

WinBiff 2.0b

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WinBiff is a Windows 3.1 mail notification program for use in conjunction with several different mail systems, including UUPC/extended, Waffle, Pegasus, FirstMail, Novell MHS, Mini-Host, FSUUCP, and sendmail (with PC-NFS).

WinBiff is distributed as shareware. See Registering WinBiff for more information.

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Installing WinBiff

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

Add WinBiff as a new Program Item to an appropriate Program Group in Windows Program Manager. Optionally, you may specify the name of a configuration file as an argument in the Command Line. By default, WinBiff will create a configuration file with the name WINBIFF.INI in the Working Directory. A configuration file must have the extension .INI, but the extension need not be specified explicitly. If you supply a file name without a path, WinBiff will place the configuration file in the **Working Directory**. A path without a drive letter is considered to be on the same drive as the **Working Directory**.

See also:

Example command lines
Multiple mailboxes
Network installation
Configuring for UUPC/extended

Example command lines

By using a given [Command Line](#), you can specify the name and location of the [.INI file](#) used by WinBiff.

Examples:

| <u>Command line</u> | Effect |
|-------------------------|--|
| WINBIFF | creates WINBIFF.INI in Working Directory |
| WINBIFF MYCONFIG | creates MYCONFIG.INI in Working Directory |
| WINBIFF C:\MYCONFIG.INI | creates MYCONFIG.INI in root directory of C: drive |

Installing WinBiff for multiple mailboxes

You may run multiple copies of WinBiff to monitor multiple mailboxes. For each mailbox to be monitored, you will need a separate configuration file.

With some mail systems, you may already have a directory for each of your mailboxes; you can use these directories to store corresponding configuration files. For each mailbox, add a [Program Item](#) to a [Program Group](#) in Program Manager, and specify one of the directories just created as the [Working Directory](#). WinBiff will create a WINBIFF.INI in each of these directories.

Otherwise, create a **Program Item** for each mailbox to be monitored, and explicitly specify a configuration file in each [Command Line](#). You may wish to name the configuration files after the accounts with mailboxes to be monitored. For example, if you have mailboxes for accounts *fred* and *sally*, you might use configuration files named FRED.INI and SALLY.INI.

See also:

[Example command lines](#)

[Network installation](#)

[Configuring for UUPC/extended](#)

Network installation

You may run WinBiff from a network server. You may use multiple configuration files stored on individual network nodes, or a single configuration file stored on the server.

If you use multiple configuration files, the configuration file at a given node provides the settings used by WinBiff when run by a user at that node.

If you use a single configuration file stored on the server, you can use [environment variables](#) to specialize settings at each node. For example, the configuration file might give the [Mail file](#) specification as C:\MAIL\%USER%, which contains the environment variable USER. The [AUTOEXEC.BAT](#) file at each node should set the environment variable USER to an appropriate value. See your DOS manual for details on how to set environment variables.

See also:

[Multiple mailboxes](#)

[Using DOS environment variables](#)


[Configuring for Netware and Pegasus](#)


Configuring WinBiff

To configure WinBiff the first time, start the program. The **Setup** dialog box will appear on the Windows desktop. To change the configuration, choose **Setup** from the system menu.

From the **Setup** dialog box:

Press  to use the configuration settings you have chosen, without saving them.

Press  to save (and use) the chosen settings.

Press  to cancel any changes you have made.

See the following topics for more configuration information:

Required fields

[Polling interval](#)

[Mail file](#)

Optional fields

[Alarm interval](#)

[Window caption](#)

[Mail reader](#)

[Sound file](#)

More options

[Startup and display options](#)

[Window action](#)

[Sound options](#)

[Customizing WinBiff colors](#)

Special topics

[Using DOS environment variables](#)

[Netware and Pegasus](#)

[PC-NFS](#)

[UUPC/extended](#)

[WinOS2](#)

Required fields


Polling interval

The polling interval tells WinBiff how often to check for new mail. Five (5) seconds is the minimum polling interval.

Mail file

The mail file specification gives the name of the file(s) containing mail messages. For example, if mail is stored in the file USER.MBX in the directory MAIL on drive C, the mail file specification would be C:\MAIL\USER.MBX.

You may use DOS wildcard characters ("*" and "?") and DOS [environment variables](#) in the **Mail File** specification.

You may click on the adjacent  button to choose a **Mail file** from a Windows Common Dialog box. DOS wildcard characters, however, must be entered manually.

Unless running under NetWare, Pegasus users should use "*.CNM" in the mail file specification. If you run **Pegasus** under **NetWare**, see Configuring for NetWare and Pegasus.

Waffle creates two mailbox files, a text file with a ".F" extension, and an index file with a ".I" extension. If you use **Waffle**, specify the ".F" file.

Novell MHS mail systems create mail files without an extension, so **MHS** users should use "*" in the mail file specification. You may use the SYS: volume name or a mapped drive name in the mail file specification. If you use the SYS: volume name, you may also specify a server.

By default, UUPC/extended creates mail files with an extension of .SPB (see also Configuring for UUPC/extended).

Users of PC-NFS should specify a mail file on an NFS-mounted drive (see Configuring for PC-NFS).

See also:

Netware and Pegasus

PC-NFS

UUPC/extended

Using DOS environment variables

Optional fields

Alarm interval

If you set the alarm (see [Alarm on](#)), you may choose an appropriate alarm interval.

Window caption


Enter a caption for the WinBiff title bar. If no caption is specified, the mail file name will be used.

Mail reader

Enter the command to invoke your mail reader (including any command-line arguments). The string "%s" in the mail reader specification will expand to the full pathname of the specified [Mail file](#).

Sound file

Enter the name of a ".WAV" file to play when mail is received. This field is disabled unless the [Sound option](#) is set to **Custom**.

For the **Mail reader** and **Sound file** fields, you can use the  buttons to pick files. You may use DOS [environment variables](#) in the **Window caption**, **Mail reader** and **Sound file** fields.

See also:

[Mail file](#)

[Alarm on](#)

[Sound options](#)

[Using DOS environment variables](#)

More options

See the following topics for additional configuration options:

[Startup and display options](#)

[Sound options](#)

[Window action](#)

[Customizing WinBiff colors](#)

Startup and display options

By clicking with the left mouse button in the appropriate boxes, you may choose the following **Startup options**.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Show old mail | whether to display old mail left in your mailbox |
| Last icon position | whether to position the WinBiff icon at its last location |

The following **Display options** are available:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Show headers | whether to show mail headers |
| Reverse sort | whether to sort headers by reverse order of their arrival |

The **Reverse Sort** option is inapplicable, and its checkbox disabled, unless the **Show headers** option is selected.

See also:
[Window action](#)


Window action

The **Window action** choice tells WinBiff what to display when mail arrives. Normally, WinBiff shows an image of a mailbox with its flag down. When mail arrives, WinBiff will raise the flag on the mailbox and change the background. If the window is displayed and the Show headers option is checked, then up to 150 message headers will be shown. The **To top** option causes the WinBiff window or icon to remain visible even though other windows cover it. The **Restore** option causes the icon to become a window when mail arrives; when all mail has been read, the window again becomes an icon.

The **Activate** option makes WinBiff the active window when mail arrives. This option is not recommended for most users. If you are running a DOS program in full-screen mode, this option will activate WinBiff on the Windows desktop when mail arrives (but see the following restrictions). Otherwise, if the **Activate** option is not set, the DOS full-screen application remains active; hence, WinBiff will not change when mail arrives. In Windows standard mode (the mode used by 286-class machines), the **Activate** option has no effect when a DOS application is running. In Windows enhanced mode (the default mode for 386, 486, and Pentium machines), the **Activate** option has no effect if a DOS application is running and has the "Exclusive" option set in its .PIF file.


Sound options

You can choose what sound WinBiff will make when new mail is received, by choosing a **Sound option**. Choosing **Beep** uses the Windows "Default Beep" sound. Choosing **Custom** plays the .WAV file given in the Sound file field.

The  button allows you to play the sound file during setup.

The **Alarm on** option enables the WinBiff alarm. When mail arrives, the alarm will sound repeatedly until turned off. The Alarm interval indicates how often the alarm should be sounded. Note that if **No sound** is chosen, the alarm cannot be set. Similarly, if the alarm is not set, the **Alarm interval** cannot be chosen.


Customizing WinBiff colors

Pressing the  button from the **Setup** dialog opens another dialog box. Using this dialog box, you can change the colors used by WinBiff.

Pick which color area you wish to change by clicking on the list of areas, or by clicking in the appropriate color display box. For example, clicking on the words "From line" allows you to change the color of "from" text in mail headers. Adjust the **red**, **green**, and **blue** sliders to achieve the color you want. Note that moving all sliders to their maximum positions gives white, while moving all of them to their minimum positions gives black. As you adjust the sliders, the color changes will be displayed in the appropriate color display box.

Pressing  closes the **Colors** dialog, and returns control to the Setup dialog.

Pressing  will restore the WinBiff default colors.

Pressing  will cancel the effect of any color changes, and returns control to the **Setup** dialog. The color changes you make will take effect only if you choose the **OK** or **Save** buttons from the **Setup** dialog.

Special configuration topics

See the following topics for special configuration information:

[Using DOS environment variables](#)

[PC-NFS](#)

[Netware and Pegasus](#)

[UUPC/extended](#)

[WinOS2](#)

Using DOS environment variables

In the Window caption, Mail file, Mail reader, and Sound file specifications, you may use DOS environment variables by bracketing each variable name with dollar signs. For example, if the DOS **environment variable** LOGIN indicates a subdirectory where mail is sent, you might enter "C:\MAIL\ \$LOGIN\$*.*" as the mail file specification. If you need to indicate a literal dollar sign, use two of them. For example, the specification "C:\MAIL\\$\$USER*.*" indicates that mail is sent to the directory C:\MAIL\ \$USER. **Environment variable** names used by WinBiff may not contain dollar signs.

Configuring for NetWare and Pegasus

If you use the DOS or Windows versions of Pegasus (PMail) under Novell Netware, WinBiff provides a special macro to simplify setup. In the Mail file field, enter "<NW-PMAIL>", and WinBiff will figure out the full mail file specification on the preferred server, if any, else on the default server. In a multi-server environment, you may enter "*SERVER*/<NW-PMAIL>", where *SERVER* is the real name of the server. Since the macro relies on the **NetWare** bindery, you must be running bindery emulation in **NetWare** 4.x. See Problems using the <NW-PMAIL> macro, if you use the macro but fail to receive mail notification.

You may instead enter the **Mail file** specification manually, which should be:

```
SYS:MAIL\<objid>\*.CNM
```

or

```
SERVER/SYS:MAIL\<objid>\*.CNM
```

where <objid> is the hexadecimal digit **NetWare** object id assigned to the user.

Configuring for PC-NFS

If your PC is on a network with a Unix machine which can export directories using Sun Microsystems' Network File System (NFS), and you run PC-NFS, WinBiff can monitor mail sent to the Unix machine. Export the mail spool directory where your mail arrives so that it appears as a directory on a logical DOS drive on the PC. In the WinBiff **Setup** dialog, specify the file that is created on the logical drive when mail arrives as the Mail file.

Configuring for UUPC/extended

UUPC/extended places new messages in a file in the mail spool directory as they are received. You should specify this file as the Mail file, so that you will be notified of new messages.

If you set the "Multitask" option, when the **UUPC/extended** mail reader MAIL.EXE (either the DOS or the OS/2 version) is started, messages are moved to another file in the account's home directory. If you wish to track old messages (those that remain after MAIL.EXE is run), you will need to run a second copy of WinBiff with the **Mail file** set to the mailbox in the account's home directory.

See also:

Multiple mailboxes

WinBiff and WinOS2

You may run WinBiff under WinOS2 (version 3.1 or above). If you run WinOS2 in a full-screen session, you can run WinBiff as you would run it under Windows itself. Similarly, if you minimize windows to the Desktop, WinBiff may be run in a seamless mode session as it would run under Windows.

If you wish to run WinBiff in a **WinOS2 seamless mode** session, and you hide minimized windows, or you minimize windows to the Minimized Window Viewer, you need to exercise a little care. In this case, Windows icons are not visible in **seamless mode**. Therefore, you should either (1) run WinBiff as a window all the time (choose **To Top** or **No action** as the Window action), or (2) choose the **Restore** option as the **Window action**.

If you run WinBiff in a **seamless mode** session, and you pick WinBiff from the OS/2 Window List, the window may not be restored to the proper size. This is due to an idiosyncrasy of the integration of OS/2 and **WinOS2**. If you run WinBiff as described above, it should not be necessary to use the Window List. If the window is restored to a wrong size, simply resize the window manually.

Using WinBiff

After you have configured WinBiff, you should test the configuration by sending a mail message to the account being monitored. WinBiff should respond when the message is delivered.

See also:

[Modifying the configuration](#)

[Clearing the mailbox and the alarm](#)

[Launching the mail reader](#)

[Resizing and moving the window](#)

[WinBiff Help](#)

Modifying the configuration

To modify the configuration, select **Setup** from the system menu. You can pop up the system menu by clicking on the WinBiff icon, or, if WinBiff is running as a window, by clicking on the box in the upper-left corner. For either the icon or window, pressing `ALT-SPACE` will also pop up the system menu.

See also:

[Configuring WinBiff](#)

Clearing the mailbox and the alarm

After mail has arrived, the user may force the appearance of the original, no-mail icon (or window) by selecting **Clear** from the system menu. If **Clear** is chosen, the menu item changes to **Show**. Choosing **Show** will re-display the mail window or headers. If mail is pending, but not displayed on startup (because the **Show** old mail option has not been selected), choosing **Show** will also display the mail window or mail headers for the old mail.

If you have set the WinBiff alarm, when mail arrives, the alarm will sound repeatedly until turned off. Any of the following actions will turn off the alarm:

- Mouse-clicking on the WinBiff icon or window
- Scrolling the WinBiff window (horizontally or vertically)
- Restoring WinBiff from an icon to a window
- Popping up the system menu
- Launching the mail reader
- Starting WinBiff Help

See also:

[Alarm interval](#)

[Alarm on](#)

[Launching the mail reader](#)

[WinBiff Help](#)

Launching the mail reader

To launch the mail reader, double-click with the right mouse button on the icon or window. If the window (not the icon) 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.

Resizing and moving the window

You may freely move or resize the WinBiff window. WinBiff maintains two window sizes, one for when headers are displayed, and the other for the plain window. When WinBiff is started, the last window position and the two window sizes from the last WinBiff session are used.

You may also move the WinBiff icon to any location on the screen. If you select Last icon position, the next time you run WinBiff, the icon will appear at its location from the previous session.

WinBiff Help

The WinBiff Help system can be called from the system menu, or from the **Setup** and **Color** dialog boxes.

From the system menu, choose **Help** or press the F1 key.

From either dialog, press the  button or press the F1 key.

Errors/Bugs/Problems

See the following topics for possible problems running WinBiff.

[Problems using the <NW-PMAIL> macro](#)

[Problems with DOS applications](#)

[False alerts](#)

[Dropped characters](#)

Problems using the <NW-PMAIL> macro

To use the <NW-PMAIL> macro, NetWare must be loaded and a user logged in. If a dialog box pops up which says "No NetWare connection or invalid server", make sure **NetWare** is loaded and the specified server name (if any) is correct. If the dialog box pops up which says, "No NetWare user logged in", make sure a **NetWare** user is logged in. In either case, after correcting the error condition, you should enter the **Setup** dialog, and choose **OK**. When the macro is invoked successfully, either by loading WinBiff or exiting the **Setup** dialog, WinBiff writes an entry to the file NW-PMAIL.LOG in the Working Directory, containing the actual mail file specification used. Use of the <NW-PMAIL> macro has unpredictable results if you are not running **NetWare**.

See also:

[Configuring for NetWare and Pegasus](#)

Problems with DOS applications

In Windows standard mode (used by 286-class machines), all Windows applications are suspended while a DOS application runs. Therefore, in standard mode, WinBiff cannot check for mail while a DOS application is running. Similarly, in enhanced mode (used by 386, 486, and Pentium machines), if a DOS application has the "Exclusive" option set in its `.PIF` file, WinBiff will be suspended while the DOS application runs. Also, in enhanced mode, if a DOS application is running full-screen, WinBiff will check for mail somewhat less frequently than is specified by the nominal polling interval. All these effects are limitations of the Windows environment.

False alerts

If you read some, but not all, of the messages in a mailbox, WinBiff may behave as if the remaining messages are new, so that the Window action is taken. This is because some mail readers temporarily delete mail files before writing the remaining messages back to the file. If WinBiff polls the file while the file is deleted, WinBiff will behave as if the mailbox is empty; when the remaining messages are written, these messages are considered new.

If you use the Elm mail reader, and you do not discard messages after reading them, **Elm** adds some information to mail files. This extra information increases the size of mail files, which, in some cases, causes WinBiff to react as if there is new mail.

Dropped characters

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/extended'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.

Registering WinBiff

WinBiff is a shareware program. It is not free software. If you use the program in a commercial setting, or non-commercially on a regular basis, please submit your registration contribution (\$10 suggested) to:

Paul A. Steckler
10 Harbor Point Blvd. # 405
Boston, MA 02125-3212
USA

For full-time students, the suggested registration contribution is \$5. Massachusetts residents should add 5% sales tax. Checks in non-US currencies are welcome.

Contributors will automatically receive updates as uuencoded .ZIP files by e-mail. When submitting your registration, be sure to contact the author at winbiff@blimpy.ci.net so your e-mail address can be placed on the update list.

You may submit your WinBiff registration contribution by credit card. Due to transaction costs, the minimum credit card contribution is \$10. To register using your MasterCard, Visa, American Express, or Discover card, call **Public Software Library** at 800/242-4PsL (800/242-4775); outside the US and Canada, +1 713/524-6394; FAX: 713/524-6398; Internet: 71355.470@compuserve.com.

These numbers are for credit card registrations only. The WinBiff author cannot be reached at those numbers. To reach the author about site licensing, volume discounts, version information, or technical information, please contact the author at 617/436-9926, or at winbiff@blimpy.ci.net.

Contacting the author

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

winbiff@blimpy.ci.net

Suggestions for improvements are particularly welcome.

Obtaining WinBiff updates

The latest version of WinBiff is available via anonymous ftp as:

ftp.cica.indiana.edu:pub/pc/win3/util/wnbffXXX.zip

where XXX represents the version number.

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

Elm

A popular mail reader for Unix systems. Contact: elm@dsi.com.

UUPC/extended

A uucp system for PC's running DOS, Windows, Windows NT, and OS/2, distributed by Kendra Electronic WonderWorks (software@kew.com). Archived at [ftp.clarkson.edu](ftp://ftp.clarkson.edu).

Waffle

A mail and news system for Unix and DOS systems, archived at [ftp.halcyon.com](ftp://halcyon.com).

Pegasus (PMail)

Davis Harris' mail system for PC's, available in DOS and Windows versions, usually run with Novell NetWare. Archived at *risc.ua.edu* and *tyr.let.rug.nl*, or contact *david@pmail.gen.nz*.

FirstMail

A mail system distributed with some versions of Novell NetWare which uses the MHS file format.

Novell MHS

A family of mail systems for PC's running Novell NetWare which use the MHS file format.

FSUUCP

A uucp implementation for PC's running DOS, distributed by Fubar Systems, archived at toys.fubarsys.com.

Mini-Host

A uucp implementation for PC's running Windows, distributed by SuperPhysica (minihost@sph.spb.su).
Demo available at <ftp.cica.indiana.edu>.

PC-NFS

A PC-hosted implementation of Sun Microsystems' Network File System, allowing remote file systems to appear as logical DOS drives.

sendmail

The mail transport agent program used by many Unix systems. Not normally run by users.

WinOS2

The version of Windows built into the OS/2 operating system.

NetWare

An operating system sold by Novell, Inc., for creating PC-hosted local area networks (LAN's).

Working Directory

The directory from which a Windows application is started.

Program Item

An entry within a Program Group of Windows Program Manager, shown as an icon, which represents an application.

Program Group

A collection of icons contained in a Windows Program Manager window, representing a group of applications.

Command Line

The string Windows uses to run an application, including any arguments.

.INI file

A file which contains startup options used by a Windows application.

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.PIF file

A Windows Program Information File with settings for running a DOS application.

seamless mode

The mode used by OS/2 when running a Windows application in the Workplace Shell.

environment variable

A variable with a string value maintained by DOS, available to DOS and Windows programs.

AUTOEXEC.BAT

The DOS batch file that is run automatically when a system is booted.

