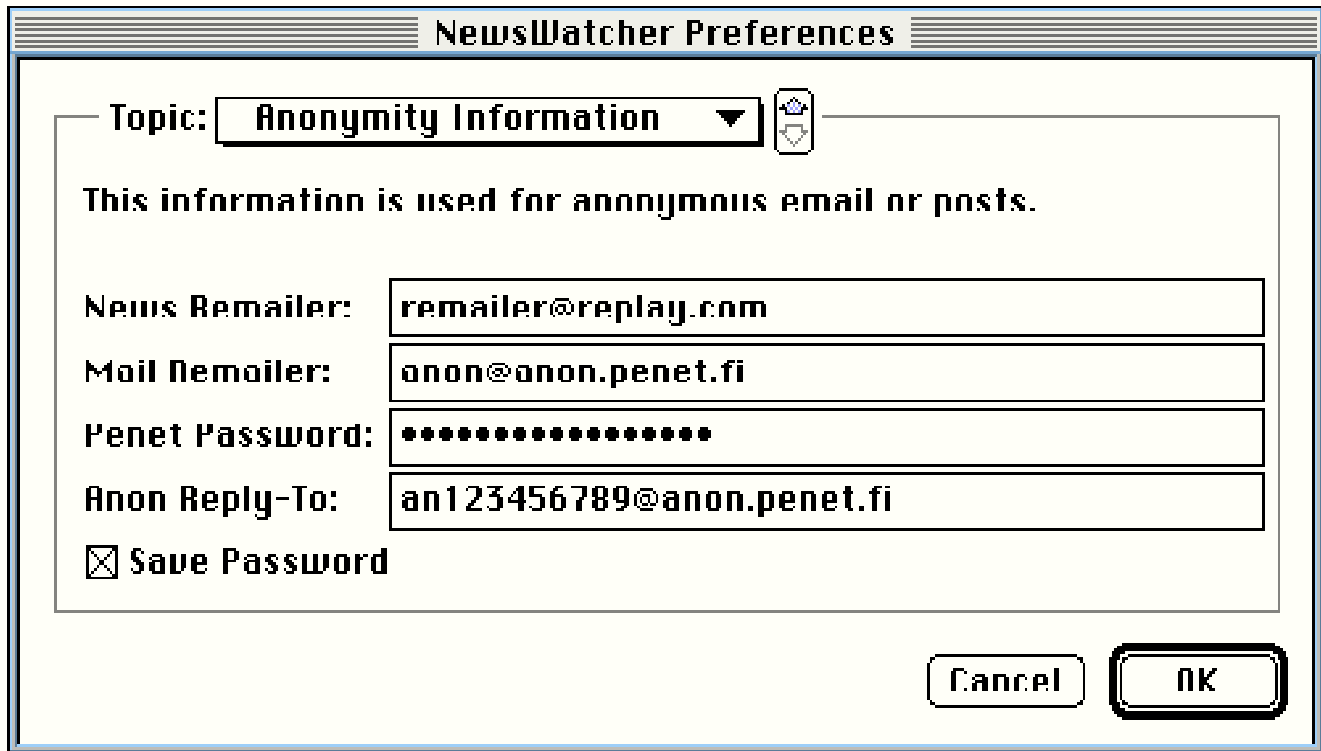# YA-NewsWatcher and Anonymity

Yet Another NewsWatcher adds a new feature to NewsWatcher: transparent support for posting via anonymous remailers. For information on anonymous remailers, read the newsgroups alt.privacy, alt.anonymous, or alt.privacy.anon-server. Also read the additional files that accompany this release of Yet Another NewsWatcher in the "Remailer Docs" folder.

About once a week there is a post sent to the newsgroups alt.anonymous and alt.privacy.anon-server by raph@kiwi.CS.Berkeley.EDU (Raph Levien) titled "List of reliable remailers" which provides an overview of which remailers are currently available. There are also two FAQ's available at the standard FAQ sites, "Anonymity on the Internet FAQ" and "Anonymous Remailer FAQ" which explain how remailers work, and what legitimate purpose they serve. Anonymous remailers are an important resource for many people on the internet who have legitimate reasons for using them. Please learn about the remailers before using them, and please don't abuse them. Remember that the use of a remailer is a privilege, which should not be abused by using the remailer for illegal or unethical purposes.

Anonymous remailers work by taking an incoming message, removing the headers that indicate its origin, and then forwarding it to its desired destination. They may do this in such a manner that no reply is possible (a one way remailer), or the sender may be given an anonymous address managed by the remailer to which replies may be sent. To create a valid message for a remailer, the "To" line must be set to the email address of the remailer, and various other header lines added to signal where the email message or usenet post should be forwarded. The anonymous remailer features in YA-NW automate this process so that it becomes foolproof. There are several different types of remailers in use today. Two major classes are cypherpunk and penet. The anonymous remailer support in YA-NW works with both types of remailer.

The actual headers used in a message sent to an anonymous remailer are not those that are displayed in the message editing window. This is done in part to make using the remailers easier, since the necessary headers vary from one type of remailer to another. When the "anon" button is selected in the message window, the header lines that will NOT be included in the message are hidden. The remaining fields (To , Newsgroups , etc.) will be used to compose an appropriately formatted message. If you wish to see what the outgoing message will actually look like, you can print the message window. This will show the message as it will be sent, with two exceptions: the password (if required) will be displayed as bullet characters, and the headers shown will be a composite of the required email and post headers if both mailing and posting are currently selected.

"Anonymity Information" in Preferences dialog.

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╔════════════════════════════════════════════════════════╗
║              NewsWatcher Preferences                     ║
╠════════════════════════════════════════════════════════╣
║  ┌ Topic:┌─────────────────────────┐ ┌─┐                ║
║  │       │ Anonymity Information  ▼│ │▲│                ║
║  │       └─────────────────────────┘ │▼│                ║
║  │ This information is used for anonymous email or posts.║
║  │                                                       ║
║  │ News Remailer:  ┌──────────────────────────────────┐ ║
║  │                 │ remailer@replay.com              │ ║
║  │                 └──────────────────────────────────┘ ║
║  │ Mail Remailer:  ┌──────────────────────────────────┐ ║
║  │                 │ anon@anon.penet.fi               │ ║
║  │                 └──────────────────────────────────┘ ║
║  │ Penet Password: ┌──────────────────────────────────┐ ║
║  │                 │ ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●                │ ║
║  │                 └──────────────────────────────────┘ ║
║  │ Anon Reply-To:  ┌──────────────────────────────────┐ ║
║  │                 │ an123456789@anon.penet.fi        │ ║
║  │                 └──────────────────────────────────┘ ║
║  │ ⊠ Save Password                                       ║
║  │                                                       ║
║                              ┌────────┐ ┌────────────┐  ║
║                              │ Cancel │ │     OK     │  ║
║                              └────────┘ └────────────┘  ║
╚════════════════════════════════════════════════════════╝
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This information is used when an anonymous remailer is used for posting or emailing a message. The news and mail remailers are specified separately, though they can both be set to the same email address if desired (and if the selected remailer supports anonymous posting).

IMPORTANT: For YA-NW to recognize that you're using the penet and not a cypherpunk remailer, you must enter the remailer address exactly as:
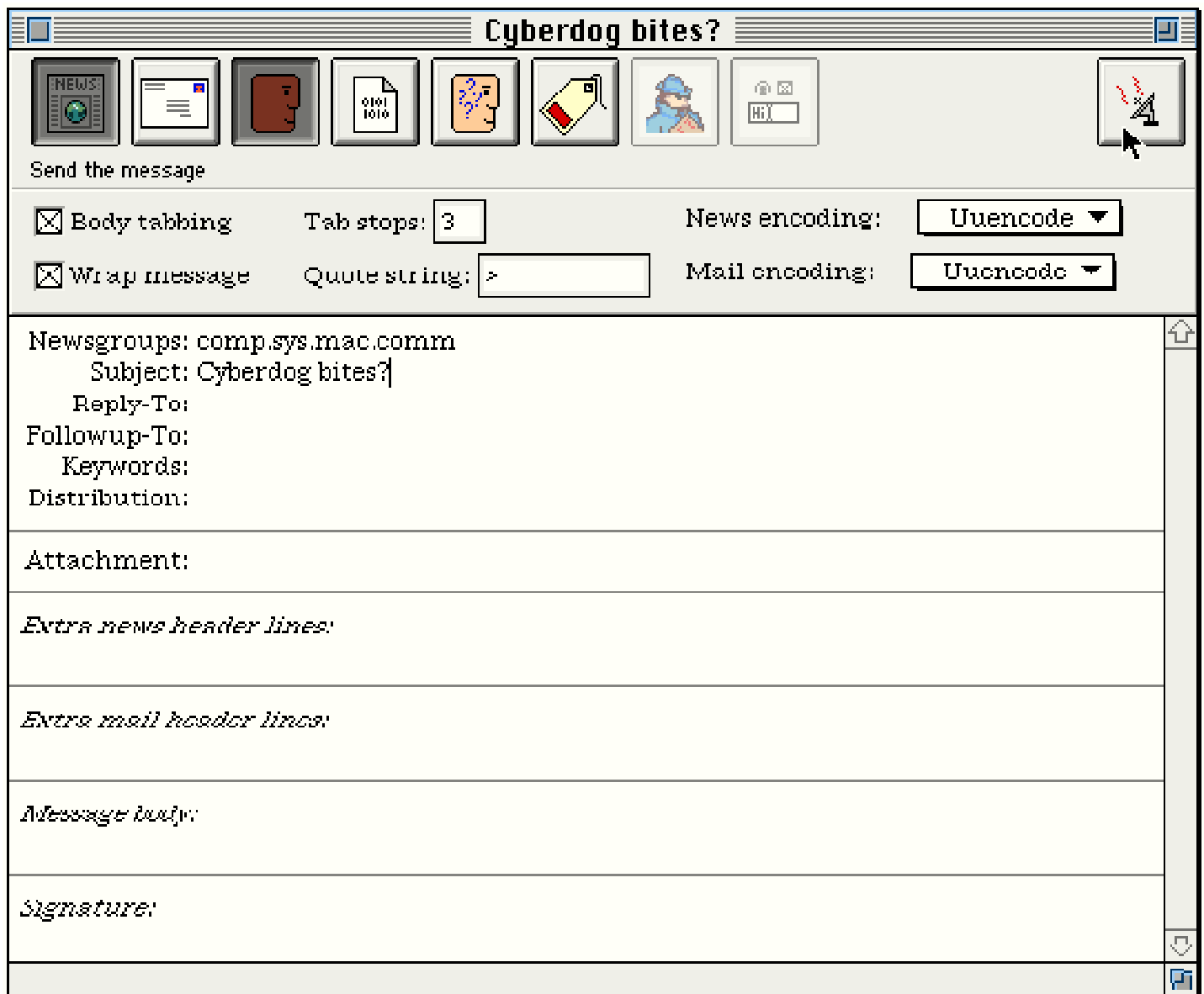
anon@anon.penet.fi

It doesn't matter if you want to use penet for email, or posts: the above is the correct remailer address to use. For addresses for other remailers, please see the "List of reliable remailers" file (and preferably get a current copy first).

The "Penet password" line is used to enter the password to your anon.penet.fi account. It can be left blank if you don't use the penet remailer, or if you use penet without a password (which is a very bad idea). The "Anon Reply-To" field may be used to add an anonymous reply address to a message that is not being sent via penet (which always allows anonymous replies). It too can be left blank if you don't wish to use it. It would usually be used to supply a penet anonymous reply email address when you are using a cypherpunk one-way anonymous remailer.

Message windows.

Message windows have a new "Use anon remailer" button. When this button is clicked, it hides a few fields that don't make sense for anonymous messages (such as cc, bcc, and reply to). These fields will not go in the anon post or email. The other header lines stay the same, even though they won't all be used as-is in the actual message. This is done to hide the details of the actual anon remailer, which can vary according to what kind of remailer is going to be used.

There are two classes of remailers that I believe cover the majority of the available open remailers: penet (which is actually a confidential remailer, since it lets people exchange messages) and cypherpunk, which is one-way and fully blind. The headers are different for each case. So what I do is take the information the sender entered in the "to" and "newsgroups" fields, put this stuff in the appropriate new anon remailer header, and replace "to" with the address of the remailer.

If you wish to see how the actual message sent to the remailer will appear, print it. Note that, when printing a message window with the anon button selected, if both "Send as email" and "Post as news" are selected, the printed message will show the headers used for both the news remailer and the mail remailer. When the message is actually sent, only the appropriate (news or email) headers are included in the message. When printing the message, the penet password is replaced by bullet characters.

Note that it is not possible to mail anonymously and post non-anonymously, or vice-versa.

You can specify a different remailer for email and posting. Selecting the anon button means that both email and posting will go to the appropriate remailer, if both the news and mail buttons are also selected. As stated, penet is designed for two way communication, so it's easy to reply to posts or email sent via penet. The other remailers are one way, but allow extra header lines to be pasted in (normally everything except "subject" and "content type" are stripped by the remailer as part of the process of making the message anonymous). So there's the option to add a reply-to field to such messages. Presumably that would be a penet personal anon email address.

Note that NewsWatcher's "extra news headers" and "extra mail headers" are also pasted in when using a cypherpunk remailer. This means that they too will show up in the final anonymous email message or post. When the penet remailer is used, these headers are positioned normally within among the other headers. Because penet is aggressive about stripping out headers, they probably will NOT be included in the final anonymous email message or post.

Finally, penet will include the References header line in anonymous posts, so your response can be part of a thread. The Keywords and Followup-To headers are stripped out, however. Because all three of these headers are "pasted in" when a cypherpunk remailer is used, they will be included in the final anonymous email message or post.

Note that your signature is never appended to an anonymous message, as this could reveal your identity. This is why the signature edit area is removed from the message window when the anon button is toggled on (and Show Details is enabled).