

Installation instructions for VbReader Version 1.4

For complete installation instructions, please read VbReader.Wri. That is the complete users manual. This document contains minimal instructions.

What's New in Version 1.4

The most dramatic change in version 1.4 is the increase in message processing speed. With Version 1.3, the code to read and write messages had been moved to the "C" language and compiled in the program's Dynamic Link Library. With Version 1.4, this code has been totally revamped, yielding an astounding increase in speed. During tests of very large messages (30Kbytes), the processing time went from 4 minutes to **1.5** seconds approximately. This should compare favourably with other off-line readers.

Note that the time required to build up a message list while moving between conferences has not changed. That code is already optimized and is limited by the Visual Basic list box capabilities.

Other new features:

- **Delete QWK Packet menu item.** Following requests from users, this menu item has been added to the **File** menu. It allows one to delete qwk packets without having to use the FileManager.
- **Twit Filter.** Following the message threads in some conferences during the past month has suggested that such a feature would be useful. This new feature appears under the **Tools** menu item. Invoking this feature displays a dialog box which allows the insertion and deletion of names of persons one would rather not see messages from. If the **Enabled** check box is checked, the program will compare the name in the **From:** field of each message with entries in the twit list. Messages with matching originators are automatically culled from the message list. The only indication to the user that twits have been found is that the number of messages displayed in the window handle bar at the top of the read screen will be larger than the number of messages listed in the **Msg __ Of __** boxes at the bottom of the screen. In this way, the user is more or less blissfully unaware of deleted twit messages, unless the user actively looks for them. Turning the option **off** will restore the filtered messages at the next scan of the message list
- **Complete support for Screen Fonts.** The user can now use any font present in his Windows environment to view and write messages. Attributes such as size and **BOLD** can also be changed. The font selection also

applies to the **Signature Lines** text box. When replies are written to the replies packet, messages written in a Windows ANSI font are automatically converted to the IBM character set. Similarly, incoming messages are automatically converted to match the selected character set.

The only caveat is that to view the IBM PC graphic characters sometimes embedded in messages (fanciful signature lines and tag lines), the **Terminal** font or **8514oem** font must be used, as they are the only fonts compatible with those characters. The use of True Type fonts greatly increases the flexibility available when displaying and writing messages. Personally, I could not care less about Happy Faces, etc. so I use True Type fonts. Also bear in mind that True Type fonts are **not** Fixed Pitched fonts. Which means that the spacing between characters will vary between different characters. While reading pure text, this is an advantage, as it allows more text on a given line length. However, if the writer used SPACE characters to format a document into columnar text, the spacing will not match and the screen will look strange. TABS should be used to format Columnar text (CNTRL TAB for VbReader). The same goes for line lengths. Do not type ENTER at the end of a line (or rather where you **think** the line should end). Just keep typing and let the program wrap lines for you. Use ENTER only at the end of paragraphs. When the text is stored, new lines will be inserted at the proper places.

Which brings us to the next topic:

- **Improved control on Quoted Text.** When including message text in a new reply, the user can now specify the line length of the quoted text, and the import method. Two methods are available: **Wrap** and **Truncate**. In wrap mode, characters exceeding the line length specified by the **Quote Width** option are wrapped to the next line. In truncate mode, those characters are truncated. In general, Truncate mode provides the most readable messages. When the Quote Width option is smaller than the Line Length, the resulting text is centered.

A setting of 76 is recommended for both options.

Quoted Text now includes the initials of the message originator.

- **Automatic splitting of long messages.** The user can now specify the maximum number of lines per message. This setting is defaulted to 99 lines. When a message exceeding this length is saved, the program automatically divides it in numerous smaller messages, with an explanation line at the beginning and end of each message. The Subject field is also updated to include a message count.

The actual limit used for making the splitting decision is the message length - 10 lines. This allows for room for line insertion during subsequent edits of the resulting messages. This also ensures that the message will never exceed the maximum line, as the possibility exists that extraneous spaces and a blank line may be added by the processing algorithms, due to the nature of QWK packets.

- **Opening Screen Size.** The program can now open in full screen mode when started, if the user wishes.
- **Easier selection of Languages.** When clicking on the **French Mode** menu item, the Windows control panel is automatically started, to allow the user to change the keyboard key layout.
- **Append Capability while saving messages as text.** The Save As Text feature will now allow a user to either overwrite an existing text file, or append to it.
- **Miscellaneous tweaks to the user interface.** The user interface has been stream-lined again. In particular, one can now create a new message without having to open an existing message. However, there must be a Control.Dat file present (ie: an opened QWK packet must be present in the Work Directory). Also, an initial conference must be selected. The resulting new message can be directed at any conference, by selecting a conference in the **View Lists** menu option.
- **Changes in the directory structure.** The TagLines directory has been replaced with a DataFile directory. This name is more descriptive, as this directory is now used to store the twit list as well as the TagFile, and will be used for other files in the future.
- **Association with QWK files.** The program can now be invoked by clicking on a QWK packet with the file manager. However, you must provide the proper association parameters in the file manager.

VbReader and PKZIP204C

Following the release of the new PKZIP, some difficulties were encountered. The result is that the mechanism to invoke the new archive program has changed somewhat.

Originally, the archiver was invoked through a **PIF** file, with VbReader passing the appropriate parameters. As the new PKZIP proved too unstable to use in this manner, the PIF files (COMPRESS.PIF and EXPLODE.PIF) have been changed to invoke BAT files (COMPRESS.BAT and EXPLODE.BAT). The contents are explained below:

Compress.bat

When creating a mail packet, the new PKZIP was found to be overzealous. It not only deleted the old replies after compression, but also deleted the REPLIES directory. In order to correct this, the batch file changes the Current Directory to the replies directory. In addition, **DPMI** support had to be disabled by including the -) switch. You may need to edit this file to match your installation. Here is the code:

```
rem *****Compress.Bat*****
rem Set Current Drive to the drive containing the replies directory
rem Substitute your own drive letter

c:

rem Set Current Directory to the replies Directory
rem Substitute you own directory structure

cd\reader\replies

rem Invoke PKZIP and pass parameters
rem Substitute your PKZIP path.

c:\pkz2\pkzip -) %1 %2 %3

rem If using PKZIP 1.10, remove the -) switch
rem *****End of Compress.BAT*****
```

Explode.Bat

When expanding a QWK packet, the new PKZIP proved unstable. The batch file provides a means of disabling **DPMI** support.

```
rem *****Explode.Bat*****
rem Substitute your own path

c:\pkz2\pkunzip -) %1 %2

rem If using the older pkzip110, remove the -) switch
rem *****End of Explode.Bat*****
```

While I am aware that the present method of invoking the archiver may seem somewhat crude, it works. This method allows the greatest amount of flexibility in terms of modifying parameters which may be required to make the new PKZIP reliable on any system. A later release of Vbreader will hopefully be able to include a more streamlined method of launching the archiver, but until the verdict is totally in regarding PKZIP204C, this is the safest method.

Installation Instructions:

If installing the program over an older version of VbReader, delete any file in the program's directory. You may leave the subdirectories intact.

If installing the program for the first time, create a directory (C:\Reader is suggested).

Copy the distribution ZIP file to the program directory. Unzip it. The file is zipped with version 1.10 of Pkzip.

Modify the Compress.Bat and Explode.Bat files to match your system configuration. Ensure that the proper paths to your PKZIP and UNZIP program are setup in the batch files, as well as the path to the replies directory. **Failure to do this will result in the program not functioning properly.**

Launch Windows. Using the File Manager, Double Click on READER.EXE. The program will start. At this stage, the program will insert a line in your WIN.INI file, listing the current program directory. The program will also invoke the **Screen Options** configuration menu.

Configure all the items in the dialog box. Close the dialog box.

Invoke the **Quick Configuration** menu. Invoke all remaining items one by one and configure all options.

When totally configured, select the **Save Configuration to Disk** option. This will create the READER.INI file in the program directory.

Use the FileManager and move the Tagfile from the Taglines Directory to the DATAFILE directory. You may delete the TAGLINES directory.

The intallation is complete.