

Jabberwocky Version 0.1 User Guide

What is Jabberwocky, other than a style of prose first practiced by Lewis Carroll?

Jabberwocky is a remote response system (not a point system or mailer) that allows BBS users to read and respond to messages extracted from QuickBBS compatible BBSs offline, that is while not connected to the BBS. Jabberwocky should run fine on any Macintosh with HFS support (Mac 512KE or later). Jabberwocky will normally request 384K of RAM under MultiFinder, which should be more than plenty for almost any use. If you are strapped for RAM, you may be able to run in 256K.

Please do not confuse Jabberwocky with true point systems; point systems include a communications interface, and several other facilities not present in this program.

Jabberwocky is intended as an improvement on manual BBS calling, not true point operations.

I'm sure that many BBS users are overwhelmed by the volume and diversity of echomail now available on networks like Fidonet, Altnet, etc. Use of a program like Jabberwocky makes reading large volume echomail conferences a practical proposition, even for long distance callers.

Some of the advantages that Jabberwocky offers over online mail reading include:

- o Reduction of your online time for mail reading. This can be a real economic benefit if you are calling long distance, it can free up the BBS for more callers, and can leave you more time for other BBS activities like file transfers.

- o Freedom from line noise. Since mail bundle transfers occur with file transfer protocols like Zmodem, message integrity is assured.

No more garbled messages or replies.

o User Interface. No longer are you limited by modem capabilities, or the primitive editors many BBSs support. Even the best online BBS editors require the use of the clumsy Wordstar command set. You can use a full screen scrolling window editor with nearly instantaneous response, with the Macintosh user interface that you are used to.

o Read and answer your mail when YOU want to, not when you get through to the BBS. Just download your message bundle, and read it at your leisure. Communications programs with scripting can be set up to get your mail unattended.

o Cut and Paste. How many times have you wished for the simple ability to easily import text from other sources into BBS

messages? Jabberwocky makes this process what it should be.

Main Jabberwocky Features:

Jabberwocky uses a more or less standard Macintosh user interface, with support for cut and paste, multiple windows and the font(s) of your choice.

It supports extremely fast and flexible mail reading, with a wide range of navigation options, including threading, goto, exit from thread, and bidirectional reading.

It automatically creates and maintains packet files for you when you enter replies.

Jabberwocky supports and recognizes the differences between local, echo and netmail messages, including support for privileged messages where appropriate.

At any time during the creation of a new message the user may decide to change the conference to which the message is posted, or even reply to the echomail message via netmail (assuming he has access to netmail). It is also simple to change the subject and addressee of the message during the creation process.

How does Jabberwocky work?

Basically, Jabberwocky reads a mini-message

base that the user downloads from the BBS, and creates files of responses to be uploaded to the BBS in Fidonet standard PKT format for processing by the BBS echomail software. The message base format that Jabberwocky understands is generated by a software package known as QMX© (QuickBBS Mail Express). QMX© is commonly available on QuickBBS based bulletin boards, and may be available on other systems running QuickBBS compatible message bases. QMX© is a copyrighted work of Mike Ratledge.

What Options Does Jabberwocky Support?

One area that requires some explanation is the Options dialog box. The first three settings (Origin Line, Pointnet and Pointsmart) have potential to cause problems. They are included for the sake of maximum flexibility; generally you should not change the default settings without discussing them with your sysop.

The origin line option lets you override the

origin line that the BBS generates for you. Some sysops do not like their QMX© users to override the BBS origin line; therefore it is wise to ask first, especially if the BBS you call is sending you an XORIGIN.XRS file. If you don't, you may find yourself locked out of the BBS.

The Pointnet setting is available for flexibility in special circumstances only. Very few users should need to change the default number. One occasion that MAY, under some circumstances require use of this option is the use of netmail.

The Pointsmart addressing option controls the way Jabberwocky puts origin addresses in netmail messages that it generates. Pointsmart on means Jabberwocky will use 4-ply addressing; Pointsmart off means it will use fakenet addressing. The method that you need to use will depend on the configuration of the BBS you are calling. You will need to discuss this with your sysop before sending netmail with Jabberwocky.

After entering your registration number into the dialog box, it is wise to quit and restart Jabberwocky immediately. This will insure that any messages you send will have the non-Demo tag line, and that your key is stored to disk correctly.

The other Option dialog settings affect local operation only, and are reasonably self-explanatory.

Changing Message Attributes:

One of the main features of Jabberwocky is support for changing the target conference, subject and addressee of the message during the message creation process.

For example, if you are replying to a message in Echomac that may be more appropriate to respond to by netmail, you merely need to select the message area option from the settings menu, and you will be presented with a list of message areas that you have access to. If one of these areas happens to be netmail, selecting it, and clicking on the OK button will cause your reply to go by netmail. To edit the subject or address information, netmail address, or set the message for privileged only access, the message information dialog can be used. Be sure to check the address whenever entering a netmail message; Jabberwocky attempts to generate the address from the echomail origin line if you are responding to an echomail message.

Unfortunately there are many mail processors that do this in a non-standard fashion, or place multiple addresses on origin lines. This can

confuse Jabberwocky.

About the files Jabberwocky uses:

Jabberwocky reads and creates number of different files. The files that Jabberwocky creates are its own configuration file, TEXT files containing messages that you have saved, and .PKT files. They can be distinguished easily by their names and icons.

The configuration file icon is a standard document icon with a italic j inside, and a C in the upper left corner. It will always have the name JabrConfig File. Do not change the name; Jabberwocky will not find the file if you do. This file will always be located in the folder Jabberwocky is in (thus Jabberwocky cannot be run from locked volumes or be multilaunched). If the JabrConfig File is not present Jabberwocky will create a new configuration file with a reasonable set of default settings. If Jabberwocky locates a file with the name JabrConfig File that does not match the

configuration file format, it will issue an error message with error code number 999 and then quit. Since it may be necessary to occasionally change the configuration file format this message may occur when you update to a new version. Be sure that you write down your old configuration before upgrading to versions that indicate that they use a new configuration file format.

TEXT files have a document icon determined by their creator type; if you haven't changed the creator in the Options dialog, it will be a standard document icon with a italic j inside. Otherwise it will have the document icon for the creator application you have specified.

.PKT files have a document icon, with the italic j inside and an upward pointing arrow in the lower right hand corner. They contain your replies to messages, formatted for uploading to a BBS. The name of the file is DDHHMMSS.pkt, where DD is the date of the month, HH is the hour (military time), MM is the minute, and SS

is the second which Jabberwocky was launched. Each .PKT file may contain several messages; however Jabberwocky will create a new .PKT file each time it is launched, for each session replies are generated. It is perfectly acceptable to upload multiple .PKT files in one session using Zmodem batch mode. Do not change the name of the .PKT files. The BBS is expecting file names in the format Jabberwocky generates. If you use a file transfer protocol that does not directly pass the file name to the BBS, be sure to type the name in correctly.

Other than the configuration file, the files that Jabberwocky reads are the .XRS files generated by QMX©, and a special control file. These are:

- SUMMARY1.XRS - list of conferences, summary of messages
- AREAS1.XRS - a list of conferences
- XORIGIN.XRS - default origin line sent by the BBS
- MAIL1IDX.XRS - index to the message

base

-USER1.XRS - user name network
address info
-BATMAIL1.XRS - file of messages
-JABRAREA.XRS -special control
file for private/netmail

The current version of Jabberwocky uses all of these files except SUMMARY (support for will be added in later versions). Presence of XORIGIN.XRS is determined by the sysop whose BBS you call. If the others are not found, all in the same folder, and with the names indicated above, Jabberwocky will abort with an error message. See the Appendix for information on JABRAREA.XRS.

How do I use Jabberwocky? (A Tutorial)

Find a BBS running QMX© compatible software - many QuickBBS systems run QMX©. If your favorite QuickBBS doesn't, you might suggest it to the sysop. It will benefit the sysop too, for the same reasons it benefits you.

When you find a system that you would like to use Jabberwocky with, let the sysop know what you intend to do, unless it is clear that the system already supports Jabberwocky or MacPoint users. The reason for this is that you will be uploading .PKT files, while most MS-DOS based BBSs will be expecting their QMX© users to upload compressed files. This may require that the sysop modify his BBS setup to handle your files properly. Usually this is a minor change to his batch file.

Call into the BBS and select the QMX© option. You will be presented with the QMX© menu; be sure to configure the message areas that you wish to read, the packing methods, and the download protocols. The most efficient selections for most users are PKZip and Zmodem.

The first time you run QMX©, you may be a little confused due to the menu prompts: the following is a typical session that a new user might have (note especially the “No” answers to

menu prompts!). Following is a sample session for new users. Please note that this may change with future versions of QMX©.

Your response is indicated by type in quotes.

>> Quickpoint Mail eXpress 1.0 << -

Welcome, ERIC!

Low Message = 1; High Message = 4815

New Messages for you Start at 4816

QMX Fast Access...

Any new mail you read will be timestamped

4 Jan 90 8:12:02

One moment please - Scanning message headers.....

Default Protocol = None Compression

Selected = None

Default Message Groups (highlighted groups currently have new messages)

No Areas

With your default groups, you will get 0 messages - Proceed? (Y/N) **"N"**

Quickpoint Mail eXpress v 1.0

C]onfigure Areas and Protocol

P]ack Messages for Download

U]pload Your Response Mailbag

Q]uit Quickpoint Mail eXpress

"C"

Defaults are Z-MODEM with PKZIP

A]reas to Read Selection

P]acking Method Select

T]ransfer Protocol Select

M]ain Quickpoint Menu

"A"

Read ALL Groups Available to You or

SELECT Groups? (A/S) Select

Select Only from Groups with New Mail?

(Y/N) **"N"**

Do you want:

Group 1 - "NETMAIL" (Y/N/?) ? **"Y"**

Area Description is 'NETMAIL' - Select?

(Y/N) **"N"**

Group 2 - "Local" (Y/N/?) ? "Y"
Group 3 - "News" (Y/N/?) ? "Y"
Group 4 - "Restaurant" (Y/N/?) ? "N"
.....and so on through the entire BBS
conference list.....

Save these group selections as your
"default"? (Y/N) "Y"

Defaults are Z-MODEM with PKZIP
Areas to Read Selection
Packing Method Select
Transfer Protocol Select
Main Quickpoint Menu
"P"

Current Packer Selected is None
Please select from the following compaction
techniques:

PKZip (best!)

PKArc (good)

LHArc (slow!) <<<<Mac Systems

cannot use LHArc!

Compression ==> **"P"**

Defaults are Z-MODEM with PKZIP

Areas to Read Selection

Packing Method Select

Transfer Protocol Select

Main Quickpoint Menu

“T”

Default Protocol is Currently Set to None

Please select from the following transfer protocols:

Xmodem (slow!)

Ymodem (better)

Zmodem (best!)

Select later

Protocol ==> **“Z”**

Defaults are Z-MODEM with PKZIP

Areas to Read Selection

Packing Method Select

Transfer Protocol Select

Main Quickpoint Menu

“M”

Quickpoint Mail eXpress v 1.0

Configure Areas and Protocol
Pack Messages for Download
Upload Your Response Mailbag
Quit Quickpoint Mail eXpress
“P”

Do you have a Response Mailbag to
Upload ? (Y/N) **“N”** <<**Here is where you
would upload the reply .pkt created by
Jabberwocky.**

There are ***NO*** New Messages Available to
be Read by You Now...

Message # to start reading mail ? (Default:
4816) **“4000”**

And QMX© goes into it's packing routine.
Next time on, you should find that QMX© will
have it's setup ready to go for you.

After packing your mail and downloading, you
have a subset of the BBS message base on your
computer; you can move on to other parts of the
BBS, or log off. Typically this

subset will have a filename of BAT1MAIL.***, where *** denotes the compression method you used.

You then need to decompress the mail bundle you downloaded: if you specified PKZip, you need a copy of UNZip, a freeware extractor for PKZip files. The latest version is 1.02b - avoid version 1.02, as it does not properly recognize all .Zip files. UNZip is available on many BBSs, and on all of the major pay services.

After decompressing your mail files, you are ready to run Jabberwocky. Note that the mail files should all be unpacked to the same folder, and their names must not be changed; otherwise Jabberwocky will not find the files. Just double click on Jabberwocky; if Jabberwocky is not in the same folder that the mail files are in, it will ask you to find them. Select any file in the folder containing the mail files (they will all end in .XRS), and Jabberwocky will extract the information it needs to read the messages. If you have not registered Jabberwocky, you will

be asked to enter a temporary key at this point. This is a reminder to register.

Once Jabberwocky builds the index it needs, a window will open up displaying the first message in the downloaded message base.

Jabberwocky commands are pretty straightforward; however there is one variation from the standard Mac user interface that you should be aware of. In particular, message base navigation keys DO NOT require command be pressed; this is why the key equivalents are shown enclosed in brackets in the Message menu, rather than the standard command character prefix. Arrow keys are also active, the right arrow gets the next message, the left the previous. Up and down arrows navigate through threads. This speeds reading large message bases considerably. In addition, the “GoTo” dialog is activated by pressing any of the numerical keys.

When reading the message base, it is very

simple to reply to, quote or enter your own message - the keys that trigger these actions are listed in the Message menu. Of course, since Jabberwocky is a full-blown Macintosh application, you can cut and paste at will. Do be aware that Jabberwocky, as well as most mail processors on Fidonet have a message length maximum which can range anywhere from 10K to 32K in size. If your message gets to be more than 4 pages or so, it would be wise to split it into multiple parts.

One thing that I am concerned about is the possibility of over-quoting. When you hit that <Q> key, the entire message you are reading, including the tag and origin line, is quoted and pasted into the reply window. This default action makes it very easy to abuse quoting. Under most circumstances, you should not need to quote more than a small percentage of the message you are replying to. Please be sure to take the time to delete unnecessary quoted text, so I can leave this feature in.

When you enter a message or reply to a message, you have the ability to change the subject line and “to” user name from the Message Info dialog. If you are entering the message into a local message area, you can also tag it privileged, which usually means that only the addressee and sysops or sigops can read the message. Some BBSs automatically strip privileged tags, so be sure that the BBS you are calling supports this feature before using it.

When you save your reply, Jabberwocky automatically creates a file with the name DDHHMMSS.pkt - the time being the time Jabberwocky was launched. This file is maintained by Jabberwocky, and should not be edited by any other program as it contains binary information necessary for the BBS software to process the messages.

After reading your messages, you are ready to upload your replies to the BBS. This is simply done by calling back the BBS, going back into QMX©, responding YES to the question “do you have a mailbag to upload” and uploading the .PKT file.

There are a couple of potential sticking points to watch out for at this spot. First, QMX© is often set up to receive the .PKT files in compressed format. Jabberwocky does not create compressed .PKTs, and there is no easy way for Mac users to create compressed files. You should ask your sysop beforehand if he is capable of handling uncompressed .PKTs uploaded into QMX©. If he isn't, it is a simple matter for him to change his BBS setup to accommodate the raw .PKTs - but be sure to ask nicely.

The second thing to be careful of is MacBinary. DO NOT upload .PKTs with MacBinary turned on! This will corrupt the file irretrievably,

causing your mail to be lost. Under some circumstances, it might even cause the BBS to crash. PKT files must be uploaded as binary data, without modification by the terminal program. The .PKT files that Jabberwocky creates are in a format that ZTerm(1) recognizes automatically, and uploads as binary data without user intervention. The two together offer an unbeatable way for Macintosh users to interact with QuickBBS based BBSs.

Be sure to upload your PKT files into QMX©, not the BBS upload area. Some sysops have configured their BBS to recognize PKTs in the upload area and process them, but it is not a normal part of a QMX© installation.

If you use the menu option to change message areas, Jabberwocky currently has no way to determine if an area is local or not. This means you cannot enter a private message into a local area unless you do it as a reply to an existing message. This appears to be a limitation of QMX©. Maybe someday I'll figure out a way

around the problem.

The Legal Stuff:

Jabberwocky, Copyright © 1990, Eric Larson,
All Rights Reserved

Jabberwocky is “shareware” - basically this means that it is commercial program distributed on public access BBSs. You are free to make as many copies as you want, and distribute it in any fashion, and use it however you desire, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) You must not modify the program, or remove the word “Demo” from tag lines in messages created by the unregistered version.
- 2). Versions that you distribute must be unmodified and include this documentation, again unmodified.
- 3). You may not sell this program or recover any remuneration for the transfer of this

program other than “reasonable” costs for the media on which it is transferred. This specifically excludes making this program available on disks distributed by for-profit shareware distribution companies. Fee based BBSs are free to distribute this program, so long as they do not claim copyright over collections of software of which this program may be a part.

4) If you continue to use this program for more than a 30-day evaluation period, you are required to purchase a license to use the software. This license grants you the right to continue to use the program “Jabberwocky”, in its current version, in perpetuity. There is a small possibility that future versions of Jabberwocky may require an upgrade fee to help

defer development costs, however this is not anticipated at this time. Any such upgrade versions will certainly include major functionality improvements, such as internal archiver support.

The fee to license Jabberwocky is \$20; and may be sent to:

Eric Larson
2902 Falls Road
Marcellus, NY 13108

Please include your name exactly as you are registered on the BBSs you call; the key you receive by return mail is matched to your name. If you prefer, I can return your key by netmail; just let me know your Fidonet or Macnet address. Be sure to keep a record of this key in a safe place; future versions of Jabberwocky may use a different configuration file format, which may require that you re-enter your key.

Support for Jabberwocky is available on

Echomac, or to registered users directly from the author, either by netmail to 1:260/330@Fidonet, or on the Shockwave Rider BBS at +1-315-673-4894.

Warranty - none expressed or implied. This software is licensed "As Is". Determination for fitness for intended use is solely up to the user. Because of potential interactions with unknown software or hardware, the author cannot assume responsibility for data loss and any consequential or incidental damages.

January 12, 1990

Eric H. Larson

(1) ZTerm is a high quality Macintosh based terminal program distributed as shareware, written by Dave Alverson, and supports a number of particularly innovative features. It is a bargain at \$30. ZTerm should be available on any major online service as well as all BBSs that serve the Macintosh user community. It is ideally suited for use in conjunction with PC

based BBSs.

Acknowledgements:

Apple Computer Inc. - for a great operating system.

Rick Rice - Number One Alpha Tester, debugging assistant and code fragment supplier.

Rick Harrison - for proving that a QMX© compatable reader for the Mac world is needed.

Mike Ratledge - for QMX© and XRS©, without this would be impossible. QMX and XRS are copyrighted works of Mike Ratledge, who can be found in any recent Fidonet nodelist, or moderating the QMX/XRS echomail conference.

The QuickBBS Group - for resurrecting a project I thought might be dead, and making this worthwhile.

Symantec - For Think C 4.0 and the TCL.

Dave Alverson - for a comm program ideal for use with PC based BBSs.

Léo Laporte - without whom I never would have gotten into this great hobby.

APPENDIX - JABRAREA.XRS

JABRAREA.XRS is a special control file that optimally is created by your sysop on his BBS. It controls what areas you may enter privileged access mail into, as well as defining the netmail area. It is necessary, because as far as I have been able to determine, this information is not present in the files QMX© generates. This is probably due to the fact that QECHO, the most popular QuickBBS echomail processor strips the privileged status from all incoming echomail. However, there are now appearing echomail processors for QuickBBS that can configure privileged bit stripping on a individual message area basis. One of these is Tossan, which I run. To take advantage of the newfound ability of Tossan and similar processors to handle privileged mail, there must be a way to tell Jabberwocky which message areas accept this form of message. This is done with the JABRAREA.XRS file. Your sysop should create this file, and place it in his BBS directory so that

when you receive your mailbag and decompress it Jabberwocky will automatically be able to determine the BBS configuration. I strongly suggest that you send a copy of this information to your sysop to enlist his help in setting up JABRAREA.XRS; if you attempt this on your own, and erroneously make a determination as to what areas may be acceptable for privileged mail you may find that a) your privileged mail is appearing as public mail, and b) you have been barred from the BBS by your sysop.

Note that some versions of QMX© will not automatically include this file in your mail archive. In such cases you may have to manually download JABRAREA.XRS from the BBS you use Jabberwocky with.

If this file is not present you will not be able to use Jabberwocky to send net or privileged mail.

Following an example of a JABRAREA.XRS file:

```
; /* bof */  
;
```

```
; Jabberwocky Control File - name must be JABRAREA.XRS
;
; This text file is used to designate message areas that have special
; treatment - i.e. local, privileged, netmail, etc. Unfortunately QMX©
; does not support certain message base configuration info, such as what
; areas can be used for privileged mail. This was ok before the advent
; of Tossan, as QEcho stripped privileged bits. But now that we have
; REAL software available...
;
; JABRAREA.XRS should be packaged in the mailbag
; created with QMX©, therefore it should be located in your BBS
; directory.
;
; Format of the control file is as follows -
;
; ; = stuff after this to end of line is ignored
; AREANAME = nnn - AREANAME is the message area name as defined in the
; QuickBBS setup. nnn is an integer denoting the status of the message
; area.
;
;      nnn = 0  noprivileged, echomail (the default)
;      nnn = 1  noprivileged, local mail
;      nnn = 2  noprivileged, netmail
;      nnn = 10 privileged+public, echomail
```

```
;      nnn = 11 privileged+public, local mail
;      nnn = 12 privileged+public, netmail
;
;      any other flag is treated as a 0
;
;
; my BBS setup:
;
NETMAIL = 12    ;netmail, of course
LOCAL = 11      ;Local, privileged ok
NEWS = 1        ;news articles, no private
STARLOUNGE = 11 ;local scifi sig
RESTAURANT = 11 ;another local scifi sig
;
;
; /* eof */
```