WinBiff 1.6b - (C) Copyright 1992-93, Paul A. Steckler

WinBiff is a Windows 3.x version of the well-known Un*x biff program, designed for use in conjunction with mail delivery programs such as UUPC/extended, Waffle, Pegasus, FSUUCP, and sendmail.

Installing WinBiff

Copy the file WINBIFF.EXE to any convenient directory. Typically, users keep WINBIFF.EXE in a directory along with other small Windows utilities.

To configure WinBiff for your system, start the program, and select "Setup" from the system menu in the upper left window. In the dialog box which pops up, enter a suitable polling interval (how often WinBiff checks your mail file), a caption for the WinBiff title bar, the full pathname of the file your mail delivery program creates, the command to invoke your mail reader (including any command-line arguments), and optionally, the name of a ".WAV" file to play when mail is received.

The minimum polling interval is 5 seconds. If no caption is specified, the mail file will be used. You may use DOS wildcard characters ("*" and "?") in the mail file specification. Pegasus users should use "*.CNM" in the mail file specification. (Note for Waffle users: Waffle creates two mailbox files, a text file with a ".F" extension, and an index file with a ".I" extension. Specify the ".F" file for WinBiff.) The string "%s" in the mail reader specification will expand to the full pathname of the specified mail file.

By clicking with the left mouse button in the appropriate boxes, you may choose the additional options:

- o start the program minimized
- o "autosize" the program window
- o show mail headers
- o reverse sort headers by order of arrival
- o whether on startup to display kept mail

The "autosize" option tells WinBiff to display an icon when there is no mail, and to display a window (with or without headers) when mail is present. The reverse sort option is inapplicable, and its checkbox disabled, unless the show headers option is selected. If the "show kept mail" option is de-selected, and your mail file(s) have not been modified since WinBiff was closed, mail will not be displayed on startup.

You can choose what sound WinBiff will make when new mail is received, by clicking on the appropriate radio button in the dialog box. Choosing "Beep" uses the Windows "Default Beep" sound. Choosing "Custom" plays the .WAV file given in the Sound file field. The "Test" button allows you to play the sound file during setup. (You must have appropriate hardware and/or drivers installed for this choice to work. A speaker driver SPEAKER.DRV which provides adequate results without special hardware is available at many shareware sites, and is available from the author on request.)

For the mail file, mail reader, and sound file fields, clicking on an adjacent Browse button allows you to pick files from a Windows Common Dialog box. The Browse buttons require the Windows 3.1 COMMDLG.DLL. If you are running Windows 3.0, and do not already have COMMDLG.DLL, you may obtain a copy at many shareware sites, from Microsoft, or from the author.

If you press the "Save" button, a WINBIFF.INI file is created, and the values you have given will be recalled when the program is started subsequently. The WINBIFF.INI file will be placed in the

current directory.

You may run multiple copies of WinBiff to monitor multiple mailboxes. For each mailbox to be monitored, using mkdir, create a directory where a WINBIFF.INI will be stored. Then, for each each mailbox, add an item to a folder in the Windows Program Manager, and specify one of the configuration directories just created as the "Working Directory". When you save your configuration information, it will be saved in the "home" directory for that mailbox.

Using WinBiff

When WinBiff runs minimized, it displays either of two icons. One icon shows a mailbox with its flag down; the other shows the same mailbox with its flag raised, and the word "MAIL". WinBiff switches between these two icons depending on whether there is mail in the specified mail file. The arrival of new mail optionally causes the program to beep or play the sound in a .WAV file.

When WinBiff runs in a window, unless the show headers option has been selected, it displays bitmaps equivalent to the icons. That is, there are two bitmaps, one for when there is no mail, and another for when there is. If the show headers option has been selected, and there is mail, the "From:" and "Subject:" lines for up to 150 messages are displayed in the window. Scrollbars are provided, allowing scrolling through the headers. Choosing the reverse sort option displays the headers so that the latest-arriving message is at the top.

The user may force the appearance of the original, no-mail icon (or bitmap) by selecting "Clear" from the system menu. If "Clear" is chosen, the menu item changes to "Show". Choosing "Show" will re-display the mail bitmap or mail headers. If mail is pending, but not displayed on startup (because the "show kept mail" option has not been selected), choosing "Show" will display the pending mail.

To invoke the mail reader, double-click with the right mouse button on the icon or window. If the window is displayed, you may also double-click with the left mouse button or hit <RETURN>. The reader is invoked whether or not you actually have mail pending.

When the "show headers" option is set, the caption reads "WinBiff (caption)"; it reads just "caption" if WinBiff is iconized, or headers are disabled and running as a window -- this is so the title bar is of reasonable size. WinBiff's window is resizable; the bitmaps remain reasonably proportioned regardless of size.

Bugs/Problems

If you play a .WAV file on the receipt of mail, use SPEAKER.DRV as your sound driver, and disable interrupts during playback, a serial-port communications program (such as UUPC's UUIO) may lose characters. Normal operation of a single UUIO process should not be a problem, since mail delivery occurs after all files have been transferred.

Registration

WinBiff is a shareware program. If you use the program in a commercial setting, or non-commercially on a regular basis, please submit contributions ($10 suggested) to:

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    Boston, MA 02125-3260
    USA

Users who submit $10 or more will receive updates as uuencoded .ZIP files by e-mail.

You may freely distribute the WinBiff executable WINBIFF.EXE as long as the executable file is not modified in any way, and as long as this file, WINBIFF.WRI, is distributed with the executable.

Disclaimer

You use WinBiff at your own risk. All warranties expressed and implied are disclaimed. Any damages resulting from the use of WinBiff shall not result in any liability.

Contacting the author

E-mail correspondence concerning this program may be submitted to:

winbiff@blimpy.ci.net

Users without ftp access may request a uuencoded .ZIP file of the latest version of WinBiff by sending a message to:

winbiff-request@blimpy.ci.net