

Getting Started

About FirstClass

FirstClass is the Open University's e-mail and conferencing system. Over 200,000 students and Associate Lecturers have access to FirstClass and make use of the online community environment that can be found there. Many courses provide a course discussion area and tutor group discussion area (conferences) on FirstClass. If your course does not have a course run conferencing environment you may find there is a social conference for your course within the Open University, OU Student Association discussion area.

By using FirstClass you agree to abide by the Open University Code of Conduct and Conditions of Use for conferencing systems. More information about the FirstClass service, including server downtime scheduled can be found in the Information section of this site.

Using FirstClass

With FirstClass you can:

- Send and receive electronic mail (e-mail)
- Transfer text and graphics files so that other users can access them
- Browse and send messages to online forums (conferences)
- Participate in an online synchronous chat
- Publish information on the World Wide Web

Depending on the level of permissions assigned to your user account, you may not be able to use all of FirstClass' features. For example, you may be able to read messages in certain areas, but not delete them.

How FirstClass Works

The FirstClass client software runs on your computer. It connects to a FirstClass server and provides the interface (such as menu commands) that lets you work with

FirstClass objects. You can use any of the following clients to connect to a server; FirstClass client software, a web browser, a handheld device.

The FirstClass Servers store all your messages and documents, the Mailbox, conferences and folder structure that contains these items. It also contains information about all the users known to the server. When you log into FirstClass, you connect to a server. The Open University has several servers and you may be able to connect to more than one of these servers depending on which courses you are studying. On each server, you will see the objects that the administrator for that server has given you permission to see. The server to which you normally connect is considered your home server.

FirstClass objects include:

- Messages
- Documents
- Uploaded files
- Folders
- Conferences
- Calendars
- Your Desktop
- Your Mailbox

OU Computing Services

You should already have received a letter from the Open University informing you of your Open University Computer Username and password.

To find out what server your FirstClass account (email and conferencing) is situated on you need to look at your personalised list of computing services available from your OU home page

Students need to visit the Student Home web site:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/students/>

Associate Lecturers need to visit the Tutor Home web site:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/tutorhome/>

Your home page will offer you access to a number of computing services, in addition to FirstClass.

To find out on which server your FirstClass account is located, you will need to 'sign in' to the home page web site with the username and password provided on your confirmation letter and view your menu of computing services.

If you have never used the online services previously, the first time you sign on you will be asked to provide some personal details, security information and a new password.

By completing this process you will be able to view your menu of computing services. You can also change your FirstClass preferred name (i.e. the name you wish to be known as on the system) via your home page.

On your list of computing services you should see a link titled FirstClass Desktop or FirstClass Mailbox. There will be some information next to the FirstClass Desktop or Mailbox link including the name of the FirstClass server you will connect to.

Note down the FirstClass Server number as you will need this server number to set up your connection to FirstClass.

Some aspects of your FirstClass account, such as access to course-specific conferences, may start a later date. The service open and close dates will also be displayed on your menu of computing services.

Installing FirstClass

For those users installing the FirstClass Client software for the first time using the P559 Online Applications CD Version 5

Start up your computer

Do not open any other applications and place the CD in the CD-ROM drive (which is assumed to be drive D: in the instructions below)

Your PC maybe configured to autorun the P559 CD, if not you will need to click on the Start button, click on Run, then type in the box labelled Open: D:\install.exe and click on OK

The Setup process for the Online Applications CD-ROM will then start; click the 'Continue to main menu' button on the Welcome screen

You will be presented with a number of different options to install, select the 'Conferencing software' category

Click on the Install FirstClass 7.1 button

The FirstClass Welcome screen will open as shown in Figure 1 click on Next to continue

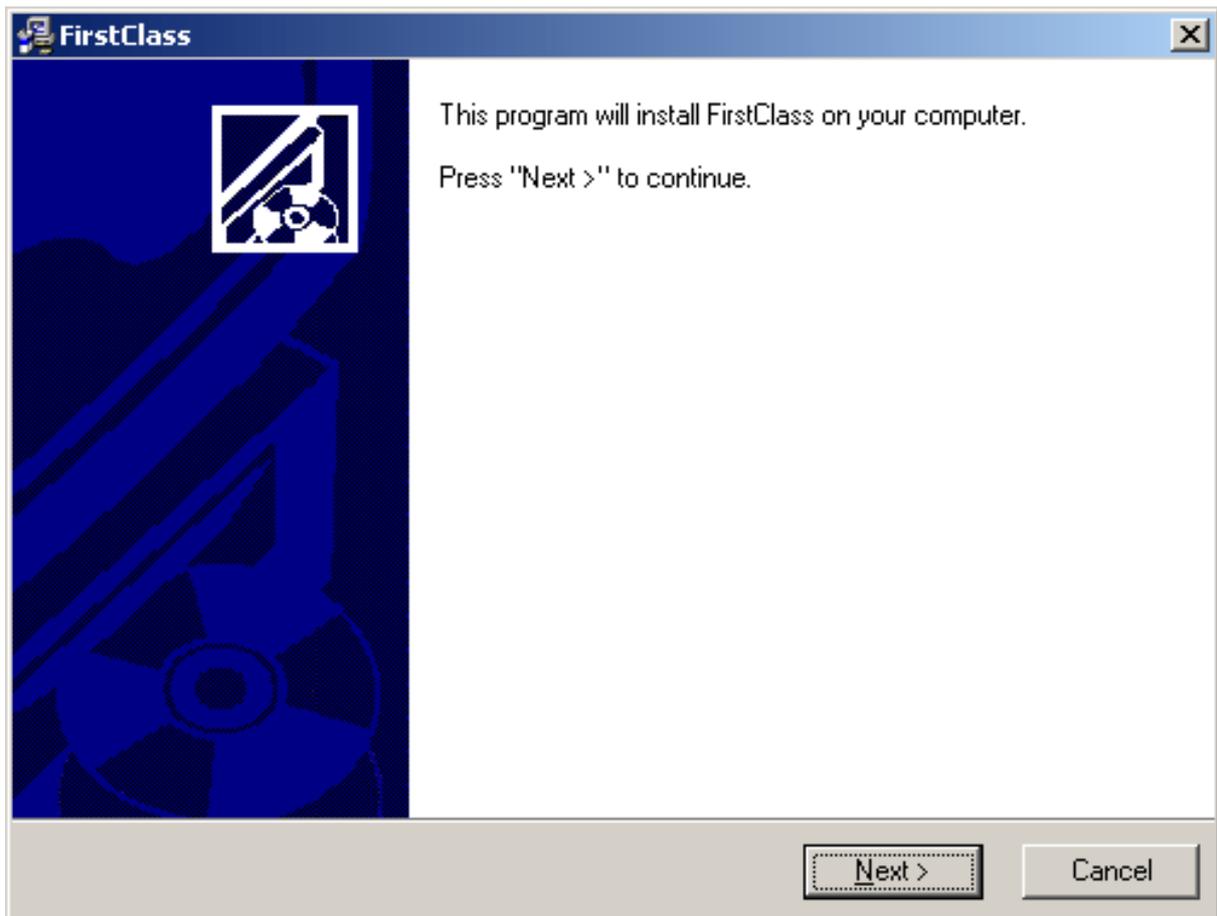


Figure 1 - Welcome

In order to install FirstClass, you will need to agree to the license agreement from the software authors, as shown in Figure 2 License agreement

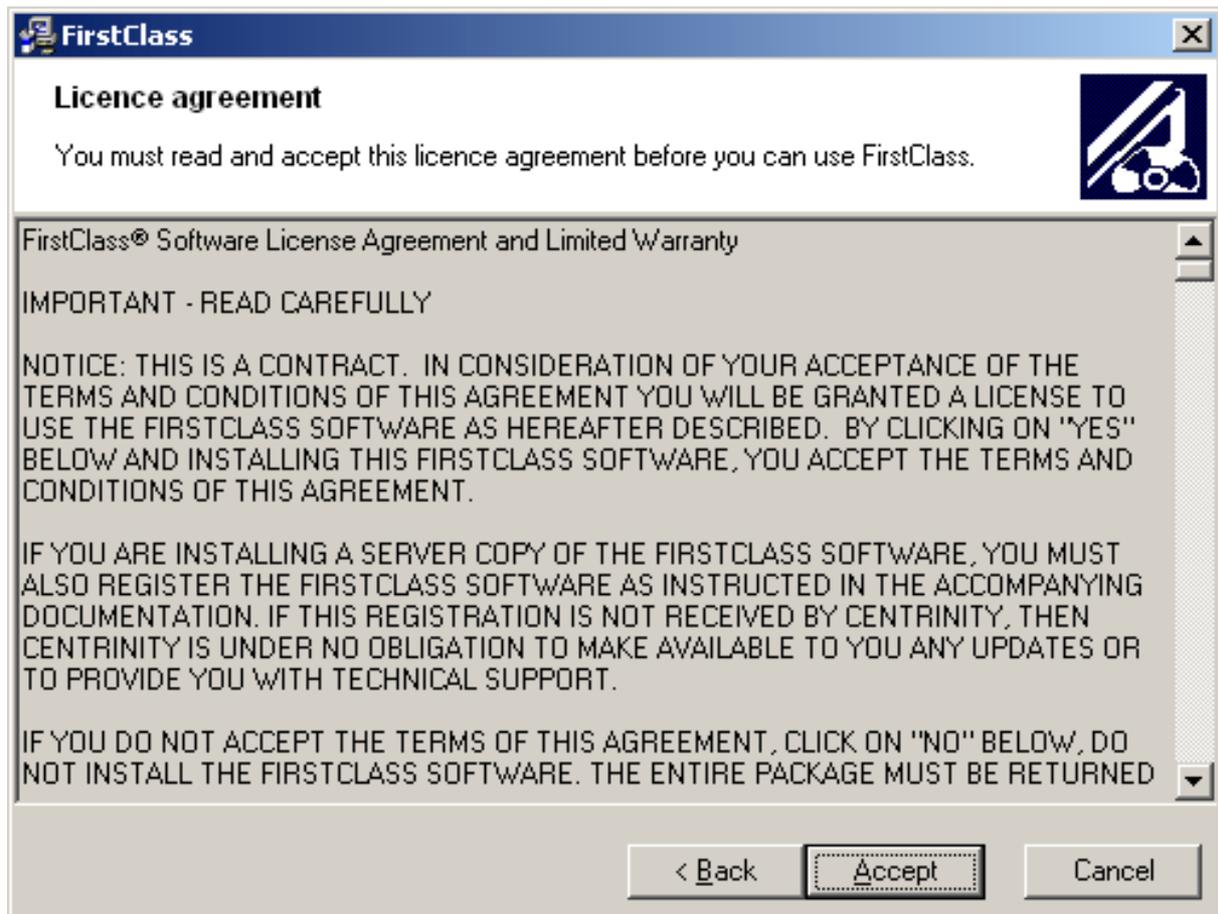


Figure 2 - License Agreement

To proceed with the installation click on the Accept button

Next you will be asked to select the directory for the installation, as Figure 3 the Install Location window shows

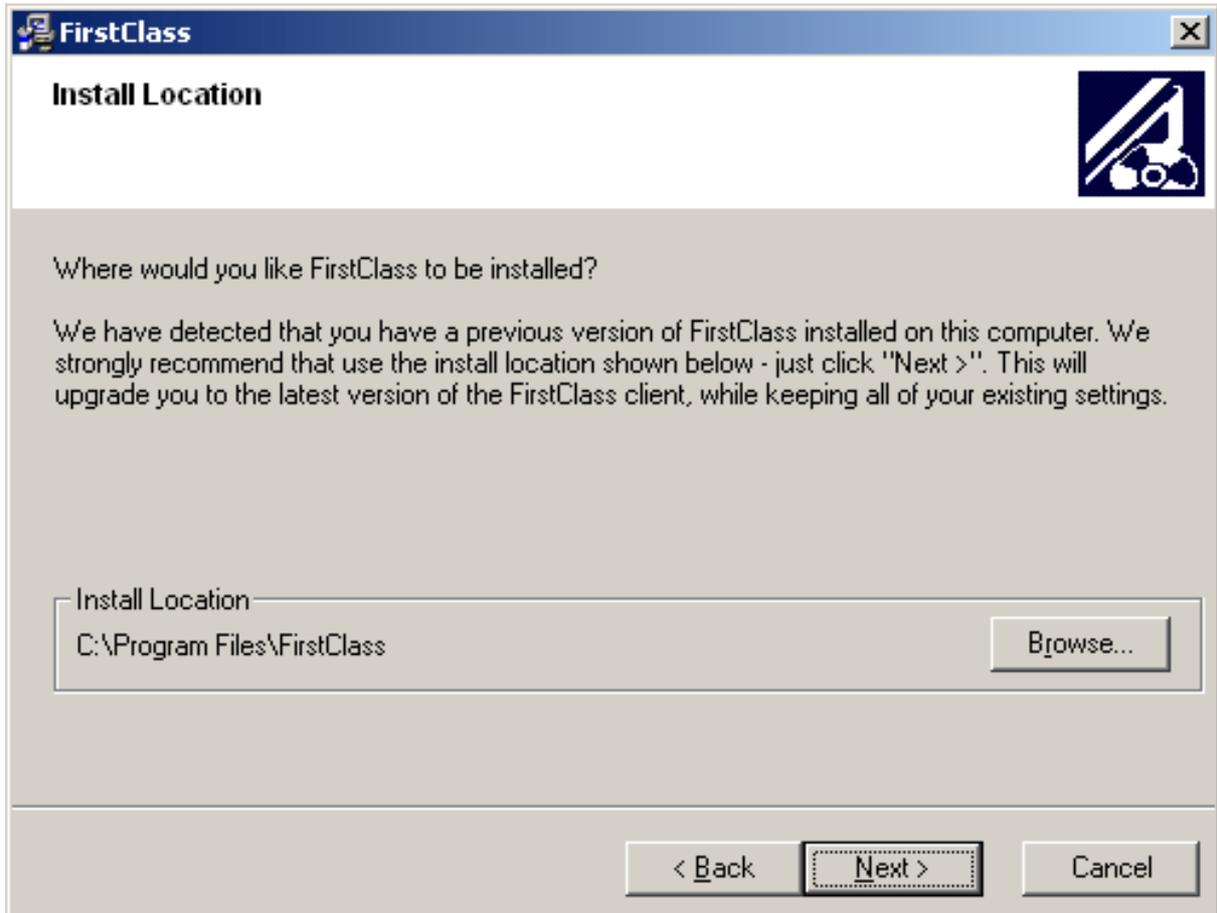


Figure 3 - Choose Destination Location

We recommend that you select the default destination folder entry here and click Next

Once the application is ready to install, the Ready to Install dialogue box Figure 4 will be displayed

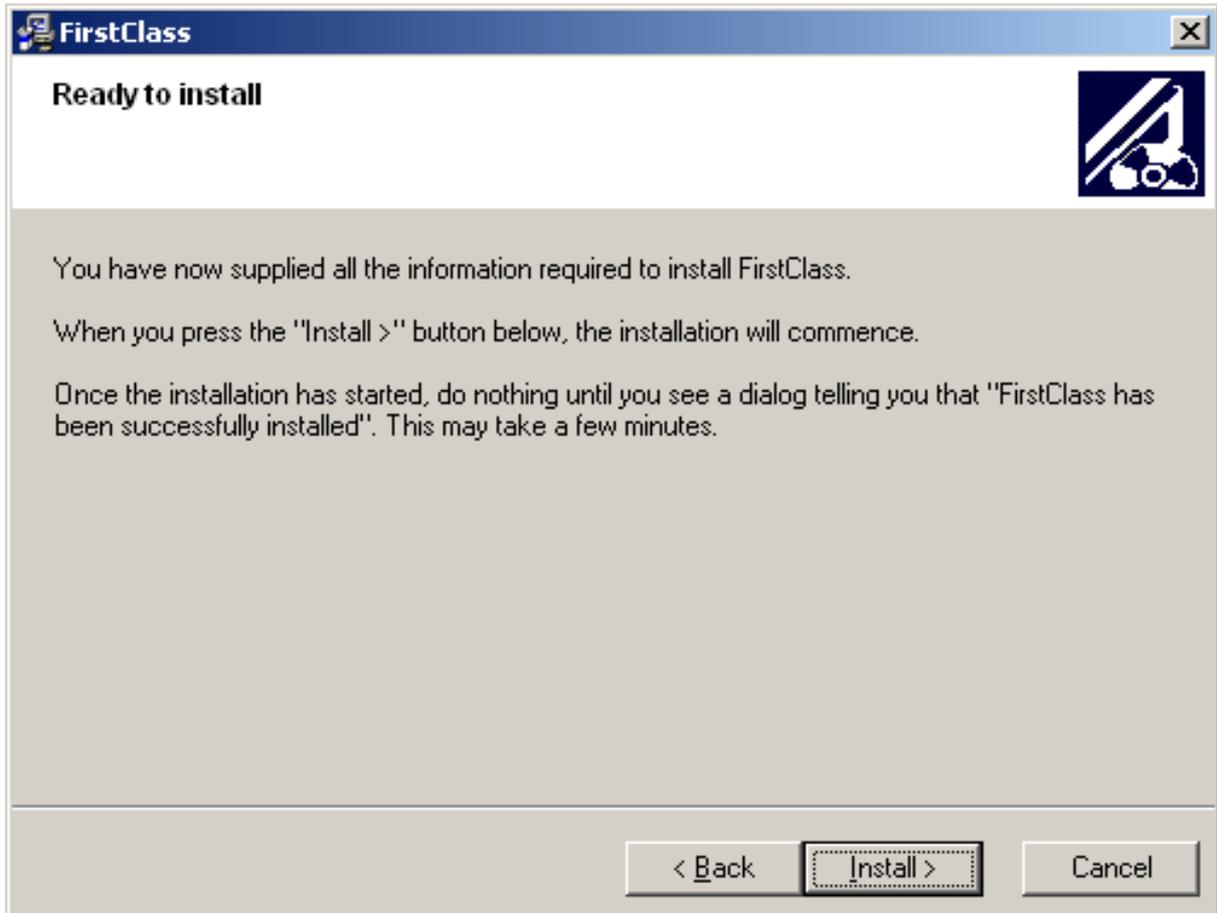


Figure 4 - Ready to Install

The set-up application is ready at this stage to copy the necessary files across to your computer. You can use the Back button to alter any settings or choose to quit the installation procedure

otherwise, click Install to continue

Once the installation is complete the FirstClass has been successfully installed window will open as shown in Figure 5

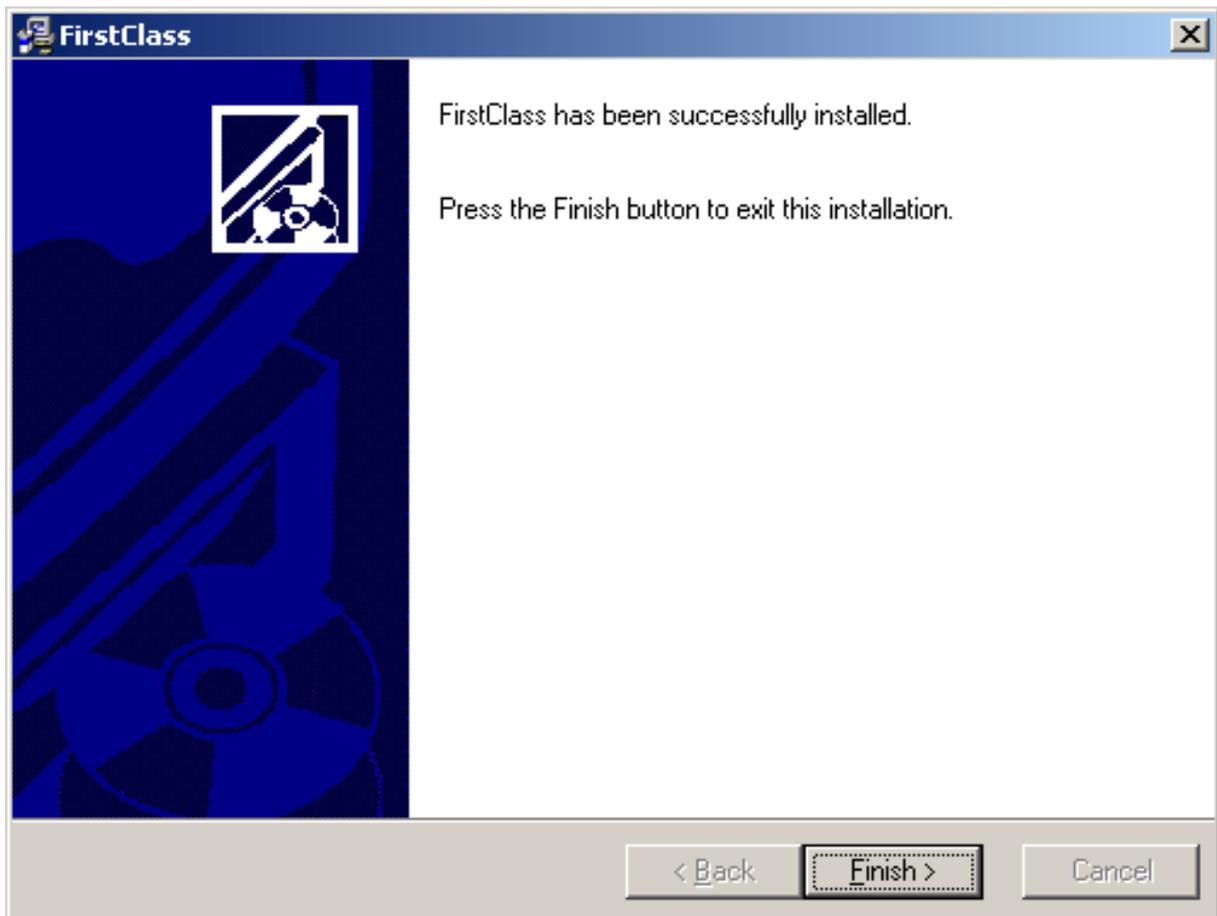


Figure 5 - FirstClass has been successfully installed

Click the Finish button to close the Installation Wizard

This completes the installation; you are now ready to set-up your connection to FirstClass.

An icon (the FirstClass logo)  will appear on your desktop.

The FirstClass login screen will automatically open. This window can be closed by clicking on the Close  button at the top right of the login screen if you want to set up FirstClass later.

Once FirstClass is installed the P559 CD installer will check you if you want to install more software. If you do click on the 'Back to main menu' link, if not click on 'Exit this installer'.

Upgrading FirstClass

How to upgrade a previous installation of FirstClass

Start up your computer

Do not open any other applications and place the CD in the CD-ROM drive (which is assumed to be drive D: in the instructions below)

Your PC maybe configured to autorun the P559 CD, if not you will need to click on the Start button, click on Run, then type in the box labelled Open: D:\install.exe and click on OK

The Setup process for the Online Applications CD-ROM will then start; click the 'Continue to main menu' button on the Welcome screen

You will be presented with a number of different options to install, select the 'Conferencing software' category

Click on the Install FirstClass 7.1 button

The FirstClass Welcome screen will open as shown in Figure 1 click on Next to continue

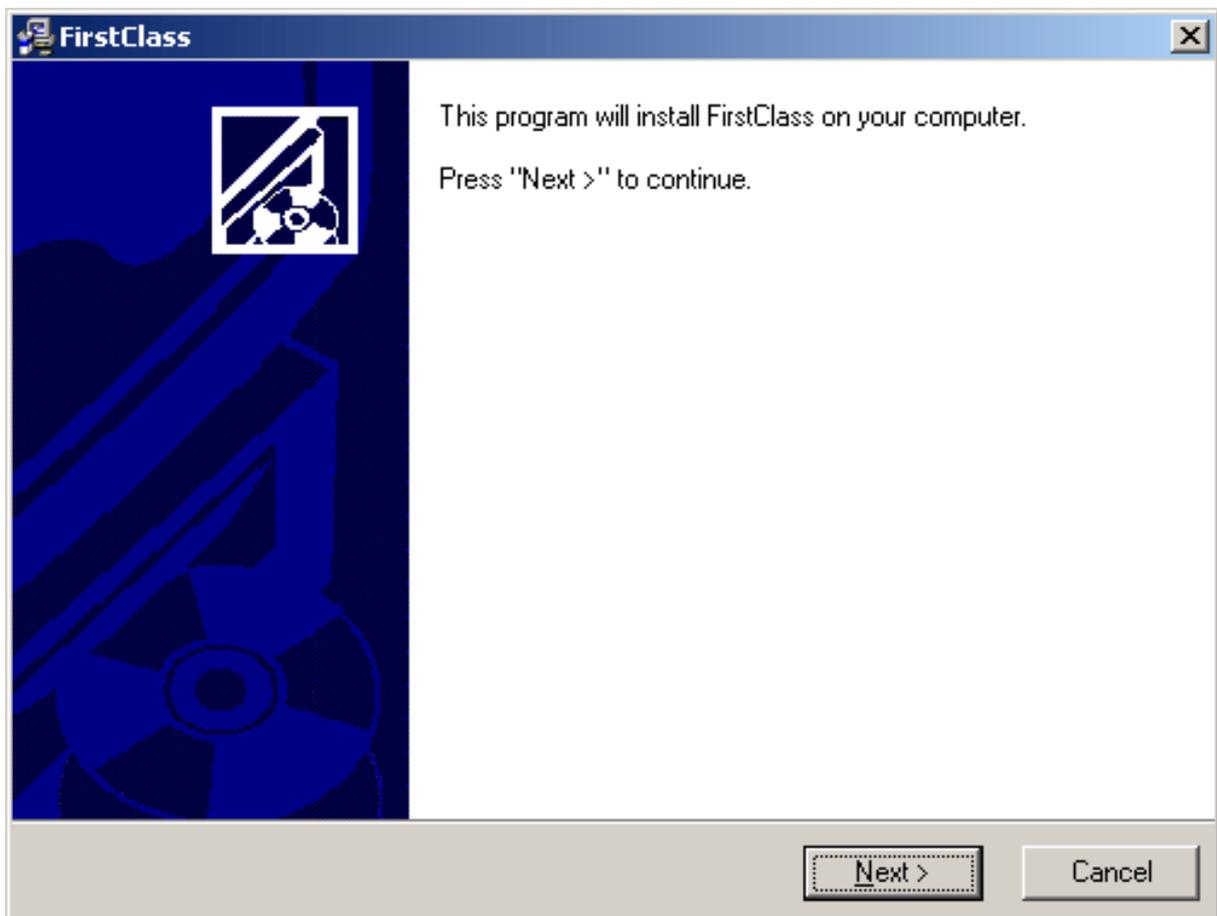


Figure 1 - Welcome

In order to install FirstClass, you will need to agree to the license agreement from the software authors, as shown in Figure 2 License agreement



Figure 2 - License Agreement

To proceed with the installation click on the Accept button

Next you will be asked to select the directory for the installation, as Figure 3 the Install Location window shows

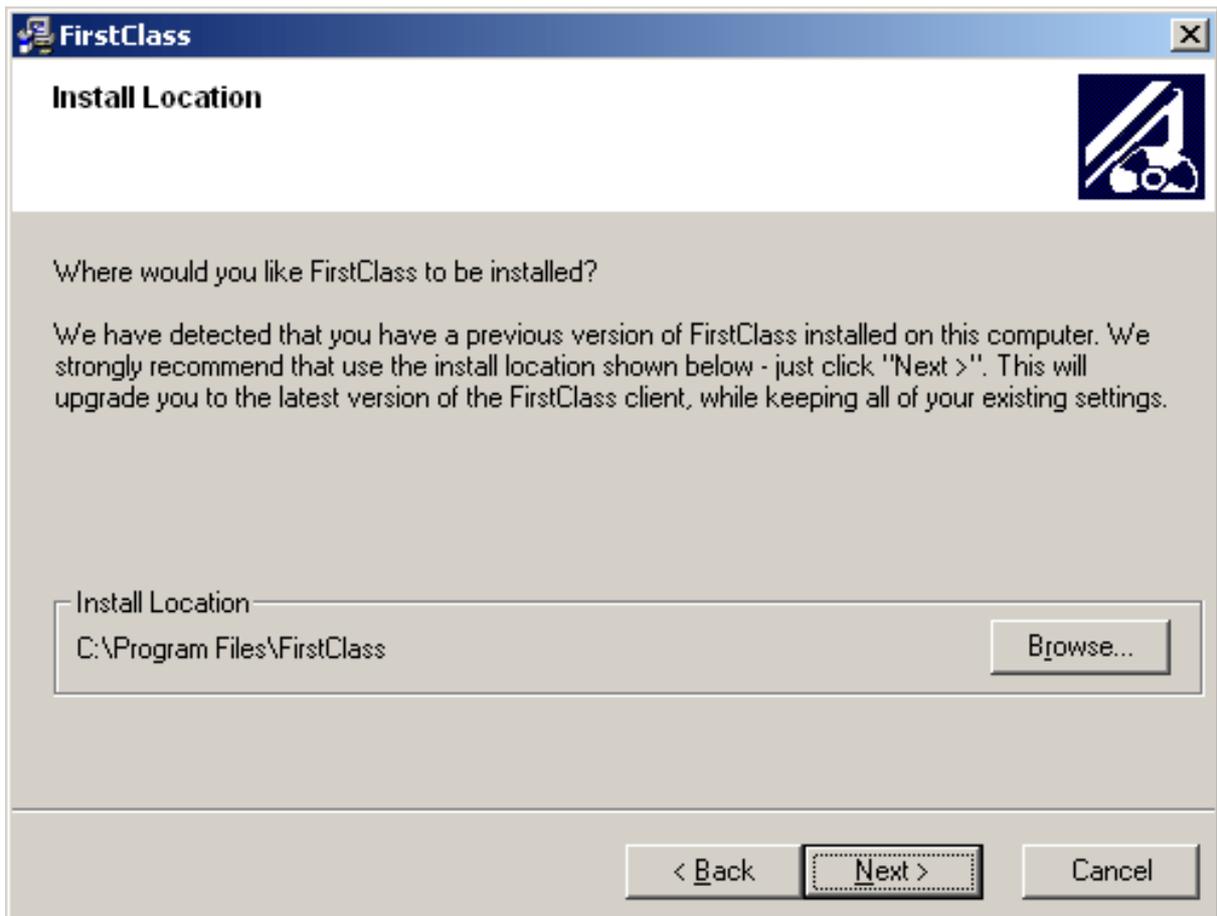


Figure 3 - Choose Destination Location

We recommend that you select the default destination folder entry here and click Next

The Replace Existing Personal Post Office window will open as shown in Figure 4

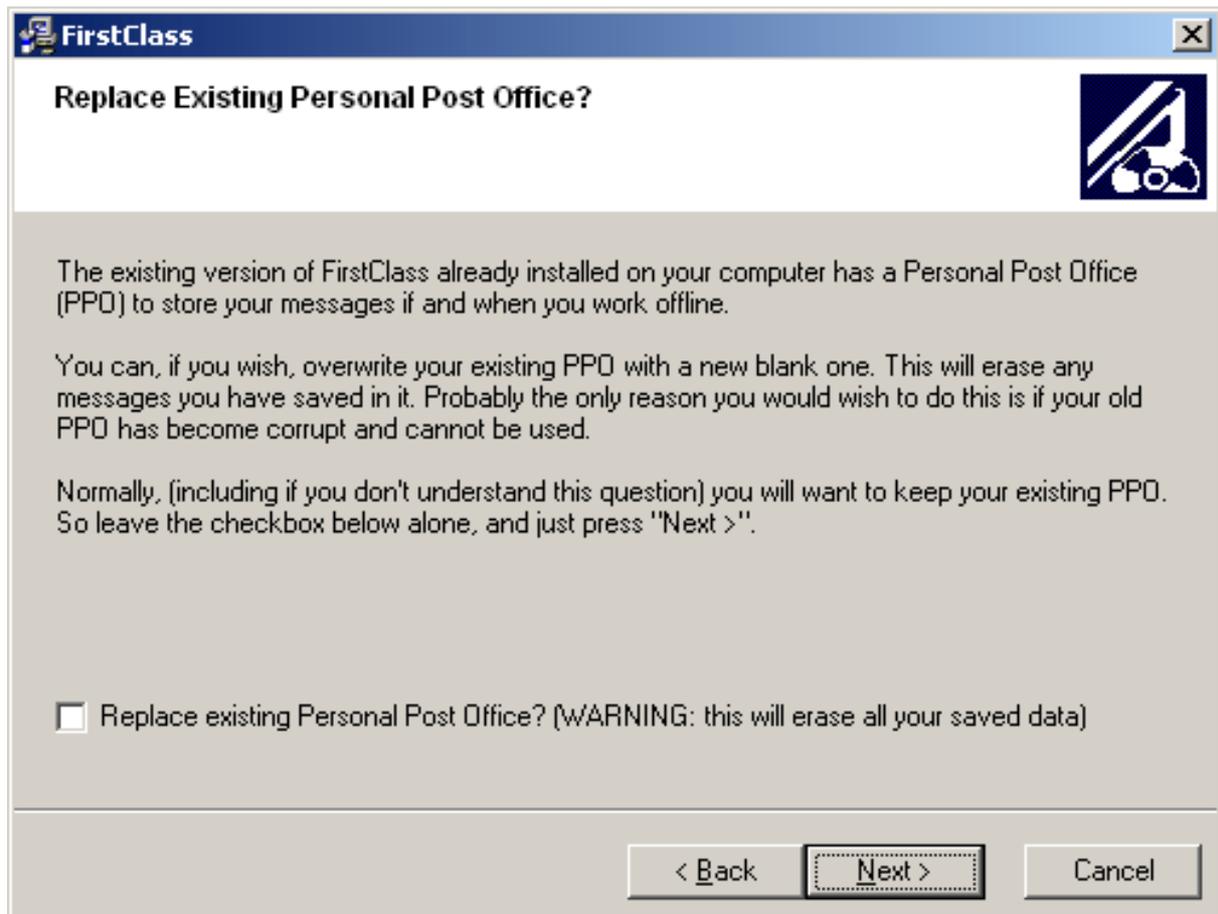


Figure 4 - Replace Existing Personal Post Office

It is recommended that you do not replace the existing Post Office as this will delete any stored data, but click on Next to continue

Once the application is ready to install, the Ready to Install dialogue boxFigure 5 will be displayed

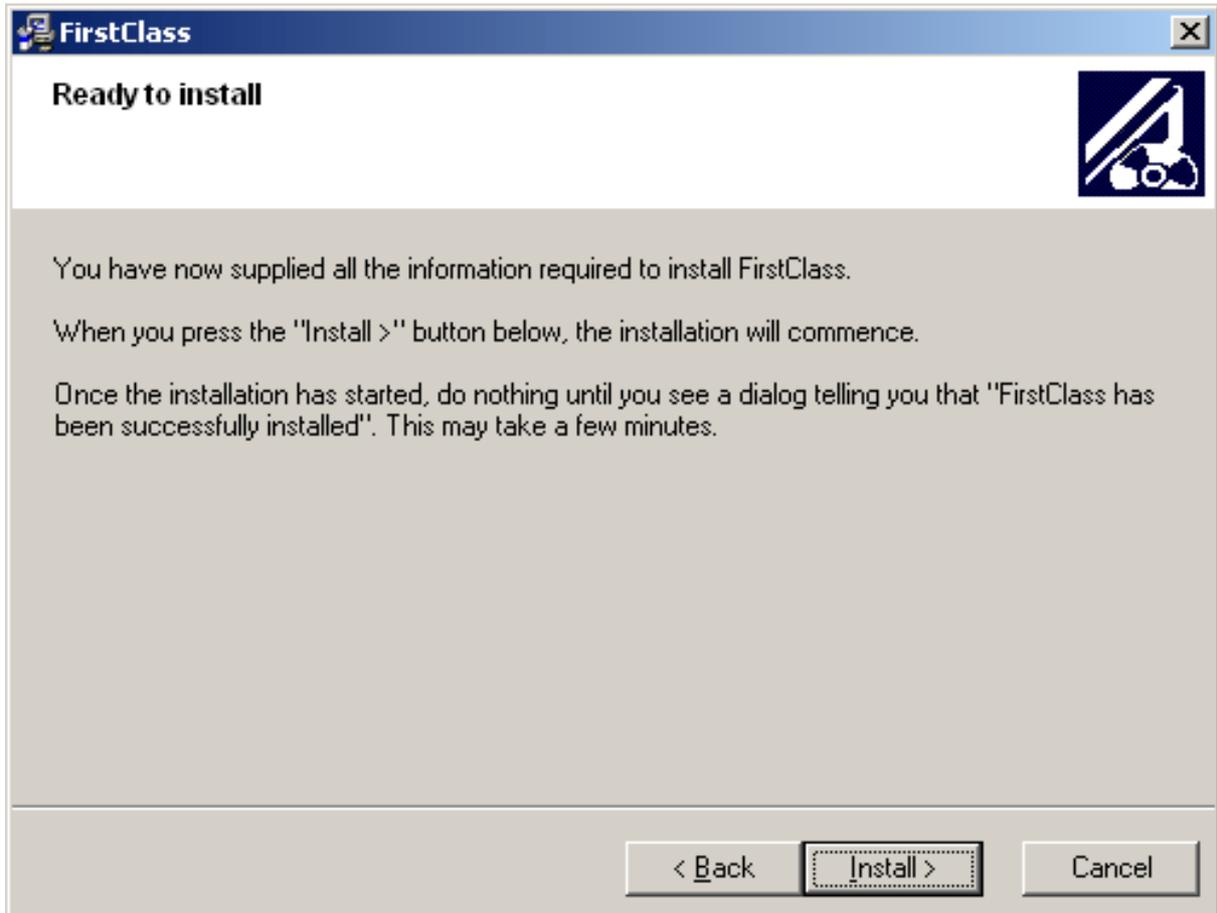


Figure 5 - Ready to Install

The set-up application is ready at this stage to copy the necessary files across to your computer. You can use the Back button to alter any settings or choose to quit the installation procedure

otherwise, click Install to continue

Once the installation is complete the FirstClass has been successfully installed window will open as shown in Figure 6

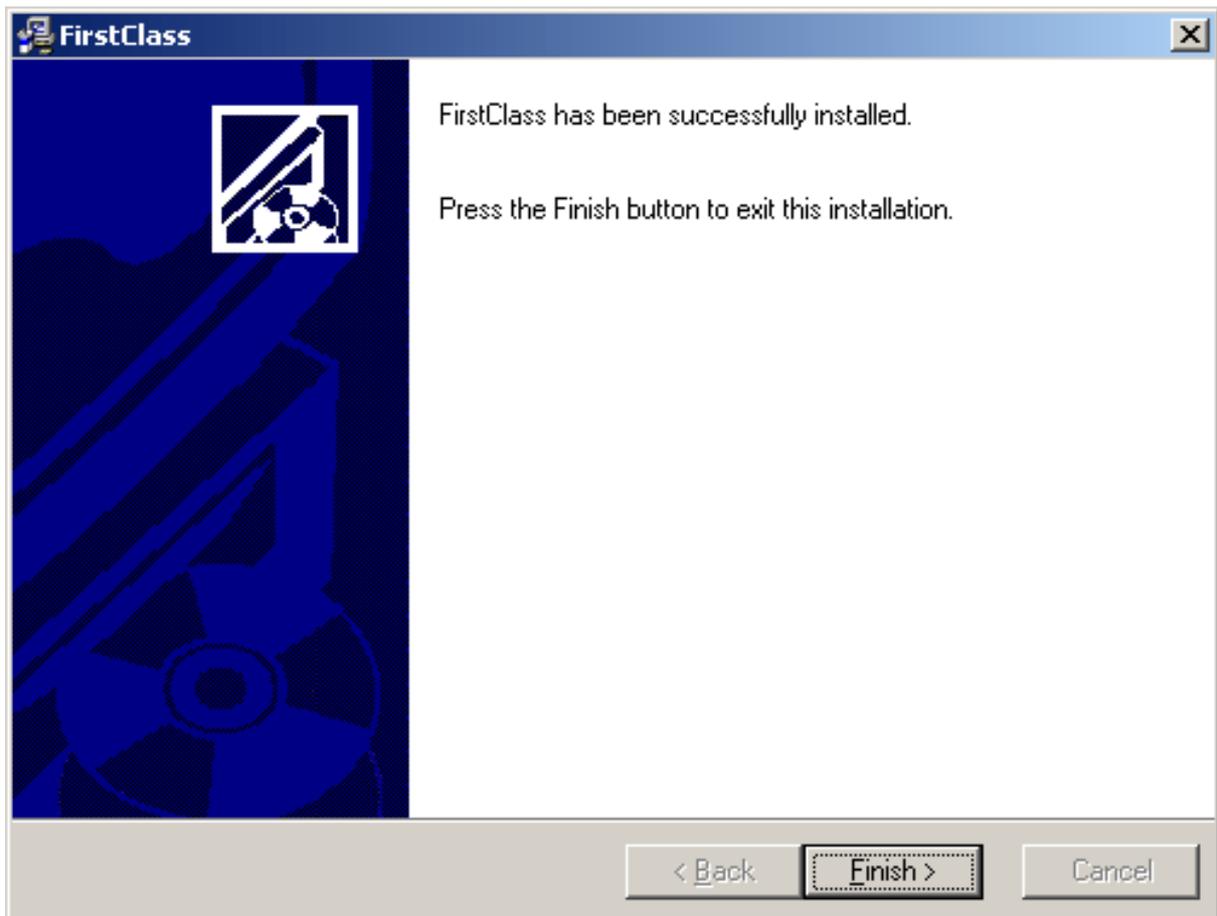


Figure 6 - FirstClass has been successfully installed

Click the Finish button to close the Installation Wizard

This completes the installation; you are now ready to use FirstClass.

An icon (the FirstClass logo)  will appear on your desktop.

The FirstClass login screen will automatically open. This window can be closed by clicking on the Close  button at the top right of the login screen if you want to set up FirstClass later.

Once FirstClass is installed the P559 CD installer will check you if you want to install more software. If you do click on the 'Back to main menu' button, if not click on Exit this installer.

Connecting to FirstClass

You must have successfully installed the FirstClass client software version 7.1.

The first time you start the FirstClass client software you will need to specify which server to connect to.

Click on the play button  located at the bottom right hand corner of the animation screen to play the movie taking you through how to connect to a FirstClass server (also covered in the text below).

Click on the Start button, then select Programs, FirstClass and then FirstClass  FirstClass® or double click on the FirstClass  icon on your desktop

Once you have brought up the login screen click on the drop down arrow  next to the Address: field and select the home.fc entry from the drop down menu. The Server: field on the Login screen will read oufcntx.open.ac.uk as shown in Figure 1 Login window

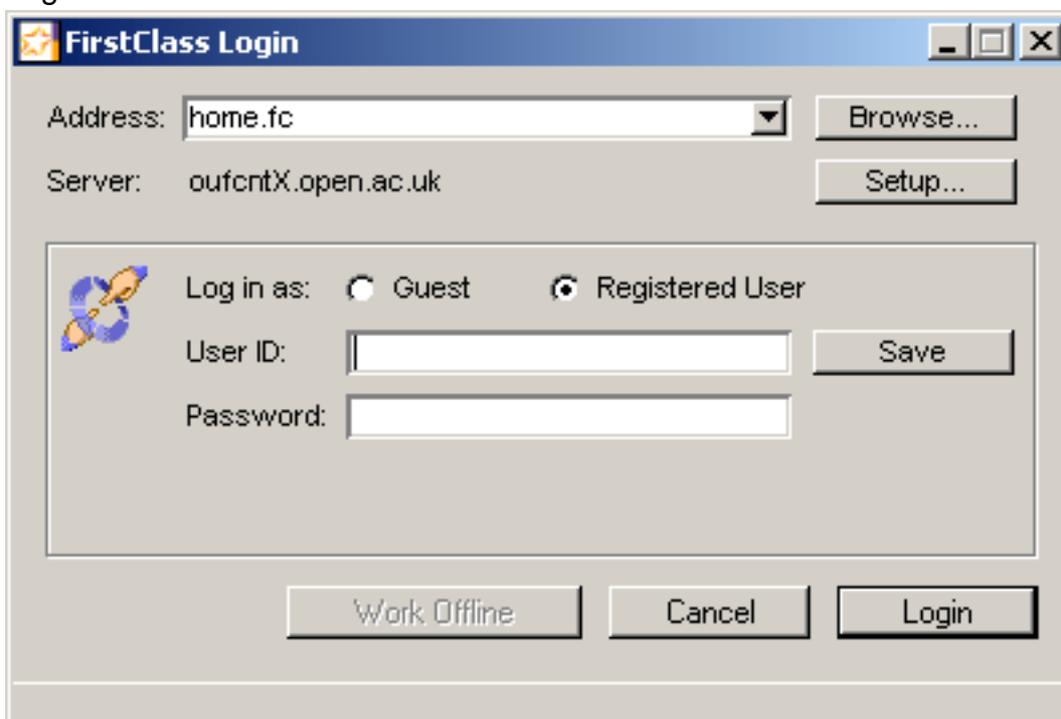


Figure 1 - Login window

To alter your setup specification you will need to substitute the x in the Server: field with the number of the OU Server that you wish to connect to

The most reliable way to find which server your account is situated on is by accessing your Personal Menu and then 'Signing on' to your Home page. How to access your Personal Menu and finding which server you have an account on is covered in the Account Registration part of the Getting Started section

However, as a rough guide, the following indicates the servers available at the time of press (mid-2003) and the users allocated to them

oufcnt1.open.ac.uk for Open University Business School, Arts, Social Sciences, Faculty of Education and Language Studies, Institute for Educational

Technology and School of Health and Social Welfare courses

oufcnt2.open.ac.uk for Science, Mathematics, Computing and Technology courses

Click the Setup button on the Login window to make the FirstClass Service Setup window appear

The Server: field on the Service Setup window will initially read oufcntx.open.ac.uk. Replace the x with the number of the server you wish to connect to. Figure 2 shows an example of the Service Setup window for someone registered on server 1 (with an address oufcnt1.open.ac.uk)

Service Setup

Connect via: Local Network.fcp

User ID:

Password:

Log in as guest Log in automatically

Retry login: 0 times

Retry delay: 0 seconds

Fill in if service is accessible via the network

Server: oufcntX.open.ac.uk

Network:

Fill in if service is accessible via modem or ISDN

Phone #:

Notifier Notify me of new mail when offline

Notifier password:

Clears all nonconnection resources from your settings file

Figure 2 - Service Setup window

Once you have entered the appropriate server address, click on the Save button and you will then see the Login window as shown in Figure 3

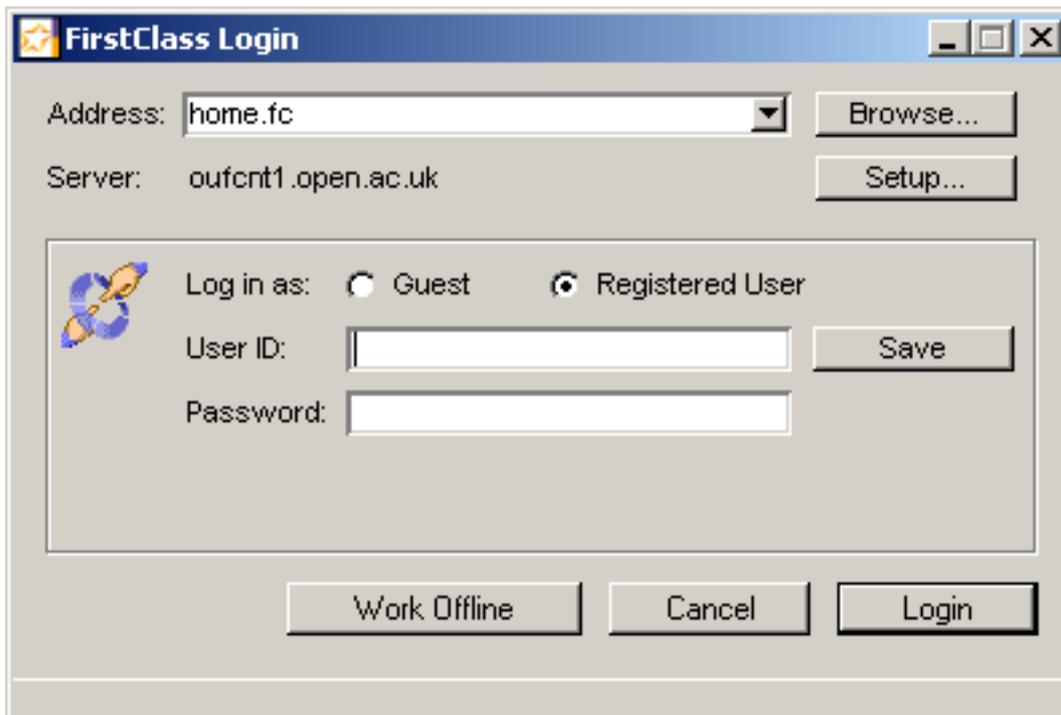


Figure 3 - Login screen

If you wish to save your OU Computer Username into your settings file in the User ID: field, then enter it on this login screen and click on the Save button

Your current Password should be entered into the Login window each time you want to use the system.

Before you can connect to FirstClass you will need to establish your Internet connection. Follow your ISPs instructions to achieve this and then launch the FirstClass software.

Enter your Username and Password on the Login screen and you are ready to connect.

Assuming your ISP connection has been successfully made and you have entered your Username and Password click on the Login button to begin the login process.

Your FirstClass desktop will appear and you have now successfully logged into FirstClass.

If you have an account on several (multiple) servers you can make simultaneous connections to those servers from one installation (copy) of the FirstClass client software. For instruction on how to alter your setup for multiple servers follow the instructions given in the Connecting to Multiple FirstClass Servers section.

Connecting to Multiple FirstClass Servers

If you have an account on several (multiple) servers you can make simultaneous connections to those servers from one installation (copy) of the FirstClass client

software.

First work through the instructions given in the Connecting to FirstClass part of the Getting Started section.

The first time you wish to connect to another server you will need to create a new settings file for the FirstClass client software to use.

Once your client software is running select Collaborate> Connect from the toolbar menu - this will bring up the Login screen

Type the full name of the server you wish to connect to (e.g. oufcnt2.open.ac.uk) in the Address: field of the Login window (overtyping the 'home' of home.fc)

This will result in the Server: field displaying the name of the server you wish to connect to as shown in Figure 1 which shows an example for oufcnt2.open.ac.uk



Figure 1 - Login for oufcnt2

You can use the Save button to save your User Id as before

We strongly advise you not to save your Password into the Password: box since this is a security risk if others have access to your computer or if your computer is stolen. Your current Password should be entered into the Login window each time you want to use the system.

Once you have used these settings files they will be retained within the client software's drop-down menu within the Login screen. This is displayed in Figure 2 which shows the choice of two settings files in the same Login screen.

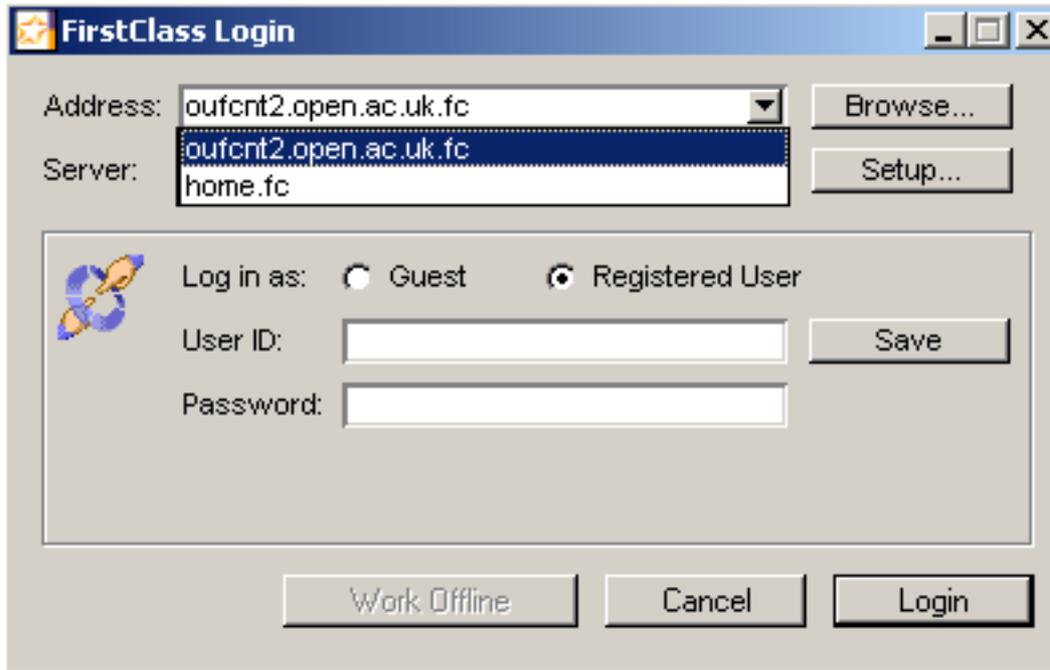


Figure 2 - Login drop-down menu

Assuming your ISP connection has been successfully made and you have entered your Username and Password click on the Login button to begin the login process.

Your FirstClass desktop for a different server will appear and you have now successfully logged into a separate FirstClass server.

If you wish, you can then repeat this procedure to configure FirstClass to connect to other servers in the same manner. You will also find an additional settings file listed for Centrinity, but this is not required to connect to the Open University's servers.

FirstClass Personal

Normally, you must be connected to a server to work with the objects on your FirstClass Desktop - this can become costly.

FirstClass Personal lets you carry out many of your normal tasks, without having a continuous connection to the FirstClass server.

FirstClass Personal can be used to create copies of the following in a set of files known as the 'Personal Post Office' (PPO) on your computer:

- Your Mailbox
- Your personal calendar
- Conferences

- Public calendars

- Directory information

FirstClass Personal connects to the OU FirstClass server at the times you specify. When connected, FirstClass Personal sends and receives items to and from the OU server, this is known as 'replicating'.

These are the things you can do with FirstClass Personal offline reader:

- Create messages

- Read messages and conference items

- Attach files to messages

- Save files attached to messages

- Search your offline Mailbox or conferences

- Send and retrieve messages

- Use calendaring

- Create and use an offline address book

- Bookmarks

- Upload files directly into offline conferences and to your offline Desktop

These are things you cannot do with FirstClass Personal:

- Participate in chats

- Upload files directly into folders

- Create personal conferences

Setting up FirstClass Personal

These instructions are intended to enable you to start working offline as quickly as

possible.

You need to complete each step of the set-up procedure carefully before moving onto the next one.

You may feel that you need more detail than is given here. Should you need further help, please turn to the LTS FAQ FC Work Offline conference inside the LTS Helpdesk conference, which can be found on your online desktop.

Before following the instructions below please ensure you know how to disconnect from your Internet Service Provider (ISP)

Start up the FirstClass Client, bringing up the Login window as shown in Figure 1



Figure 1 - Login window

Type your OU Computer Username into the User ID field and type in your password

Click on the Working Offline button on the Login window.

You will see the FirstClass Personal - Quick Set-up window as shown in Figure 2



Figure 2 - FirstClass Personal - Quick Set-up

Type your password into the box titled Your password: this needs to be the same as the password you use to connect online an example is shown in Figure 3



Figure 3 - Completed FirstClass Personal - Quick Set-up

Check that the details shown on the Registration window are all correct before you click on the OK button, if they are not correct click on Cancel and repeat from step 1

Once you have clicked on OK a Quick Set-up Confirmation window will appear as shown in Figure 4

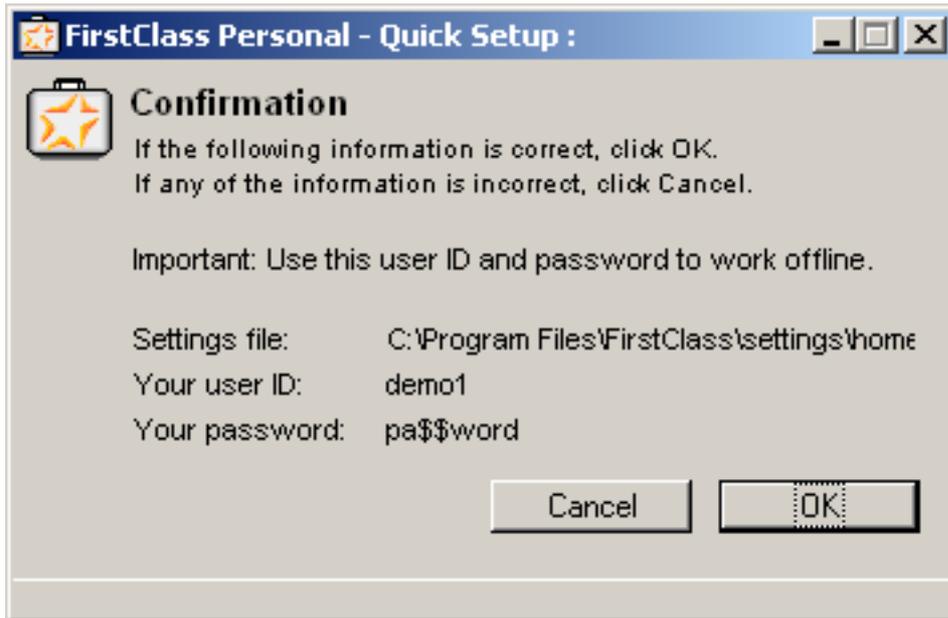


Figure 4 - FirstClass Personal - Quick Set-up Confirmation

Check settings file location, your ID and your password details are correct

If the details are correct click on the OK button

If the details are incorrect select Cancel - this may generate an error message, but you should ignore it. Correct the details in the Login window and press the Work Offline button and work through from step 4 again

For future connections you will only need to click on Work Offline button of the Login window to start FirstClass Personal.

The Registration windows will not appear again on subsequent connections to FirstClass Personal.

Click on the OK button on the Quick Set-up Confirmation form when you are happy that your details are correct

You are now connected to your FirstClass Personal offline server. You should be able to see two windows your offline FirstClass desktop as shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6. Your own offline desktop may look slightly different to the one shown in Figure 5, but you should still be able to see your mailbox and your Offline Conferences folder



Figure 5 - Desktop

FirstClass Personal will download some server directory information and the Receiving: field will read Dir Sync as shown in Figure 6

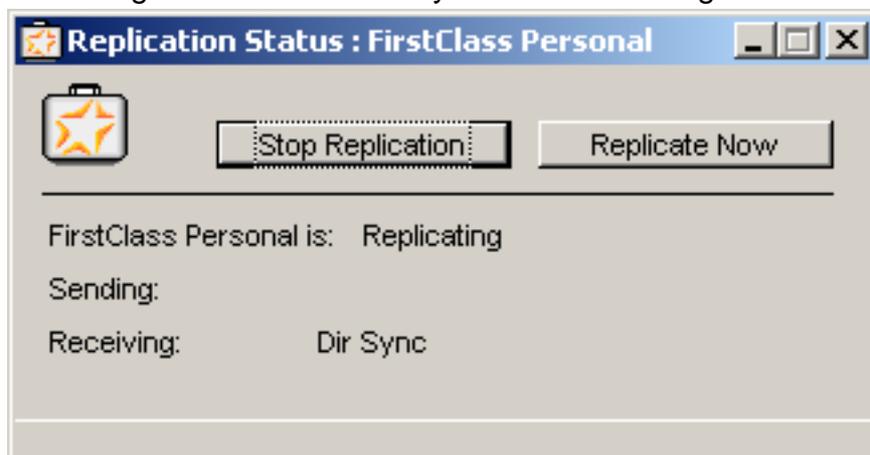


Figure 6 - Dir Sync

At this point FirstClass Personal will not be able to download the messages from any conference. You need to tell FirstClass Personal which conferences you want to work with offline.

Whether replication is successful or unsuccessful at this point, continue to follow the instructions.

Once the directory download (Dir Sync) is complete, the FirstClass Personal is: field will read Synchronising directories as shown in Figure 7

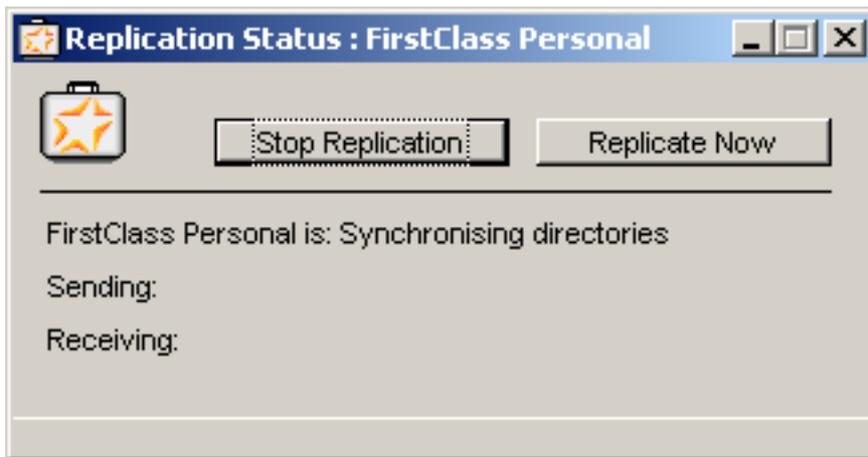


Figure 7 - Synchronising directories

You can now disconnect from your ISP, but do not close FirstClass Personal until the synchronising directories process has completed.

The synchronisation process can take some time (possibly over an hour).

Once the synchronisation process has completed the FirstClass Personal is: field will read Idle as shown in Figure 8

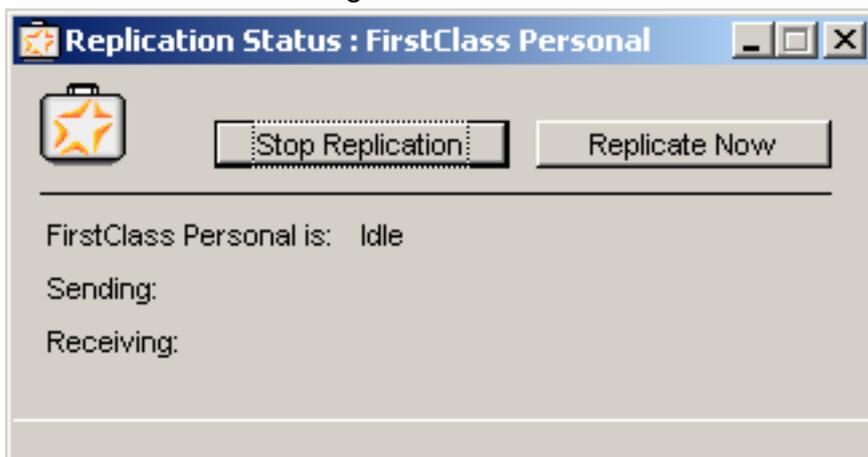


Figure 8 - Idle

Reconnect to your ISP and login to your online Desktop on the OU FirstClass server.

You will now be connected to both your online and offline Desktop

Click on your online desktop window to bring it to the front of the screen

Somewhere on your online Desktop there will be a folder called Offline Conferences, you may need to enlarge your desktop or scroll round your desktop to find it

If you can't find an Offline Conferences folder on your online Desktop select Collaboration> Work Offline> Open Offline Conferences. An Offline Conferences folder should now have appeared on your online Desktop

Each conference you wish to replicate offline needs to be added to the Offline

Conferences folder. It is advisable to include OU Service News so you can keep up to date with system down times and changes to the FirstClass service

- Find the conference, this may be directly on your desktop or nested inside other conferences

- Right-click on the conference and choose Add to Desktop from the pop-up menu

- OR Highlight the conference by clicking on it once select Collaborate> Add to Desktop

- Find the new copy of the conference on your online FirstClass desktop and drag it into the Offline Conferences folder

- If the conference you copied is normally directly on your desktop, make sure you can still it somewhere on your desktop before you drag the copy into your Offline Conferences folder.

For each conference you want to replicate offline repeat step 17

Disconnect from FirstClass online

Log into FirstClass Personal by clicking on the Work Offline button if you are not already connected offline

Replicate the messages by selecting Collaborate> Work Offline> Replicate Now or by clicking on the toolbar button



on your offline desktop