into the Scandinavian equivalent (a necessity when reading articles containing C source code or in reading BinHex listings).

Mark:Mark Read (⌘M)

Mark the currently selected article(s) as “been read”, and moves the highlight bar to the next article. This command is available whenever the article list window is the front-most window. Using this command on an article that has already been read will have no effect.

Mark:Mark Unread (⌘U)

Mark the currently selected article(s) as “not read yet”, and moves the highlight bar to the next article. This command is available whenever the article list window is the front-most window. Using this command on an article that is currently marked as unread will have no effect.

Mark:Mark All Read (Shift-⌘M)

Mark all of the articles in the article list window as “been read.” This command is available when the article list window is front-most.

Mark:Mark All Unread (Shift-⌘U)

Mark all of the articles in the article list window as “not yet read.” This command is available when the article list window is front-most.

Post/Mail:Post New... (⌘A)

Bring up an edit window for entering the header and contents of the new article. This command is available whenever the article list window is active and no other post or mail windows are active. (Note: the current news group must be postable—that is, not moderated—before TheNews will let you select this command.)

Post/Mail:Post Followup... (⌘L)

Bring up an edit window for entering the header and contents of the followup article. The text from the original message is included. This command is available only when the article body window is active, and no other post or mail windows are active. (Note: the current news group must be postable—that is, not moderated—before TheNews will let you select this command.)

Post/Mail:Mail Followup... (⌘I)

Bring up an edit window for entering the header and contents of the followup mailing. The text from the original message is included. This command is available only when the article body window is active, and no other post or mail windows are active.

Post/Mail:Forward Article...

Bring up an edit window for entering the header and contents of the followup mailing. The text from the original message is included, but unlike the “Mail Followup” command, it does not include the “>” prefix or the signature file; also, it fills in the “To:” field with the user name. This command is available only when the article body window is active, and no other post or mail windows are active.

Sort:By Subject

Sort the current article list by subject (overriding the sort setting selected in the Preferences dialog) and redraw the display.

Sort:By Date

Sort the current article list by post date (overriding the sort setting selected in the Preferences dialog) and redraw the display.

Sort:By Author

Sort the current article list by author name (overriding the sort setting selected in the Preferences dialog) and redraw the display.

Thread

Toggle the thread flag (overriding the setting selected in the Preferences dialog) and redraw the display.

Rotate (⌘R)

Perform a “rot13” transformation on the currently displayed article or posting window. A “rot13” transformation systematically exchanges one letter for another, thus obscuring the contents of the posting.

Cancel (⌘D)

Cancel the currently displayed article. Note that TheNews will only allow the author of an article to cancel it¹³ — if you attempt to cancel an article of which you are not the author, TheNews will let you know of your folly. Also note that if your article has made its way into the network, you may not be able to catch all of the occurrences of your article.

Windows Menu

The commands under this menu let you bring any of the active windows into the foreground.

¹³The program verifies your name against the name in the “Sender” header field, or if not present, the “From” field. The system administrator can also cancel an article by reciting the appropriate incantation.

Appendix A—Error Messages

I can't seem to initialize the TCP driver...

TheNews requires MacTCP to make contact with the network, but it can't find the necessary MacTCP resources to open the connection. Either you have not yet installed the MacTCP package, or you have mis-administered it. Consult the MacTCP documentation or contact your system administrator.

The server has rejected your login ID and/or password...

In the preferences dialog, you have entered a login and password which is unknown to the server. You'll still be able to read news, but you may be restricted against posting articles.

The server didn't accept your posting...

For some unknown reason, the news server has

rejected your posting. The contents of the posting have been saved to a file named “dead.article”. This error comes as a result of some problem external to TheNews, and indicates a potential problem at the news server. Consult your system administrator.

The server doesn't want to respond. TheNews has tried to connect to the news server computer, but that computer has failed to respond. That computer may be non-operational, it may not have the appropriate server software, or you may have typed in the wrong address for the server in the “Preferences” dialog.

The server has gone south... While TheNews was exchanging information with the news server, it suddenly has dropped the connection. Most likely, the server computer has become non-operational, or some link in the network has become disconnected.

The server has denied you access.

The news server seems to think you're not allowed to access. At some sites, the NNTP server has been configured to use an "access list," which lists all machines which enjoy unlimited access to the news resources. Those machines not on the list can only make limited requests.

TheNews requires full NNTP access.

The mail server didn't accept your letter.

I can't make contact with the mail server.

TheNews has tried to submit your mail followup to the mail server, but for some unknown reason it has rejected your message. Consult your system administrator.

I can't write the groups file.

I can't write the file xxx.

TheNews has tried to write a file to disk, but something has gotten in its way. You may be attempting to write to a locked disk, or perhaps your disk is already full.

This is a required field and cannot be left empty. In a dialog, you've left one of the required fields blank. TheNews will move the cursor to the missing field.

The first read pair must be greater than or equal to the server's first article.

The last read pair must be less than or equal to the server's last article.

The low pair member must be greater than the previous high member.

The low pair member must be less than or equal to the high member.

You are trying to create an invalid entry in the internal news article index. All "been read" entries must be within the range of the server's available list. Individual "been read" pairs must be in numerical order. Refer to Appendix C for more details.

You can't edit the group information until the group has been formally subscribed.

TheNews doesn't have sufficient information about the selected group to perform .newsrsrc edits.

You aren't allowed to cancel an article unless you are its author.

You have attempted to cancel an article, but you are not the author of that article.

The news spool folder doesn't exist or is not mounted.

TheNews can't find the news spool folder. Make sure that you've correctly located the folder in the Preferences dialog.

The 'UUPC Settings' file could not be opened.

TheNews can't find the UUPC settings file. Make sure that you've correctly selected the file in the Preferences dialog.

Eudora doesn't seem to be where you left it. Mail not sent!

You've asked TheNews to use Eudora for sending followup messages, but the program isn't where you told TheNews to find it. You'll need to revisit the Preferences dialog, uncheck the "Use Eudora" box, and then recheck it. TheNews will then give you a chance to re-locate the program.

Eudora doesn't have enough memory to run. Mail not sent!

TheNews has tried to launch Eudora but there wasn't enough memory to do so. Quit some applications or change Eudora's memory requirements.

Appendix B—Unix Compatibility

TheNews offers some degree of compatibility with the Unix-based news reader clients “nn”, “rn”, and “xrn”. The format of TheNews’s news group files and the “.newsrsrc” files used by the Unix-based programs is, in theory, identical. Certain steps must be taken, however, to ensure that your .newsrsrc file is readable by TheNews, and that your news groups file are readable by rn and its cousins.

When using a .newsrsrc file with TheNews and vice-versa, be aware of the following:

- MacOS and Unix have different ideas on how to mark the end of a line of text. TheNews uses the Unix format, which means that:
 - If you use FTP with Telnet, select binary mode (disable MacBinary).

- If you use Kermit, select raw binary mode.
- If you use NFS or CAP, you can use the file directly from the Unix disk.
Alternatively, you can drag the file back and forth from your Mac.
- When copying to your Mac, you'll need to change the file type to "NnrC" and creator application signature "NncL". To do this you'll need one of several utility programs which allow you to change the file info—ResEdit, Alpha, and SUMII, as well as many other programs all offer this function.
- Some Unix-based news readers store only the subscribed groups in the .newsrsrc file. If you try to use such a file with TheNews, it will assume that every group found on the server is a newly added group, and pester you about subscribing to each and every group. If at all possible, coerce the Unix news

reader to store all news groups in the .newsrsrc file.

Appendix C—Gory Details

This appendix contains a number of odds and ends that the average user needn't worry about. Some items will help debug network connections; other items will allow a degree of customization. Oh yeah—remember the standard disclaimer on page 1 which said the author can't be held anything whatsoever? Well, that disclaimer goes double here!

Network Debugging

Under most configurations, TheNews is a “plug-n-play” application—that is, once you've configured the program, it works without any problems. However, under certain circumstances, the program can be darn near impossible to get running. TheNews has some hidden debugging features that you can enable with the ResEdit program. Once enabled, the item “Trace” will appear in the menu bar; this gives you access to two trace functions, “Show” and “Mask”. Show toggles a logging window, while Mask brings up a dialog which allows you to pick the category of event to be logged.

Internally, the program maintains a log of up to 1000 events; it overwrites the oldest events when it runs out of space. When it encounters a particular event, it checks to see if this event has been enabled for logging, and if so, it stores some appropriate message in the log buffer. You can look at the buffer via a scrollable window which can also be saved to disk or printed. Logging works regardless of the presence or absence of the log window).

Three items in the trace mask dialog deal with the TCP interface. One flag tells the program to log control events (open, close), another tells the program to log every message it sends, and the third tells the program to log every line it receives. Two items in the dialog mask trace events at the NNTP level. One flag tells the program to log NNTP commands, and the other tells the program to log the NNTP server's responses. Likewise, the dialog includes two items for tracing SMTP commands and responses. If you are using CTB, you can set flags to log control events (including all script processing), to log every line TheNews sends, and to log every line TheNews receives.

To use the trace feature, perform the following steps:

- 1) Using ResEdit, modify the MBAR #1 resource by adding the menu resource #2000.
- 2) Start TheNews directly by double clicking the application's icon.
- 3) Pull down the trace menu and select "Mask...". Select the desired event categories by clicking in the appropriate checkboxes.
- 4) Try the network operation in question (request a new news groups file, post an article, send mail followup, or whatever).
- 5) Once you are back in control, select "Show" from the trace menu. A small window should appear in the upper right corner of your screen, showing you a list of the most recently logged events. You can scroll through this log if desired, you can print the log, and you can save the log to disk. (You can also leave the trace window active while the system is running, but this will slow things down considerably.)

Customization

Most of the parameters you'll need to deal with are accessible via the Preferences dialog. However, you may access a few of the more obscure runtime parameters by using ResEdit to change various program resources, as described in the following paragraphs:

Signature File Name

TheNews will look for a file named "TheNews Signature" in the application folder. You may have a mail program which allows you to define a mail signature file in a similar manner (but it probably won't use this file name!) STR resource 1008 defines the file name sought by TheNews.

List Window Columns

The columns in the group and article list windows are dynamically sized according to the size of the window plus some proportion information stored in three STR resources. STR 1009 defines the article list layout for unthreaded displays and STR1026 defines the layout for threaded displays; they contain six numbers defined as follows:

- 1) width of the checkmark column
- 2) width of the thread count (0 for unthreaded displays)
- 3) width of the subject column
- 4) width of the from column
- 5) width of the post-date column

STR 1010 defines the group list layout and contains six numbers defined as follows:

- 1) width of the group name column
- 2) width of the "unread" column
- 3) width of the "available" column

By playing around with these values, you can change how much text from each column actually appears.

Allow Read-only Connections

Many NNTP server sites are set up to use "access lists" to determine who has access

to the server. If the address of the NNTP client (your Mac) doesn't appear in the list, the server denies full access. It does however, allow anonymous users to access a subset of the available commands so that they can perform bulk transfers of news articles for use by clients on the remote site.

Unfortunately, the NNTP specification doesn't provide a specific response code to indicate this type of connection, so many servers reply with a "Read-Only" response. This conflicts with the more-obvious meaning of "Read-Only", which implies a valid connection without posting privileges. If your server really means the latter, change the value of STR 1011 from "0" to "1" (but please verify that your server doesn't use access list authentication, or else TheNews will get very confused when it attempts to get article headers!)

Open/Read Time-out

When TheNews makes an attempt to establish a connection with the news server, it will time-out if the server doesn't respond within 60 seconds. Likewise, after it has given a request to the server (say, to fetch an article header), it will time-out if it doesn't receive a response within 60 seconds. For most servers, these time-outs are more than adequate. However, under extremely heavy loads, or when chatting via a number of gateways, these values may be too small. STR 1012 specifies the open time-out; STR 1013 specifies the read time-out. Values are in seconds.

Input/Output Filters

By default, TheNews will translate input and output into 7-bit Ascii characters as required by the NNTP specification. If you compose your articles with a word processor, you may end up with certain "extended" Ascii character which use all eight bits. (Characters like smart quotes, bullets, and em-dashes are all 8-bit Ascii.) TheNews will do its best to translate these characters into something reasonable (for example, it will convert an em-dash into a hyphen).

To perform these translation, TheNews uses a pair of "xlat" resources, which you can edit via ResEdit. xlat 2000 provides the output translation table, and xlat 2001 provides the input translation table. If your local character set uses 8-bit characters, you can edit the appropriate table so that TheNews will convert data on input and output. (The "Filtered Output" checkbox on the Post and Mail dialogs turns this conversion on and off for outgoing data; the Article:Read command tells TheNews to filter incoming data, and the Article:Read Unfiltered command tells TheNews to skip translation of incoming data.) The current version of TheNews ships with two additional filters: xlat 2003/2004 contain the filters appropriate for Finnish users, and xlat 2005/2006 contain the filters for those systems which understand the ISO-8859 8-bit standard. To use one of the optional filters, renumber the xlat tables so that xlat 2000 is the desired output filter and 2001 is the desired input filter.

Multiple Preference Files

TheNews automatically creates a "preferences" file (cleverly called "TheNews Prefs") and places it in the Preferences folder within the System folder (or under System 6, directly in the System folder). Some users may have the need to have several different preference sets (for example, if they have access to multiple servers containing different news group sets).

TheNews offers limited support for multiple preference files. To create a second

preference file, first make a copy of the “TheNews Prefs”. Then double click on the copy to start TheNews. If you then make your changes and click on “Save”, your changes will be recorded in the new preferences file.

Note however, when you restart TheNews by double clicking on the application icon or by double clicking on a news groups file, the program will use the default preferences. To use your second preference file, start the program by double clicking on the that preference file. Alternatively, after you have already started the program, but before you have made a connection to the server, select “Open” and pick the preferences file; TheNews will replace the default preferences with those found in the other preferences file.

Editing the Article Indices

The news groups index file (the “.newsr” equivalent in Unix vernacular) is unreadable by most text editors. TheNews gives you access to the news groups index file via the “Edit” button in the Edit Group List dialog. When you select this button, you’ll be presented with a dialog that looks like this:

Group:	news.newsites			
Server:	<input type="text" value="276"/>	-	<input type="text" value="280"/>	
Been Read:	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

The two entries following “Server” indicate which articles (starting/ending) the server thinks it has. The entries following “Been Read” indicate ranges of articles have already been read. DIRE WARNING: These indices are very fragile, and hence TheNews is very particular about what you put in the fields; mainly, all been-read pairs must be within the range of the server articles, and successive been-read pairs must not overlap.

So why in the world would you ever want to fiddle with these indices? Well, the chief reason would be if you’ve recently subscribed to a news group which has thousands of articles available. You don’t want to read through them all, but you would like to read the last hundred or so. You can either grab all of them (if you have enough memory) and then read the last few, or you can come to this dialog and change the been-read range to include the first several hundred but omitting the last hundred or so.

Appendix E—UUPC/ToadNews Operations

For day-to-day operations, you'll not see any differences between running TheNews via MacTCP and using it with UUPC/ToadNews. However, there are a few things you'll need to be aware of in order to configure the program correctly. This Appendix describes those issues.

System Requirements

To run TheNews in a UUPC environment, you'll need the following:

- **UUPC.** This program is a port of the UUCP protocol which runs on your Macintosh. It is available from many of the standard archives. Describing the requirements for UUPC is well beyond the scope of this manual.
- **ToadNews.** This program unbundles the batched archives that are received by UUPC. It too is available from many of the standard archives.
- **A Modem.** This uploads and downloads news information to your server. However, since UUPC actually handles all of the communications chores, TheNews doesn't really care what kind of modem you have, or for that matter, if you have a modem at all.

Setting the Transfer Media Flag

As distributed, TheNews is configured to run over a MacTCP link. To reconfigure to use the UUPC-aware modules, you must first use ResEdit to change the configuration flag, STR 1024. This string exists both in the program file and in the preferences file, and should be set to "U" for use with UUPC.¹⁴

Setting the Preferences

When running in conjunction with UUPC, TheNews has a different set of preference requirements—for instance, you needn't specify the name of an NNTP server, but you must specify the folder where you've instructed ToadNews to stash the news articles. When you select "Preferences" from the "File" menu, TheNews presents the dialog:

¹⁴The setting in the preferences file overrides the setting in the program file. Its initial value comes from the program file setting.

☐ Show only groups with unread articles
☐ Show only unread articles
☐ Open with refresh on startup
☐ Use Eudora for mailing
 Sort articles by: ☒ Subject ☐ Author ☐ Date
☐ Thread

Organization:
 Distribution:
 News spooldir path: **Set**
 News active file path: **Set**
 UUPC settings path: **Set**
 Save as: SimpleText **Set**
 Font: 9 Monaco

OK **Save** **Cancel**

☐ Show only groups with unread articles
☐ Show only unread articles
☐ Open with refresh on startup
 Sort articles by: ☒ Subject ☐ Author ☐ Date
☒ Thread

Organization:
 Distribution:
 Save as: **Set**
 Font:

These preference settings are identical to those described in Chapter 2, so we won't repeat them here. The preferences specific to UUCP operation include:

News spooldir path: **Set**

When ToadNews unbatches the news feed you've received via Internet, it stores the articles into a special folder hierarchy. You'll need to tell TheNews where to find the top of this folder hierarchy. Clicking on "Set" will bring up a standard file dialog—locate the appropriate folder and click on "Select". For example, if your folder hierarchy looks like this:


```

MyDrive
  NewsFolder
    ToadNews Active
      tx
        politics
          94
          95
          96

```

you'll want to select "NewsFolder" as the "News spooldir path."

News active file path:

ToadNews also creates a file which describes the current news groups—the group name, the indices of articles currently available, and expiration information. You'll need to tell TheNews where to find this file by clicking on "Set", locating the file, and selecting it. The active groups file created by ToadNews is "ToadNews Active".

UUPC settings path:

TheNews allows you to post new articles, post followup articles, and mail followup messages, via UUPC. In order to do so, TheNews needs to know where UUPC expects to find the appropriate data and control files. Click on "Set", locate the file using the standard file dialog, and then click on the "Select" button. Under UUPC 3.0, this file is called "UUPC settings" and resides in the System folder.

The STRs from the UUPC settings file used by TheNews include:

CONFDIR	the path to the UUPC configuration folder
SPOOLDIR	the path to the UUPC spool folder (not the ToadNews spool folder!)
MAILSERVICE	the name of the remote UUCP machine you use for mail
NEWSSERVICE	the name of the remote UUCP machine you use for news
NODENAME	your Mac's site name
USERNAME	your E-mail name
NAME	your real name
DOMAIN	your Mac's site name in domain format
TIMEDIFF	the time zone information

If NEWSSERVICE isn't present in the settings file, TheNews assumes that you use the MAILSERVER for transferring news as well as mail.

Using TheNews in an AppleTalk Network

Generally speaking, TheNews is intended to be used by a single user who has set up her home Mac as a UUCP site. However, since TheNews deals only with files and folders, and doesn't care about how the files/folders were created, you can use TheNews in a local Mac network which has one Mac set up as the UUCP link to the outside world. To do so, mount that Mac via AppleShare and set the preferences to indicate that the uucp spool, news spool, and active files live on that Mac. Since TheNews grabs your name out of the UUPC settings file, you'll need to have your own customized copy of that file on your own Mac.

Appendix F—CTB Operations

System Requirements

To run TheNews via the Communications ToolBox, you'll need the following:

- An account on a remote machine. TheNews works by calling a remote machine via your modem, logging you into that machine, and then connecting to the news server by running the program “Telnet”¹⁵ on the remote machine.
- The Communications ToolBox. This software comes built-in to System 7 and is available from Apple for System 6. You'll also need to install the Apple Modem Tool.
- A modem. Since TheNews uses CTB, it doesn't care what model of modem you actually use. However, be advised that TheNews can be painful to run if you use a slow modem. For best results, use the fastest modem you have access to—TheNews runs acceptably on a 9600 bps modem.

Setting the Transfer Media Flag

As distributed, TheNews is configured to run over a MacTCP link. To reconfigure to use the CTB-aware modules, you must first use ResEdit to change the configuration flag, STR 1024. This string exists both in the program file and in the preferences file, and should be set to “C” for use with CTB.¹⁶

Setting the Preferences

The preferences for running with CTB are identical to those required for running over MacTCP—refer to Chapter 2 for more details. However, since TheNews must log you into the remote machine, “User ID” and “User Password” are required.

Scripts

When you ask TheNews to open a new or existing news group, it first establishes the connection to the remote machine via the CTB. Once it has connected to the remote machine, TheNews executes the first of several of transaction scripts with the remote machine. These scripts emulate a human user, and consist of two types of data—messages that should be sent to the remote machine, and messages which TheNews expects to receive from the remote.

The scripts are stored as STR# resources, either in the program resource fork, or alternatively, in the preference file. An individual command string is either a “send” string, “wait-for” string, or a delay string, as indicated in the STR# string with a “S”, “W”, or “D”. TheNews transmits the send string verbatim, however, will continue to

¹⁵This is the same family of Telnet that you may have run on your Mac, for example, “NCSA Telnet”, but is a different program—it runs on the remote machine, not on your Mac.

¹⁶The setting in the preferences file overrides the setting in the program file. Its initial value comes from the program file setting. If you have a PowerBook and want to use TheNews both at home via CTB and at work via MacTCP, you should create two preferences files, one with the STR set to “C” and the other set to “T”. To launch TheNews with the appropriate setting, double click on the appropriate preferences file from the Finder.

read data until it receives the wait-for string (that is, you needn't supply the entire message that the remote machine sends in response to your message). Delay strings aren't sent—the string indicates the number of seconds of delay before executing the next string.

TheNews will perform limited substitution, inserting certain fields your entered with the preferences dialog, as follows:

\U User ID
\P User password
\N News server IP address
\S Mail server IP address

For example, the string “WPassword:” tells TheNews to read input until it receives the string “Password:”, and the string “S\P” tells TheNews to send your user password.

Logging In and Starting the News Server (STR# 3004)

Once you’ve connected to the remote machine, TheNews must log you in and connect to the news server. Under most circumstances, you’ll use Telnet to the news server, however, other methods may be possible. The default version of STR# 3004 consists of six strings:

- 1) Wogin:
- 2) S\U
- 3) Wword:
- 4) S\P
- 5) Wsh\$
- 6) Stelnet \N 119

The “sh\$” is a substring of the shell prompt string for the Bash shell. You should substitute the appropriate string for your shell’s prompt; most shells allow you to set the prompt string. You should avoid making the prompt too complex—for example, avoid a prompt which includes the history command number or current directory path.

Also, if your login shell prompts you for input (for example, if it asks you to identify your terminal or asks if you want to read your mail), you’ll need to add the appropriate queries and responses to your login script.

Quitting the News Server and Logging Out (STR #3005)

When you close the open news group file, TheNews tells the news server that it is quitting. The Telnet session will terminate and you’ll return to the shell. Your script will need to tell the remote computer that you are disconnecting, and then wait for the modem to hang up. The default version of STR# 3005 consists of three strings:

- 1) Wsh\$
- 2) Sexit
- 3) WNO CARRIER

Again, the “sh\$” is your shell prompt—modify as necessary. The “exit” command is sufficient for quitting most shells—other possibilities are “logout” or “bye”. The “NO CARRIER” message comes from your modem and indicates that the link has been terminated. Your modem may use a different message.

Starting the Mail Server (STR# 3006)

TheNews must interrupt the news server Telnet session in order to access the SMTP mail server. To do this, TheNews sends the Telnet “escape character”, which puts Telnet into local mode. TheNews then tells Telnet to start a shell, and then it starts a second Telnet

session to the SMTP mail server.¹⁷ The default version of STR# 3006 consists of three strings:

- 1) S ☐ !
- 2) Wsh\$
- 3) Stelnet \S 25

The “Nov 28, 2024Nov 28, 2024 ☐ !” string is what ResEdit shows—the “☐ ” is really the hex character 1D. This corresponds to the character generated by the keystroke CTRL-], which is the standard Telnet escape character. The “!” instructs Telnet to start a new shell.

Quitting the Mail Server (STR# 3007)

When TheNews is finished with its transaction with SMTP, the corresponding Telnet session terminates, putting you back into the shell session started from the NNTP Telnet session. From there, you’ll need to exit from that shell and return to the NNTP session. The default version of STR# 3007 consists of three strings:

- 1) Wsh\$
- 2) Sexit
- 3) Wexit

Again, the “sh\$” is the shell prompt—modify as necessary. The “Sexit” terminates the shell session, and the second “Wexit” is the echo from the “Sexit”, and is necessary in order to sync back up with the NNTP Telnet session.

Hints

1. TheNews appends a carriage return (but no line feed) to every line it sends to the remote computer. Somewhat perversely, it expects incoming lines to be terminated with a line feed (but no carriage return). This corresponds to a standard Unix getty. A “stty -a” command on a suitably configured port reports the following:

```
parenb -parodd cs7 -cstopb -hupcl cread -clocal -crtsets
-ignbrk brkint ignpar -parmrk -inpck istrip -inlcr -igncr icrnl -iucL
ixon -ixany -ixoff imaxbel
isig iexten icanon -xcase echo echoe echok -echonl -noflsh -tostop
echoctl -echoprt echoke
opost -olcuc onlcr -ocrnl -onocr -onlret -ofill -ofdel -tabs
```

2. Before you attempt to use TheNews via CTB, you’d be well advised to test out the various scripts from a standard login shell. Also, for testing purpose, you may want to enable the trace mechanism described in Appendix C.

3. Certain operations can be painfully slow over a dialup line. In particular, the NNTP command LIST may consume several minutes on a very large news server, even at 9600 bps. To deal with the LIST delays, you can tell TheNews to avoid sending LIST commands unless

¹⁷This scenario requires that your Telnet understand the concept of escape characters and also has the capability to launch a second shell. If your Telnet cannot do this, then you probably can’t send mail directly from TheNews. As an alternative, check out the CTB-capabilities of Eudora.

it absolutely must—change STR 1028 from ‘1’ to ‘0’.¹⁸ Also, if your server is very large, you may want to edit your news groups file to delete the news groups you never read (don’t forget to keep the file type “NnrC” and creator “NncL”).

4. TheNews always volunteers your user-id and password to the news server—some news servers choke on this information. If your server is one of these, use ResEdit to change STR 1031 to “0”.

5. If you want to use a different modem tool, for example, the Hayes Modem Tool, use ResEdit to change STR 1030 to the desired tool name.

¹⁸Well, if you really want to know... the LIST command asks the news server to send a list of all available news groups along with the currently available article indices. Since you probably don’t subscribe to all of the available news groups, this is overkill, since the GROUP command will also return the currently available article indices. However, because of the costs of network transactions, it actually is faster on a high-speed link to use the LIST command. On a slow link, the transaction time is much smaller relative to the data transmission time, and it’s quicker to use a series of GROUP commands. Sound reasonable?

Appendix G—Posting Guidelines

*(A primer on how to work with
the USENET community, written
by Chuq Von Rospach)*

USENET is a large collection of computers that share data with each other. It is the people on these computers that make USENET worth the effort, and for USENET to function properly those people must be able to interact in productive ways. This document is intended as a guide to using the net in ways that will be pleasant and productive for everyone.

This appendix is not intended to teach you how to use USENET. Instead, it is a guide to using it politely, effectively and efficiently.

Communication by computer is new to almost everybody, and there are certain aspects that can make it a frustrating experience until you get used

to them. This document should help you avoid the worst traps.

The easiest way to learn how to use USENET is to watch how others use it. Start reading the news and try to figure out what people are doing and why. After a couple of weeks you will start understanding why certain things are done and what things shouldn't be done.

Never Forget that the Person on the Other Side is Human

Because your interaction with the network is through a computer it is easy to forget that there are people "out there." Situations arise where emotions erupt into a verbal free-for-all that can lead to hurt feelings.

Please remember that people all over the world are reading your words. Do not attack people if you cannot persuade them with your presentation of the facts. Screaming, cursing, and abusing

others only serves to make people think less of you and less willing to help you when you need it.

If you are upset at something or someone, wait until you have had a chance to calm down and think about it. A cup of coffee or a good night's sleep works wonders on your perspective. Hasty words create more problems than they solve. Try not to say anything to others you would not say to them in person in a room full of people.

Be Careful What You Say About Others

Please remember—you read netnews; so do as many as 250,000 other people. This group quite possibly includes your boss, your friend's boss, your girl friend's brother's best friend and one of your father's beer buddies. Information posted on the net can come back to haunt you or the person you are talking about.

Think twice before you post personal information about yourself or others. This applies especially

strongly to groups like soc.singles and alt.sex but even postings in groups like talk.politics.misc have included information about the personal life of third parties that could get them into serious trouble if it got into the wrong hands.

Be Brief

Never say in ten words what you can say in fewer. Say it succinctly and it will have a greater impact. Remember that the longer you make your article, the fewer people will bother to read it.

Your Postings Reflect Upon You—Be Proud of Them

Most people on USENET will know you only by what you say and how well you say it. They may someday be your co-workers or friends. Take some time to make sure each posting is something that will not embarrass you later. Minimize your spelling errors and make sure that the article is easy to read and understand. Writing is an art and to do it well requires practice. Since much of how people judge you on the net is based on your writing, such time is well spent.

Use Descriptive Titles

The subject line of an article is there to enable a person with a limited amount of time to decide whether or not to read your article. Tell people what the article is about before they read it. A title like “Car for Sale” to rec.autos does not help as much as “66 MG Midget for sale: Beaverton OR.” Don’t expect people to read your article to

find out what it is about because many of them won't bother. Some sites truncate the length of the subject line to 40 characters so keep your subjects short and to the point.

Think About Your Audience

When you post an article, think about the people you are trying to reach. Asking UNIX questions on rec.autos will not reach as many of the people you want to reach as if you asked them on comp.unix.questions or comp.unix.wizards. Try to get the most appropriate audience for your message, not the widest.

It is considered bad form to post both to misc.misc, soc.net-people, or misc.wanted and to some other newsgroup. If it belongs in that other newsgroup, it does not belong in misc.misc, soc.net-people, or misc.wanted.

If your message is of interest to a limited geographic area (apartments, car sales, meetings,

concerts, etc...), restrict the distribution of the message to your local area. Some areas have special newsgroups with geographical limitations, and the recent versions of the news software allow you to limit the distribution of material sent to world-wide newsgroups. Check with your system administrator to see what newsgroups are available and how to use them.

If you want to try a test of something, do not use a world-wide newsgroup! Messages in misc.misc that say “This is a test” are likely to cause large numbers of caustic messages to flow into your mailbox. There are newsgroups that are local to your computer or area that should be used. Your system administrator can tell you what they are.

Be familiar with the group you are posting to before you post! You shouldn't post to groups you do not read, or post to groups you've only read a few articles from—you may not be familiar with the on-going conventions and themes of the

group. One normally does not join a conversation by just walking up and talking. Instead, you listen first and then join in if you have something pertinent to contribute.

Be Careful with Humor and Sarcasm

Without the voice inflections and body language of personal communications, it is easy for a remark meant to be funny to be misinterpreted. Subtle humor tends to get lost, so take steps to make sure that people realize you are trying to be funny. The net has developed a symbol called the smiley face. It looks like “:-)” and points out sections of articles with humorous intent. No matter how broad the humor or satire, it is safer to remind people that you are being funny.

But also be aware that quite frequently satire is posted without any explicit indications. If an article outrages you strongly, you should ask yourself if it just may have been unmarked satire. Several self-proclaimed connoisseurs refuse to use smiley faces, so take heed or you may make a temporary fool of yourself.

Only Post a Message Once

Avoid posting messages to more than one newsgroup unless you are sure it is appropriate. If you do post to multiple newsgroups, do not post to each group separately. Instead, specify all the groups on a single copy of the message. This reduces network overhead and lets people who subscribe to more than one of those groups see the message once instead of having to wade through each copy.

Please Rotate Messages With Questionable Content

Certain newsgroups (such as rec.humor) have

messages in them that may be offensive to some people. To make sure that these messages are not read unless they are explicitly requested, these messages should be encrypted. The standard encryption method is to rotate each letter by thirteen characters so that an “a” becomes an “n”. This is known on the network as “rot13” and when you rotate a message the word “rot13” should be in the “Subject:” line. Most of the software used to read usenet articles have some way of encrypting and decrypting messages.

Summarize What You are Following Up

When you are following up someone’s article, please summarize the parts of the article to which you are responding. This allows readers to appreciate your comments rather than trying to remember what the original article said. It is also possible for your response to get to some sites before the original article.

Summarization is best done by including

appropriate quotes from the original article. Do not include the entire article since it will irritate the people who have already seen it. Even if you are responding to the entire article, summarize only the major points you are discussing.

When Summarizing, Summarize!

When you request information from the network, it is common courtesy to report your findings so that others can benefit as well. The best way of doing this is to take all the responses that you received and edit them into a single article that is posted to the places where you originally posted your question. Take the time to strip headers, combine duplicate information, and write a short summary. Try to credit the information to the people that sent it to you, where possible.

Use Mail, Don't Post a Follow-up

One of the biggest problems we have on the network is that when someone asks a question, many people send out identical answers. When

this happens, dozens of identical answers pour through the net. Mail your answer to the person and suggest that they summarize to the network. This way the net will only see a single copy of the answers, no matter how many people answer the question.

If you post a question, please remind people to send you the answers by mail and offer to summarize them to the network.

Read All Follow-ups and Don't Repeat What Has Already Been Said

Before you submit a follow-up to a message, read the rest of the messages in the newsgroup to see whether someone has already said what you want to say. If someone has, don't repeat it.

Check the Headers When Following Up

The news software has provisions to specify that follow-ups to an article should go to a specific set of newsgroups—possibly different from the newsgroups to which the original article was posted. Sometimes the groups chosen for follow-ups are totally inappropriate, especially as a thread of discussion changes with repeated postings. You should carefully check the groups and distributions given in the header and edit them as appropriate. If you change the groups named in the header, or if you direct follow-ups to a particular group, say so in the body of the message—not everyone reads the headers of postings.

Be Careful About Copyrights and Licenses

Once something is posted onto the network, it is effectively in the public domain unless you own the appropriate rights (most notably, if you wrote

the thing yourself) and you post it with a valid copyright notice. Of course, the information becomes public, so you mustn't post trade secrets that way. When posting material to the network, keep in mind that material that is product-related may be restricted by the license you or your company signed with manufacturer and be careful not to violate it. You should also be aware that posting movie reviews, song lyrics, or anything else published under a copyright could cause you, your company, or the net itself to be held liable for damages, so we highly recommend caution in using this material.

Cite Appropriate References

If you are using facts to support a cause, state where they came from. Don't take someone else's ideas and use them as your own. You don't want someone pretending that your ideas are theirs; show them the same respect.

Mark or Rotate Answers and Spoilers

When you post something (like a movie review that discusses a detail of the plot) which might spoil a surprise for other people, please mark your message with a warning so that they can skip the message. Another alternative would be to use the “rot13” protocol to encrypt the message so it cannot be read accidentally. When you post a message with a spoiler in it make sure the word “spoiler” is part of the “Subject:” line.

Spelling Flames Considered Harmful

Every few months a plague descends on USENET called the spelling flame. It starts out when someone posts an article correcting the spelling or grammar in some article. The immediate result seems to be for everyone on the net to turn into a 6th grade English teacher and pick apart each other's postings for a few weeks. This is not productive and tends to cause people who used to be friends to get angry with each other.

It is important to remember that we all make mistakes, and that there are many users on the net who use English as a second language. If you feel that you must make a comment on the quality of a posting, please do so by mail, not on the network.

Don't Overdo Signatures

Signatures (message trailers) are nice, but don't overdo it. Signatures can tell the world something about you, but keep them short. A signature that is longer than the message itself is considered to be in bad taste. The main purpose of a signature is to help people locate you, not to tell your life story. Every signature should include at least your return address relative to a well known site on the network and/or a proper domain-format address. Your system administrator can give this to you. Some news posters attempt to enforce a 4 line limit on signature files—an amount that should be more than sufficient to provide a return address and attribution.