

Magic GEnie

version 1.1

© 1989 by Mark Smith

written by Smittie
documentation by Matt Armstrong

Released 22 June 89 for the benefit of all

At least read this...

Magic GEnie is a Red Ryder 10.X procedure that is designed to get all that information available on GEnie quick and then allow you to digest it off line where you are not paying for time, saving you LOADS of money versus getting the same information manually. Magic GEnie handles all, or any combination of, of the following tasks: logging on to GEnie, getting and sending any mail you have, checking your favorite RTs for new messages and files, capturing a list of the current TOPics in each CATegory, and in version 1.1, you can download files. It also keeps track of the time you spend on GEnie and calculates the cost of each call. All of this is done with minimal input from you once the procedure is initiated. Tell Magic GEnie what to do and let it fly. Magic GEnie is intuitive and easy to use once you have everything set up correctly. Setting up is short and easy.

If you're the type that can't read docs because of some kind of emotional peculiarity, then quench your desire and go start up Magic GEnie now and do anything you want to do with it. Then come back here and learn how to make it work. It will make Magic GEnie that much more useful when you do run it again. Now I too have read that and then jumped straight into using the software, never to read the docs again. Quite frankly, you won't get very far with Magic GEnie unless you read these docs. There are a lot of little tweaks you may need to make, and if you don't Magic GEnie will **seem** useless. In reality, you may have needed to make one small change to make it run flawlessly.

As a last ditch effort on my part to get you to read these, I've tried to set up these docs so that an experienced GEnie/Red Ryder user doesn't get bogged down in un-necessary details, with Appendices going into more detail on subjects that a beginning GEnie/Red Ryder user may need help on.

But I already use Magic GEnie 1.0!

If you already use Magic GEnie 1.0, you have already set up all the things necessary to run Magic GEnie. Some new things have been added/changed that you should know. To a search for "Additions and Editions" to get a list of the new things, and what you need to know about them.

The Bare Essentials

Setting up Magic GEnie is a relatively easy task. I'll divide them up into things you'll have to do offline and things you must do online with GEnie.

Off-Line Setup

Magic GEnie needs the following to be set up before you can use it:

- You must have the Magic GEnie procedure file in the same folder as Red Ryder to have it function properly. So, stick it in the same folder as Red Ryder.
- You need to create a folder that Magic GEnie will look to during operation for its functions. I'm going to call it the "GEnie folder" in these docs, and you might as well call it that also to avoid confusion later on. You can place this just about anywhere on your disk you want.
- For an easier and faster execution of Magic GEnie, you may want to link it to a Macro button in Red Ryder. This would allow you to start Magic GEnie with the click of a button. See the RR manual for details.
- Select "TEXT file transfer preferences" and uncheck the item that tells Red Ryder to look for a certain character before sending the next line. If you **don't** uncheck this checkbox, Magic GEnie will sit and wait forever for that prompt character when it sends your mail.

Now, with all of those things set up, you need to start up the Magic GEnie procedure in any of the normal ways. It will create a file called "MG1Prefs" that holds all of your settings, don't throw this file away unless you want to clear all of your entries out. For normal operation, you can just ignore this file, Magic GEnie handles it transparently.

Upon first execution, Magic GEnie will show you a "Settings" window, where you can tell GEnie most of the things that it needs to run.

	Round Table name	Page #	Files page #
First RT:	Mac RT	605	606
Second RT:	Freesoft	585	586
Third RT:			
Fourth RT:			
Fifth RT:			

☒ "BRO ALL NOR" method.
☐ "REA MAR NOR..." method.

User ID and Password:

userID#,password

**Magic GEnie folder is
Same as Red Ryder.**

Change folder...

Cancel

OK

Figure #1: The Settings Window

Although most of this may be self explanatory to some of you I will explain each section just in case.

"Round Table name" is just that, the name of the RT that you want GEnie to access. You don't need to be exact here, in fact, it doesn't even have to be close. The name that you enter here is the name that Magic GEnie will use when it saves the various files that are associated with the RT and when it looks for a downloading list.

"Page #" is the page number that the RT is on. For example, if you want to read the Macintosh RT's bulletin board you would type "M605,1" at the GEnie prompt. So, the Macintosh RT's page # is 605. Magic GEnie will add the comma and the "1" for you.

"Files Page #" is the page number on which the RT's file section is on. This number is almost always the RT page number plus one, e.g. the Macintosh RT is on page 605 and the Macintosh files section is on page 606. Again, Magic GEnie will add the comma and required numbers for you. These three items are repeated for each RT that you wish to access. You can have as few as one and as many as five RTs.

"User ID and Password" Not much question as to what goes here, right? Make sure that you enter them exactly as they appear in figure 1. If it is not in that format, Magic GEnie will not be able to log on.

"Magic GEnie folder is" This should be set to that "GEnie" folder that you (hopefully) have already created. You can change this by clicking on the "Change Folder..." button. The new folder's name will then be shown as the current folder. Note that this does **not** show a path name, only the folder name itself. This folder is the heart of all of Magic GENies functions.

"BRO ALL NOR" and "REA MAR NOR..." radio buttons. These buttons are used to select which method Magic GENie should use to check for new messages in the bulletin board sections of each RT. These are here to accommodate two different types of users. "REA MAR NOR..." was added in response to the topic in category 1 of the Mac RT where there was an on going discussion as to the best method of checking for new messages. If you use the "REA MAR NOR..." method please let Smittie know if there are any problems. No one involved in beta testing used that method on a regular basis and so it was difficult to give it any real testing. If you find any problems with it let Smittie know and he will work with you and get them corrected. Smittie needs input from someone on this one. If you currently do not use either of these methods, or if all of this is like some foreign language don't despair. Try reading GENie's online help or your manual, as well as Topic 53 of Category 1 of the Mac RT which has the previously mentioned discussion of these two messages.

The "Setup" dialog that first shows up is designed to hold information that is seldom changed. Thus you should not have use this dialog very often. Once the information has been set you should be able to leave it alone unless you decide to change an RT or you change your password. Once you have completed all the information, click "OK".

This is as good a place to talk about modems as any. Magic GENie is designed to communicate as little as possible with your modem to help avoid command conflicts. It does, however, send an ATH command to hang up your modem. It expects that +++ will put your modem into the command mode to accept the ATH command. It also uses Red Ryder's standard redial command. In general, it expects your modem to have the standards of the Hayes command set. If your's does not, talk to Smittie. If you express a genuine interest, he'd be willing to do something for you I'm sure. Meanwhile, make use of the "Online..." button talked about later on, it will allow you to use Magic GENie when you are already online with GENie, skipping MG's dial procedure.

On-Line Setup

The three things that are known to be necessary to set on GENie follow. The place on GENie to set them can be found by typing "set" at most any GENie prompt. Here they are:

- Page length set at Zero. This gets rid of the infamous "Press Return" prompts that can pop up anytime. Although Smittie has reprogrammed MG to look for these prompts, it would still be a good idea to eliminate possibility of online hangups and set your page number to Zero. It also cut's time off of your stay on GENie.
- Modem Break set at Control-C (ASCII 3). This is necessary for GENie to recognize the end of the Mail file Magic GENie sends it. Control-C was chosen because it seems to be a standard on GENie and most BBS.

- Prompt Character set to a "?." This is the default, but you may have changed it way back and forgotten about it. It can be set in the same place as the previous two settings.

Also, if you are new to GEnie, you must initialize all the RT's you wish Magic GEnie to enter. You will want to "IGNore All" of the new messages if you have never done that before. If you don't, GEnie will send all the messages dating back to when Nixon was president, keeping you online for at least an hour. If you are lost with these GEnie online settings, read Appendix 1 where I'll give you a step by step list you can follow to accomplish this.

Everyday Operation

In everyday operation, Magic GEnie will be quick to use. Typically, you will startup the procedure, change a few checkboxes, hit "Begin..." and be on your way. I'll talk about each task GEnie can do for you individually. They'll be Mail, Messages/Indexes/New Files, and Downloading. But first, I'll show you the main GEnie window, and talk about the things that don't fall into any of those categories.

Mac RT Cat. 1— <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> new messages. <input type="checkbox"/> Get a new Index. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> new files.	Dial: <input checked="" type="radio"/> ATDT 555-1111 <input type="radio"/> ATLODT *70,555-1111 using: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1200 baud. <input type="radio"/> 2400 baud. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Log off when finished.
Freesoft Cat. 1— <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> new messages. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Get a new Index. <input type="checkbox"/> new files.	
Cat. 1— <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> new messages. <input type="checkbox"/> Get a new Index. <input type="checkbox"/> new files.	
Cat. 1— <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> new messages. <input type="checkbox"/> Get a new Index. <input type="checkbox"/> new files.	
Cat. 1— <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> new messages. <input type="checkbox"/> Get a new Index. <input type="checkbox"/> new files.	
<div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="button" value="GEMail QuickCheck."/> <input checked="" type="button" value="Begin..."/> <input type="button" value="Online..."/> <input type="button" value="Settings..."/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/> </div>		

The Main Window

"Log off when finished" when checked, Magic GEnie does just that, logs off when finished. One should note that currently if Magic GEnie does not log off when finished, it can't update the " *MG Usage Log" file.

"Settings" takes you to the "Settings" dialog.

"Cancel" cancels the procedure.

"Begin" begins the call up process.

"Online..." tells GEnie that you are already online and to skip the dialing process. Magic GEnie can find out where it is on GEnie from just about everywhere. You might want to watch it in some of the value added services like Groliers. If it seems to be having problems, just go to page 1 (TOP) on GEnie. It will surely know where it is then!

"GE Mail Quick Check" Simply logs onto GEnie receives any mail, sends any mail you have and, if you have the "Logoff" check box checked, logs off of GEnie. This is useful for when you call GEnie during the peak hours and want to minimize time online. If you receive and send a medium size message, it will usually take about a minute and a half.

Phone Numbers are there for obvious reasons. Enter your access phone numbers here.

"1200 Baud" and "2400 Baud" tell which baud setting to call GEnie at.

Miscellaneous General Operation Stuff...

With each log on, Magic GEnie adds to a " *MG Usage Log" file the following info: time of logon, time of logoff, and the approximate cost the the whole operation. Keep in mind that if Magic GEnie is told to stay online after it is through, all it can do is add when Magic GEnie ended the usage file.

With each download, Magic GEnie adds to a " *MG Download Log" file a little screen capture of how your download went. If Magic GEnie didn't download something you wanted, check here for a possible reason why.

Be aware that Magic GEnie is not a human being, and can get stuck at places and not know it. If you did not have your break key set to Control-C on GEnie for instance, Magic GEnie would simply sit there, thinking it had sent what GEnie interprets as a Break. For this reason, it would probably be wise for you to watch it the first couple times you ask it to do something new. If nothing goes wrong after a couple of times, you can feel safe that Magic GEnie will continue to do it without a hitch. I say this not to give Magic GEnie a bad rep, but as some friendly advice. You need not worry too much though, I saw a message on the Mac RT that said "You shouldn't worry....GEnie does have a timer that will log off idle users."

Getting and Receiving Mail

Getting mail with Magic GEnie is simple, you do absolutely nothing. Magic GEnie will detect when you have mail and automatically get it and save it off in a file called "GE Mail [Date]" in the current GEnie folder. If you get mail more than once a day, your new mail is appended to the older GE Mail file for that day. It is sending messages that you have to do something different with.

For sending mail, Magic GEnie makes use of the GEnie command called "TBAatch." Using this method allows you to put as many letters as you like in one long file. You should make a TEXT (Text only) file called "To GEnie" and place it in your designated GEnie folder. Provided that the "TBAatch" format is adhered to, GE Mail will be able to sort them all out and get them to the correct addresses. The following is from the online help file on GEnie, with a few changes:

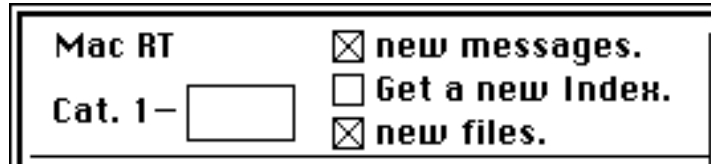
1. The first 3 lines of each letter are taken as To Address, Carbon Copy Address (CC), and Subject.
2. If your are sending no CCs, you **must** stick a few spaces in the second line. The format of multiple To's or CC's would be ADDR1,ADDR2,ADDR3 etc.
3. The last line of each message should have *NEXT (*N) as the only item.
4. Do *not* leave a space (blank line) between the *N and the first line of the next message. That line should be the addressee of the next letter followed by CC, Sub, etc, in the exact format outlined in number one.
5. At the end of the last message in the chain, use *S to end the file.
6. If you are sending only one piece of mail do *not* use *N after the last message but rather enter the *S.
7. It is my experience that you must put a return at the end of the last *S command, otherwise GEnie puts up a prompt that fools MG.

Yes, it does sound complicated, it did to me too when I first read this. But after a few tries, it becomes second nature to use, and you begin to love it's simplicity. I would print the help on TBAatch out if you are not printing this whole manual out for reference. Remember, name this TBAatch formatted TEXT file "To GEnie" and put it in your designated GEnie folder if you want Magic GEnie to send it. Magic GEnie automatically looks for this file, and if it finds it, it sends it. While sending, Magic GEnie will also be appending the sent mail to a file called "Sent to GEnie" in the designated GEnie folder. Each TBAatch send is delimited with a bunch of ••• (Option-8) bullet symbols to make it easier to search for a specific date. If the "To GEnie" file is important and un-duplicatable, you should make a copy of it in case GEnie or Magic GEnie screws up. This

will insure that you will be able to re-send it.

RT specific things: Messages, Indexes, and New Files

Each of the above things is linked to a check box near the specific RT.



A Section of The Main Window

It's all condensed into this one picture. This section is repeated for each RT. "Mac RT" is the name of the RT. The check boxes are used to indicate what you want Magic GEnie to get for you.

"new messages" will get all the new messages in the RT using the method that was selected in the "Set Up" dialog (either "BRO ALL NOR" or "REA ALL NOR..."). The new messages are appended to (added to) the file, i.e. after one week of using Magic GEnie everyday the file called "Mac RT msgs" in the GEnie folder would contain the whole weeks worth of messages. Smittie says the following best:

"Now when I was developing Magic GEnie I thought this would be a really wonderful thing. But as I used it I found out something. It's a real headache to have to scroll through a meg and a half of text trying to find the beginning of the most current messages. So, the file is date stamped each time it is written to. Each time Magic GEnie checks the RT bulletin board

.....03/12/89 07:34:11.....

will be put before the new messages for that day. When you want to go back to read the messages, just do a search for the current date preceded by a bullet or two (option 8) and presto magico, there ye be. Magic GEnie will create one file for each RT that you check and the file name consist of "[the RT name] msgs"

"Get a new Index." This will provide you with a listing of all the Categories in a bulletin board and all the Topics in the Categories. This is very useful when you are getting want to go through and "IGNore PERmanently" some the the Topics and Categories in an RT, and is absolutely necessary if you are using the REA ALL NOR method of reading messages. When this is chosen, if there is an old Index it will be over written (replaced) with the new one. Magic GEnie will create one file for each RT that you check and the file name consist of "[the RT name] Index"

"new files." When this is selected Magic GEnie will check the RT's file section for newly uploaded files. Only the short descriptions will be provided. Long descriptions are in the list of

improvements, if you want them, bug Smittie about it. He needs to know what the people who use Magic GEnie want. Magic GEnie will create one file for each RT that you check and the file name consist of "[the RT name] files" This file is appended to.

"Cat. 1—" Those of you who use the "REA ALL NOR..." method of getting new messages should know what this is for. Just enter the highest category number for each of your RTs.

Downloading Files

Downloading a bunch of files is simple and straightforward. Magic GEnie's downloading is, however, pretty simplistic and is not meant to replace downloading specific procedures such as "I Dream of Downloading." It's purpose in life is to eliminate the frustration of having to use two procedures for doing one thing—logging on to GEnie.

To tell Magic GEnie that you want to download, create a TEXT file with the Round Table name (exactly as it is displayed on that RT's Message, Index, and New file filenames) and "DL list" added to the end. For instance, If I had an RT called "Mac RT" and I wanted to download something from it, I'd create a text file called "Mac RT DL list" If the filename differs even slightly, Magic GEnie will not properly recognize it as a downloading list for that Roundtable.

Now, what do you put into that file? It's simple, a return delimited list of the filenumbers you want to download from that RT. This means that you enter the first file number, press return, enter the second filenumber, press return and so on, until you have put all of the filenumbers you wish to download into the downloading list file. The way things are set up now, you can only download multiple files. However, Magic GEnie continues to attempt a download if one of your files turns out to be non existent, so theoretically you could download one if you specify the file you want, and another file that does not exist in the library. For instance, If I had 4 files I wished to download, my downloading list would look like this:

```
1246
1435
1363
2723
```

<-Note the return after the last filenumber!

Once you have the file set up, run Magic GEnie. In order for Magic GEnie to download you must also have the "New files." option checked for that RT. If you don't, want a download to execute for a specific RT but you have the DL List file created, simply uncheck "New files." option. If one of the files turns out to be non-existent or unavailable, Magic GEnie will detect it and attempt to download all of your files minus the bad one. Because Magic GEnie currently cannot download a single file, the download get's cancelled if for some reason it comes down to a single file.

Floppy people alert! Magic GEnie uses Red Ryder's "Auto Receive Volume" to determine

where it puts the downloaded files. I have found that if you set this before running Magic GEnie, it sometimes gets changed back to the same folder Red is in. It always works, however, when you set the Auto Recieve volume while Magic GEnie's main window is showing. If you don't set it, it will download into the same folder as Red Ryder. It can be set from under the File menu.

A Message from the Programmer...

The first version of Magic GEnie has been downloaded about 400 times. I see that as a pretty good indication that people like Magic GEnie. I have added several features and I have several more that I plan to add. But in order to continue making Magic GEnie useful to you the user I need you input. Let me know what you think, good or bad. If you find what you think is a bug, let me know. I'll either explain why it is not a bug or I'll fix it. If you think there is something that Magic GEnie should do for you, let me know. If I can make Magic GEnie do it I will. Your input is what will make Magic GEnie better. I am not asking for money and I am giving you the user the chance to have some say in what Magic GEnie becomes. If you must give away your money send me an Email note and I'll let you know where to send the check. Otherwise, just send me a note letting me know what you think of Magic GEnie.

I need to thank a few people here:

Matt Armstrong - For writing the documentation. He's done a great job. He has also spent a lot of his own time and money testing for me. Thanks Matt. Bart Barton - His support made development of version 1.1 a whole lot less painful. Thanks Bart. All the Magic GEnie 1.0 users who sent me notes. Version 1.1 is here because of you guys:

M.ARMSTRONG4
NHARRIS
ANNE.INDA
A.FELDMAN
J.NELSON19
J.JACHNA
JACK.KROL
C.ALTWEGG
CHALLY

W.KUBECK
R.L.RADFORD
A.WATSON4
P.WATSON D.NEALE1
DCRULL
T.CASTLE
W.REVEAL1
M.OCONNELL2

Thanks for the support.

As I said before, please report any bugs or problems to me ASAP. I will either explain the problem or fix the bug.

And that's about it!

You've now got all you need to run Magic GEnie 1.1! Smittie, would love to hear your comments and suggestions and questions for future versions of Magic GEnie. Incidentally, his

GEnie mail address is "SMITTIE" (with out the quotes). My GEnie address is "M.ARMSTRONG4" (yep, w/o the quotes) if you want to tell me about any major glitches in these docs, or suggest additions to them.

Appendices

Included in these Appendices are a section for the complete novice getting started with the GEnie setup, and a section for the complete Magic GEnie expert who wants to see what changes and additions happened to version 1.1 quickly.

Appendix I: The Beginner Setup

So, you got lost when I talked about GEnie settings eh? Well, while I can't take the place of the GEnie manual and explain GEnie in full, I can explain the stuff you'll need to know. If this is still Greek when you finish, read the GEnie online help or the Manual. You might also want to read CATetory 1 TOPic 53, which answers many of the questions asked about GEnie. Smittie has also started a topic to support Magic GEnie in the Freesoft RT and Mac RT BB's. However, I assume that since you have downloaded MG from GEnie that you know, at least rudimentarily, how to get around.

To set the three settings needed for Magic GEnie to function, follow these steps:

1. Type "Set" at most any GEnie prompt.
2. Type 1.
3. Set the following items to the following values.
4. Set the "page length" to 0 (zero).
5. Set Break key to 3. In your regular use of GEnie, this can be typed as CNTL-C.
6. Make sure your prompt character is a "?," and not another character.

If you sucessfully set these three values, Magic GEnie should work for you. I say should because these are the only settings people have come out and said "I had to change this to this to make Magic GEnie work" with. If you spot any others, let Smittie know.

When you join a new RT, all the messages in that RT will show up as "new" because you obviously haven't seen any of them. The problem with this is that if you tell MG to get the new messages in that RT, you will download messages dating back to 1986! To avoid this, use the IGNore ALL command for each RT. Basicly the IGNore ALL command goes through and marks all the messages in the BB as "OLD" so they won't show up on a new message scan. Here is some text straight out of the GEnie manual on the IGNore ALL command:

Ignore All New Messages in a BB (IGNore ALL) - You can use the "IGNore ALL" to ignore all the new messages in all Categories. Ignored messages can still be read using the specific message numbers with the REAd command. The IGNore command can be useful if you do not want to read all the new messages on a Board, or if you haven't been on for a while, or a backlog of messages exist. It can take awhile, depending on the size of the BB. It can take over an hour...so it might be best to do

it just before you log off or come back later.

Appendix II: Additions and Editions

So you already use Magic GEnie. Perhaps you've written some E-Mail to Smittie suggesting new features, and he wrote you asking what you thought about a new idea he had. Well, here are the one's that were implemented:

1. Changed the main window so the baud rate is not linked to the phone number.
2. If you sent mail twice in one day using the "To GEnie" file, the second file would not get its name changed to "Mailed to GEnie" To fix this, the "Mailed to GEnie" file has been taken out (a very effective way of getting rid of a bug!). The "Sent to GEnie" file remains.
3. Magic GEnie now has a " *MG Usage Log" file it creates. With every call, it records the time logged on, time logged off, and from those times it calculates the charge GEnie will give you (well, the bugs are still being worked out of this part). Obviously, if you tell Magic GEnie to stay online after it's done, it can't calculate the time online.
4. Magic GEnie supports both PRO BRI and PRO FUL as well as Command Mode in the BB's. If it encounters PRO NON, it will set it to PRO BRI. This has to do with the prompts Magic GEnie looks for. In PRO BRI, they were so small that occasionally they would show up in a message—with disastrous results.
5. Magic GEnie now supports Downloading! No, it's no IDOD, but it is simple and get's the job done efficiently. See the main text for a description of this nice addition.
6. MG no longer creates a "Mailed To GEnie [date]" file. Too many problems were caused when you sent mail twice in the day. It still appends your sent mail to the "Sent to GEnie" file. If you are sending Mail that you don't want to lose, make a copy of the To GEnie text file. That way, if MG or GEnie pukes, you can simply resend it.
7. Magic GEnie can now start up in the middle of an online session. Simply click the new "Online..." button from the main window. Smittie says that MG can figure out where it is from pretty much everywhere on GEnie. It would be a good idea to move to Page 1 though, to avoid problems—especially if you are in a value added section like Grolier's.
7. Countless bugs were squashed, and countless little changes were made to make MG run more reliably.

Since no software is bug proof, and there have been many changes to MG, you could easily run across a bug. If you do **don't toss MG into the trash!** Write SMITTIE a note and he'll fix it or explain why you are having a problem. Heck, the procedure is free, so take advantage of it!

A last note

Although I worked hard on making this document look nice, it's more than likely that some of the paragraph formats, or font info was lost in the conversion of this doc from Write Now format, to Mac Write format, and perhaps to the word processor that you use's format. I'm sorry about this! If you have any suggestions on a better way to lay this out, please tell me.