

NetFeed!

THE Macintosh <=> UseNet Reader

NetFeed is the ultimate utility written because two Electrical Engineering students were tired of all the bureaucracy involved with accessing information through the mainframe at their university. Hence, being adapt programmers they decide to sit down and write there very own UseNet reader/posting program for the best computer around! You see, the university insisted that only “technical-related” information be stored on their mainframe. So the only UseNet info they could receive was the boring computer-system-specific topics...yuck! What you see is just under a year's (on and off) work to find a way around this problem. We tried to make this program as easy to run as possible. Navigating your way around an NNTP (Net News Transfer Protocol) site - aka UseNet - isn't the easiest thing in the world. Every possible effort was made to stick to the Mac interface with little deviation. If have any questions, please feel free to e-mail the authors:

Bill Burns (WDBURNS@MTUS5) or Brad Boyer (BRBOYER@MTUS5)

(NOTE: If we receive a postcard from you or a donation and postcard, you'll receive the accompanying VIEWER program to use with NetFeed...a sort of “NoteBook Manager” ... :))

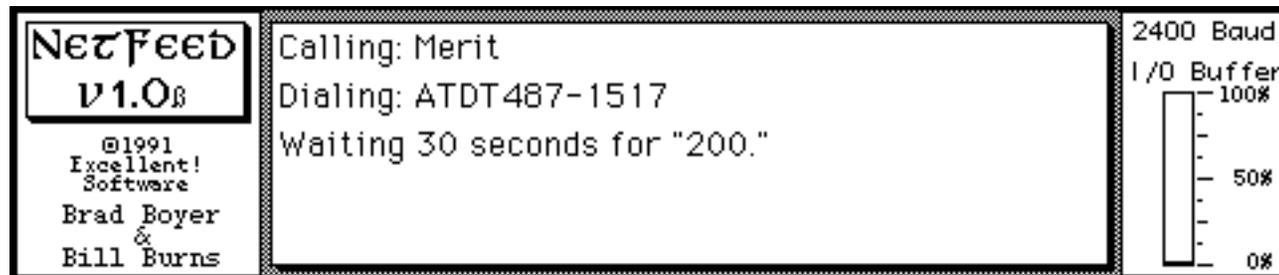


Figure 1

Script file rules:

- **This program only works with modem-connections! MacTCP is *NOT* implemented yet!!!**
- There can be as many lines (and trial script lines) as you like
- Each different connection method must start after a “\x” from the previous script AND
- The first line of EVERY connection site is “*<name>” and is only for output purposes...(but MUST be present)
- The next line describes how to log on all the way to a NNTP (UseNet site):

Command structure is as follows:

(Note: all commands MUST begin with the "\" character!!!)

command:	what it does / expects:
----------	-------------------------

-----	-----
-------	-------

d	Dial number immediately proceeding "d" char includes all dialing codes the "@" char indicates what speed to set up.
---	---

Also to be included is the parity, stop bits and wordsize needed. (make sure you read the conversion table !!!)

w	Wait xx seconds for string.
---	-----------------------------

s	Send (output to port) text string
---	-----------------------------------

r	Send a carriage return/line feed char.
---	--

x	This particular Script line is finished.
---	--

Please note that the script file will run from top to bottom, trying each connection until it gets a valid connection OR you run out of places to try (entries in the script file). In most instances, there may be more than one way to get to a NNTP server. Inability to connect may be caused (aside from operator error) by a busy phone line or a down server... For direct-dial-in Merit folks, the first connection example may be all that you need - aside from changing the phone number and/or the baud rate.

If you find that you can connect manually, and CANNOT write a script for it, that is where the "Pre-Logged" function under the "Options" menu may come in handy. This is so that you can be already on-line with an NNTP server and still run NetFeed....

!! note that you may also place comment lines in your script file, to do so make sure that the first character on that line is a "#" character. The entire line will be ignored...you may use this to remind yourself what your script file is actually looking for...

Dialing codes:

Δdial hayes-modem √ 2400 baud:

Δ 1: 0=None Parity

Δ 1=Odd

Δ 2=Even

Δ 2: 0=1 Stop-bits

Δ 1=2

Δ 2=1.5

Δ 3: 0=7 bit Word size

Δ 1=8 bit

Δ 2=5 bit

Δ 3=6 bit

Example Script file:

*Merit-MTU

|dATDT5551212√2400,2,0,0 |w20CONNECT |r |r |r |r |r |stelnet 141.211.164.8 119 |w30200 |x

Δ

ΔWait 20 secs for CONNECT, send 6 CR's

Δ then send the telnet command to merit for terminator.cc.umich.edu 119

Δ then wait 30 secs for string "200" which is the NNTP code for "I'm Ready!"

Δ|x command is the end

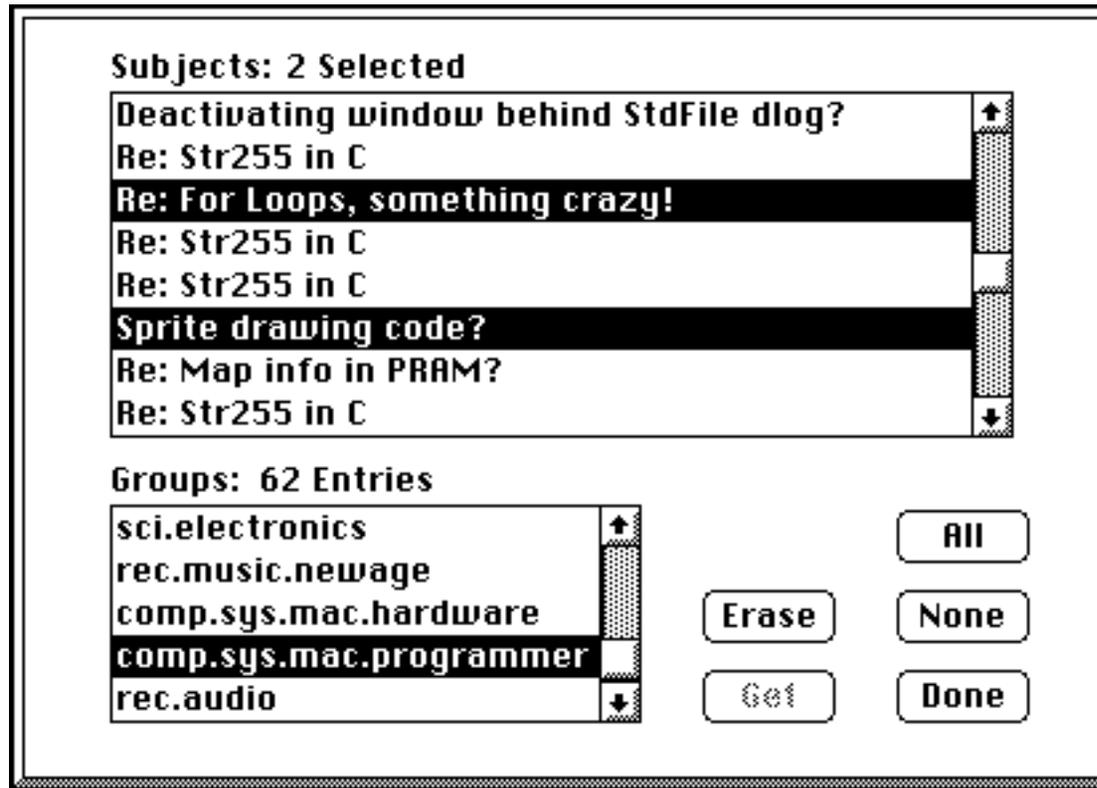


Figure 2

Once you are connected to a UseNet server (or beforehand if you desire), you can select the menu option "Subject Feed". NetFeed will then contact the UseNet server and begin comparing all known subject lines (from articles) that YOU have already with new subjects (i.e. new mail) present on the UseNet server. If any new mail is present for the groups that you have listed in the file "NetFeed Param", the subject lines are retrieved and placed in the database. What all groups are processed, NetFeed is ready for your next action.

Selecting menu option "Article Feed" (see Figure 2) will bring up a dialog box that lists all current groups and their respective potential subject lines in them. Click on any subject(s) in any of several groups that sound interesting to retrieve and that are added to the queue. To start the process of getting this mail, click the "Get" button. Other buttons are for ERASING ALL SELECTED SUBJECTS (i.e. "Erase" button), selecting ALL or

NONE of the subjects in the currently selected group (i.e. "All" or "None" buttons), and leaving the dialog box (i.e. "Done" button). Please be very careful with the ERASE button - it erases every subject in every group that you have selected!!!

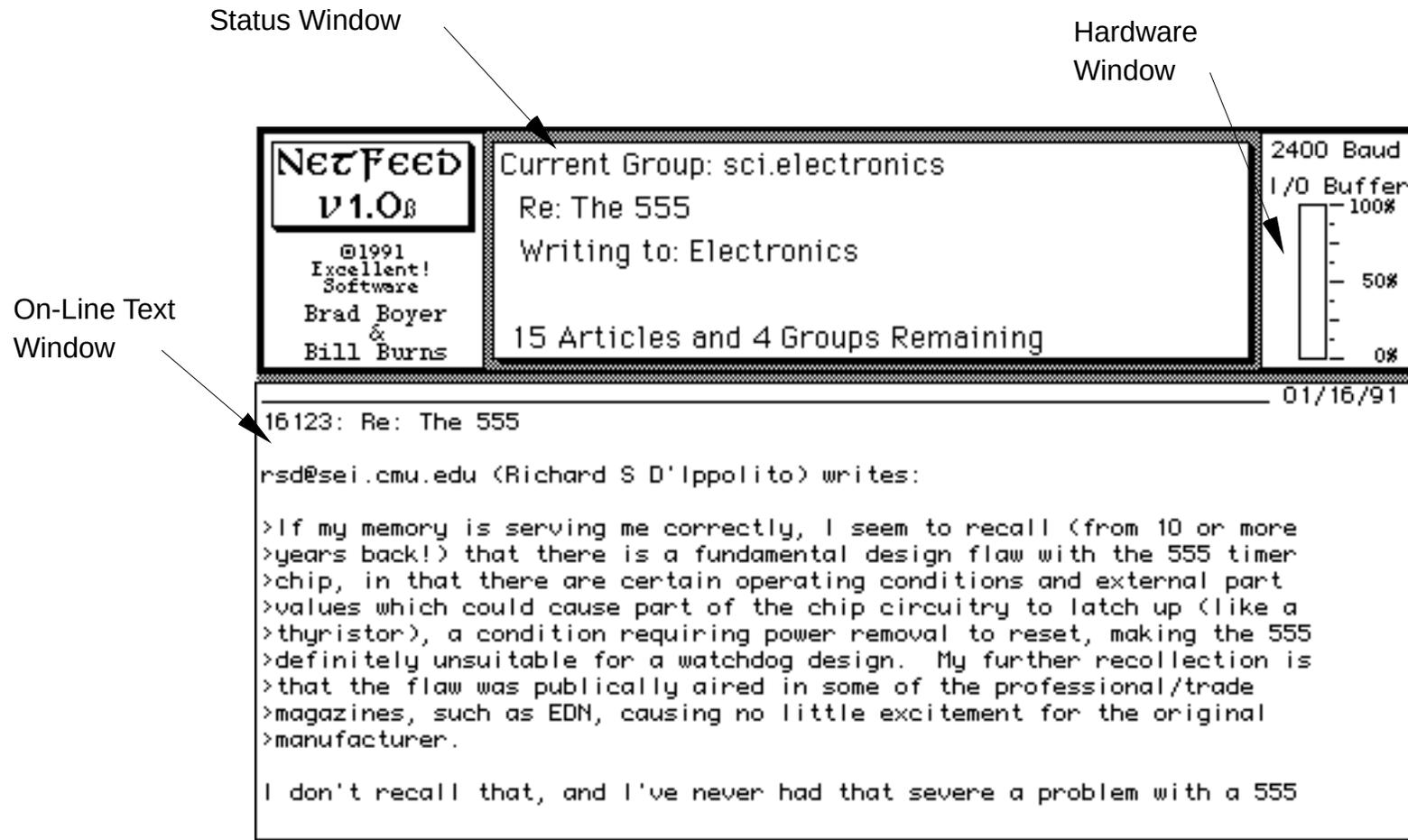


Figure 2

WINDOWS

The three basic main windows that are up during an on-line session are the Main Status Window, the Hardware Window, and the On-Line Text Window.

The Main Status Window is constantly updated with information pertaining to the status of the connection, and the results of any action of either NetFeed or the UseNet server. This window also displays the connection process (See Figure 1).

The Hardware Window provides three vital pieces of information: the currently operating Baud rate (determined by the first line in the file "Script"), the amount of text that is being tracked by the internal serial buffer (note that the size of the buffer is dependant on the baud rate and in most cases will not fill up very quickly - if at all!), and an indication of whether or not we have sent an "X-Off" to the sender because our buffer has reached near maximum (and we don't want to lose any incoming characters!). Please note that the "X-On/X-Off" light will only be active when NetFeed's serial buffer is approaching maximum - this is evident by the buffer bar graph being almost filled up and a small "dot" on top of the graph. For most instances, this will hardly ever happen, but it IS possible at high baud rates, or when running NetFeed in the background.

Another file that you will have to customize is that called NetFeed Param. This file is the master selection list of interesting groups

the format for setting up the Param file (which groups you want to track, etc.) is as follows:

the_usenet_groupname,the_startingnumber_of_article,type_of_file,Output_Filename

Param File Explanation:

* usenet_groupname : a valid UseNet group that exists on the server you're connecting to (see included list)

* starting_number : automatically updated. To start, use "-2" for last 10 articles in that group,

"-1" to have the last number set to THEIR last number (i.e. start from scratch the next time you run a feed),

or "0" to get as many as possible that you can from the server.(Anyones over 100 article limit will have to be gotten next time.)

* type : do you want the article's header information intact? If Yes, use "article"; if no, use "body".

* output_filename : the Mac File name placed in NoteBook folder

Note that each group places it's own articles in its own text file. All notebook folders are stored in the folder: "NetFeed NoteBooks"

example: (see enclosed UseNet list for YOUR choices - they are constantly updated, but we don't track them)

comp.binaries.mac,2640,body,Mac_Binaries

Please note: NetFeed is Shareware - you are encouraged to distribute this program as widely as possible, but you are not authorized to make a profit on this program (aside from normal disk-duplication costs -sorry EduComp!)

Authors Adresses: Bill Burns

Brad Boyer

P.O.Box 648

Rt 3. 660 Elk Drive

Gaylord, MI 49735

Gaylord, MI 49735