

# The OneNet Experience

## By John P. Skeehan

About a year and a half ago, SoftArc, the publisher of FirstClass, the software The OneNet Member Network uses, created a simple gateway feature that changed the way administrators view what was possible with BBS software. Those changes allowed us to gateway conferences to any other FirstClass (FC) BBS site in the world. That BBS could then gateway the same conference to an FC site even further removed.

Scott Converse, Founder and Executive Director of The OneNet Member Network, asked me to set up numerous gateways from OneNet Los Altos (ONLA) (which at that time was the original primary OneNet hub) to various FC sites across the United States and overseas.

This primary hub operation has since been moved from OneNet Los Altos to OneNet Boulder (Colorado). Still, each site has 40 gateways currently. The list of who's connected to the OneNet is constantly growing. The estimate at this time is that about 400 FC BBSes are gatewaying these conferences.

Originally, the network had very few conferences. For example, in the beginning, on ONLA there was the **Ask Apple** conference where quite a few Apple employees hung out, and it became one of the most popular conferences on the system. So much technical discussion occurred in that one conference that we decided to create several other technical conferences to take off the pressure of the increased message traffic in **Ask Apple**. You know these additional conferences today by their names as **Mac Software, Mac Hardware, System Seven, PowerPC's, Multimedia, QuickTime, Publishing/Prepress, Mac Programming, Online Services, Graphics & Animation, Musicians & MIDI, HyperCard, PowerBook, and Modems.**

When we began The OneNet, we had no idea it would grow so quickly. We were quite surprised when all these new conferences became so heavily used also. In fact, now some of them are becoming the basis of separate areas and new divisions here at ONLA as well as Boulder. Whereas in the beginning we were gating about 30 basic conferences, now the network offers 340 conferences and is constantly changing and growing. Many of these ideas for new conferences come from the other administrators on The OneNet.

At this time, we have really three types of conferences on the network:

The first type is called a 'message conference.' This is a conference that allows text of up to 32K and small attachments of up to 20K.

The second kind is called a 'file conference' and is one that allows larger file attachments.

The third kind is a 'private conference.' This is a conference that is shared between FC sites but is not available for the general public to use.

With the imminent release of SoftArc's Version 2.5 of their First Class software,

The OneNet will have many more abilities such as multi-hop e-mail. You will be hearing much more about FC V.2.5 and its great new changes very soon. I'm looking forward to seeing how The OneNet matures this coming year, and I hope to see your messages and suggestions about conferences—additions and changes—in the future.

I invite you to enjoy the conference 'surfing' that The OneNet Member Network provides.