DNEWS Management

DNEWS: A fast, efficient, low management NNTP news server for

Windows NT, VMS and UNIX systems.

Version 2.3

DNEWS Management

DNEWS Features

Dynamic sucking feed.

A sucking feed may use as little as 10% of the normal disk space and network bandwidth. By only getting news items that people usually read very large savings are possible particularly for small sites & workgroups. A hundred users can be supported on 100-200 MB depending on their reading habits!

I run a single user server on my NT as a background service, it's using less than 5MB.

Flexible expire settings

By allowing expiration by 'number of items' low volume groups become much more useful. Also by allowing settings which change with disk space the system is much more stable to large influxes of news.

Flexible access restrictions

Reading and Posting access can be given separately to different users and selections of news groups.

Binaries available for common platforms

On many platforms you do not need to build the binary yourself, e.g. VMS, (VAX & ALPHA), Solaris, Linux, Windows NT

Email confirmation of posts

DNEWS can be configured to send email confirmations as it sends items up to a main news server. This gives users a clear record of a posted item and it's successful transfer into the 'net'.

Items stored in a database

Items are stored in a database which puts items together in blocks of 100. This saves directory entries, inodes, and the empty space usually wasted due to blocking factors. Also file open and closes are minimized, this is essential on systems where this is a 'costly' operation, e.g. VMS.

Compiling and porting relatively easy

DNEWS was designed to be portable from the ground up, it does not rely on obscure UNIX features.

Installation easy, totally configurable without recompiling

DNEWS can be configured without recompiling and all the configuration scripts have been simplified where possible.

Documented

A user manual is available.

Supported

EMAIL support is available for help with installation and management.

Speed

On comparable systems DNEWS typically out performs other news software, (even the likes of CNEWS and INN in some instances), other VMS news servers don't even come close.

This is partly because DNEWS uses a more advanced database to store the news items. The difference is also very notable on smaller systems (e.g. Linux)

XOVER implemented in software

No xover database is created, the normal DNEWS database is fast enough to create this information 'on the fly'

Streaming support

Streaming NNTP extensions are built in.

Machine impact automatically limited

DNEWS runs in a single process, this speeds up connect time as a process does not need to be created, and it self-limits the impact on the system.

DNEWS Installation

Always refer to *install.txt* for the most up to date installation notes and helpful hints etc.

When upgrading InstallShield will detect that you already have dnews installed and it will only upgrade the exe files without over writing any configuration files.

Main installation steps for Windows NT

- FTP the files

```
FTP ftp.std.com
ftp> cd /ftp/vendors/emagic/dnews
ftp> binary
ftp> get dnews23m.exe  (or whatever is the latest version)
ftp> quit
```
- Start the installation process by typing in: "dnews23m" or by double clicking on the exe file from explorer.

- The rest of the installation is automatic.

- I highly recommend you disable reverse DNS lookups from Dnews Manager, from the 'main options' dialogue if you have any problems with slow response or the service locking up.

- If it doesn't work check the log file (dnews.log) and then check the FAQ document.

```
TYPE \dnews\dnews.log
```

Main installation steps for VAX

1. FTP ftp.std.com /ftp/vendors/emagic/dnews...

2. @extract   Extracts the required files

3. $ edit register_user.com   Change uic and disk to match your machine

4. $ @register_user   Register user dnews$server on your machine.

5. $ edit dnews_start.com   Define the disk(s) where DNEWS
        is installed

6. $ edit sys$manager:systartup_v5.com   Add the startup line (see startup.tmp)

7. $ edit sys$sylogin: Add the symbol (see login.tmp)

8. $ edit dnews_top:news.conf   Modify the file DNEWS.CONF to describe
        your   system by defining the following
        symbols   MANAGER,
    NNTP_FEEDER....
            TIMEZONE, DISKSPACE, MYNAME

9. If your news feed stamps the path header with a name other than it's ip name as in
        'nntp_feeder' then edit newsfeeds.conf and add an exclude command to
        prevent your news system from 'echoing' all messages back to your feeder.

10. $ edit access.conf   Grant an ip range access to the system, e.g.

                    .here.comp.edu:read,post,:::
                            161.23.4.*:read,post,:::*

11. $ @dnews_top:dnews_start   Start the system

12. $ type dnews.info   Type the log file, give it one or two
        minutes   before panicking.

13. $ tellnews status   Get a status report

14. Go to your favorite PC news reader software and try it out!!!

Main installation steps for UNIX

- FTP ftp.std.com /ftp/vendors/emagic/dnews/dnews_linux.tar.Z

- Extract the files to a temporary directory

```
# uncompress dnews_linux.tar.Z
# tar -xvf dnews_linux.tar
# cd dnews
```
- EDIT dnews.conf and carefully define the following symbols

Symbol	Example	Description
manager	system@here.this.place	Email address of the news manager
nntp_feeder	news.feeder.site	The news site where you are going to SUCK a feed from. You need NNTP READER access to this site.
myname	news.this.place	Your full internet name, if left out this may be picked up from the system.
diskspace	100	Total disk space in megabytes
confirm	*.this.place	Send email confirmation to postings from these addresses. (set this to match your local email addresses)
df	df -k	Path and parameters for df command (Display Filesystem)
sendmail	/usr/lib/sendmail -t %s	Path and parameters for sendmail

- EDIT your startup script and add the following line, startup scripts are different for every version of UNIX:

```
# emacs /etc/rc.d/rc.local
Add a line:
/usr/local/dnews/dnews_start.sh
```

- If your news feed stamps the path header with a name other than it's ip name as in 'nntp_feeder' then edit newsfeeds.conf and add an exclude command to prevent your news system from 'echoing' all messages back to your feeder.

- EDIT access.conf and grant ip access to ip numbers or names in your domain, names will only work if your reverse name translation is setup correctly.

```
*.this.site.edu:read,post:::*
161.24.3.*:read,post:::*
```

- If you have changed any of the default directories, then you must edit all the shell scripts, (*.sh) to reflect the change.

- Run the installation script:

```
# ./install.sh
```

- Start the news server

```
# ./dnews_start.sh
```

- The system will now try and fetch a list of newsgroups from your feeder site, this may take 10 minutes the first time and the system will not respond to the tellnews command while this is happening. Use 'ps -alx | grep news' to check it is running, and look at the log files:

```
# more /usr/local/dnews/dnews.log
# more /usr/local/dnews/nohup.out
# ps -ef | grep news
```

- When the system has had a chance to get going, try it out using the tellnews command

```
# tellnews status
```

- Go find a PC and try out the system!

Setting up DNEWS to take a full feed

In access.conf, give your feed site access to send you ihave messages:

```
my.feeder.site.com:ihave:::*
```

In dnews.conf, comment out the nntp_feeder definition.

In newsfeeds.conf, replace:

```
site $NNTP_FEEDER
    groups *
    builtin
    posting
```

With:

```
site my.feeder.site
    groups *
    builtin
```

And in dnews.conf add a line:

```
cachedall true
```

You need to FTP an active file from your provider, if he won't supply you one then you can get one of the NetWin FTP site, but it is better to get a local one. Copy this file to your spool directory:

```
(Stop DNEWS first)
copy active_from_provider.txt /dnews/spool/active.dat
```

Now, read the FAQ section entitled "**3.6 How do I set my EXCLUDE parameter correctly?"**

Here is an example of a full feed from UUNET. Note the exclude parameter is essential.

```
-------dnews.conf---------
In  dnews.conf  comment out nntp_feeder by putting a HASH in
front of the line, and add cachedall true, e.g.
     # nntp_feeder  your.feeder.ohio.edu
     cachedall true

------newsfeeds.conf cut here ----------
     site me
             groups *
     site news.uu.net
             groups *,!local.*
             exclude uunet
     site YOUR.MAIL.GATEWAY
             smtp
------access.conf cut here and change your domain and ipnumbers ------
# Don't let the world connect :-)
*:logoff:::*

# Do let your domain and ip range connect   **** CHANGE THIS BIT ***
*.your.domain:Read,Post:::*
161.232.32.*:read,post:::*

# Do let your news feed from UUNET send you items
news*.uu.net:ihave:::*
```

Gateways & Misc. setup options

CAUTION, gatewaying mailing lists to public news groups is a little risky, don't do it lightly. Two gateways are needed to make a news group and a mailing list 'identical', you must setup both so that a news post gets sent to the mailing list and so a mailing post gets posted to the news group.

Gatewaying a Mailing List into DNEWS

First setup DROBOT to run from NT-Mail, in control panels run the NT-Mail admin tool. Click on 'executables' and enter a name for this gateway, e.g.

juglist-robot

(You will then need to add this user to your juglist mailing list, e.g. juglist-robot@here.com, so that this robot will get all messages that are posted to the mailing list)

In the command line box type in:

```
    drobot -dir c:\ntmail\news -groups rec.juggling
```
Now, setup the service to post these items.

```
    addsvc -del dposter
    addsvc -add dposter dposter.exe "dposter -dir c:\ntmail\news
                  -to news.here.com"
```
Now start the services (from control panel) and then test posting a message and mailing a message to the mailing list and see if the newsgroup and mailing list are kept in line.

Gatewaying a news group out to a Mailing list

Setting up a gateway from a "NEWS group" to a "MAILING LIST" In newsfeeds.conf add a feed for the group you wish to gateway, the 'site' name can be anything meaningful to you.

```
        site juggling
              groups rec.juggling
```

(This will make dnews create juggling.feed in the workarea directory)

Now to actually send the items, setup an xmit process for each mailing list. To do this edit addmail.cmd (which will be in /dnews with luck)

```
notepad addmail.cmd
            Change the -name to be the name in newsfeeds.conf
            Change MAIL.HERE.COM to point to your mail server
            Change JUGLIST@HERE.COM to point to the actual mailing list
            addsvc -del dxmail1
            addsvc -add dxmail1 xmit.exe "dxmail1 MAIL.HERE.COM -at *5 *
(cont. but should be on one line)   -mail JUGLIST@HERE.COM -name JUGGLE"

addmail.cmd  (run the script to add the service)
```
Restart things:

```
tellnews reload
```
Start the xmit service in Control Panels.

Test the mailing list, if a loop occurs, disable it first, then figure out why.

Gatewaying a UUCP feed into DNEWS

UUCP stands for 'Unix to Unix Copy Protocol', however, in 'news' terminology this refers to an old system for transfering news where a group of messages are added together to create a large file which is then coppied to your system by some unknown means, e.g. satelite feeds with special interfaces, magenetic tape, local file transfer of some strange type etc...

Once the file arrives you first need to uncompress it, this is considered 'your job' once uncompressed DNEWS can deal with it. To tell DNEWS to look for these files you setup a 'dposter' service.

```
addsvc -del dposter
addsvc -add dposter dposter.exe "dposter -dir c:\uucp\in -to news.here.com"
```

This will search for files called *.bag in the directory c:\uucp\in and after processing them it will delete them. It's your job to write a batch script to get the files in this directory and uncompress them if necessary, the file format is:

```
#! rnews nnnn
...(article, exactly nnnn bytes, counting each end of line as one byte)
#! rnews nnnn
...(next article)...
```

Gatewaying a UUCP feed out of DNEWS

Gatewaying a UUCP feed out of DNEWS Setting up a UUCP feed out of DNEWS In newsfeeds.conf add a feed, e.g.

```
site site1.name.uucp
    groups *
```
Add a service (or process to run xmit and dposter)

```
addsvc -add dxmit1 xmit.exe "dxmit1 site.name.edu -at *5 * -uucp c:\dnews\
site1 "
```

This will create files called news000n.bag in the directory c:\dnews\site1 It's your job to copy these to the destination sites, and delete them. If you want you can compress them first. :-)

TELLNEWS commands

The tellnews command is used to communicate with the server, you can find out what it's doing, modify some internal settings, reload the configuration files or shut down the server cleanly.

To use the command you need read access to the DNEWS configuration directory.

Try this command to find out what your server is doing:

```
tellnews status
```
Or this command to shut down your server

```
tellnews exit
```

Here is a table of all the other TELLNEWS commands:

tellnews cached comp.os.* 999
tellnews setused 950

Tellnews Status

Tellnews Status

Here is an example output with comments explaining each line.

```
200 161.29.2.1 DNEWS Version 2.3e, posting OK
#This line shows the name and version number of the server, it
#also tells you if posting from your ipaddress is possible.


Feed[0]: me *,!to.*,!*.binaries.*
Feed[1]: 161.29.1.140 Posting Builtin *
# This is a list of the feeds in newsfeeds.conf, the first feed must be called 'me'
# it specifies what groups to accept locally, the other feeds specify where to
# send items and what items to send, (*=send all groups)  The word 'posting' means
# feed[1] is to send items upstream using the posting mechanism, and it is a builtin
# feed (e.g. doesn't need an extermal xmit process to send items)


Chan[0:116] (0:0) 161.129.22.1 161.129.22.1 C_CMD
Chan[1:168] (1:13) 161.129.12.140 161.129.12.140 C_CHECK
# This is the list of currently connected sessions, the ip number and name are shown
# but in this case reverse translation is disabled so it shows the number twice.
# 168 = the file number of that socket
# 13 = The number of characters in the output queue for that channel.
# C_CHECK = What that channel is doing


Expire started at Fri Feb 16 13:31:05 1996 Done, start 1% end 1%
  Processed 920 removed 0 deleting 200/-1/150 speed 170.429
Expire finished at: Fri Feb 16 13:31:12 1996, Elapsed 0 hours, 0 minutes
# Shows the start and finish time and %'s of the last expire run.
# Processed = number of history lines in your history file.
# removed = number of history lines removed
# deleting shows the number of items being deleted, total and actual
# (of 200 items deleted 50 were cross posts so dont count as real deletes)
# The -'ve 1 is a progress counter which ticks over when the expire is running.
# Speed = processed/second


Contents of DNEWS group fetching queue, 2 entries:
    Group rec.humor.funny    fetching, got 20 items
    Group comp.os.vms     pending (low priority)
    Group comp.lang.java    pending (low priority)
End of queue.
# This is the list of groups dnews is currently trying to fetch.


Reverse lookup took 80 seconds, disable lookups if possible (see nodns)
# This error means your name server is faulty (or not contactable), you
# should disable name translation,  set NODNS TRUE in dnews.conf


History: disk 76k memory 7k/80k, Str 2k/5k/500k Malloc 1097k/1097k/2128k
# Current history file is 76K (40mb would be more normal) and the in memory
# amount for this file is 7k (5mb would be more normal)
# The Str and Malloc's are for debugging, they show the total memory allocated and
# also what is being used at present.
Used 1MB=1%, Free work 34Mb, hist 34Mb, spool 34Mb, log 34Mb
# Disk space used as a percent and how much is actually free.
Groups Cached 3 of 4624,  Uptime 0 day(s) 0 hour(s)
# Shows how many groups are cached, and how long the system has been running.
```

Tellnews Stats

Example output: Note that the idle cpu use is not show correctly, don't panic about this one.

```
      CMD       CPU       ELAP    CALLS CPUAVG ELAPAVG
     idle    3013.05     3012    1042   2.89    2.89
  backgnd      49.91       50    1041   0.05    0.05
   RevDNS      80.22       80       1  80.22   80.00
     fcmd       6.66        6       7   0.95    0.86
     quit       0.00        0       7   0.00    0.00
```

CMD = any nntp command sent, as well as several extra measurements .

CPU = how much cpu time spent doing that command in total.

ELAP = how much elapsed time.

CALLS = how many times that command has happenned.

CPUAVG = the average cpu use per call for that command.

ELAPAVG = is the average elapsed time per call for that operation

DNEWS Manager (Windows)

The DNEWS Manager allows easy setup and management of the news server. The following chapter describes what can be done from each dialogue.

The front dialogue is divided into two main areas, on the left options for configuring DNEWS and on the right options for controlling the running system and sending interactive commands to it.

Setup - Main Options Dialogue

This dialogue covers the major settings in dnews.conf that need to be configured.

My IP Name

This is the ip name or number of your news server. It must be a working name or number which you could use to connect to your PC via FTP or TELNET. If you have multiple IP numbers then use the local ethernet IP number. If you use a name that doesn't work the status and other COMMANDS won't work. (and may lock up for extended periods when you try them)

Suck News From

This is the ip name or number of the server you are going to fetch news from. If your name server is flaky, or not always available (e.g. with RAS) then using the IP number can avoid lock ups. You need simple NEWS READER access to this machine.
If you are getting a full IHAVE feed from a site (e.g. they are pushing the news at you), then this item should be left blank.

Disk Space (MB)

DNEWS will try and keep it's disk usage below this setting. A value of 300 is good for about 200 users but it is dependent on their reading habits.

Manager Email

DNEWS will send you a daily report of the expire process. This should be a valid internet email address, e.g. joe@my.domain

Confirm Postings

DNEWS can send your users confirmation messages when the local postings are sent up stream, this setting lets you tell DNEWS who your users are (as it doesn't want to send confirms to every person on the internet who sends a message 'through' your machine. You must include a wild card (* character) in this. e.g. *this.domain. Note: *.this.domain would not match joe@this.domain whereas *this.domain will. (the extra full stop causes the problem)

If you run two domains you can give both domains separated by a comma, e.g.
`*this.domain,*other.domain`

Warn Info Debug Flush

The default logging level is 'info' If you experience crashes NetWin support staff will ask you to set the debugging level to FLUSH and then send the log file next time a crash occurs. The debugging level will slow down the server.

Try to translate IP numbers to Names

When a user connects DNEWS can try and translate the ip number (e.g. 161.203.12.5) into an ip name (e.g. pc1.my.domain) But this translation could lock up your server if your DNS is faulty (or if it can't be contacted for some reason) So you may want to stop DNEWS from doing this translation. However if you do this you must put ip numbers into access.conf (the user access file) because it will not be able to check the ip names.

Main - Advanced Settings Dialogue

This dialogue lets you modify advanced settings from dnews.conf

Cached Life

The number of days that a group should remain 'cached' after it has been read by a user. When a group is 'cached' items will be fetched on the off chance someone will want to read them. This setting has nothing to do with how long items are stored for after they have been fetched, that is set in the configuration file expire.conf

Expire At

The time in hours and minutes that DNEWS should run it's automatic expire job. Either value can be a wild card or a list, so if the minutes were set to 15,45 then the expire would run at quarter to and quarter past the hour. If the hours were set to 3,20 then an expire job would run at quarter past 3 and quarter to 4 and quarter past 8p.m. and quarter to 9:00p.m.

Update At

How often DNEWS should fetch new articles, this is runs every 10 minutes by default. It would not hurt to decrease this to once per hour. e.g. minutes=15 hours=*

Rotate Log

The log files tend to grow very rapidly, in order to stop them getting too big they can be automatically rotated (deleted) every 'n' lines.

Config Files

This setting is where the config files are, don't play with this!

Spool Files

This setting is where the spool directory is, you may need to move the spool area to a larger disk if you want to have heaps of news. To do this:

stop the server
Move the spool tree using file manager
Change this setting using DNEWS Manager

Start the server
Cross your fingers :-)

Main - Sucks Modify

This dialogue lets add more than one sucking feed, when you do this you must supply a wild card of news groups to fetch for each sucking feed. The largest set should be the first in the list.

```
E.g.
suck1  main.news.site *
suck2  local.news.site secret.*
```

Feeds Out

This dialogue lets you modify the settings of the selected feed

Users and Feeds In

This dialogue lets you control access to your server, each line in the access.conf file is checked when a connection is made, both ip numbers and names (if reverse dns translation is enabled) are matched to the first column. If a match occurs then the READ, POST, IHAVE and GROUP settings are then assigned to that user.
After connecting the user can then supply a username and password, when this happens the file is checked again, and the read,post,ihave and group settings are modified for that connection.

Note also, that every line in the file is matched, and the last match is used, so you have to put general settings at the top, and specific user settings near the end.

Here is an example of allowing a user to connect and then give user/passwords

```
 *:logoff:::*
 *:read,post:joe:joepassword:*
 *.my.domain:read,post:::*
```

This will prevent the rest of the world from even connecting, while letting most people read and post mesages, Joe will be able to connect from any domain as long as he uses his username and password.

If you use the Netscape browser then there are limitations on how you can use this file, this is because netscape doesn't allow you to enter the username and password unless access is refused by the server. This isn't generally a problem but it can cause a problem if you want to have people from one domain connecting with and without passwords, this will not be possible via netscape, but will work with all other browsers.

Setup Wizard

This dialogue will step you through the basic DNEWS setup, it is intended to get the system running when the person answering the questions doesn't really know what they are doing :-)

It should only be run ONCE when you first install DNEWS as it may change settings which you have since modified.

Write Changes

This button will write any changes you have made to your configuration files. If you don't press this button the changes will be lost.

Generally you should make changes, then press "Write Changes" then press "Do Reload" to force the DNEWS server to reload it's configuration files.

Stop Server

This button stops the DNEWS service (it will not work on Windows 95 or from a remote PC using a mapped drive, in those cases you should use the Commands dialogue, and send an EXIT command.

Start Server

This button attempts to start the DNEWS service, it will not work from a remote workstation using a mapped drive or on Netware or on Windows 95).

For Windows 95 you must start the service by double clicking on the dnews.exe icon.
For Netware you must load the NLM from the console (or with rconsole)

View Log

This button shows the last 100 odd lines of the dnews.log file. After starting the server you can use this button to find out when the server has actually finished it's initialization.

Also in the event of any unexplained behavior you should check the log file.

Status

This buttons sends a 'status' command to the server and shows you the output, if it locks up doing this then you probably have a problem with your reverse name translation, which you can disable in the main setup dialogue.

Commands

This dialogue lets you send any of the builtin TELLNEWS commands to the server. If the command has parameters you will be prompted for them. You can use this to add new local news groups, or perform other strange and wonderful management tasks.

See the manual for help on the tellnews commands.

Do Reload

This button send DNEWS a reload command, this will make the server re read all it's configuration files, You need to press "Write Changes" before pressing the reload button.

This button DOES NOT reload the configuration files into DNEWS Manager, if you change the files outside of DNEWS Manager then exit it and restart it to pickup your changes.

Config Files

This dialogue lets you tell DNEWS Manager where to find the DNEWS configuration files.

Use this if you are running DNEWS Manager from networked PC, first SHARE or MAP a drive to the disk where DNEWS.CONF and the dnews configuration files are stored, and then run DNEWS Manager and tell it which drive and directory to look in.

FEED Modify

This dialogue lets you modify the settings of the selected feed

Note the first FEED must be the ME feed. This is a dummy feed, which is actually used to check if incoming items match the list of news groups that you want.

If you change the ME feed you may have to send the TELLNEWS COMMANDS:
    undelete *

matchfeed

Don't do this without first understanding what they mean :-) (see the manual)

Access Modify

This dialogue lets you modify the settings of the selected access line.

Read access lets users read news items
Post access lets users post news items
Ihave access lets an IHAVE feed come into your machine

Registering DNEWS.

To register to DNEWS click on the REGISTER button in DNEWSMAN and fill in the questions. Alternatively you can use the TELLNEWS REGISTER command from a COMMAND SHELL. We do require payment before issuing a license key, you can make payment by giving credit card information with your registration.

After answering all the questions you can then start up your favourite email system, create a new message and then press SHIFT+INS to paste the registration form into the message.

Send the message to your local DNEWS reseller, or netwin@world.std.com in 24-48 hours your will receive a license key to fully enable dnews.

Entering your registration Key (when you get it via Email)

Enter the key with the tellnews key command or from the COMMANDS button on DNEWS Manager.
e.g.
   tellnews key a1b2c3d4e5

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

This section is now a separate file, dnewsfaq.doc, you should print it out and scan thru the list of problems it answers as they are almost certainly to be questions you will find yourself asking.

I still can't figure it out, how can I get help?

You have two options, the DNEWS discussion list has lots of expertise on it. So try that first.

If that fails, or if you are a registered (not free) customer then as part of normal support NetWin provide email advice and help on setting up your system. In general try and give as much information as possible about your setup and what you want to do, and ALWAYS include a FAX or phone number just incase your mail system is broken as well :-) e.g.

Hardware & OS: Windows NT - Intel   (or NT-Alpha or Solaris 4.3 etc...)
Version of DNEWS: 2.0b
Type of feed: Sucking feed   (or full ihave feed...)
FAX: (include country code)
And any relevant setup files, usually one or more of: dnews.conf, newsfeeds.conf, access.conf
And maybe a few lines from dnews.log showing the problem
(Please don't email 3MB of log files to us :-)

And state your problem clearly:
(a bad example) My feed doesn't work, why not?
(a good example) The IHAVE feed coming INTO my system from my provider is being refused, he says it gives an error, 'transfer permission denied', what should I do?

DNEWS Mailing List

There are two mailing lists for DNEWS, one is only used to make major announcements of new version or urgent patches. The other is for general discussion, you may want to join both.

To subscribe to the discussion list send to:

```
dnews-request@adam.com.au
```
A message containing one word:

```
subscribe
```

Then to post to the list send to:

```
dnews@adam.com.au
```

To subscribe to the announcement list

Send a message to:

maiser@emagic.co.nz

Containing the line:

subscribe dnews

This is a moderated list, it's only function is to provide timely information on new features, releases, bugs, installation gotcha's etc to interested people. You will not get 20 messages a day from this list, it will probably average 1-2 messages per month.

Configuration files

The following files define your news system in approx. order of importance:

File Name	Description
news.conf	Main configuration file
access.conf	Controls nntp access to your server
expire.conf	Specifies how long to keep news items
newsfeeds.conf	Defines feeds out of your news system up the line of news servers
moderators.conf	Defines where to send email to a moderated news group
control.conf	Defines how to process control messages for auto creation and deletion of news groups

dnews.conf

cachedonly true (don't allow items into non cached groups)

cachedall true   (pretend all groups are cached)

Symbol	Example	Description
active_static	true	Stops new groups from being added by the sucking feed. Use this if your feed site has lots of groups you never want added into your active file.
cachedall	true	Pretend all groups are cached, use this if you are taking a full IHAVE feed in.
cachedonly	true	Only accepts items into groups which are cached, this is used for the hybrid feed where items are sent by a feed but only taken if users are reading that particular group.
confirm	*.this.place	Send email confirmation to postings from these addresses. (set this to match your local email addresses)
config	dnews_top:	Directory for configuration files (*.conf)
debug_rotate	10000	Automatically rotates log files (renames and deletes the oldest one) if more than 10000 lines are written. This is good if you have turned on debugging as you always have the last few thousands lines if a problem develops but you don't run out of disk space due to the huge log file.
diskspace	100	Total disk space in megabytes a dynamic feed needs 20-200MBs, a full feed needs approx. 1000MB
expire_at	5 23,3	Run an expire job at 5 past eleven and 5 past 3 in the morning.
feed_reader	true (default)	Sends the 'mode reader' command when connecting to a feeding site, this is the default. You will probably never have to change this setting.
history	\dnews\spool	Directory for history file, this could grow to 40MB for a full feed (80,000 blocks)
history_min	5	Pause if less than 'n' megabytes free
item_max	100000	Sets the maximum size for any article that DNEWS can deal with, the default is 1,000,000. A smaller number will save memory.
life	30	Number of days to keep caching a news group after someone reads an item in it.
logdir	\dnews	Directory to write log files
logdir_min	5	Pause server if less than 5MB is left free on logging disk.
loglvl	info	One of: error,warn,info,debug,flush There are four levels of error reporting, "error" includes serious errors, "warn" includes possible problems, "info" includes general information messages and "debug" which

		is used for tracing bugs. "flush" is the same as debug but the log file is flushed with every single line written, this is useful if the system is crashing but not providing a stack dump.
loguse	true	Write a log of every item body read by users in the file used.log
manager	system@here.this.place	Email address of the news manager
mail	smtp	This is only used on VMS systems. The name of the foreign email system on VMS, typically in% or smtp% (don't include the %)
myname	news.this.place	Your full internet name, if left out this may be picked up from the system. It's best to put it in by hand to make sure it's right.
nntp_pass	mysecretword	Use this if the site you are sucking from requires a username and password to access it.
nntp_user	jbloggs	Use this if the site you are sucking from requires a username and password to access it.
nntp_feeder	news.feeder.site	The news site where you are going to SUCK a feed from. You need NNTP READER access to this site. If you are not sucking a feed then comment this line out. If you need to specify a PORT other than the default one (119) then add it on the end of the name, e.g. feeder.site.edu:2021
nntp_suck2-4	second.feeder alt.irc.* myuser mypassword	Get irc groups from another news server, every 10 minutes, the user/passwords are optional. (also see update_groups)
nntp_logoff	You are not one of our users	Specifies the message to give to users who are not granted connect access via access.conf.
nodns	true	Stops DNEWS from doing reverse DNS lookups every time a user connects, you will have to put ip numbers into access.conf if you use this feature, but if your DNS is faulty or slow then this can improve connection times.
port	119	The TCP port which DNEWS should listen for incoming connections on.
postonly	true	Stops items from being posted locally until the 'echo' back from the feeder site, this gives a very clear confirmation that the message has been passed up stream. You cannot do this if you want to have local groups which are not on the site you are sucking from.
report	no	Stops the daily email report from being sent to the manager after every expire run.
send_at	*5 *	Send messages upstream when the time matches, this would do it every 10 minutes. e.g. at 1:05, 1:15...
send_later	true	Stops DNEWS from attempting to send a post immediately, useful if you are using a dial up connection. You can trigger this by hand using 'tellnews requeue'
timeout	30	Define how long to wait after a channel becomes idle before disconnecting it, the default is 120 minutes.
timezone	NZST	Timezone hh:mm or timezone name Appendix B
too_old	50	Refuse items that were created more than this many days in the past, this prevents old items from being re-distributed when a machine dumps old news items onto the network.
spool	\dnews\spool	Disk name (or logical) for news articles
spool_min	5	Pause if less than 'n' megabytes free
update_at	*0,*5 *	Check for new items every time the minutes end in a 5 or a zero and at any hour, e.g. every 5 minutes..
update_groups1-3	*binary* 45 1	Get binary groups once a day at 1:45, this is in addition to the update_at setting, not instead of.
workarea	\dnews\spool	Directory for work files (active.dat, *.feed, etc)

workarea_min	5	If less than 'n' megabytes are free on this disk then pause the news system, (stop accepting new articles)

access.conf

This file controls access to your system, you can control access by IP name, IP number or even by individual user using password protection.

<host>:<perm>:<user>:<pass>:<groups>

Parameter	Example	Description
<host>	*.my.domain 161.29.4.*	A wildcard name or number, this rule is only used if the connection matches this address
<perm>	Read, Post, Ihave,logoff	Allow any combination of reading posting or ihave feeding from this site.
<user>	chrisp	Some news readers can send a user name, if so then it will be matched here, and the password can be checked.
<pass>	rumplestiltskin	The password in plain text
<groups>	*,!*.erotic.*	Allow access to groups matching this wild card

Notes:

Unlike other news implementations, you can permit reading and posting to different combinations of news groups, for example you may wish to allow students to read all groups but only post to local news groups.

The last matching line in the file is used. This file can be tricky to setup, if it doesn't work as expected check that you have the entries in the right order so that the last matching ip name does what you want.

expire.conf

This file can be tricky to use, remember order is significant!!

The expiration file is very different from INN and CNEWS implementations, Rather than a simple set of rules, the DNEWS expire rules match both news group names and current disk usage, so as use increases the rules can become more strict.

In addition rules can specify minimum or maximum numbers of items, this allows a single rule to apply to groups which get 20 items a day, or 20 items a month.

Each line of the file must have the following format:

```
UPTO x GROUPS wild KEEP n DEFAULT n PURGE n MAXITEMS n MINITEMS
n
```

Symbol	Example	Description
upto	20%	This rule applies if less than 20% of the disk space is full.
groups	alt.*,comp.binaries.*	This rule applies if the group matches this list
keep	2	Keep items for this many days even if they have already expired. (From the expire date in the article header)
default	10	Keep items this long and then delete unless the expiration date says to keep it longer.
purge	35	Delete after this many days even if the expire header says to keep it longer. This should be set long enough to keep FAQ's and no longer to prevent abuse.
maxitems	1000	Delete old items if the group has more than this many items in it. Good for controlling high volume groups.
minitems	10	Don't apply any other rules if the group has less than this many items in it, this is good for making 'low volume' groups useable.

Example:

```
# Default rule
```

```
upto 10000% groups * keep 0 default 1 purge 10 maxitems 0 minitems 0
# Start to panic a little
upto 90% groups * keep 0 default 2 purge 33 maxitems 100 minitems  0
# Normal operation, put your meaningfull settings here.
upto 60% groups * keep 2 default 5 purge 33 maxitems 1000 minitems  10
upto 60% groups comp.* keep 2 default 10 purge 33 maxitems 2000 minitems  10
# Lots of space, just stop things getting silly (e.g. 10000 items in...)
upto 30% groups * keep 2 default 17 purge 33 maxitems 3000 minitems  100
upto 20% groups * maxitems 2000
# Keep any local groups forever (this line must be last to work)
upto 1000% groups local.* keep 99999 minitems 10000
```

newsfeeds.conf

This file controls feeds out of DNEWS to other sites, it also controls the feed 'into' DNEWS via the same mechanism.

Symbol	Example	Description
site	me $NNTP_FEEDER my.leaf.site	The name of the site to feed, usually it's full internet name. The 'me' feed must be the first one in the file.
builtin	(flag, no value)	Specifies the builtin feeding mechanism should be used. This is only intended for sending local postings up stream, it is not fast enough to send a full feed on to another site.
posting	(flag, no value)	Specifies that the nntp 'post' command should be used to send items upstream. This gives your feeder site the job of deciding how to email postings to moderated groups.
exclude	feeder.real.name,feeder.third.name	Use this if your feeder site is 'name stamping' articles with a name other than it's ip name. This MUST be right or DNEWS will attempt to echo everything it gets back to the feeder site. (check the path header)
smtp	(flag, no value)	Specifies this is not really a feed, but on a vax it is actually the email queue used to send articles to moderated groups, this is only needed on VMS and then only if you are not using the 'POSTING' mechanism to feed upstream.
maxcross	50	Throw away items which are crossposted to more than '50' news groups. This is good for preventing 'spamming' which is where people post adverts and money making schemes to inappropriate news groups.
maxsize	100000	Limit items to 100K, the default is 1MB, if you want to make it larger than 1MB then you must also increase ITEM_MAX in DNEWS.CONF. Personally I think 100K is too big, ftp sites and web should be used for larger items.

moderators.conf

You won't need to touch this file unless you want to add a local group and make it moderated. In that case add your groups at the top of the file as the first match is used.

Format:

```
newsgroup:email-address
```
If the email address contains a "%s" then that is replaced by the news group name with the dots changed into dashes.

Example:

```
local.gossip.moderated:chrisp@marc.cri.nz
gnu.*:%s@tut.cis.ohio-state.edu
*:%s@uunet.uu.net
```

control.conf

This file controls the action taken when control messages are received. This is the secret to the administration of news. The following control messages are checked by this file:

- newgroup

- rmgroup

- version

- checkgroups

- ihave

- sendme

- sendsys

- senduuname

However only the following three are implemented.

- newgroup

- rmgroup

- version

Blanks are not allowed, e.g. :: would be misinterpreted.

For each type of control message, you can specify based on who sent it, whether or not to do what the message says, just log it, or email the message to the news administrator. The log file that DNEWS creates can be used to action the control messages at a later date as it contains valid commands.

All control messages are logged to 'control_(message).(action)'

Format:

```
message-type:email-address:action
message-type     rmgroup, newgroup, version
email-address    A wildcard email address, e.g.
news@trusted.site
action              "drop", "log", "mail", "doit", "doit,mail"
```

Example:

```
all:*:*:mail
ihave:*:*:drop
sendme:*:*:drop
sendsys:*:*:drop
senduuname:*:*:drop
newgroup:tale@*.uu.net:comp.*,misc.*,news.*,rec.*,sci.*,soc.*,talk.*:doit
rmgroup:tale@*.uu.net:comp.*,misc.*,news.*,rec.*,sci.*,soc.*,talk.*:doit
```

How news gets in and out of your system

FEEDING news INTO your system

With DNEWS you have two choices, you can push the news into your system using an NNTP IHAVE sending program or a SUCKING feed. A pushing ihave feed is run from the server which provides you with a feed. This is the standard way of sending news but it has two disadvantages:

1. An NNTP IHAVE feed comes as a random selection of items from various news groups, this prevents any optimization when creating indexes and storing items.
2. An NNTP IHAVE feed must be setup from the other end. This prevents auto configuration of what is fed, it also makes configuration difficult as you may have limited or virtually no access to the feeder site configuration.

Feeding in using an NNTP IHAVE feed.

If you use this method then you must take a full feed, or at least a fixed subset of feeds, you can't use the DNEWS dynamic system.

To set this up simply modify the *access.conf* file to allow the site that is feeding you to have IHAVE access.

```
news.feeder.site:ihave:::*
```
In dnews.conf add one line

```
cachedall true
```
Then the job is done apart from setting the feed up from the other end which is entirely your problem!

Feeding in using a SUCKING feed (default)

This is extremely easy to setup, in the file NEWS.CONF define the variable NNTP_FEEDER to point to a site where you have NEWS READER access.

Simple wasn't it :-)

FEEDING news OUT OF your system

Sending news up line using a POSTING feed (default)

If you are a LEAF site. (A leaf site is where you don't feed news on to anyone else) then you have an easy option, you can pass the job of 'posting' an item up stream to your feeder site.

Using this system DNEWS essentially pretends to be a NEWS READER which is posting your item directly on your FEEDER site. Any error message will be emailed to you.

In the file NEWSFEEDS.CONF define one feed as follows:

```
site $NNTP_FEEDER
groups *
builtin
posting
```

If your feeder site is stamping each news item with a name different from it's IP name that you used in your DNEWS.CONF file then you will have to add an exclude line to this feeding definition to stop the feed from trying to send every item that comes in back to the feeder.

```
        exclude feeder.name.stamp
```
The special commands 'builtin' tells DNEWS to use it's own internal NNTP link to send any articles to this feed and the command 'posting' tells DNEWS to POST articles rather than pass them up using the IHAVE mechanism.

In order to get email confirmation of each post as it is really posted use the CONFIRM variable in news.conf to match all local email addresses.

Sending news up line using an NNTP-IHAVE sender

If you are a leaf site then just remove the 'posting' keyword from your newsfeeds.conf file.

However, if you want to pass a full feed on to someone else then you need to use the XMIT program as the builtin feed cannot deal with large volumes. See the section "How do I setup XMIT" in the FAQ section of this manual.

Appendix A, What is USENET

What is USENET News?

USENET News is a world wide bulletin board. It has no management or central system. It is a large number of computers and networks connected together.

News groups

The news is divided into approximately three thousand groups. These groups are chosen by mutual agreement using a complicated voting system.

How your article will get to the rest of the world

When you post an article, it travels from your machine to all the NEWS servers which your machine is connected to, (usually just one other machine, but in the case of a university, you may be connected to three or four other 'news' machines). Each of these servers in turn pass on your 'article' to all the machines that they are connected to. In this way your message eventually gets to every other news machine in the world.

There are some very clever built in systems to prevent an article from traveling in a loop but these need not concern you. The important point is there is built in redundancy, so once your message gets past your local system a single faulty system will not stop it from getting to the rest of the world.

What to read first

There are a number of postings in the news group "news.announce.newusers" that should be read and followed by all users using news for the first time.

What is an FAQ?

FAQ stands for Frequently Asked Questions. These are questions that every one asks when they first become interested in a topic, the 'old timers' in a news group get sick of answering them again and again so they create an FAQ. This is a list of all the questions and answers. _Always_ look for an FAQ before posting a question.

Be careful posting

Remember when you ask a stupid question on NEWS you have just annoyed approximately ten to one hundred thousand people, depending on the news group. So always consider very carefully before posting.

How big is it?

An item in a widely distributed news group will reach an estimated 24,000 sites world-wide hosting 1,000,000 potential readers. Most sites are educational institutions, but many research organizations,

companies, and government departments are also part of USENET. This number is growing exponentially, as many as 20,000,000 users are on the internet and most 'private' individuals will only begin to connect over the next couple of years.

Appendix B, Time Zone Names

gmt	Greenwich Mean
ut	Universal
utc	Universal Coordinated
cut	Coordinated Universal
wet	Western European
bst	British Summer
nst	Newfoundland Standard
ndt	Newfoundland Daylight
ast	Atlantic Standard
adt	Atlantic Daylight
est	Eastern Standard
edt	Eastern Daylight
cst	Central Standard
cdt	Central Daylight
mst	Mountain Standard
mdt	Mountain Daylight
pst	Pacific Standard
pdt	Pacific Daylight
yst	Yukon Standard
ydt	Yukon Daylight
akst	Alaska Standard
akdt	Alaska Daylight
hst	Hawaii Standard
hast	Hawaii-Aleutian Standard
hadt	Hawaii-Aleutian Daylight
ces	Central European Summer
cest	Central European Summer
mez	Middle European
mezt	Middle European Summer
cet	Central European
met	Middle European
eet	Eastern Europe
msk	Moscow Winter
msd	Moscow Summer
wast	West Australian Standard
wadt	West Australian Daylight
hkt	Hong Kong
cct	China Coast
jst	Japan Standard
kst	Korean Standard
kdt	Korean Daylight
cast	Central Australian Standard
cadt	Central Australian Daylight
east	Eastern Australian Standard
eadt	Eastern Australian Daylight
nzst	New Zealand Standard
nzdt	New Zealand Daylight

Appendix C, NNTP Summary

authinfo [user Name]|[pass Password]

Used to authenticate individual users. The command is first sent to define a user and then sent a second time to give the password. Older news readers may not allow the use of this feature. On the server side add entries to access.dat using an editor.

article [MessageID|Number]

Responds with the article, if no second parameter is given then the current article is sent.

News readers should avoid using MessageID as it generates extra work for the server.

body [MessageID|Number]

Sends the body of the message.

date

Responds with the current time from the servers point of view, (not standard)

group newsgroup

Sets the current group

head [MessageID|Number]

Sends the header of a message.

help

Sends a list of valid commands.

ihave <message-id>

Used by another news system to 'offer' new items to this news system.

last

Sets the current news item to one item lower.

list [active]

List on it's own or with the active qualifier responds with a list of known news groups.

list active.times

Responds with a list of news groups and the date and time they were created. This file may or may not be complete depending on how the system was installed and how long it has been running.

list newsgroups

Responds with a list of news groups and a short description of each one. This list may or may not be complete or even available depending on how your system is installed.

listgroup [newsgroup] (extension)

Gives a list of valid items in a news group. This is currently the only efficient way for a news reader to establish which items in a group actually exist.

mode reader (extension)

Does nothing, this command only exists for compatibility with INN.

mode stream (extension)

Responds with a success status to signify that the streaming extensions are supported.

newgroups yymmdd hhmmss [GMT] [<distributions>]

Lists news groups created since the given date.

newnews newsgroups yymmdd hhmmss [GMT] [<distributions>]

Lists message-id's of news items that arrived after the specified date.

next

Sets the current point to the next item.

post

Used by news readers to post a new item.

slave

Has no affect.

stat [MessageID|Number]

Checks an item exists, responding with it's message id.

check [MessageID] (extension)

Checks an item exists. This is one of the STREAMING extensions to NNTP. It is different from the stat command in that it will respond that it still has a message even after the message has expired.

takethis [MessageID] (extension)

This is the other half of the streaming extension to NNTP, this command behaves like the IHAVE command but doesn't have a refusal stage so it's return status doesn't need to be checked before the next item is sent.

xgtitle [group_pattern] (extension)

Extension used by ANU-NEWS to actually use the newsgroups file to respond with a list of newsgroups that matches the pattern, and gives their one line descriptions.

xhdr header [range|MessageID] (extension)

Lists the requested header of all items that fall within the given range.

xover [range] (extension)

Lists all the items within range giving a fixed set of headers in return. Under DNEWS this command is implemented in software, no actual database is required as the DNEWS database is efficient enough to produce this information on the fly.

xpat header range|MessageID pat [morepat...] (extension)

Weird extension, don't use this. In shell syntax it is roughly equivalent to:

xhdr header range | grep pat

xpath MessageID (extension)

This command is not implemented, as their is no internal file name that can be returned and frankly the command should never have existed as it breaks every rule of information hiding and abstraction. But hey, that's UNIX :-)

Appendix D, File Formats

Active.dat

```
group end start modflag cacheflag feedlast life range

group = The name of the news group
end = The last item in the group
start = The first item in the group
modflag = m=Moderated group, y=Normal group, d=Deleted,
g=Gone, e=Deleted-moderated
cacheflag = n = not cached, c = cached
feedlast = The last item successfully sucked from our upstream
site.
life = Number of days to continue caching this group for.
range = Number of items in the group,  -1 means it will be
calculated when needed.
```

Active.times

This file is used by news readers to find new news groups.

```
group time
group = group name
time = time in seconds that the group was created.
```

Active.names

Don't worry to much if you don't have this file, almost no news readers even use it.

```
group<tab>description
```

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(DNEWS is an extremely complex piece of software. NetWin will make reasonable efforts to solve any reported problems but we must limit our legal liability for obvious reasons.)

Corrections & Additions.

Please let us know if you find errors in this manual or if you think some additional information should be added.