Snak - IRC for Macintosh

Users Guide and Manual for Snak
Version 4.6.3

By Kent Sorensen "kents@snak.com"

05/11/01

Introduction

Snak is a program that will let you participate in discussions in Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channels. A channel is like a virtual meeting room where people meet and talk.

In order to use IRC, individuals use a client program like Snak to access a nearby IRC server (a dedicated computer). This server will then relay the words that the individual writes, to other servers so that the other participants in the channel can see it.

What is IRC

IRC is different from other chatting systems like AIM and ICQ, in that it is intended for conversation within a whole group of people, rather than one on one. However it also fully supports private conversations between two people.

IRC is not one single system, but rather a collection of independent networks that consists of IRC servers whose owners have decided to exchange IRC messages.

An IRC server is just a dedicated computer somewhere that does nothing besides accept user input through an IRC client, pass it on to other servers, and receive text from those servers. The server then sends the text to the the client program which displays it to the user.

IRC Networks

There are many IRC servers, but they are not all connected to each other. They are organized into different networks, the largest of which are EFNet and Undernet. All servers on a given IRC network exchange messages but do not bridge to other networks.

Some networks are regional like OZnet (Australia) and BrasNet (Brasil), others, like EFNet and Undenet have servers all over the world. All the servers on the same network carry the same channels.

Most networks have thousands of channels, each focused on a location or subject, and anything that is typed into the channel will be seen by the other members. This makes it possible to have a real-time conversation with people all over the world.

Snak will let you connect to multiple servers at the same time and the servers do not have to be on the same network. Therefore you can participate in channels on multiple networks if you so desire.

At any given time the largest of the IRC networks may have as many as 35.000 participants and almost anyone can find a channel that talks about a topic that is of interest to that particular person. It is estimated that at any given time there are several hundred thousand people using IRC.

About the program

The primary function of an IRC client is to display the messages that the other participants in the channel sends, and allow you to send your own messages into the channel for the other members to see.   However, a client like Snak does much more and that is the topic of this manual.

If you are new to IRC, you probably want to read the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that is available from the locations listed at the end of this chapter.

You can also jump right into it and connect to a network and join a few channels. Please read the Quickstart chapter if you are impatient to get started.

Please see the Registration chapter for information on how to register.

Some of Snaks features are:

• Unique docking windows allow efficient use of window space.

• Highlight feature can highligh or speak messages.
• Full speech support with individual voice assignment.
• Two powerful script languages - AppleScript and ircII
• Connection setup and open channels can be saved to a setup file that can be clicked to restore the session automatically
• Files can be sent with DCC by dropping them on the Userlist
• Easy download of MP3 files from sorted list of available songs.
• Built-in address book allows you to keep track of the snippets of information you find as you talk to other people via IRC
• ToolTips provide quick reminders about settings.
• Guardian feature can help parents and teachers control what channels their children and students can visit
• Settings like background color and font can be selected individually for each channel.
• Connection records can specify multiple servers, which allows the program to try each server until it finds one that will connect
• Integrated notify list makes it easy to track when your friends are connected to IRC
• Aliases and scripting help eliminate much tedious typing and provides powerful features
• Extensive compatibility with the ircII scripting language.
• "Find" and "Find Again" functions to search in the channel listing and channel text
• Multiple connections and multiple channels per connection
• Intuitive Drag and Drop operations in many situations
• Automatic and Manual logging functions
• Support for Command-clicking URL

If you find bugs in the program it is important that you report them to me at "bugs@snak.com" so that I may fix them.   Please do not assume that someone else has reported the bug. If you report a bug, please be sure to let me know if it is reproducible, and exactly what steps to take to make it happen. Every system is unique in some way and each of us use the program in our own way.

If you like the program be sure to tell others about it. If you have problems with it, tell me.

You can always find the newest version of Snak on my web page at "http://www.snak.com" and I can be reached at "kents@snak.com"

On the Internet, you can find numerous documents relating to IRC. Most of them assume that you use a client like ircII on unix, but most of the information and commands still apply to Snak.

Here are a number of links to get you started:

http://www.newircusers.com
http://www.irchelp.org
http://www.lib.ox.ac.uk/internet/news/faq/archive/irc-faq.html

These pages are in German
http://irc.fu-berlin.de/einfuehrung.html
http://irc.fu-berlin.de/de-comm-chatsystems-faq.html