

Helldiver Help Index

This Index lists the Help topics available for Helldiver. Use the scroll bars to see entries not currently visible in the Help window.

Introduction

[What is Helldiver?](#)

Commands

[File Menu](#)

[Search Menu](#)

[Groups Menu](#)

[Read Menu](#)

[Send Menu](#)

Procedures

[Configuring Helldiver](#)

[Saving Articles](#)

[Group Search Conditions](#)

[Message Notepad](#)

[Sending Mail and News](#)

[Address Book](#)

Other

[Helldiver Biff](#)

[Helldiver Send](#)

[Reporting Problems and Suggestions](#)

[Future Work](#)

What is Helldiver?

Helldiver is an off-line newsreader for use with the Waffle BBS package. It supports both Waffle 1.64 and 1.65. Helldiver supports any number of users, with the proviso that each user must have an existing Waffle account and password.

Helldiver provides subject-threading in the form of a window that shows the subjects in the current newsgroup, or the user's mailbox, sorted into alphabetical order (or in the case of the mailbox, in arrival time order for convenience). Subjects can be selected to be read, and then the user enters read mode to display the articles in a separate window.

The file NEWSRC or JOIN in the user's home directory is used to record which articles have been read by the user.

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Keyboard Short Cuts

Commands

The following topics describe the options available on each of Helldiver's main menus. See the topic [Message Notepad](#) for information on the notepad's menu options.

[File Menu](#)

[Search Menu](#)

[Groups Menu](#)

[Read Menu](#)

[Send Menu](#)

Procedures

The following topics describe major aspects of Helldiver's operation.

[Configuring Helldiver](#)
[Saving Articles](#)
[Group Search Conditions](#)
[Message Notepad](#)
[Sending Mail and News](#)
[Address Book](#)

File Menu

Save

Save the currently selected article to a file. See the topic [Saving Articles](#) for more information.

Save and Delete

When processing your mailbox, this is a shortcut version of **Save** to save the article and then delete it directly after the save. You will be prompted for deletion after the save.

Save in Mailbox

This is a shortcut version of **Save** that appends the currently selected article to the file MAILBOX in the user's home directory.

Uudecode

This shortcut pops up the **Save** dialog box and automatically checks the **Uudecode** and **Replace File** buttons.

Delete

Delete an article from your mailbox. It does not allow deleting articles from newsgroups.

Explode Digest

This option is not currently implemented.

Address Book

Pops up the user's address book for browsing and editing. See the topic [Address Book](#) for more information.

Add to Address Book

This option appends the e-mail address and real name of the author of the currently selected article to the address book. This is a convenient way to save away a person's e-mail address for future reference.

Save Newsrc/Join File

Save the newsgroup information to your NEWSRC or JOIN file. These files keep track of where you are up to when reading each newsgroup. You will be asked if you wish to save your NEWSRC or JOIN file whenever exiting Helldiver and you have read some articles from newsgroups, even if you have previously saved the information using this menu option. This option allows you to save this information earlier while reading news if you wish.

Settings

Change the user-configurable settings. See the topic [Configuring Helldiver](#) for more information.

Article

Swap to the article display window. The '=' key will also perform this operation.

Exit

Exit the program. You will be asked if you wish to update your NEWSRC or JOIN file if you have read articles from any newsgroups, or you have changed from using the NEWSRC file to the JOIN file, or vice versa.

Search Menu

This menu only applies in the article display window of Helldiver. It is not currently implemented.

Find

Pops up a dialog box to ask for a string to search for in the currently displayed article.

Find Next

Find the next occurrence of the search string specified by **Find**.

Groups Menu

This menu only applies in the subject display window of Helldiver.

Subscriptions

This option pops up a dialog box to allow you to change the subscription status of newsgroups. A '!' will appear next to any newsgroup that you are currently unsubscribed to. Double clicking on a newsgroup, or pressing the space bar while it is selected will toggle the subscription status.

Unsubscribe

This unsubscribes you from the current newsgroup, or resubscribes you if you are already unsubscribed. You cannot unsubscribe from your mailbox.

Next Group

Go to the next newsgroup that is unread and has unread articles.

Previous Group

Go to the previous newsgroup that is unread and has unread articles.

Go to Group

Pops up a dialog box to ask for a newsgroup to jump directly to. A search condition can also be specified to restrict the subset of articles from the group that are displayed. See the topic [Group Search Conditions](#) for more information.

Go to Mailbox

This is a short-cut version of **Go to Group** that goes to the user's mailbox and displays its contents. Unlike newsgroups, the contents of the mailbox are shown in arrival order rather than being sorted on subject. Thus, the most recent mail message will always be at the end of the list.

Unmark

Unmark the current newsgroup so it is no longer marked as read.

Read Menu

This menu contains entries that allow you to control the fashion in which you select and read articles.

The following menu entries are only available in the subject list window.

Read

Enter reading mode on the currently selected article in the subject list.

Read All

Select all articles in the current newsgroup and enter reading mode on the first one.

Read Selected

Enter reading mode on the first article selected in the newsgroup.

Show Unread

Re-scan the current newsgroup and just show the articles that were marked as unread in the NEWSRC or JOIN file when Helldiver was started.

Show All

Re-scan the current newsgroup and show all articles.

Show FAQs

Re-scan the current newsgroup and show all articles that are cross-posted to the newsgroup **news.answers**.

Select

Toggle the selection status on the current article.

Select All

Select all articles in the current newsgroup.

Select Subject

Select all articles that have the same subject as the current article. This is useful to select an article and all follow-up's to the article that have the same subject.

The following menu entries are only available in the article display window.

Next

Go to the next selected article in the current newsgroup. If there are no more unread articles, then you are returned to the subject list window.

Previous

Go to the previous selected article in the current newsgroup.

Next Physical

Go to the next article in the current newsgroup, whether or not it is selected.

Prev Physical

Go to the previous article in the current newsgroup.

Headers

Toggles the display of the header lines of the currently selected article. Selecting this once will display all header fields, and selecting it again will return to the short header form.

The following menu entries are available in both the subject list and article display windows.

Kill

Not currently implemented.

Auto Select

Not currently implemented.

Send Menu

This menu contains entries for sending mail and news messages. For all message options, you can edit the header fields and body part in the message notepad before transmission.

Mail

Send a new mail message. You will be prompted for the destination addresses and subject.

News

Send a new news posting. You will be prompted for the newsgroups, subject, keywords, summary, etc. The current newsgroup is the default newsgroup to post to.

Reply

Reply to the author of the current article.

Follow

Follow-up to the current news posting.

Reply All

As for **Reply**, except that all addresses on the **From**, **To**, and **Cc** lines are replied to.

Reply and Follow

Both reply and follow-up to the current article. The resultant message is sent to the author, and also posted to the follow-up newsgroups.

Forward

Forward the current article to someone via e-mail, or to some other newsgroups, or both. You are given an opportunity to edit the forwarded article before transmission. Thus, you can insert some forwarding comments with the article if appropriate.

Edit Signature

Opens the message notepad on your signature file, SIG, in your home directory, permitting you to edit the signature that is appended to all outgoing messages from you.

Reporting Problems and Suggestions

If you have any problems with Helldiver, or you have suggestions for new features, then please e-mail me on the Internet at the following address:

rhys@cs.uq.oz.au

Please see the section entitled [Future Work](#) for more information on what is planned for future versions of Helldiver.

Future Work

The following are planned for the near future for Helldiver. They are not in any particular order.

- Kill/Select files.
- Digest explosion.
- Viewing the contents of save files.
- Save in the Waffle 1.65 folder format.
- Searching for strings in displayed articles.
- Copying parts of articles to the clipboard.
- Multi-part messages when sending.
- Changing the reading order for newsgroups.
- Some Message-Id threading.
- Support for MIME (Multi-media Internet Mail Extensions).
- Multi-part unsharing of sources.
- News access methods such as WaflineMail/QWK, etc.
- A serial NNTP-like door for Waffle.

Other suggestions are welcome.

Message Notepad

This section and its subsections describe the notepad editor that Helldiver invokes to edit outgoing mail and news messages.

The notepad is similar in functionality to the standard Windows program NOTEPAD.EXE, with the following additional menus:

Edit Menu Extensions

Format Menu

Attachments Menu

If you are sending a mail or news message, then once you exit the notepad, you are asked if you wish to transmit the message. Answering **No** will abort the transmission, and answering **Cancel** will return you to the notepad to continue editing the message.

Notepad Edit Menu

The **Edit** menu of the Message Notepad is similar to the **Edit** menus of other Windows applications, with the addition of the following items:

Copy File

Prompts for the name of a file which the currently selected region is copied into.

Paste File

Prompts for the name of a file to paste into the notepad at the current position.

Paste Quoted File

The same as **Paste File**, with the addition that all lines pasted in are prefixed with the '>' character. This is useful for pasting messages stored in files into a message that is being composed.

The attachment options on the Attachments Menu provide another way to include the contents of files into your messages. The attachment options are usually more robust because the pasting options may fail if memory is in short supply.

Notepad Format Menu

The **Format** menu of the Message Notepad permits the insertion of special formatting commands which affect how the final message will appear.

Start Format Command

This option inserts a "<<" character into the text of the message. This character is used to start all formatting commands.

End Format Command

This option inserts a ">>" character into the text of the message. This character is used to end all formatting commands.

Split Message

Not currently implemented.

Page Break

This inserts a "<<**newpage**>>" command into the message. When the message is submitted, this command will be replaced by a CTRL-L.

Rot13 Start

Insert a "<<**rot13-start**>>" command into the message. When the message is submitted, all characters following this command, up until the next "<<**rot13-end**>>" command are encrypted with the rot13 algorithm.

Rot13 End

Insert a "<<**rot13-end**>>" command into the message, which turns off rot13 encryption.

Change Case

Change the case of the next character.

Notepad Attachments Menu

This menu contains options for attaching external files to a message for transmission. When an option is selected, you will be prompted for a filename, and a command will be written into the message text. Once the message is submitted, the command will be replaced by the contents of the file, encoded in the indicated way.

File

Copy the contents of the file in at this point.

Uuencoded File

Uuencode the file and include its encoding at this point.

Multi-Part Uuencode

Not currently implemented.

Message

Similar to **File**, except that any message headers at the start of the file are prefixed with a ``>`` character.

Configuring Helldiver

Helldiver performs most of its configuration by reading Waffle's standard configuration and password files. Additional user-configurable information is read from the file HELLDIV.INI in the same directory as the HELLDIV.EXE executable. The configurable options for all users are all kept in the same file, and may be modified by selecting the **Settings** option on the File Menu. Their names and meanings follow:

Home

Name of the user's home directory, which Helldiver uses when it starts up and when it processes standard Helldiver files such as NEWSRC, JOIN, ADDRESS.BK, MAILBOX, etc. Enter the full pathname of your new home directory, including the drive name, so Helldiver is always certain to find it. The default directory name is the user's home directory under Waffle. Note that changing your home directory will not affect Helldiver's processing of your mailbox: it will still scan your Waffle home directory for mail.

Reply-To

If people experience trouble replying to you because of invalid **From** headers, then an override **Reply-To** address may be specified in this setting, which will be added to all outgoing messages unless you delete the **Reply-To** line when composing the message, or enter a new reply address.

Mail Format

A formatting string for the article headers to be displayed in the user's mailbox. This string tells Helldiver how to display article header information in the subject window. It may contain any characters, together with formatting commands of the form **%X**, which are replaced with certain values from the article's header. The default value for this option is '**%16F %D %T**'. Commands have the general form **%cnX** where **X** is a letter indicating the kind of header field, **c** is a separator character for use in date and time fields, and **n** is the width of the field, in characters. The following formatting commands are available:

%F	Name of the person the article is from.
%L	Number of lines in the body of the article, if known.
%D	Date article was posted in MM/DD format.
%d	Date article was posted in DD/MM format.
%E	Date article was posted in MM/DD/YY format.
%e	Date article was posted in DD/MM/YY format.
%T	Time article was posted in HH:MM format.
%%	The % character.

It is possible to change the separator character that Helldiver uses for dates and times by using the **c** character described above. For example, **%-E** will display dates in MM-DD-YY format rather than the usual MM/DD/YY format.

The article's subject is always added at the end of the formatted headers.

News Format

A formatting string for the article headers to be displayed in newsgroups. The formatting string has the same format as the **Mail Format** string. The default value is '**%16F %5L**'.

Add outgoing messages to OUTBOX

When this option is checked, it directs Helldiver to save all messages you send via mail or post to news, in the file OUTBOX in your home directory. This is a convenient way to keep a log of all mail and news that you have personally sent.

Use JOIN file instead of NEWSRC file

By default, Helldiver uses the file NEWSRC in your home directory to keep track of where you are up to with reading each newsgroup. By checking this option, you can direct Helldiver to use Waffle's JOIN file instead. The NEWSRC file is slightly superior for Helldiver's use because when Helldiver uses it, Helldiver will automatically subscribe you to any new newsgroups as they become available, whereas, with the JOIN file, you have to manually subscribe to the new newsgroups by selecting **Subscriptions** on the Groups Menu.

Saving Articles

When you select one of the **Save** options on the File Menu, a dialog box pops up to prompt you for the save filename. The following buttons are also available to modify the way the article is saved:

Mkdir

Clicking this button will make the directory name entered into the dialog box's **Filename** field.

Home

Clicking this button will take you back to your home directory.

Last

Clicking this button will bring back the filename that was used for the last save operation performed. This makes it easy to save a number of articles in succession to the same file.

All Selected

Checking this button will direct Helldiver to save all articles that have been selected for reading in the current newsgroup to the save file. The default is to just save the current article.

Uudecode

Checking this button directs Helldiver to uudecode the article (or articles) to be saved, rather than saving them directly. When used with the **All Selected** checkbox, this performs a multi-part uudecode, assuming that the articles are in the correct order for decoding.

Replace File

Checking this button directs Helldiver to replace the entire contents of the save file, rather than just appending the article to the save file.

Group Search Conditions

When the **Go to Group** option on the Groups Menu is selected, it is possible to specify a search condition to restrict the set of articles that are returned to the user. The articles that are returned are those that satisfy all search conditions. The following search conditions are available:

Quick Search

If you enter a string here and click on **Ok**, then the current selection in the newsgroup list will be moved to the first newsgroup with the given string as a prefix. For example, if you enter **comp.sys**, the current selection is moved to the first group name that begins with **comp.sys**. Thus, this provides a quick way to scan through the newsgroup list for your required newsgroup.

Subject

If a subject string is given, then all articles whose subjects contain the given string as a substring will be selected. Case is ignored when comparisons are done.

From

If a from string is given, then all articles whose **From**line contain the given string as a substring will be selected. Case is ignored when comparisons are done. Both the e-mail address and the author's 'real name' are searched for a match.

Hours

If a number of hours is specified, then it indicates how many hours back in time articles should be searched for. The search is done on arrival time, **not** posting time. So, for example, specifying **24** will select all articles that have arrived at your site in the last 24 hours. This is convenient if you know that the article you are searching for arrived recently and you wish to exclude unnecessary older articles.

Unread Only

If this button is checked, then only articles in the newsgroup that have not yet been read will be selected. Otherwise, all articles in the newsgroup are selected.

news.answers

If this button is checked, then only articles that have been cross-posted to the newsgroup **news.answers** are shown. Since 1991, this newsgroup has become the official repository of Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) lists on USENET, so checking this button is equivalent to saying 'show me all frequently asked question lists for the selected newsgroup'. Normally you will wish to uncheck the **Unread Only** button when searching for FAQs. The **Show FAQs** option on the Read Menu provides another way to display FAQs for the current newsgroup.

Eliminate Cross-posts

One of the common problems with some newsreaders is that they show an article that has been cross-posted to many newsgroups in all of the cross-posted newsgroups, leading to the user seeing the article more than once. Helldiver has the ability to suppress duplicate articles, and is enabled by checking this button. In addition, the standard **Next Group** and

Previous Group options will also suppress duplicate articles during searches.

An example of suppression is that if an article was cross-posted to the newsgroups A, B, and C, and the user was subscribed to A and C, then the article will only appear in one of A or C. Usually it will appear in the newsgroup whose name is alphabetically smaller. The article display window will show a **Crossposted-To** header line for all cross-posted articles, so it is still possible to determine what other groups the article appears in.

Address Book

The address book facility is an enhanced version of the mail alias facility common to Unix mailers. On Unix a file called `.mailrc` in the user's home directory can contain aliases that map short user-assigned names to their full Internet e-mail counterparts, and the user can use these short names when addressing mail. It is also possible to create lists of destination e-mail addresses so a mail message sent to the alias will result in messages sent to all recipients on the list.

Helldiver generalises this facility, allowing the user to assign aliases that may be used when addressing mail, as well as short comments about the e-mail destination. Usually these comments will be the actual names of the recipients. Helldiver can also cope with lists of e-mail addresses, and aliases for address book entries. The address book facility only expands aliases to one level. Lists are entered as e-mail addresses separated by commas.

The user's address book is stored as the ASCII file `ADDRESS.BK` in the user's home directory, and may be edited by selecting the **Address Book** option on the [File Menu](#). When sending mail, a button **Address** is available to permit popping up the address book to select e-mail addresses to be added to the list of recipients.

Helldiver Biff

The program HBIFF.EXE included with the Helldiver distribution is a Windows program which monitors the user's mailbox and reports when there is mail available. A beep is also sounded when new mail arrives. The program always stays iconized. Clicking on the icon will reset Helldiver Biff to the "no mail available" status. The following menu items are available from the icon's menu:

Read Mail

Executes the main Helldiver program HELLDIV.EXE. Double clicking on the icon will also have this effect. HELLDIV.EXE must reside in the same directory as HBIFF.EXE.

Today's Mail

Changes the icon to reflect the state of the mailbox today. That is, if new mail has arrived in the last 24 hours, then the icon will be set to show available mail, otherwise it will be set to show no available mail.

All Mail

Changes the icon to reflect that state of the mailbox. If there is any mail in the mailbox, the icon will be set to reflect this fact.

Header Lines

Pops up a dialog box containing a list of the **From** lines of the messages in the mailbox, thus allowing you to preview the mailbox's contents without starting the Helldiver Newsreader.

Settings

Change the user-configurable settings for this program. You can enter a new user-id to be scanned for new mail, and also disable the mail-arrival beep if you wish. If you enter a user-id that has the form "\$VAR", then the environment variable "VAR" will be read for the user-id at program startup. e.g. setting the user-id to "\$USER" will direct Helldiver Biff to always get the user-id from the "USER" environment variable. This can be very useful in shared-computer situations.

About Biff

Display the version information for Helldiver Biff.

Help

Display this help page.

Helldiver Send

The program HSEND.EXE included with the Helldiver distribution is a DOS program that acts as the last phase in the transmission of mail and news. It formats messages, adds **From** lines, and other important header lines, and then calls the Waffle programs RMAIL.EXE and RNEWS.EXE to deliver the messages. It is not necessary to install this program in a Program Manager group, etc, because it is exclusively called by the main Helldiver program HELLDIV.EXE. The only requirement is that HSEND.EXE reside in the same directory as HELLDIV.EXE. If this is not the case, then you may not be able to send mail or news properly.