

## **QVT/Net News Reader**

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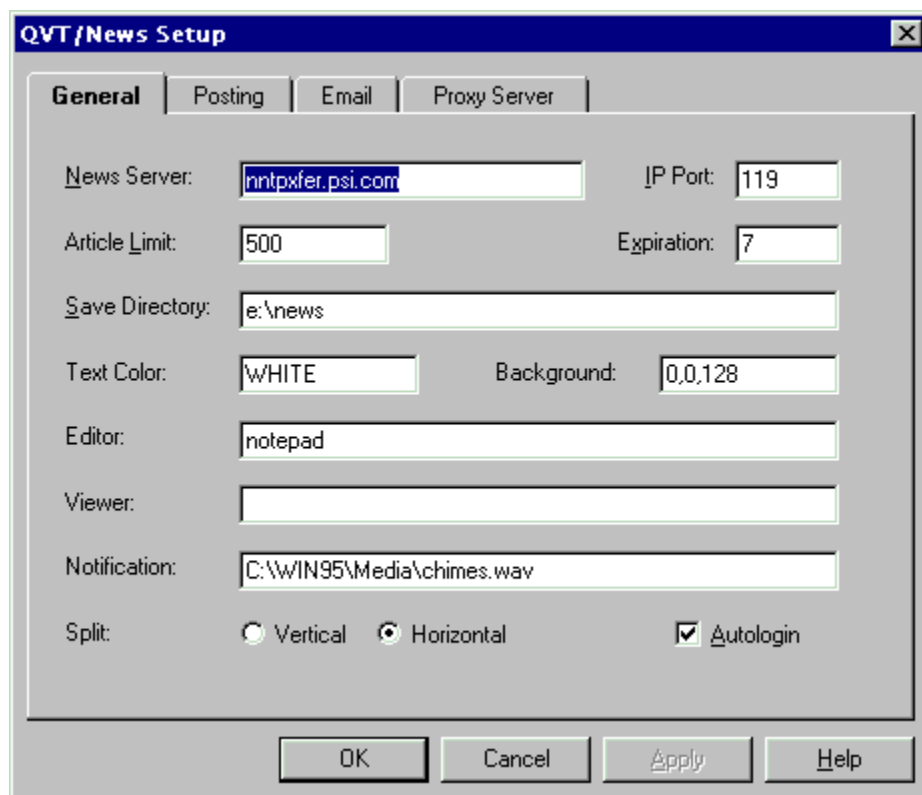
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## Setting up the News Reader

Before you can begin to use QVT/News, some setup must be performed. In many cases, reasonable default values are provided, so you can get going with only a minimum of effort. To begin the setup process, go to the 'Setup' pulldown menu, and click on 'Preferences'. This will bring up a dialog box:



The screenshot shows the 'QVT/News Setup' dialog box with the 'General' tab selected. The dialog has four tabs: 'General', 'Posting', 'Email', and 'Proxy Server'. The 'General' tab contains the following fields and options:

- News Server:** nntp.xfer.psi.com
- IP Port:** 119
- Article Limit:** 500
- Expiration:** 7
- Save Directory:** e:\news
- Text Color:** WHITE
- Background:** 0,0,128
- Editor:** notepad
- Viewer:** (empty field)
- Notification:** C:\WIN95\Media\chimes.wav
- Split:**  Vertical  Horizontal
- Autologin:**

At the bottom of the dialog are four buttons: 'OK', 'Cancel', 'Apply', and 'Help'.

This four--page property sheet can be used to configure almost all aspects of the QVT/Net Newsreader. The first page contains the following items:

### News Server

In order to read or post news articles, you must connect to a news server somewhere on the network. The name or IP address of your news server should be entered here.

### IP Port

By default, NNTP news servers listen for incoming connections on IP port 119. Sometimes, however, a proxy server will be used, which will usually listen on a different port. Use this field to enter the port number that is used by your news server.

### Article Limit

Many newsgroups experience a large volume of articles. QVT/News allows you to set a limit on the number of articles that you want to look at. For example, if you set an article limit of 500, you will be shown only the 500 newest articles, thereby providing a kind of automatic 'catch-up' facility.

If you want no article limit, enter '-1' in this field.

### **Expiration**

If you read news by downloading the articles to your PC, then reading them off the local disk, a mechanism must be provided for deleting these articles. This process is called 'expiration', and it is governed by elapsed time; articles which have reached a certain age will be deleted. This input field allows you to define the number of days that must elapse before a downloaded article will be deleted from your disk.

### **Save Directory**

This is the root directory into which downloaded and/or saved news articles will be placed.

### **Text Color and Background Color**

QVT/News allows you to specify the foreground and background colors which will be used in the article-display portion of the newsreader window. You can use either the name of the color (one of the basic eight) or an RGB spec. RGB specs consist of a string in the format 'nnn,nnn,nnn', where each 'nnn' is a decimal number ranging from 0 through 255.

### **Editor**

Some of the news posting functions allow you to invoke an external text editor for the purpose of composing outgoing news articles. This field should contain the name of the executable file for the editor that you want to use.

### **Viewer**

A fair amount of Usenet traffic consists of various 'media' objects, such as graphics images and sound bites. QVT/News is capable of decoding and presenting most standard types of image files, but in the event that an unsupported file type is encountered, you will have to use an external viewer. This setup item is used to specify the filename of the default external viewer that you want to use.

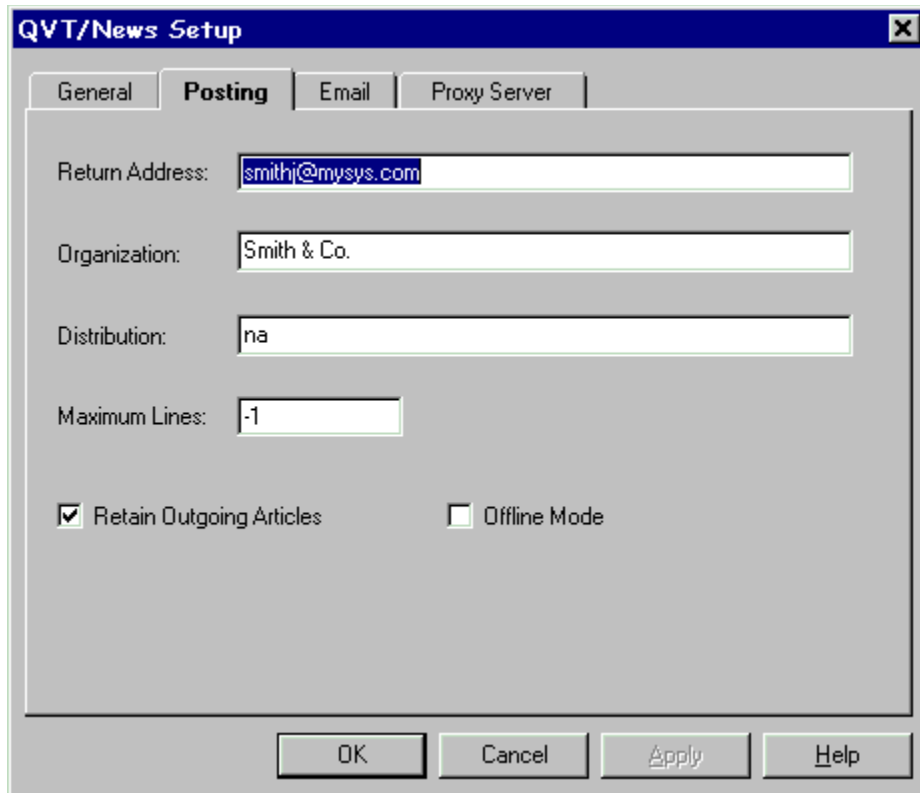
### **Layout**

The QVT/News window can be split either horizontally (two sub-windows side-by-side), or vertically (two sub-windows one above the other). This button pair is used to select the configuration that you prefer.

### **Autologin**

This checkbox allows you to specify that the 'Open' dialog should be brought up as soon as the newsreader is launched.

The second page of the setup dialog, titled 'Posting' looks like this...



...and contains these items:

### **Return Address**

This should be your return email address. Those who read your articles on the Net will be able to send replies to this address. For readability, you should append your name, in parentheses, after the email address:

smithj@mysis.com (John Smith)

### **Organization**

The name of the organization from which you are posting (if any).

### **Distribution**

The default distribution scope for your outgoing articles. The usual default would be 'world', but you can substitute a more restricted value, such as 'na' or 'usa'.

### **Maximum Lines**

Due to software limitations, it may be necessary to 'split' postings of large binary files into multiple parts. This parameter is used to specify the maximum number lines that will be allowed in each part of these postings. A value of '-1' (the default) indicates that there should be no limit.

### **Retain Outgoing Articles**

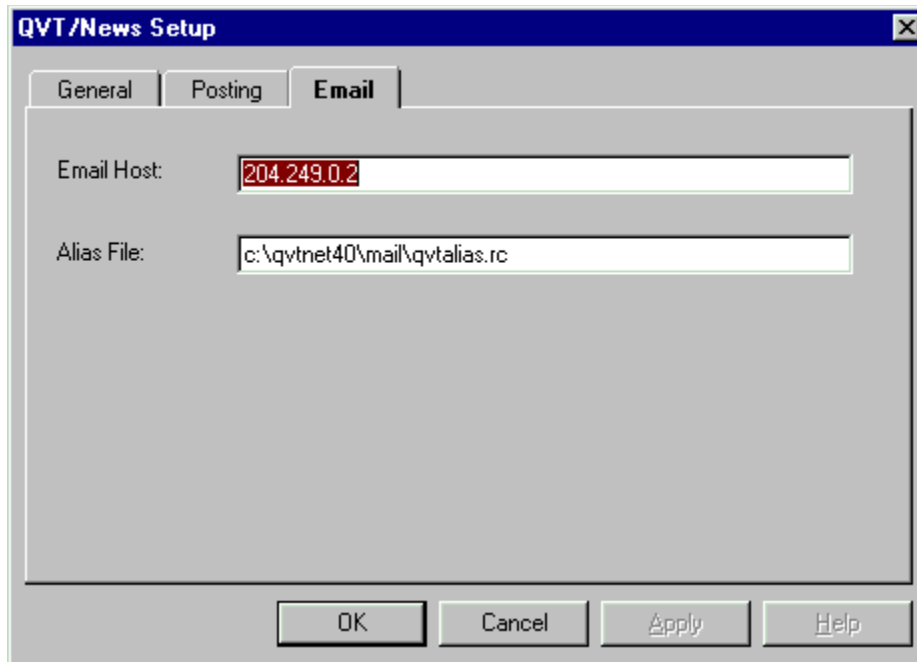
If this checkbox is enabled, all of your outgoing postings will be saved on the local disk, in

the directory specified by the 'Save Directory' configuration item (see above).

### Off-line Mode

QVT/News allows you to both read and post articles while not connected to a news server. Articles are read off-line by downloading them and reading them off the local disk. By enabling this checkbox, you can also arrange for outgoing articles to be queued up locally. These stored articles can then be posted as a batch, at a later time when you are connected to the server.

The third page of the set dialog looks like this...



...and contains these items:

### E-Mail Host

QVT/News allows you to send individual replies to other Net users, as well as posting articles to newsgroups. If you plan to use the email capability, you should enter into this field the name or IP address of the mail gateway that the newsreader should connect to for the purpose of sending mail (via SMTP). If this field is left blank, the email command button will be disabled.

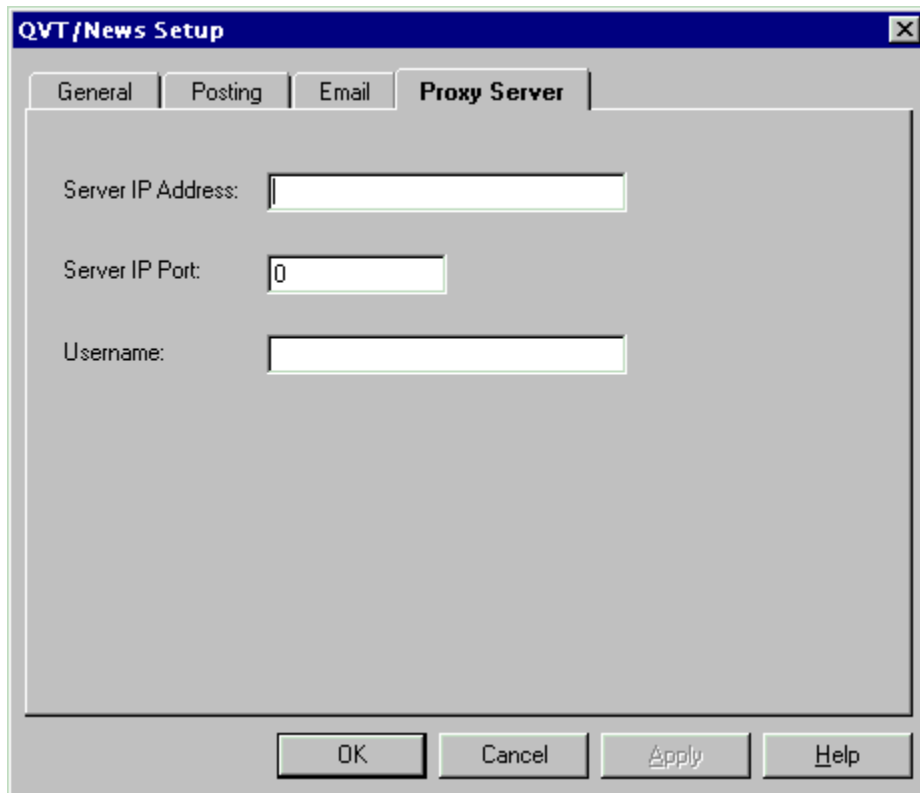
### Alias File

When you use the 'Reply via Email' function, the newsreader will normally use as the 'send to' address the 'From:' or 'Reply-To:' addresses which are found in the current article. You may, however, want to send your email message to someone else, in which case you may want to make use of the 'Alias' database which is an adjunct to the QVT/Net Mail application.

This input field allows you to enter the pathname of the file which contains the alias list. The 'base' part of the filename will always be 'qvtalias.rc'; it is the directory portion of the

path that will vary.

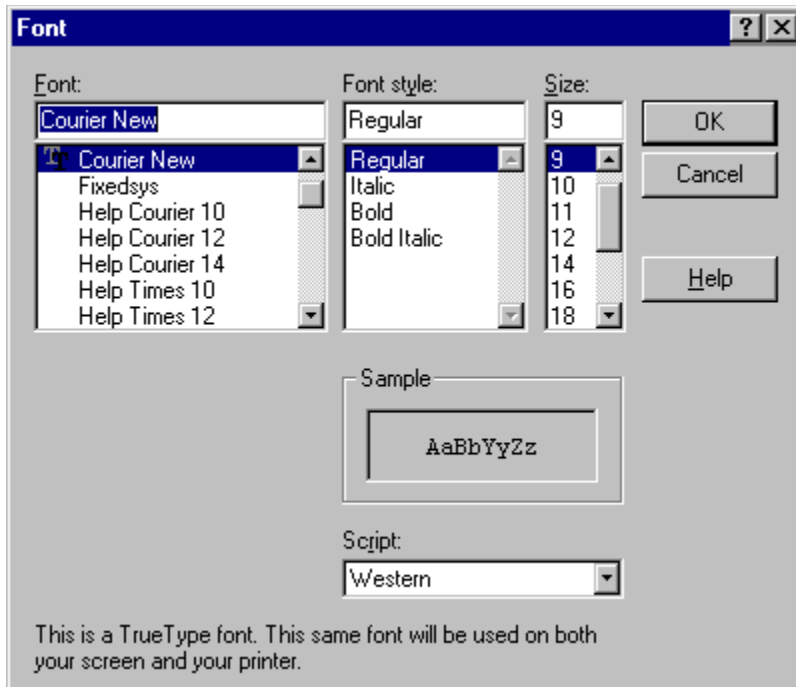
The fourth, and last, page of the Preferences dialog is for configuring a proxy server:



If your PC is sitting behind a firewall, you may have to go through a proxy server in order to connect to Internet hosts. This dialog page is used to enter the proxy server's IP address and IP port.

### **Font Selection**

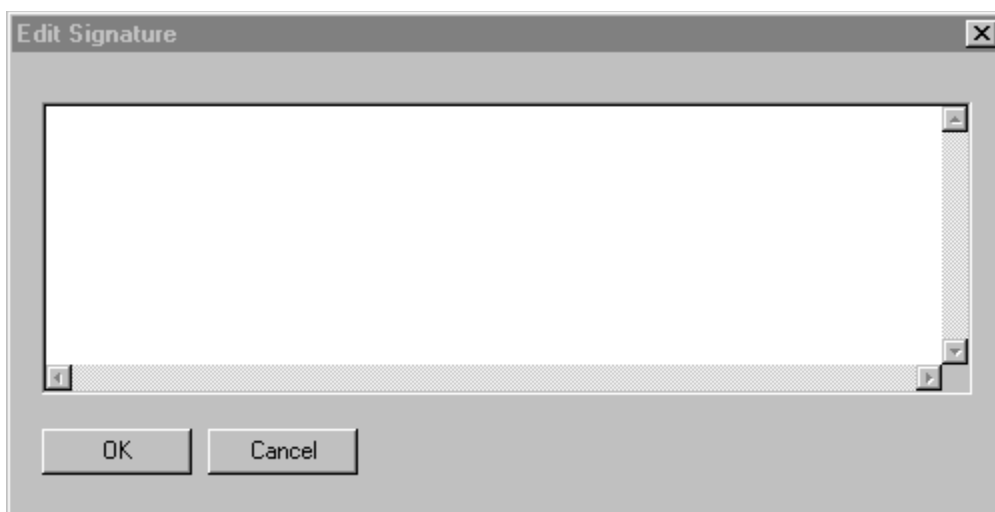
By default, QVT/News uses a reasonable font for the display of news articles. You can, however, choose a different font, selecting from among any of the fonts which are installed on your PC. When you select 'Setup - Font', this standard font selector will be displayed:



You can use this dialog to select any font you want. Your selection will be saved for use in both the present and in future QVT/News sessions.

## Signature

When you post articles to the Usenet, it is customary to provide a 'signature' at the end of your articles. These signatures can include any messages and/or information that you want. QVT/News allows you to compose a default signature that will be appended to all of your outgoing messages. This can be done by selecting the 'Setup - Edit Signature' menuitem, which will bring up this dialog:



The main part of this dialog consists of a text window that you can use to enter your signature; multiple lines are permitted. When you are finished, click on 'OK'.

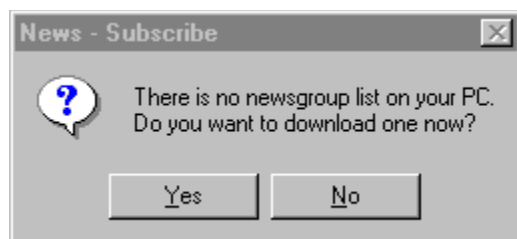




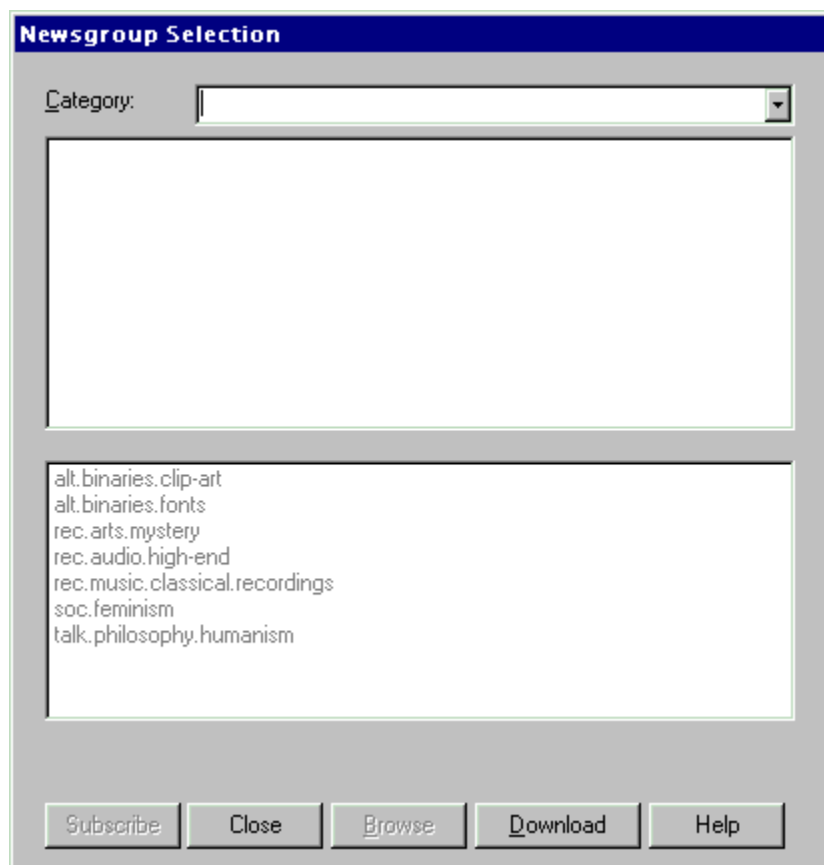
## Subscribing to Newsgroups

Before you can read news off the Usenet, you must 'subscribe' to one or more 'newsgroups'. These are the many subject areas which are used to categorize Usenet traffic. QVT/News provides a dialog that you can use to subscribe to the newsgroups that interest you.

The 'Subscribe' function is accessed via the 'Newsgroups-Subscribe' menu item. When you select this menuitem for the first time, you will see a popup message that looks like this:



Since QVT/News uses a locally-stored newsgroup list as the basis for its 'Subscribe' process, we strongly recommend that you select 'Yes'. Once you have done so, QVT/News will connect to your news server and download a newsgroup list. This may be a fairly lengthy operation, especially over slow dialup connections, but it will only have to be done once. After the download is complete, the main 'Subscribe' dialog will be displayed:



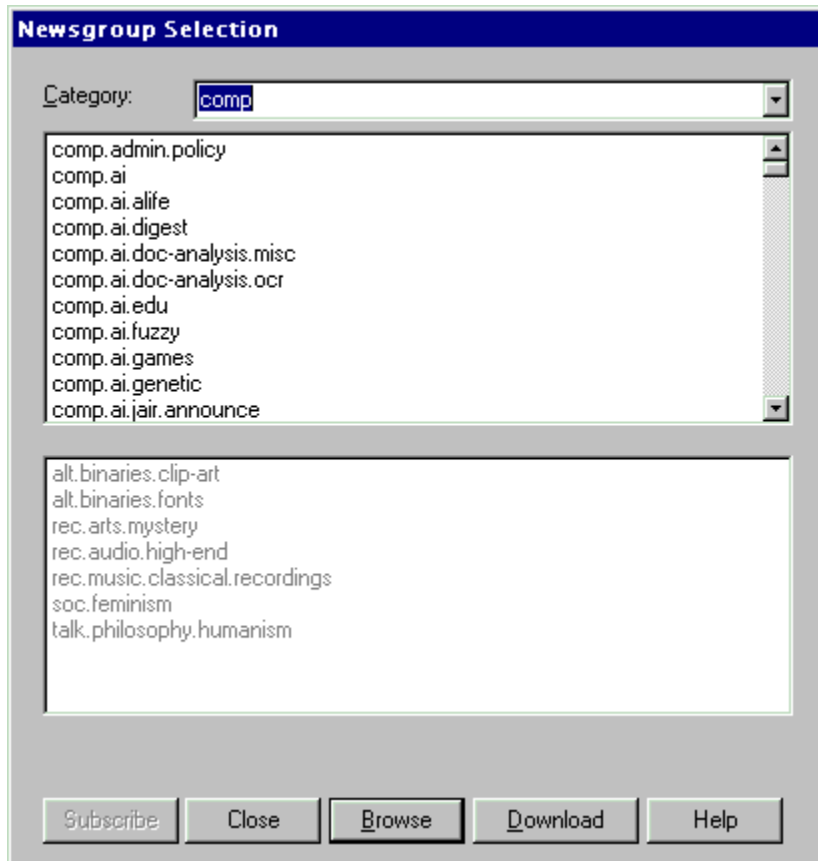
This dialog contains three data elements. The first is a 'combobox' which contains a list of

frequently-used newsgroup 'prefixes'. By 'prefix', we mean the left-most, or most-significant, part of the newsgroup name. Common examples include 'comp', 'rec', and 'talk'; most news servers will have a number of other major news categories as well.

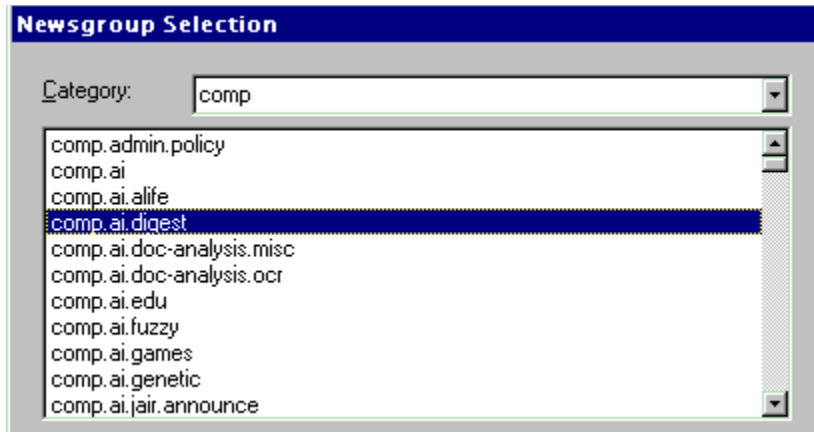
There are two ways to use this combobox:

- Click on the arrow, and select an entry from the drop-down list
- Type in the first few letters of the newsgroup category, then press <Enter>

In either case, all of the newsgroups which are present in that category will be shown in the listbox which is located just below the combobox:



To subscribe to a newsgroup, simply select it from this list...



...then click on 'Subscribe'. The selected newsgroup will be deleted from the list of available newsgroups, and added to your list of subscribed newsgroups:



All of these newsgroups will be shown later when you try to download articles, or read articles from the server.

When you are finished subscribing to newsgroups, click on 'Close' to terminate the 'Subscribe' dialog.

## Downloading Articles

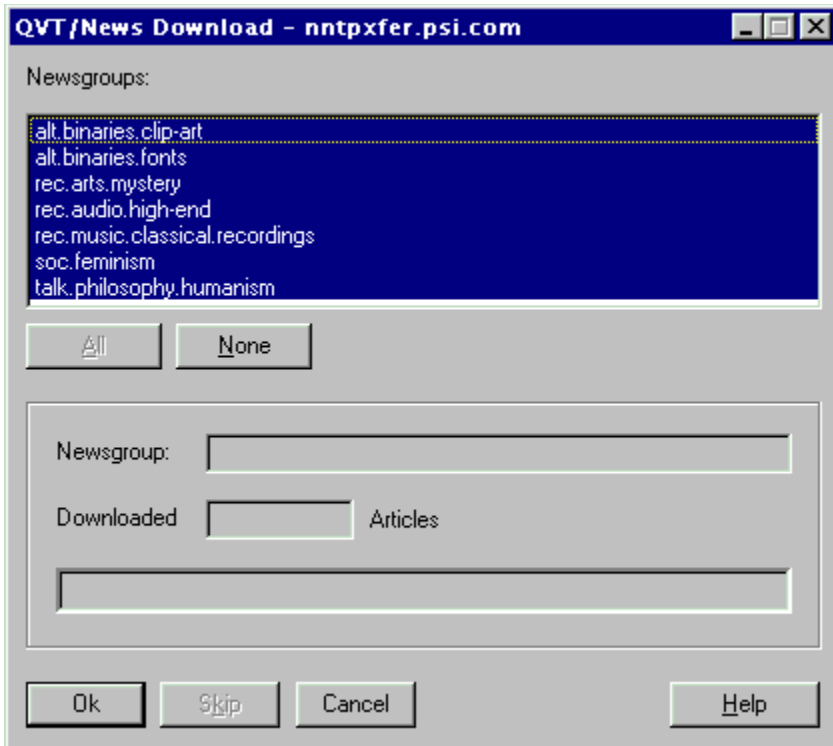
QVT/News supports two methods for accessing Usenet articles. The first method is to download the articles from the server to your PC. This method is recommended if:

- Most of your Usenet activity involves discussion groups, not binary files
- You tend to read most of the articles in each newsgroup

The download approach is not recommended if your basic interest in the Usenet is the availability of binary files, such as graphic images, because encoded binaries tend to be quite large, and you will not have the ability to screen out unwanted postings in advance, resulting in wasted time and disk space. In these cases, you should probably use the 'Read from Server' approach, which initially downloads only the article headers.

Note, however, that you need not confine yourself exclusively to one method or the other. When downloading news, you can select at runtime which newsgroups you want to download, and you can simply exclude 'binaries' newsgroups that you prefer to access directly from the server.

The download function is accessed from the 'File-Open' menuitem, which will bring up a dialog; from that dialog, select the 'Download' option and click on 'Ok'. QVT/News will then connect to your news server, and when the connection is established a new dialog will be displayed:



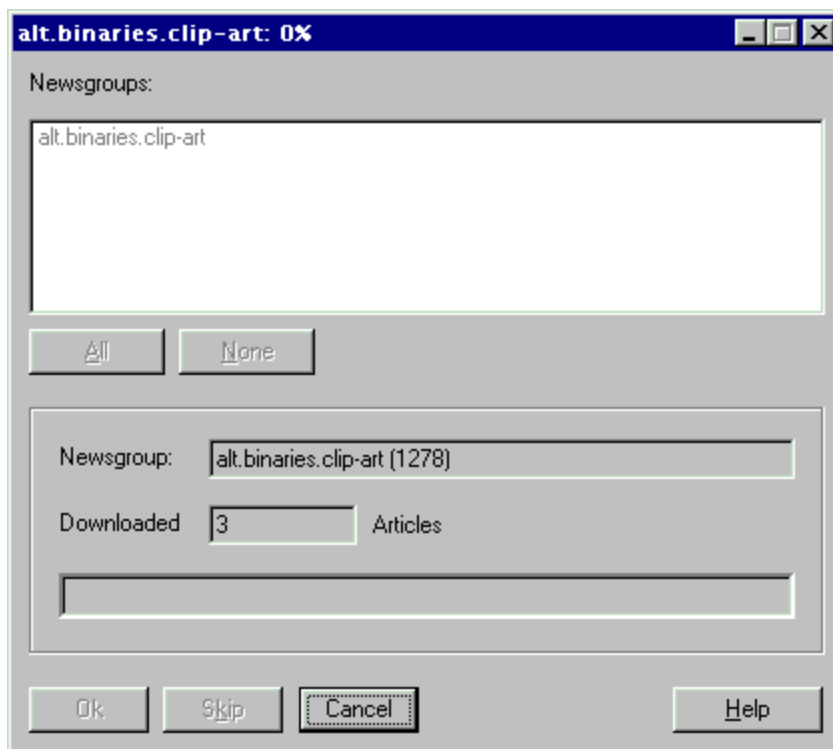
This dialog will present the list of subscribed newsgroups, along with a number of command buttons that you can use to manage the download process. These are:

### All/None

The presence of these buttons reflect the fact that you don't necessarily have to download from all of your subscribed newsgroups. When the dialog first comes up, all of the newsgroups are selected, but you can selectively 'deselect' ones that you want to skip. The 'All' and 'None' buttons are simply quick ways to select and deselect the entire list.

### **Ok**

Click on this button when you are ready to begin downloading. This process will begin by clearing the listbox and re-displaying only the selected newsgroups. Downloading will proceed with the first newsgroup. All new articles which are found on the server, and which have not yet been downloaded, will be brought down to your PC. A running status report will be kept, showing the number of articles available to download, together with the number downloaded so far. After the first newsgroup is finished, the listbox will be updated to show the final number of articles downloaded, and the process will move on to the next newsgroup on the list.



### **Skip**

This button will be enabled only when downloading is actually taking place. You can click on it to terminate downloading in the current newsgroup, and move ahead to the next newsgroup.

### **Cancel**

This button will terminate the download process. If you are in the middle of a download, the remainder of the current article will be downloaded, after which the server connection will be shut down, and the dialog box closed.

## Reading Articles

Whether you choose to read the news from the server, or from local storage, once you have selected one of the 'Read' options (from the 'Open Session') dialog, you will be presented with a list of your subscribed newsgroups, with each newsgroup name showing the number of unread articles available. This list is the starting point from which you can begin reading.



## Retrieving a List of Articles

To begin reading, all you have to do is either:

- Select a newsgroup
- Click on the 'Articles' button (in the toolbar)

or:

- Double-click on a newsgroup

The newsreader will then begin retrieving articles from the selected newsgroup. If you are reading from the server, only the first ten or so articles will be retrieved to begin with; if you are reading locally, the entire newsgroup will be retrieved.

**Note:** there is a way, when reading news directly from the server, to force the downloading of the entire newsgroup. This is done by pressing and holding the right mouse button, then clicking on the 'Articles' toolbar button.

Once this step is complete, the list of retrieved articles will be displayed in place of the newsgroup list. The article list is in the form of a tree: the newsgroup name is the 'trunk', the various threads are the 'branches', and the articles are the 'leaves'. The articles are sorted by thread, and by article date within each thread.



## Retrieving an Individual Article

Note that each 'thread' entry has a '+' symbol next to it, on the left. If you want to look at the list of articles which belong to a thread, you can click on the '+' and the list will expand. You can then select an article and read it. Alternatively, you can begin reading the thread directly without having to expand it first. In either case, the procedure is basically the same:

- Select a thread or article, by clicking on it once
- Click on the 'Read' button

or:

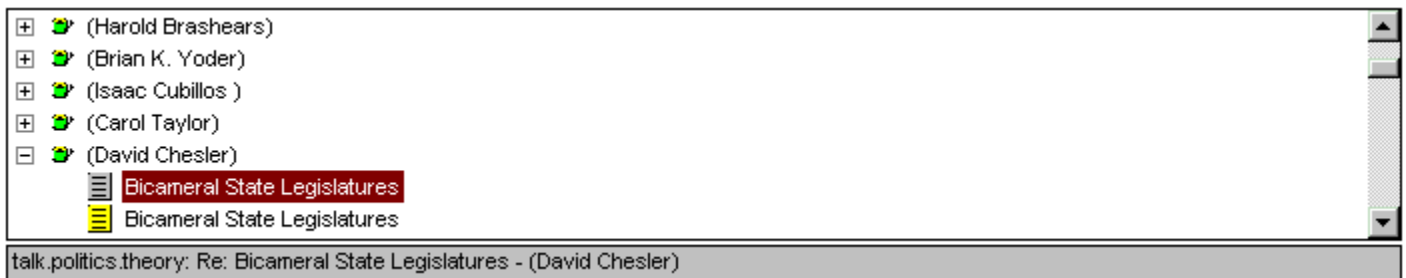
- Double-click on a thread or article

In either case, the full text of the article will be retrieved and displayed in the main article text area, which occupies the large area in the bottom part of the QVT/News window. Note that, once an article has been retrieved, the icon which represents the article will turn grey; this indicates visually that the article has been read. Articles read during a session will not be presented for reading in future sessions. If, after reading an article, you want to keep it available for later reading, you can 'unmark' it by clicking on the 'Unmark' button.



## Changing the Sort Order

Normally, articles are sorted by thread, and by date within each thread. There is, however, an alternate sort order available, which allows you approach a newsgroup in a different way. This sort is activated by selecting the 'Articles - Change Sort' menuitem. The result is shown below: the main sort is now by author, with articles sorted by thread and by date within the set for each author. This method is useful if you are mainly interested in postings from a few 'regular' contributors to the newsgroup.



## Posting a Reply to an Article

One of the more common operations that you may perform while reading is posting a reply to an article that you are reading. This is done by clicking on the 'Reply' button, which will cause a new dialog to be displayed, overlaying the main QVT/News window. The bottom part of the dialog contains an edit-text area which you can use to compose your reply; all of the

text of the original article is included, and indented over by one angle-bracket ('>'). You should remove the included text that is not relevant to your reply, so that readers of your posting don't have to wade through dozens of lines of old text before reaching the new, and also to conserve network bandwidth.

The upper part of the dialog contains a set of input fields, most of which are used to compose the header of your followup article:

**Post Followup Article**

From:

Newsgroups:

Subject:

Distribution:

Organization:

Keywords:

Followups To:

Buttons: Post, Email, Both, Editor, Save, Cancel

**From:** Your return email address. The default is taken from the 'Preferences' dialog.

**Newsgroups:** The newsgroups to which the article will be posted. If the newsgroup list seems long, you may want to trim it a little, by deleting irrelevant entries.

**Subject:** The subject line of the article. You should modify the subject line if you are introducing a new, divergent topic in your article.

**Distribution:** The distribution of the article (e.g., 'world', 'na', 'usa', etc.).

**Keywords:** A set of a few keywords that help categorize the article

**Followups-To:** This indicates that followups to your posting should be posted to this set of newsgroups, rather than the original set. Useful if a thread begins to drift off-topic, which is a frequent occurrence.

**Editor:** Load the article text into an external editor. The default is 'notepad'.

**Save:** Save the article into a disk file. You will be prompted for a filename.

**Post:** Post the reply to the Net.

**E-Mail:** Send the reply directly to the original author, via email.

**Both:** Mail the article, then post it.

## Deleting Articles

QVT/News provides you with a number of various ways to delete articles that you are no longer want to see in the article list. There are three 'levels' of deletion:

- Article



- Thread
- Newsgroup

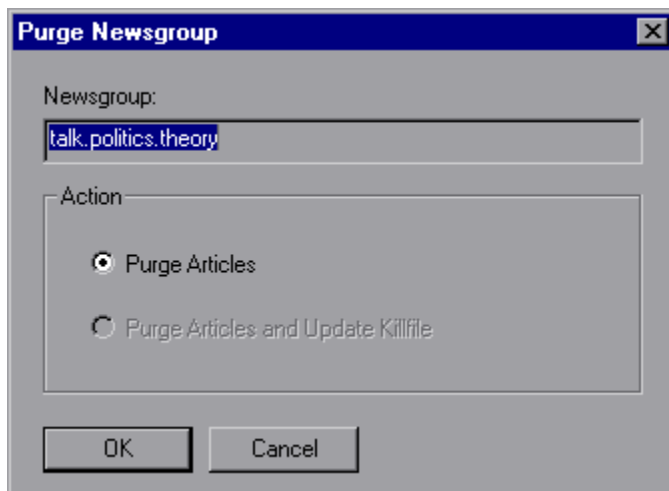
To delete a single article, select the article, then click on the 'Delete' button.

There are two ways to delete a thread:

- Select the thread, then click on 'Delete'
- Select any article within the thread, then click on 'Delete' while holding down the right mouse button

If you perform either of these operations while holding down the <Ctrl> key, the thread will be 'killed' as well as deleted (i.e., the thread will be added to the killfile).

To delete all of the articles in the newsgroup, select the newsgroup, then click on 'Delete'. Alternatively, you can at any time click on the 'Purge' button. The 'Purge' dialog gives you a choice of options, as well as an opportunity to cancel the purge:



The first option will delete all of the remaining articles, and mark them as 'read'. The second option will additionally add each thread to the killfile, so that no articles belonging to those threads will be presented in future QVT/News sessions.

**Note:** When reading news locally, articles that you delete in this manner are not actually deleted from the disk at this time. Instead, they are marked as 'read', so that they will no longer appear in the article list for this newsgroup. Articles will be physically deleted by the 'Expire' process, which is performed when you close the news session.

## Undeleting Articles

QVT/News provides you with an 'undelete' capability, in case you inadvertently delete one or more articles. There are two undelete commands: Undelete Last, and Undelete All, both of which are found on the 'Articles' submenu.

Undelete Last will restore the last article deleted. It can only be used once, and will not be available for use again until another article is deleted.

Undelete All will restore all of the articles which have been deleted during the current session. After running this command, the article list will basically look the way it did when you first accessed the newsgroup.

### **Saving and Printing Articles**

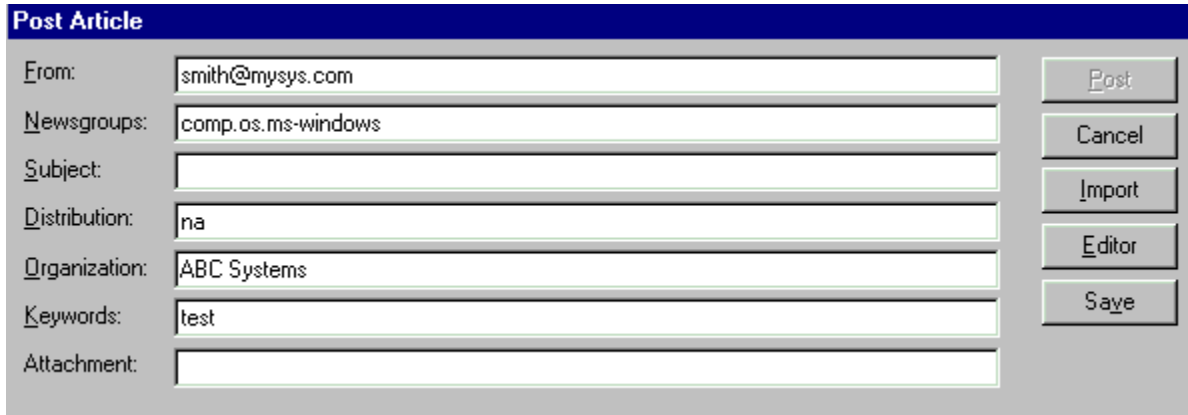
In addition to reading articles, you may also save them as files on your PC, or print them on your printer. To save an article to a file, simply click on the 'Save' button. A dialog box will appear, which you should use to type in a filename under which the article will be saved. Note that the default directory for saving articles is the 'Save Directory' that was given in the Preferences dialog. You can, however, change directories and put the saved article anywhere you want.

Printing an article is simply a matter of clicking on the 'Print' button. You should, however, make sure that a printer has been defined to QVT/News. This is done by using the 'Setup-Printer' dialogs. The first dialog is used to select a printer for use by QVT/News; the second selects a font for printing articles. We recommend that you do both of these when you first run QVT/News; it will not have to be done again unless you change printers.

## Posting Articles

QVT/News supports posting articles as well as reading. The posting of replies, or followups, is discussed in the section on [Reading Articles](#). Posting a reply, however, assumes that you are working with a pre-existing article. You can also create and post a brand-new article, using the Post Article function.

To begin the process of posting a new article, click on the 'Post' button. This will bring up a new dialog:



As you can see, this dialog consists of two main areas. The upper area contains a number of input fields, most of which relate to header information. Some of these fields will already be filled in with information taken from the [Preferences](#) dialog. Some of the others will have to be filled in at this time.

- From: Your return e-mail address
- Newsgroups: The comma-separated list of newsgroups
- Subject: The subject of your article
- Distribution: The distribution area for the article. For example, 'world'.
- Organization: The organization that you are posting from
- Keywords: A couple of words that can help categorize the article
- Attachment: The name of a binary file that you want to include in the article.

Out of this set of items, only 'Keywords' and 'Attachment' are optional. All of the others are mandatory!

The command buttons, which appear to the right of the input area, perform the following functions:

- Post Post the article
- Cancel Cancel the posting

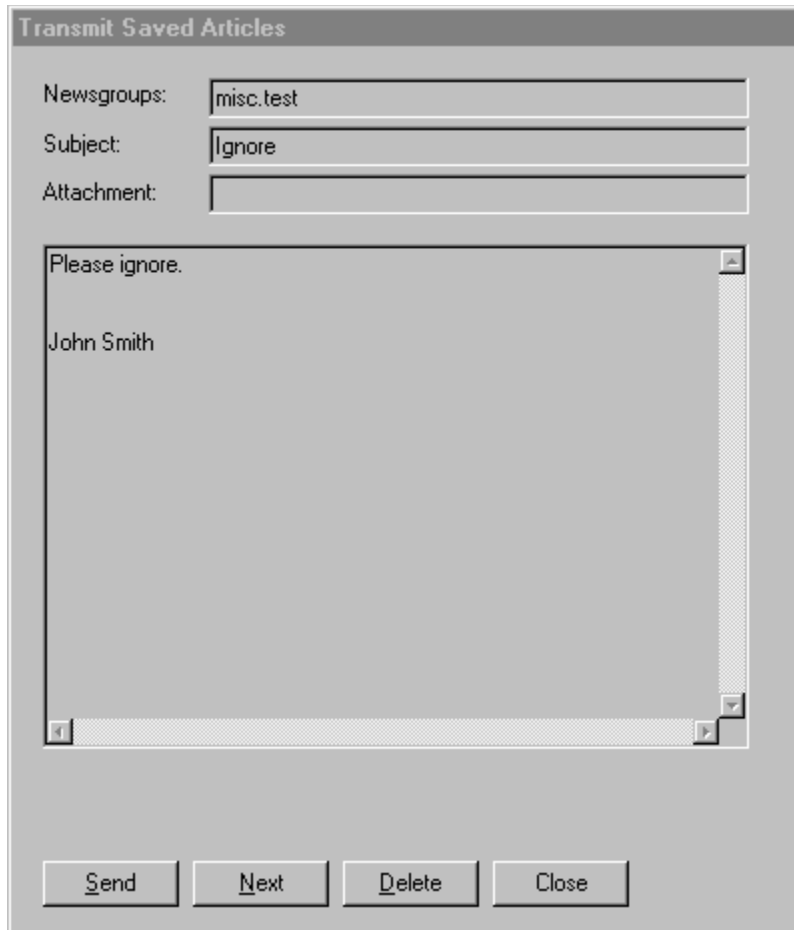
Import	Load a text file into the text-edit area
Editor	Load the article text into an external text editor; default is 'notepad'.
Save	Save the contents of the article in a disk file.

The lower part of this dialog consists of a text-edit window. Use this editor to compose your message. When you are satisfied with the article, and assuming that all of the mandatory header fields have been filled in, you can click on 'Post' to send the article to the news server. During the posting process, a series of messages will be displayed just above the text window, indicating the progress of the operation. After the article has been transmitted to the server, a result message, indicating success or failure, will be displayed.

After an article is posted, the dialog remains on-screen. If you are finished, click on 'Close' to erase the dialog window and return to the main QVT/News window.

### **Posting Articles in Batch Mode**

As mentioned elsewhere, QVT/News provides an 'off-line' mode, which allows you to read and post news without being connected to your Internet provider. Articles posted in offline mode are stored on disk, and can be posted as a batch when a connection to the Net has been established.



This dialog will show you, one at a time, the articles that are queued up in the 'outbox'. You will see the newsgroup list, the subject line, and the article text.

Commands available include:

**Send**

Post the article.

**Next**

Skip this article. Retain it in the outbox for future disposition.

**Delete**

Delete this article. Go on to the next article (if any).

**Close**

Terminate the dialog. Any unposted articles will be retained for your attention in the future.

## Additional Features

### Kill File

While reading news, especially in the larger newsgroups, you may encounter subjects and/or authors that you don't want to bother with in the future. QVT/News provides a 'kill file' feature that allows you to specify that, within a given newsgroup, articles on certain subjects, or by certain authors, will be excluded from the list of articles that presented for browsing. This relieves you of the need to manually delete these articles every time they appear (which may be frequently). The result can be a measurable reduction in the 'annoyance factor' when reading these newsgroups.

Note that articles are killed based on a 'partial match' logic. This means that a subject or author need not match a killfile entry exactly in order to be killed. For maximum efficiency, we recommend that you compose your killfile entries using the minimum substring that will trigger a match; characters and words that do not contribute to the meaning of the entry should be edited out.

Normally you will add items to the kill file while you are reading articles. Go to the 'Newsgroups' menu, and select 'Edit Killfile', which will bring up this dialog:

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Edit Kill File". At the top, it displays "Newsgroup: talk.politics.theory". In the top right corner, there are "OK" and "Cancel" buttons. The dialog is split into two sections: "Subjects" and "Authors". Each section contains a large listbox on the left and an input field on the right. In the "Subjects" section, the listbox contains one entry: "An Open Letter to Rush Limbaugh". Below the listbox are buttons for "Add Subject" and "Delete Subject". The "Authors" section has an empty listbox and buttons for "Add Author" and "Delete Author".

Note that there are two sections to the dialog, one for subjects and one for users. In each case, the items which are already in the killfile are displayed in the large listboxes. The right-hand side of each area contains an input field that you can use to enter new items to be added to the kill file. If you are in the middle of reading an article, the subject and author of that article will already be present in these input fields.

**To add a subject to the kill file:**

- Put the cursor in the input field which is located directly above the 'Add Subject' button
- Type in all or part of the text of the subject that you want to 'kill'
- Click on 'Add Subject'

The new subject will be added to the 'Subjects' list.

#### **To add an author to the kill file:**

- Put the cursor in the input field which is located directly above the 'Add Author' button
- Type in all or part of the author's name or address
- Click on 'Add Author'

The new username will appear in the 'Users' list.

#### **To delete a subject or author:**

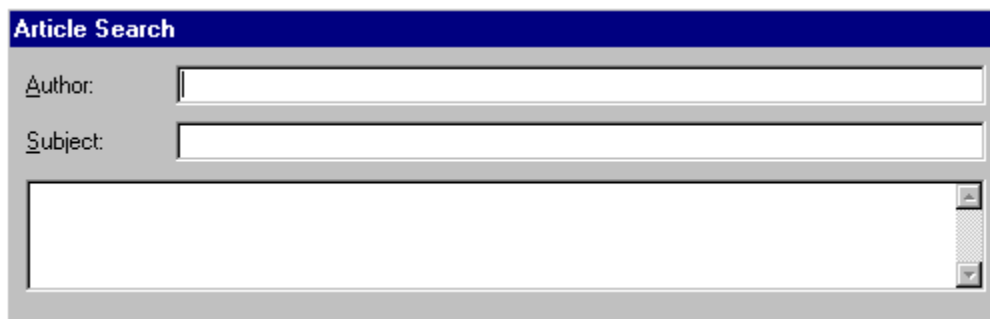
- Select the item that you want to delete
- Click on the appropriate 'Delete Selected' button.

The item will be deleted from the listbox.

When you are finished editing the kill file, click on 'Ok'. To abandon the killfile without saving changes, click on 'Cancel'.

### **Article Search**

If you normally download the news and read articles locally, then you can make use of the 'Article Search' feature. This allows you to locate articles by subject and/or author. This feature is available from the 'Articles' menu.



To invoke a search:

- Type in the author name and/or subject that you want to search for
- Click on the 'Search' button.

QVT/News will search your news repository for articles that match your search criteria. Note that the search logic treats your search keys as partial keys; articles which either match or contain the search keys will be retrieved. Note also that the search is case-insensitive.

If the search finds one or more matching articles, a brief one-line summary for each article

will be displayed in the listbox which is located in the middle part of the dialog box. You can view the text of any of those articles by double-clicking in the listbox.



## Initiating a News Session

To begin reading news, you should start with the 'File-Open' menuitem. Selecting this menuitem will bring up the the following dialog, which gives you access to both local and server news sessions:



There are two different operations which are accessed through this dialog:

### Read Articles from Disk

This option is used to read articles which have already been downloaded to your PC.

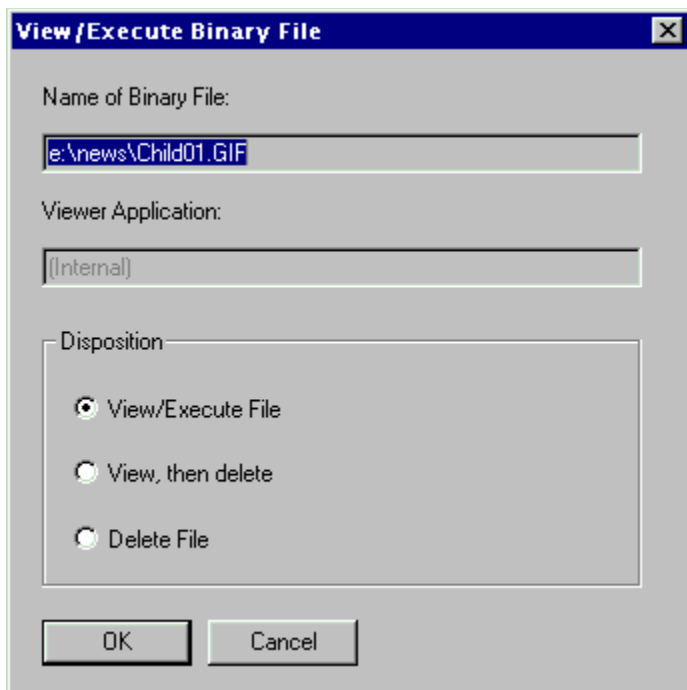
### Read Articles from Server

This option will connect you to the news server, and you can read articles directly from the server. This procedure is considerably slower and less convenient than reading locally-stored articles, so we recommend that you use it only if it is impractical for you to store news articles on your PC. Reading news from the server is also the preferred approach to access 'binaries' newsgroups, since you can select the binaries that you want \*before\* they are downloaded to your PC in their entirety.

## Extracting Binary Files

There are a number of newsgroups which exist primarily as distribution points for various types of binary files, for example image files and program files. These files are usually posted in encoded form, typically using the 'uuencode' format (QVT/News can also decode MIME-encoded files). QVT/News allows you to decode these files 'on the fly'.

If, while reading news, you encounter an article that contains an encoded binary file, the file will automatically be decoded, and you will be presented with this dialog:

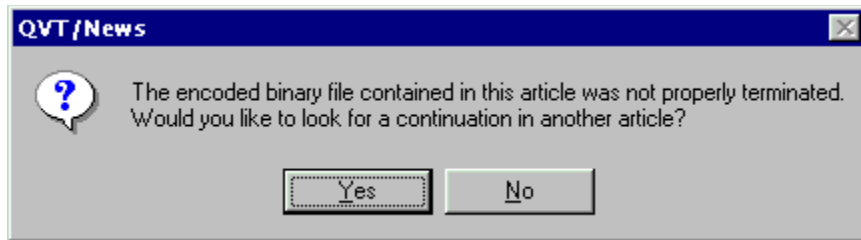


The top part of the dialog show you the name of the extracted file, and the name of the default viewer application (this will be '(Internal)' if the file is a standard type of sound or image file). The lower part presents three options:

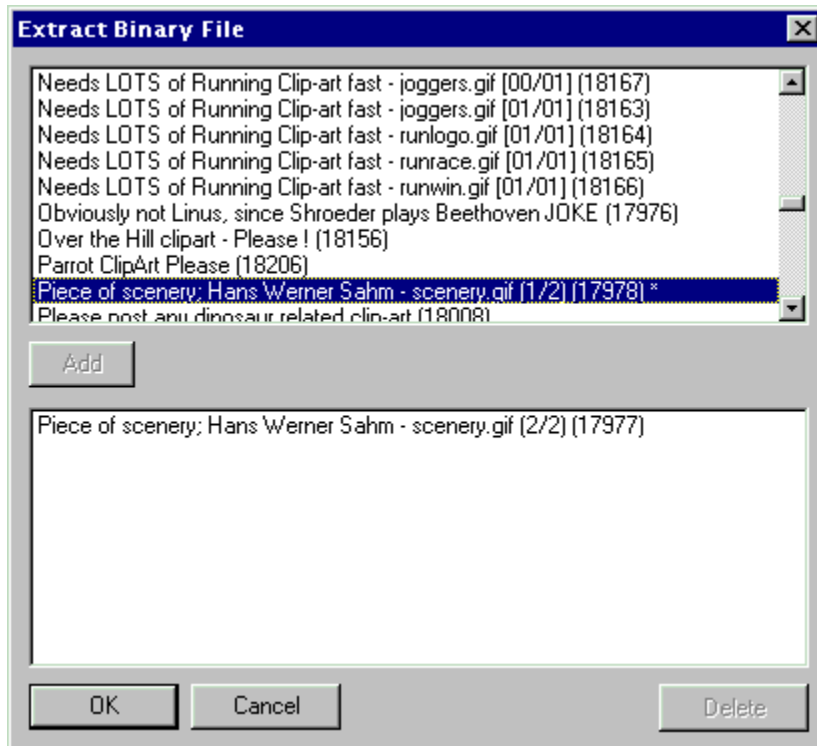
- View/Execute View or execute the file.
- View, then Delete View the file, then delete it.
- Delete Delete the file without viewing.

## Multi-part Postings

Things become a little more complicated with multi-part encoded files, which are fairly common. The best procedure in this situation is to begin by decoding the first part (the subject line will often include indications such as '1/2', indicating part 1 of 2). After the first part is decoded, a prompt will be displayed, as follows:



If you answer 'yes', another dialog will be displayed:



This dialog will show, in the top half, the list of articles contained in the newsgroup. The selection point will be the current article (i.e., the one just decoded). In the lower half, QVT/News will list the articles that it believes contain the remainder of the encoded file.

At this point, if necessary, you should edit the list, by adding and/or deleting articles. When the list contains the right articles, in the right order, click on 'Ok'. The listed articles will be decoded in order, and combined into a single binary output file. When this process is finished, you will be given the same 'View/Execute' options as those described above.

A similar sequence will occur if you happen to read an article that is part of a multi-part encoded binary, but not the first part. A message will come up explaining that you have apparently brought up an article that represents the middle of a multi-part binary. You will be given the opportunity to access the article list, as shown above, and construct a list of articles to decode. The main difference will be the fact that you will have to identify all of the articles in the multi-part posting.

