Quick and Dirty Documentation for Local Dial version 1.0

programmed and copywrite 1989
by Matt Armstrong

If this document is all screwed up, I'd change the font to your favorite, and the size to 12.

A Brief Introduction

I wrote this procedure out of a frustration with the dialing of all the local BBS in my area. Before Local Dial, I had to execute my "auto-logon" procedure for each individual BBS. If that BBS was busy and I wanted to check another, I'd have to cancel the procedure and start up the procedure for that BBS. Back and fourth, back and fourth, until I got online somewhere. Oh sure, I wrote short procedures to redial many different BBS in sequence, but when one went down I had to re-write the procedure. In short, a lot of my time was messing around with Red Ryder and less was spend on the BBS!

So I wrote Local Dial. With Local Dial you can redial six of your favorite BBS, if you don't feel like calling one of them, it's easy not to with the click of a mouse. Local Dial will continue to dial all of the BBS you tell it to until it gets online — but that's not all! It will then execute any logon procedure you have ready for it. Before dialing, it will also load any Settings files that you want it to.

So how do you do this?

I'd recommend that you go into Red Ryder 10.3 and execute the procedure, just to get an idea of what it looks like. Play around with it a bit, you can't kill it. Go on, I'll continue when you get back.

[... 10 minutes pass ...]

Ok, you are back. You should have noticed that you could fill in the name of six BBS right off the bat. Also, you should have noticed a "Dial" checkbox next to each BBS. If you check this "Dial" checkbox, Local Dial will dial that number when you press the "Begin" button at the lower left of the main window.

The only thing that I feel is a little obtuse is the "Set..." button next to each BBS. If you clicked on it, you will have noticed that a "Set..." window appears. This is where you tell Local Dial the dialing strings (phone numbers), procedures, and settings that go with each BBS. The pathnames are subject to the 132 or so character limit described in the Filename section (or possibly the Procedure section) of the RR documentation.

Local Dial creates a little file called "LDPrefs" in the same folder as Red Ryder. This is where it stores all you're info for each BBS between executions. If you'd like to protect you're entries (it can be a pain to do over) just make a backup of this file.

A Note on the Procedures

The autologon procedures you write for Local Dial to execute for the BBS it connects to should assume that you are already online when your procedure is executed. If you're procedures have worked with Red's Phonebook, they will directly port to Local Dial. Do not worry if the BBS shoots out it's "Password? :" string before Local Dial starts up your logon procedure, Red Ryder will still scan that line and detect the prompt.

Huh?

"I can't get the thing to work!" you exclaim. Well, I'd be glad to hear your problems, and if I do I'll do my best to fix them. I'd also be glad to hear from you if you did get it to work or you made some improvements to the procedure (I included the source code). I'd be even more interested if you have suggestions for the procedure for me to do. In any of the four events, you can contact me at:

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or, if you prefer the electronic media (as I do):

GEnie mail address : M.Armstrong4
MacComm or
Sonoma Online! (Sonoma County CA BBS'): Matthew Armstrong

Again, if you use it and like it let me know. And if you don't use it because you don't like it let me know and I'll change it.

Possible Problems

The only possible problem that I can foresee with Local Dial is the dialing procedure. Local dial begins the dialing process by typing "AT V1" and "AT", without expecting an OK. When it dials, it expects to receive one of 4 strings back "ERROR," "NO CARRIER," "BUSY,"

or "CONNECT." If your modem hangs with this, then I'd suspect that it's not Hayes compatible. I'd be interested in working with you if you are having problems.

The number you enter in to the "dialing string" portion of the "Set..." dialog box must also contain the dialing command for your modem. For instance, if you wanted to dial 555-1213 you would enter "ATDT 555-1213" in the dialing strings box.

It's Free of Charge

Consider this procedure shareware without a charge. While I was considering writing a really long description asserting my rights and taking away your freedom, I decided to keep it simple. You can modify this procedure all you like. All that I ask is that you don't call your modification Local Dial and that you stick my name somewhere on it, something like "inspiration provided by Matt Armstrong" and also that you don't make or ask for money for you're derivatives.