Yet Another NewsWatcher 2.2.0b7 Read Me

Please read all of this document thoroughly before trying to run Yet Another NewsWatcher for the first time. You should also have read and be familiar with the user guide for the original NewsWatcher program by John Norstad. More detailed information on various YA-NewsWatcher features is discussed in the user guides "YA-NW and Binary Posting", "YA-NW and Filtering", "YA-NW and Sorting", and "YA-NW and Anonymity."

Yet Another NewsWatcher is a Usenet newsreader application for Macintosh featuring binary and anonymous remailer posting, article filtering (kill files), and article sorting. Please see "Program Information" below for who to blame for what.

What's included in this distribution:
  • NewsWatcher: a fat binary version of Yet Another NewsWatcher
  • a number of text files that document the various features that YA-NewsWatcher adds to original NewsWatcher. It does not contain the original NewsWatcher user document, which you should obtain and read carefully.

You may also need to obtain one or more of the following helper or applications:
  • YA-NW Filter Converter: a application for converting VA-NewsWatcher or YA-NewsWatcher filter (kill) files to the new format used by YA-NW 2.0.4 and later
  • YA-Base64: a helper application for decoding MIME Base64 encoded as well as uuencoded attachments.
  • YA-NW Filter to TEXT: a utility application for converting YA-NewsWatcher filter files to plain text files that can be edited with a text editor.
  • YA-NW TEXT to Filter : a utility application for reconverting a plain text file back to a YA-NewsWatcher filter file.

If you are running YA-NewsWatcher after having previously used the original NewsWatcher, when the program starts you will receive an error message about preferences being not found, damaged, or invalid. This is normal. These are the preferences that YA-NewsWatcher adds for the extra features it offers.

IMPORTANT:
YA-NewsWatcher has been proven to be a stable program that runs well and reliably on most peoples' Macs. If you encounter problems, here are some things to try/look out for:

  • Set a reasonable preferred memory size for the application. The default size seems to work for many people with full group lists up to about 16000 or so. Increasing the memory to 2560 kB may help for very large full group lists for normal day-to-day use. Please see the original NewsWatcher manual for a discussion of memory usage. Note that, f you have more than just the subject and author headers shown in message windows, you will probably need to further increase the amount of RAM allocated to YA-NewsWatcher, especially if you open newsgroups containing many articles. You may also need to increase the memory allocated to YA-NewsWatcher if you create filters that use other than the standard subject and author headers.
  • Make sure you have your location and time zone specified correctly in the Map and Date & Time control panels. Setting your location is important for the correct operation of the various date handling routines.
  • Set a reasonable maximum number of articles to fetch, such as 600, rather than the standard default value of 15000.
  • Make sure you're using the most recent version of MacTCP (2.0.6) or Open Transport (1.1), and have installed all the appropriate system software updates (7.5.1 for example).
  • If these fail, see if disabling filtering has any effect. Also try turning off some of the other options that have been added in YA-NewsWatcher (showing date and time or line counts in subject windows, etc.)
  • If none of the above help, try flushing the article cache (see Additional Information, below).

• As a last resort, trash your old prefs and/or filter files, and see if that makes any difference.

Program Information:
Yet Another NewsWatcher is free. It may not be sold for profit or included with software or other products which are sold for profit without the permission of Northwestern University. Otherwise it may be freely distributed.

Yet Another NewsWatcher was developed by Brian Clark based on the original NewsWatcher application by John Norstad. If you encounter a problem, please read the NewsWatcher manual and the Yet Another NewsWatcher readme files to see if the matter is discussed there.

The Yet Another NewsWatcher program, the various filter file utility, and YA-Base64 helper applications should also be found at Info-Mac Archives mirror sites worldwide.

The anonymous FTP site for the original NewsWatcher program, the user document, and the CodeWarrior C source code is:

   ftp://ftp.acns.nwu.edu/pub/newswatcher/

The helper programs used by NewsWatcher (both versions) are available via anonymous FTP at:

   ftp://ftp.acns.nwu.edu/pub/newswatcher/helpers/

except for YA-Base64 as noted above

NewsWatcher (both versions) requires a Macintosh running System 7.0 or later with 2.5 megabytes or more of memory and a hard drive. The Mac must be connected to the Internet, and MacTCP or Open Transport must be properly installed and configured. Unlike the original NewsWatcher, YA-NewsWatcher will NOT run on machines without Color QuickDraw (which includes all 68000 Macs).

NewsWatcher (both versions) is distributed as a "fat binary." This means that it runs in native 68K mode on Motorola 68K Macintoshes, and it runs in native PowerPC mode on Power Macintoshes.

For dialup use, NewsWatcher (both versions) works with the various SLIP and PPP programs, and with ARA together with an appropriately configured AppleTalk/IP gateway. It is strictly an online newsreader, and it does not support any other kind of dialup connection. The program requires an active full TCP/IP connection to the Internet. It does not support offline newsreading, and it does not support older kinds of dialup connections designed primarily for simple terminal emulation. We have no plans to add these features. If you need an offline newsreader or a newsreader which works with older kinds of dialup connections, you must use some other program.

The original NewsWatcher was written by John Norstad of Northwestern University:

   mailto:j-norstad@nwu.edu

If you have a comment, question, or suggestion about Yet Another NewsWatcher, please read the user documents for the program before writing to any of the authors. Most questions are answered in John Norstad's user document for the original NewsWatcher. In particular, see the "Getting Started" chapter for basic instructions on how to use the program, and see Appendix F for a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) and their answers. If you don't have a copy of the user document, you can get it via anonymous FTP. Hold down the Command key and click anywhere in the following line:

   ftp://ftp.acns.nwu.edu/pub/newswatcher/user-doc.postcard.sea.hqx

Additional information is contained in the various user documents that accompany Yet Another NewsWatcher.

Before writing or posting to ask for help or report a problem, make certain you have the most recent version of the program.

For information on licensing the original NewsWatcher for commercial use (e.g., for inclusion with other commercial software, products, publications, or services), contact Andy Rosenau of Northwestern University:

  mailto:ar@nwu.edu

The program is based on the original version 1.0.2 written by Steve Falkenburg of Apple Computer. John Werner of Taligent is a major contributor. Thanks also to the following people who helped test development and beta versions, helped with design discussions, and/or helped with code contributions: Apple DTS, Steven Carmody, Steve Dorner, Adam Engst, Ron Flax, Aaron Giles, Haydn Huntley, Steve Klingsporn, Jean-Pierre Kuypers, Robert Lentz, Peter Lewis, Jim Matthews, Andrea Norstad, Jeremy Norstad, Lasse Hillerøe Petersen, André Pirard, Quinn, Howard Rafal, Pete Resnick, Craig Richmond, Larry Rosenstein, Leonard Rosenthol, Jeroen Scheerder, Michael Shappe, Eric Slosser, Stephan Somogyi, Neal Trautman, Dean Yu, Mahboud Zabetian, Willem Nijenhuis, Bill Stewart-Cole, and the nice people on comp.sys.mac.comm.

The regular expression code is a slightly modified version of code by Henry Spencer. The 3-D button controls are slightly modified versions based on code by Zig Zichterman. The popup menu controls in message windows are slightly modified versions based on code by Jim Stout.

Special thanks to Steve Dorner, both for his advice and assistance, and for his "Eudora" mail program, which has served as a consistent source of inspiration for NewsWatcher in particular and as a standard of excellence for Macintosh Internet software in general.

Additional Information:
This version is NOT an "official, John Norstad" version of NewsWatcher. John can't and won't support it, and is not responsible for any bugs   added in YA-NewsWatcher. It is also NOT supported or endorsed in any manner by Northwestern University or ACNS. Questions or comments regarding problems or support should not be directed towards John Norstad or Northwestern University or ACNS.

The restrictions imposed by John Norstad and Northwestern University regarding the use, distribution, and modification of NewsWatcher also apply to YA-NewsWatcher.

New or Changed Features in Yet Another NewsWatcher
This section documents the features in YA-NW that are either entirely new or which are different from those found in original NewsWatcher.

1) A number of small cosmetic changes have been made. The spinning beach ball cursor has been replaced with a color animated cursor (the small NewsWatcher newspaper icon, with a spinning globe). The panel area of windows is drawn in light gray. The icon pseudo-buttons in message windows have been replaced with genuine icon checkbox controls that are drawn in a 3-D style (as are the other buttons in the panel area).

2) The dialog to select folders has been changed to satisfy the Apple Human Interface Guidelines, and it's now a little smarter about aliases to volumes.

3) The subject line to file name routine has been changed to be more intelligent and to provide less mangled file names when saving articles to disk which try to maintain part (n/m) numbers in the file name.

4) The detection of Base64 encoded binary files has been added, with decoding via a new helper application "Yet Another Base64 Decoder." Unlike MPack, this new decoder will handle (indeed it requires) the concatenation of all parts of the original message, and it will run in the background without user interaction after being sent an apple event. Posts with Base64 attachments will now be handled just like those with uuencoded or binhexed attachments.

5) Added a number of other options relating to extracting binaries. All these options are set in the "Extracting Binaries" portion of the Preferences dialog. If "Keep Bad" is checked, YA-NW will not delete any binaries that it starts to download and then determines that they are bad in some way (incomplete, or not a recognizable binary format, or ...) Also, each of the decoder helper apps has an "Auto launch" checkbox. If checked, the decoder will be automatically launched when YA-NW starts up, and will be quit when YA-NW quits. This keeps the decoder apps from launching and quitting with each binary being extracted, which can slow down the decoding process.

6) A new item has been added to the Special menu to disable or re-enable the truncation of messages that seem to be binary posts. Sometimes the logic used to detect binary posts fails, causing normal text messages to be truncated. This menu option lets you (presumably temporarily) disable truncation so that the message can be read, or printed or ...

7) The time that articles are kept in the cache has been reduced from 60 to 30 days.

8) The option to flush (empty) the article cache when quitting by holding down the option key when selecting Quit has been added. There's a confirmation dialog so that you can change your mind about emptying the cache. A large cache can cause some out of memory errors, since the number of articles actually added to a subject window for processing and actual display is the number fetched PLUS the number in the cache. The latter number can be very large, causing apparently inexplicable memory problems. Note that, if you have the option to backup your prefs file enabled, you can "undo" the cache flushing by using the backup prefs file the next time YA-NW is launched (the article cache is stored in the prefs file).

9) The ability to save or extracting binaries from multiple open windows, or send messages in multiple

open windows has been added. By holding down the shift key while selecting Save from the File menu, all open windows of the same kind as the topmost window will be saved. For example, if a subject window is topmost, all the selected articles in all open subject windows will be saved to disk. If a user group window is topmost, all the user group windows will be saved. Similarly, if shift is held down when choosing Extract Binaries, all selected articles in all open subject windows will have their binaries extracted. In all cases, the way this works is that the topmost window is processed normally, then the windows are cycled through one by one, until you're back at the original window. During the cycling, whenever the new topmost window is the same kind as the original topmost window, the save or extract binaries operation is performed on it. Note that this all happens sequentially. There is still no thread manager support for doing multiple tasks simultaneously.

Similarly, you can send all the open message windows by holding the shift key when clicking on the Send button or selecting Send from the News menu. This works by rotating through the open windows as described above. The difference, of course, is that each message window is closed after it is successfully sent.

10) Full support for binary posting has been added. See the "YA-NW and Binary Posting" document for more information.

11) The ability to filter articles has been added. See the "YA-NewsWatcher and Filtering" document for details.

12) Article sorting in subject windows was added. See the "YA-NewsWatcher and Sorting" document for details.

13) Support for scrolling digest articles to the next subject has been added. When reading an article, the 'b' key now scrolls to the first line beginning with "Subject: " following the current insertion point. If the "Spacebar digest shortcut" item in the Newsreading Options preference dialog is checked, digest processing is also mapped to the space bar. For both keys, the default space bar processing occurs if no "Subject: " lines are found. (Note that digest processing requires that the Main Keyboard Shortcuts" preference be selected.)

14) Added support for posting or mailing messages using anonymous remailers. Please read the document "YA-NewsWatcher and Anonymity" for information on this subject.

15) Improved marking as read of cross-posted articles. In original NewsWatcher, only articles that were opened had any cross-posts also marked as read. Now this also occurs when an article is saved to a file (including binary extraction) from a subject window.

16) Improved the handling of the .newsrc file. Added a dialog when there is a failure trying to automatically send a group list to a remote host. You are given the option of ignoring the failure (which allows the group window to be closed without sending the group list to the remote host), or proceeding normally (which means you get a second dialog explaining what error occurred, and the group window is not closed). If you often experience network problems when fetching or sending the group list, you probably should not have these operations done automatically. But if you do keep this option enabled, and you encounter errors sending the group list to the remote host, you can now close the group list window without successfully sending the to the remote host. If you haven't saved the group list locally, you'll see the usual dialog asking if you want to save your unsaved changes.

Also, in original NewsWatcher the .newsrc file would be ftp'd back to your host system only if it had unsaved changes. Of course, f you saved the group list on your Mac, and then made no further changes, the .newsrc file was considered unchanged and was not automatically ftp'd back to your host system when the group list window was closed. You had to manually send the .newsrc back in this situation. This behavior has been changed. What happens now is that the .newsrc file will be ftp'd back if it has changed since it was last ftp'd. In addition, if you also save the user group list on your Mac, you will get the usual unsaved changes prompt even if the .newsrc has been ftp'd to your host machine. In effect, the state of

saved or unsaved changes is handled separately for ftp'ing the .newsrc file and the local user group list file.

17) Added an option to modified the behavior of the "Next Group" command (and other commands that translate to this, such as pressing the enter key. Previously, even if there were still unread articles in the group (because there were more article that the number fetched from the news server), the next newsgroup in the list would be opened. Now, when the "Next Group Command Ignores Unread Articles" option in Newsreader Options is not checked, this only happens if there are no unread articles in the current group. If there are unread articles, a new subject window for the current newsgroup is reopened with newly fetched unread articles.

18) Added the "Get Newsgroup FAQ" command to the Special menu that may be used to get the FAQ for many newsgroups via the Ohio State web server using your specified http helper application. Also, the "Get Newsgroup Descriptions" command was added to get the short descriptive text that is sometimes available from the news server to describe the purpose of newsgroups. Note that these commands do not always yield the information that you seek. The Ohio State web server doesn't have a FAQ for every newsgroup in existence, and many news servers also don't have descriptions for all the newsgroups they carry.

19) Changed the labeling for icon buttons. When "Show Icon Labels" is enabled, and the mouse is over an icon button in a group, subject, or message window, a prompt explaining the function of the button is displayed in the area below the icon buttons.

20) Added the option to have a horizontal scroll bar in subject windows. In previous versions, the width of the subject was truncated as needed o fit all the displayed fields within the subject window. The narrower the window was made, the more severely the subject was truncated. There's now a new subject windows options preference to instead use a horizontal scroll bar, and maintain the full subject width (or at least he first 79 characters of the subject).

21) If "Show line counts" is enabled for Subject windows, when saving a file (binary or otherwise) to disk, the NewsWatcher Status dialog will show progress information (i.e. "Saving File 1 of 2 line 200 of 566").

22) Added the option to hide the status window (except at startup, since he window is shown before the preferences are read). When the status window is hidden, and there's therefore no cancel button to press, you can still cancel a long process by pressing command-period.

23) Increased the maximum length of header that can be fetched from the server from 255 to 4095 characters. This will help to alleviate a problem some people have encountered when trying to filter using the References: header (filtering failed when the long header was truncated at 255 characters).

24) Added a checkbox to Subject Window Options preferences dialog to have read messages removed from subject windows when they are refiltered.

25) YA-NewsWatcher can now optionally create section breaks when encountering new MIME sections in article windows. This is useful for hiding the MIME "enhanced" text produced by newsreaders like Cyberdog.

26) The format of the Path: and Message-ID headers has been modified somewhat. they now conform more closely with the so-called "Son of RFC 1036." A side benefit is that posting may be faster on some systems because the user's machine name is no longer fetched from the host when creating these headers.

27) There is a new checkbox in the "Server Options" portion of the Preferences dialog. If "Use XOVER Command" is checked, YA-NewsWatcher will use the XOVER command to fetch the subject, author, date, line count, (and other currently undisplayed and unused) headers when creating a new subject window. If you have "Show Authors," "Show Dates," etc. enabled in the "Subject Windows" portion of the

preferences dialog, then checking "Use XOVER Command" *may* result in better performance, especially if you commonly read newsgroups with few unread articles. If instead the newsgroups you read often contain hundreds of unread articles, the speed penalty of the extra and unused headers fetched using XOVER may outweigh the advantage gained by not having to send multiple commands to the news server. Finally, as with the other options under "Server Options," not all news servers support this command.

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Special thanks to John Norstad for all his hard work on original NewsWatcher.

Brian Clark