

Copernicus

BBS Software for the future!

By Michael S. Bean



Copernicus Point System Version 1.00

Written by:

**Michael D. Pester
Michael E. Connick**

Distributed by:

**Software Design
P.O. Box 12016
Des Moines, IA 50312-2016
(515) 279-9650**

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In early, 1986 I approached AMUG President David Beginski and informed him that the Phoenix area needed a strong BBS associated with the Users Group. I had joined another user group at the time for their BBS but it was all Apple II with not one Macintosh file available. David in his usual (I found out later) manner told me that I was right and that if I would do the work of maintaining it that he would supply the equipment.

Soon after that I began trying several Mac BBS's packages until I settled on a construction set called Red Ryder Host. Back then you gave Scott Watson a few bucks (I missed the beer exchange days) for Red Ryder (now called White Knight) and he gave you Red Ryder Host FREE! I remember the many days and nights I have spent over the last few years building the BBS from a few menus on a 20 meg drive to a 9600 Dual Standard HST, 5,500 files, International echo mail, 330 meg system with two FidoNet addresses (1:114/56 & 1:114/53) and Tabby pulling in 400 new national messages each day..... The Arizona Macintosh Users Group BBS has always been one of my great loves.

With all of this great success, one point is apparent over my years of AMUG Sysoping, only about 40% of our members use the BBS. After many surveys and questions the reasons for this began to surface. Many quite frankly found that the AMUG BBS was too busy and that BBS's in general were difficult for them to use, and others still did not have a modem yet. It was clear that those who did use the AMUG BBS really enjoyed it and many found the BBS to be their main joy at the Arizona Macintosh Users Group.

New Frontiers...

Since February of 1990 we have been utilizing a development version of a personal mail system for BBS's called Copernicus. Copernicus allows a user to become a point off of their favorite BBS. The only requirement is that the BBS they connect to called "The Boss" be a FidoNet or AlterNet node. As AMUG already has two nodes we were very interested!

BBS'ing with a Point...

With the use of Copernicus the AMUG BBS or any other system that will agree to assign you point status becomes your network lead to the outside world. During the recent showing of Copernicus to our Users at the April 28, 1990 AMUG telecommunications class over 22 members signed up to be AMUG BBS points immediately out of 35 that attended. As Copernicus performs all of its posting and requesting off-line this point structure should cause the AMUG BBS to be less busy as a side benefit and automation of the BBS being the primary benefit for our users. Many of our users saw these features right away and wanted it immediately.

Copernicus Basic's...

With Copernicus you will be able to automatically crash (call) your Boss (BBS) to obtain the latest messages and download the files you want. For this purpose, you may set Copernicus to call at a fixed time each day or you can call in at anytime you desire. Once your messages and files are obtained Copernicus disconnects from the BBS and allows you to read your mail and messages off-line at a time of your choice with complete cut and paste flexibility.

Once you have responded to your mail and told Copernicus to retrieve any new files you might want you are ready to crash the Boss again. This time your responses to all mail is automatically posted on the bulletin board and any uploads are sent and downloads retrieved. This total automation of the BBS system allows you to relax while Macintosh continues to call the BBS during the night until it connects and perform all of your commands. In the morning, after having your coffee (or before if you are real anxious) all of your mail and files are ready for your review. This is the BBS system I have

dreamed of. It is about time that Mac was able to fully automate all functions of BBS connection.

Copernicus Installation...

The installation of Copernicus on your Macintosh is a little complicated. You are required to answer a number of questions in order to configure Copernicus appropriately. Copernicus is actually a combination of nine separate self running programs that work in conjunction with each other. Once you install Copernicus you may not change the name of the path to any of these files in order for the program to work properly. So remember if you change the name of your hard drive Copernicus will not run. Once your system is installed the program is easily commanded.

Reading and Replying to BBS Mail...

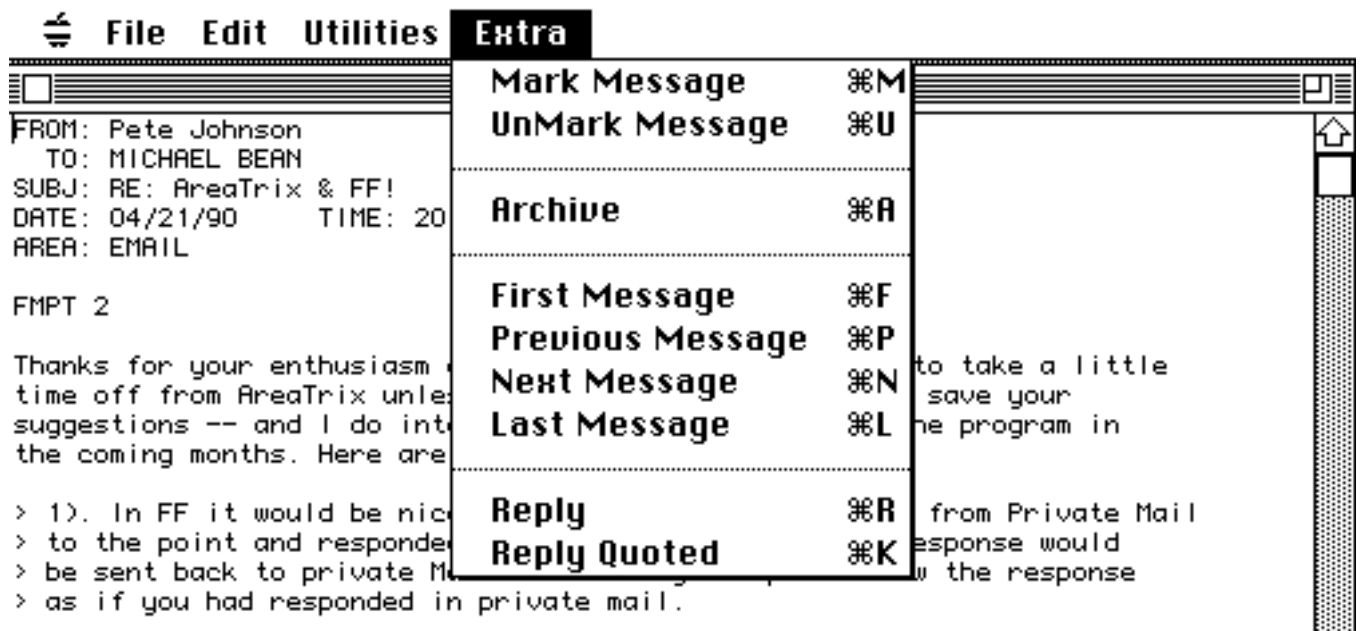
One of the historic problems with network echo's on BBS's across the country has been the sheer volume of posts to read. Many of these posts are interesting to us while others simply are in our path. With Copernicus one of your options allows the you to read all of your mail and echo's addressed to you by selecting "Read by Addressee..." under the File menu. Once you type in your name you receive a list of mail addressed to you along with a list of who it is from, the subject, date and time. You can double click on any of the messages to display it's content.

AUTHOR	SUBJECT	DATE	TIME	S TO
KATHERINE ACTIPIS	TO MICHEAL BEAN RE: VALIDATI	05/02/90	11:48:40	R MICHAEL BEAN
JAMES JACOBSEN	Validation	05/02/90	14:28:29	R MICHAEL BEAN
Cliff Neal	AMUG West Meeting Date	05/02/90	13:53:31	R Michael Bean
Alan Heflich	RE: Business Cards...	05/01/90	23:26:16	R Michael Bean
Pete Johnson	RE: AreaTrix & FF!	04/21/90	20:13:37	R MICHAEL BEAN
Chriss Koch	RE: AreaTrix	05/01/90	20:14:58	R Michael Bean
Bruce Gerson	RE: AreaTrix	05/01/90	06:17:23	R Michael Bean
David Herren	Re: Speed Optimization	05/02/90	08:18:31	R Michael Bean

Once I open the message from Pete Johnson or any other user the Extra menu becomes highlighted and allows me to mark the message to save it for later viewing, unmark it so that when I empty my mail folder it will erase, or archive it to a text file. Navigational message features allow me to move to the first message, previous message, next message or last message.

After reading your message selected you can reply to it or reply quoted. I usually use reply quoted as it will copy the original message you are responding to with quotes as listed below in the example. I can delete the portion of the quote not needed and reply to the rest. This feature is a great

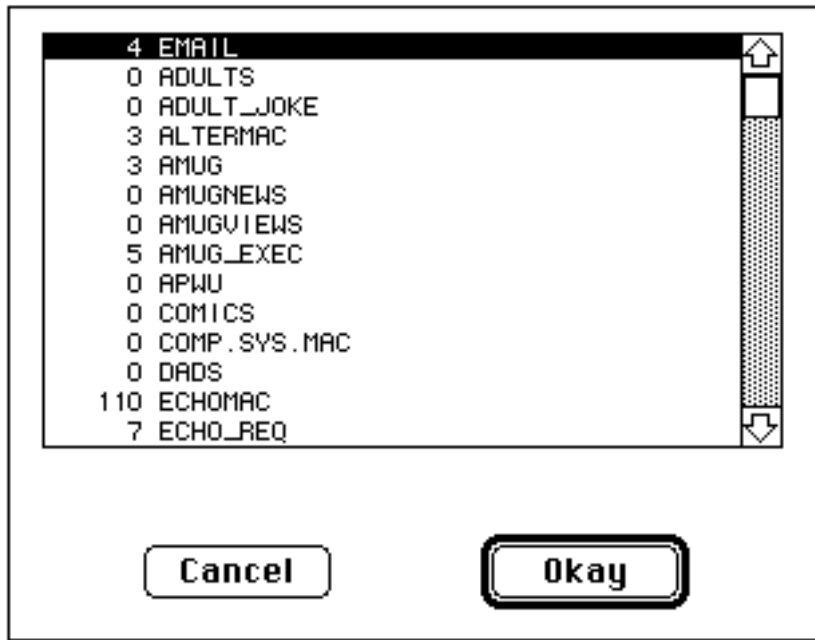
time saver and helps everyone reading your replies remember the subject you are speaking of.



Moving on, you can see from the file menu below that you can perform these same functions for reading by Area, Author or Subject. These search functions can really help reduce the amount of time you spend looking for those important messages of concern to you.

 File	Edit	Utilities	Extra
Read by Addressee...	⌘T		
Read by Area...	⌘R		
Read by Author...	⌘\		
Read by Subject...	⌘=		
Post NetMail...	⌘I		
Post EchoMail...	⌘E		
Close	⌘W		
Save...	⌘S		
Print...	⌘J		
Edit Areas...			
View Log	⌘O		
✓Sequester			
✓MultiFinder			
Quit	⌘Q		

Area Search - This function allows you to select electronic mail or an echo area to list all messages in the selected area and read them. This menu is very handy for scanning how much mail you have in each area and reading only those message areas of interest to you.



Author Search - This menu option prompts you for a name and then lists messages posted by that particular individual. If I wanted to read all of Pete Johnson's posts I could type in his name and all mail which Pete wrote would be displayed in list format as in the illustration below. Had there been more than one message they would have all been displayed for your selection.

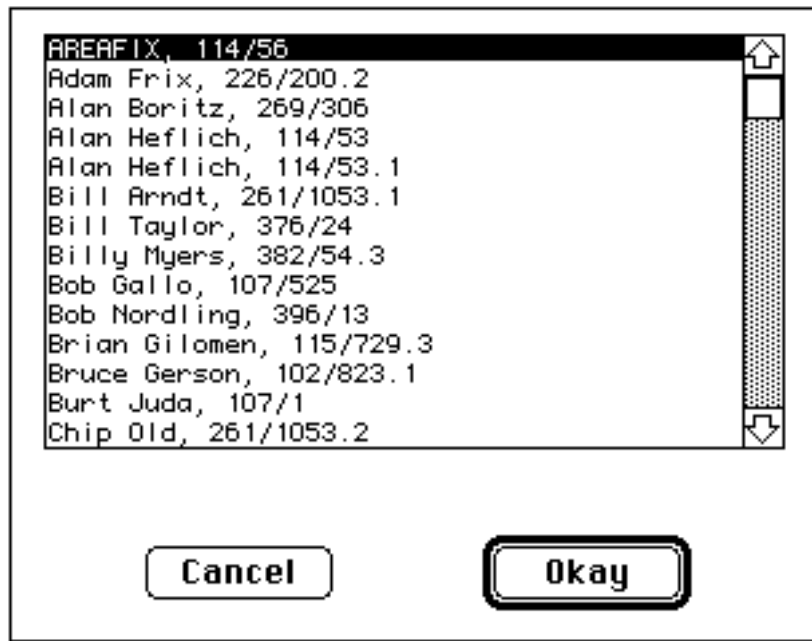
AUTHOR	SUBJECT	DATE	TIME	S TO
Pete Johnson	RE: AreaTriX & FF!	04/21/90	20:13:37	R MICHAEL BEAN

Subject Search - If I perform a subject search and type in the letters "cop" every subject line that has that combination of letters as part of the post will be listed. This is great for searching EchoMac or other large mail volume areas for those posts of interest to you. *I wish in the future that one more search would be added. That search would actually search the text of all messages for certain strings. You can do that now with Gofer but it would make a nice menu feature.*

Posting Mail...

Under the File Menu you have the option to post NetMail or EchoMail. NetMail is a private post sent directly to another user for their viewing only. EchoMail is a public posting of messages in an area related to your topic. For instance, the AMUG echo will contain posts about the Macintosh by Arizona Users.

Post NetMail - Once I select NetMail from the file menu, I am then prompted for an address or user from my address book.



I may then select a user for sending mail to. Ed Edell has created a listing of addresses that can be placed in your Copernicus set-up called PointBook. Using this list is a great help when getting started with your address book. *Two feature I would still like to see in Copernicus is 1). to allow the address book selections to be scrolled from keyboard input rather than only having the scroll selection option. 2). To place a "Group" button in this dialog box to allow the same message to be sent to group of individuals that could be selected by using the Shift key and clicking on them individually.*

With Copernicus you can send mail across the world automatically using the FidoNet system at no cost to you. Copernicus makes editing of the message very easy with wrap around text and cut and paste functionality. The home network mail system is here today!

Post EchoMail - Once you have selected EchoMail you are allowed to select the echo area you wish to post to and then an address dialog is presented to you as seen below.

Enter the name of the user to sent the post to and press OKAY, press ALL to send to all, or use the Address Book to direct your public post.

Cancel

Okay

Use Address Book

All

This Dialog box easily allows you to address your message to "All" as the default, type it in manually or use the address book to find the user the post is going to. All of the posting we have been discussing occurs while you are disconnected from the BBS and at a leisurely time of your choice.

Address Book, Connection, and Filer Transfers...

Address book - Under the utilities menu you will find Edit Address Book. This feature allows you to add new individuals to your address book or delete old addresses. Input is easy and the format is clear.



Connection - Under utilities you can start the BBS connection by selecting Crash Boss for immediate dial up or select Wait for Event to call at a later pre-set time. When you configure Copernicus for your particular set up you can designate a time for it to use in the Wait for Event command. *It would be nice if in some future Copernicus update you had a menu item called "Set Wait". This feature could be used to change the Wait for Event time easily.*

File Transfers - Downloads and uploads can be easily accomplished with Copernicus by selecting "Request File" for a download or "Attach File" for an upload. Should you select Request File you will be asked for the file name and a password. You will not use the password box unless one has been assigned to you. On the AMUG BBS 1:114/56 you can request ALLFILES.DB for a listing of 5,500 files and descriptions available on the AMUG BBS. You can also request FILES for a list of all files posted in the last 10 days. Most systems support a file list called FILES so if you do not know the name this is always a good place to start. To upload simply select "Attach File" and a dialog box will open asking you to choose the file you wish to send.

File Forwarding - One of the great features of Copernicus is that Pete Johnson has agreed to support utilities that enhance it's use. Two new hot items are FF and AreaTrix. With the use of this upload feature and AreaTrix you can upload a file to your Boss (BBS) and instruct it to forward that file to another Point (Copernicus User) on the BBS. In this way, an author could forward a file to the editor or the membership chairman can send the President a copy of the latest member list through the BBS without posting it. This is accomplished by sending a message to File Forward with a subject line that contains (Your Password) > (The Point you want it sent to). Then in the message you simply list the file name(s). This feature will allow great flexibility for the exchange of data.

FF - This utility allows all mail sent to your private (non-Network) mail section to be forwarded to your point for later reading. Pete Johnson is currently in the process of updating the software to send responses to private mail back to your Boss's private mail section for continuity of the string for the user. This is a great tool for Macintosh Copernicus users and you will want to be sure your Boss has this capability. Another great feature of this software is that if you can get all the local BBS's in your area to purchase FF and exchange mail you can set it up so that all private mail sent to you as a user on any of the BBS's you visit locally is routed to your point. That is what I call connectivity. To be able to leave a post for Michael Bean on several local BBS's and have it routed back to my home is better than Mom's Apple Pie.

Sysop's can purchase FF or AreaTrix from Pete Johnson at for only \$20 by writing Pete Johnson, Glassell Park BBS, Post Office Box 65074, Los Angeles, CA 90065

Advantages of Copernicus...

Review and respond to messages off-line at your leisure.
Responses automatically posted on next BBS call.

Ability to review list of all or new files and select them for download.
Ability to send files to other users directly.
File transfers take less time due to faster protocols.
More time is available for others as BBS is not tied up.
All access to the BBS is fully automated.
Messages are easier than ever to post and read.
Program is inexpensive at \$40.

Disadvantages of Copernicus...

Version 1.0 is not compatible with SuperLaser Spool in Finder only mode. The program will crash stating the BBS program is busy or damaged. *This new bug snuck in with version 1.0 and Michael Pester has been notified.* Most other inits work fine with it but I have been told that Thunder has problems as well. The current program that eliminates mail is called Sequester and it has no sensor that determines whether you have read your mail. This process should be disabled and run manually so that you do not accidentally lose mail. I have lost several groups of mail as I forgot to turn it off. I eventually disabled it and now only run Sequester manually. *The author has shown some interest in adding a menu item that is titled Clear Mail as a replacement.*

Who should purchase Copernicus?

Here at the Arizona Macintosh Users Group we have found that those individuals who utilize the BBS at least once a week are good targets for the use of Copernicus. Users who read Network EchoMail will not want to use anything else after trying Copernicus. If you have individuals who like to download the latest, they will do better with Copernicus also as it will not drop them after a time limit or stop because a file is too big. The transfer usually takes less time with the Copernicus/Tabby protocols also. Copernicus is not a replacement for your Telecommunication program but it will replace your needs for that software on your BOSS system which will probably be your favorite BBS. The ability to turn your BBS into a easy to use network mail system for your group is one of the best features of Copernicus. In today's world of Macintosh telecommunication software everyone that uses a BBS regularly should consider Copernicus. At \$40, it is one of the Best Mac Bargains out there! The only bargain I can think of that tops this one is AMUG membership at \$30 <grin>!

Copernicus can be purchased from:

Michael Pester
Software Design
P.O. Box 12016
Des Moines, IA 50312-2016

(515) 279-9650 Visa and Master Charge accepted.

To become an AMUG Point contact:

Michael Bean

718 E. Campbell Ave.

Gilbert, AZ 85234

(602) 892-5454

The Arizona Macintosh Users Group awards Software Design (Michael Pester and Michael Connick) with a four AMUG's rating out of a possible five and congratulates them on a great Macintosh telecommunication break through!



Happy Mac'ing,

Michael S. Bean
President

Arizona Macintosh Users Group
718 E. Campbell Ave.
Gilbert, AZ 85234
(602) 892-5454
(602) 495-1713 (modem)
AppleLink: UG0116
GEnie: MichaelBean

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