

MUDWIN

A WinSock-based client for MUDs

Introduction

This is the first beta-test version of the software; it is the first version to be really usable. Not all features have been implemented yet, but those that have are presumed to work. So far all testing has been done with *Trumpet Winsock Version 1.0 Rev A*. Reports of any experiences with other WinSock implementations are welcomed. Also, my testbed is a Packard Bell 25MHz 486/SX with a 640x480 8-bit color VGA. I would like to hear of experiences on less capable machines.

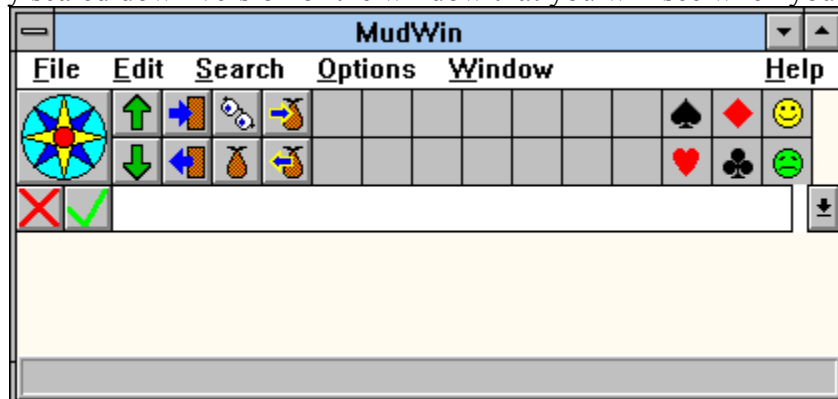
About the menus and dialogs

Almost all of the pull-down menu items do something, but in a few cases they just pop up a message box telling you that the feature still hasn't been implemented. In depth discussions about what all of the working menu items do may be found below.

The dialog boxes that you see on your system might look different from those shown here. Although not required, MudWin will use the CTL3D.DLL to give its dialog boxes a three dimensional appearance. If you don't have this DLL, don't worry; MudWin is smart enough to get along just fine without it.

Getting started

Here is a slightly scaled down version of the window that you will see when you use MudWin.



From the top to the bottom, you see the MS Windows title bar and menu bar, then the MudWin tool bar, aka the macro bar. Following that is the command entry area and the MDI client area. Finally at the bottom is the status line. The *Options* pull-down menu has items to hide the tool bar and the status line, if you don't feel that you need them.

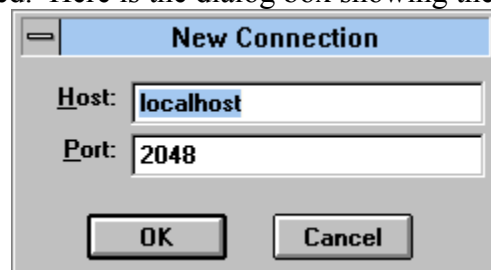
Once you have made a connection, the text window will initially appear as a normal MDI client window, similar to the group windows in Program Manager or the directory windows in File Manager. It displays a log of all text received from the server, and possibly the commands sent to the server as well. Type your commands into the input area. When you press *Enter*, the

command will be sent to the server. Meanwhile, messages from the server will be appearing in the text window. If you have multiple sessions, the commands that you type will always be sent to the server whose window is currently active. If there are no sessions active, you will get yelled at when you hit the *Enter* key. The drop-down button at the right of the input area will show you a list of your last 20 commands. Click on one to move it into the input area. If you resend the command without making any changes, it will be moved to the top of the history list. The two buttons with the red X and green check allow you to send or cancel a command in the input area. Clicking on them with the mouse works exactly the same as hitting either the *Esc* or *Enter* keys, respectively.

There is as yet no way to automate the beginning of a session, nor can you save the session parameters. This is near the top of the list of features to be added ASAP. By the way, the program seems to hang if you try to connect to a real Telnet port. This is apparently caused by the daemon at the other end waiting to finish the Telnet option negotiations. We hope to have an add-on DLL to handle Telnet protocol "Real Soon Now" (Reg. TM Jerry Pournelle ;-).

The File Menu

New and **Open...** currently do the same thing: pop up a dialog box to get the name and port number of a server. Either a DNS-style name (john.yoyodyne.com) or an IP address (123.45.67.89) may be entered. Here is the dialog box showing the (useless) defaults:



Print and **Printer Setup...** allow you to print a copy of your console log.

Exit closes all open sessions and ends MudWin.

The Edit Menu

Copy will copy to the system clipboard whatever text is selected in the active text window.

Clear Buffer erases everything in the active text window. This is a good thing to do if the system is running low on memory, or if you just want to try to forget about some previous action.

Select All selects everything in the active text window, just like you had used the mouse.

The Search Menu

None of the items in this pull down menu currently have any effect.

The Options Menu

Local Echo controls whether commands typed into the input area get echoed in the log window for the session. You might want to turn this off if the MUD to which you are connected repeats your commands itself. When checked (the default), local echoing is performed.

Word Wrap controls whether long lines in the log window for a session are automatically wrapped when the right edge of the window is reached. Most MUDs only send a *newline* character at the end of each paragraph or to perform special text formatting. You might want to turn this off if the MUD to which you are connected wraps lines for you. When checked (the default), word wrapping is performed.

Font... controls the font (and text color) used in the session's log window. The default is to use the system font, but you can change this to any TrueType font installed on your system.

Color... controls the background color used in the session's log window. The default is to use the *Window Background* color set in the *Control Panel*, but you can change this to color supported on your system. Due to a bug (feature?) of the control used to display the log, some unusual artifacts may be observed with some color choices. If you click the **Define Custom Colors...** button, you will notice a small swatch labeled **Color|Solid**. The color that you select will appear around the text in the window, but the solid version will be used as the background in the empty areas of the window.

Tool Bar controls whether the tool bar is displayed at the top of the main window. When checked (the default), the tool bar is displayed.

Status Line controls whether the status line is displayed at the bottom of the main window. When checked (the default), the status line is displayed.

The Window Menu

Using the Windows menu, you can arrange your desktop so that windows and icons are easy to see in the MudWin main window.

Cascade resizes and layers open session log windows so that each title bar is visible.

Tile Horizontally resizes and arranges open session log windows so that all are visible. The windows are stacked so that each gets a few long lines.

Tile Vertically resizes and arranges open session log windows side by side so that all are visible.

Each window gets many short lines.

Arrange Icons arranges closed session windows so that each icon is visible along the bottom of the main MudWin window.

Close All causes all sessions to terminate.

There is also a list of the names of all active windows. Selecting a window will open it if needed and bring it to the front of the stack. If there are more than nine active windows, the last item on the list will be **More Windows...** Selecting this will bring up a scrollable list of all active windows from which you may choose one.

The Help Menu

We don't have a real *Help* document yet, instead the *Contents* item brings up this document. The **About...** item pops up the dialog below, which also describes the WinSock implementation that is being used.



The status line

The status line doesn't do much, just proclaim its existence and occasionally provide detailed debugging information about various parts of the system. As soon as we think of something for it to do, we'll beef it up, I promise.

The tool bar

The current incarnation of the tool bar uses two external files for configuration. This is so that if there are any bitmap artists testing the program, they can try to improve upon my icons and/or sample commands. The toolbar will hopefully grow into a full macro facility. Send your suggestions.

Clicking on the yellow and blue portions of the compass rose on the left causes these travel commands to be sent to the MUD server: "north", "south", "east", "west", "ne", "nw", "se", "sw". Clicking on the two vertical arrows causes the commands "up" or "down" to be sent, and

clicking on the two horizontal arrows causes the commands "enter" or "exit" to be sent. Clicking on the eyeglasses sends the command "look" and clicking on the sack sends the command "inventory". I'll discuss the last two buttons in a moment.

The toolbar may be customized by changing the files "_default.txt" for the commands and (maybe) "_default.bmp" for the image. Don't change the size of the buttons, as the hotspots are currently hard-coded into the program (later we will infer this from the size of the bitmap). The first line of the text file contains the name of the bitmap file. This is so that in the future, multiple text files can all point to the same bitmap file. You will note that there are additional buttons to the right. To add your own commands, you need to paint an image onto one or more of the unused buttons and add the commands to the end of the text file. The program does successfully infer the number of active buttons from the number of lines in the text file. Following the bitmap file name, the next eight lines of the text file are the commands issued for the compass points, then each pair of lines will contain the commands for each successive vertical pair of buttons.

The last two items in the standard toolbar (pictured above) represent taking an object (by adding it to the sack, i.e. inventory) and dropping an object (by removing it from the sack). If you check the text file, you will notice that the macro for the first of these buttons is "take %s". When you click that button with the mouse, whatever text is selected in the active text window replaces the "%s" before the command is sent to the MUD server. So, if you enter a room and see something that you want to pick up, you just double-click on the word in the description and then click the *take* button. Likewise, if you want to drop an item, click the *inventory* button, double-click on (or click and drag over) the name of the desired item, and click the *drop* button.

We hope to improve the way that you customize the toolbar. It is also worth noting that the toolbar's background is just like you see it in the bitmap. We do not change it to reflect the setting of the system colors as set via the control panel. I don't know if I will ever get around to fixing this. Since none of the sample color schemes shipped by Microsoft change the colors of *Button Face*, I don't rate this as very important.

A Boring Lecture, Leading to a Known Bug

Different systems use different ways to signal the end of a line. Apple uses a carriage return, usually depicted as '\r', Unix uses a new line (aka line feed), '\n', and MS-DOS uses both, "\r\n". By a happy coincidence, the Internet by and large also uses "\r\n", mostly because that is what Teletypes used to use. When Microsoft designed their EDIT control for MS Windows, they decided to only allow "\r\n" as an end of line signal. If you have the characters by themselves or in the wrong order, you get one or more solid black bars, similar to this: |

"So what," you ask. When your intrepid author designed MudWin, he assumed that all MUDs used the "\r\n" sequence to indicate the end of a line or paragraph and failed to consider that some MUDs might use something else. He also failed to realize that some filtering functions might need to expand the buffer rather than shorten it (as when stripping our ANSI control sequences, for instance). Some of the early testers have found that these were rather silly assumptions.

This is a rather high priority bug, but it is also not going to be easy to fix. It will get fixed one of these days, but I may spend some time on the easier problems first. Sorry, but that's the best I can do right now.

Credits

Click on "Help / About MUDWIN...". Double click on the icon. Note that absolutely nothing happens. I intend to add an scrolling list of credits before the program is finalized. Until then, let me thank everyone who has helped or inspired me on this project:

Mari Johnson, mljohn@admiral.umsl.edu

Marcus J. Ranum

Peter R. Tattam

(more to come)

-- Sam Denton
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