

Interfacing Front Door with PowerBBS

First, let's get all of the legal garbage out of the way...

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Whew! Enough of that... Let's get to work. This document will not even attempt to explain net mail, echo mail, mail tossing, mail packing, or the mail man. What this document will do is give you step by step instructions on how to interface Front Door to PowerBBS.

WARNING : This document assumes that the reader is familiar with PowerBBS and has PowerBBS up and running. If PowerBBS is not set up and running, do so and then come back to this document in about a week.

Programs you will need.

A FIDONET compatible echo mail processor. I use CONFMAIL version 4.00. This document will show CONFMAIL specific command lines, but with a little patience and understanding of the echo mail process, any mail processor could be used.

A FIDONET compatible front end mailing program. I use Front Door 2.01 non-commercial. This document will give some Front Door(FD) specific examples, but with some patience and understanding of how a front end mailer works, any mailer

could be used.

PCBGate - You must have this program. You can download it from the PowerBBS support BBS at (516)822-7396 or from the Last Outpost at (412)662-0769. Future versions of PowerEcho will eliminate the need for this program.

PowerEcho - Another MUST HAVE program. This program can also be downloaded from the PowerBBS support BBS or the Last Outpost.

What is Front Door and why would I want to interface it with PowerBBS?

Front Door is front end mailing program designed to send and receive net and echo mail. Without it, there would be no way to "get the mail". Front Door takes care of calling other systems to get the mail, and it also allows other systems to call you so that they may download their mail. What it boils down to is, if you want echo mail, you must run a front end mailer program like Front Door.

Setting up PowerBBS to handle echo mail.

It is very easy setting up PowerBBS to handle echo mail (it's the other programs that are difficult). First, call up the config program that comes with PowerBBS. Select *A - General System Setup* then go to the third screen by pressing *PgDn* twice. You will see a section called *FIDO Support Options*. Put a "Y" in the field labeled *Are you running FrontDoor(tm) or other prg?* Next, write down the path and the name of the field labeled *Temporary file to read baud rate from?* (you can change if you want, just be sure to write it down for later use).

Now, hit the *PgDn* button eight(8) times. This should bring up the screen that has the communications setup and the event setup. The event setup is the part we are interested in. Turn the event off by placing a "N" in the field labeled *Do you want the Event Activated?* You will want to write down the path and the name of the event batch file. Now store the piece of paper that has the temporary baud rate path/filename and the event path/filename in a cool dry place. Keep away from fire or flame. Do not store in direct sunlight. Caution : contents are fragile. This end up.

Next, set up the forums that you want the echo mail imported into. If you don't know how to set up the forums, you should go back and re-read(or read for the first time) the PowerBBS docs. After you get the forums set it, you might want to write down the path/filenames of the message files for each forum on your handy-dandy peice of paper. You will need them later.

That's all that needs to be done for PowerBBS. Not too difficult. Just wait....

Creating Mail Directories

Now that PowerBBS is set up, you must now create the directories where the message will be exported. I recommend creating a directory off of the root called ECHOMAIL. Change to the ECHOMAIL directory, and create one directory for echo forum you set up in the PowerBBS config program. You do NOT want the PowerBBS message file to be stored in this directory. You simply want one directory for every forum you are going to echo.

Here's an example. You are going to have 3 forums support echo mail. You

call one forum LOCAL Echo, another forum Humor Echo, and the third Windows Echo. Your message file for Local is C:\POWRBBS\FORUM\LOCAL, the one for Humor is C:\POWRBBS\FORUM\HUMOR and the one for Windows is C:\POWRBBS\FORUM\WIN. You would probably want to create the following directories under the ECHOMAIL directory to hold the outgoing mail.

C:\ECHOMAIL\LOCAL

C:\ECHOMAIL\HUMOR

C:\ECHOMAIL\WIN

You should not have 2 forums sharing the same directory. This will lead to cross-conference messages which will get quite a few people pretty upset. Remember, one directory per forum.

You will also need to create a directory to hold the files that Front Door receives. I recommend calling the directory C:\INFILES.

Setting up PCBGate

Create a directory called GATE and unzip PCBGATE into that directory. Make GATE your active directory and type GATECFG CONFIG to start setting up PCBGATE. PCBGate should display a message stating to the effect that the configuration file wasn't found and that it is going to create a new one. It will then ask you for your name. The name you type in here will be substituted for SYSOP everytime a message left by the sysop is exported. You should use your real name and not a "handle" here because most echo mail areas do not permit the use of handles.

Once you enter your name, a screen will appear with 100 area definitions. At the bottom of the screen will be a prompt asking you wich area to to edit. Since this is an initial installation, I would recommend you start at area one. Just hit ENTER and a pop-up window will appear asking you for information about the area. Each area in PCBGate should correspond with one forum.

AREA NAME : This is the formal echo mail name of the echo. It is always one word, or two words connected by an underscore (_).

Example : LOCAL.

MSGF Filename : This is name of the PowerBBS message base.

Example : LOCAL.

MSGF Pathname : This is the directory where PowerBBS keeps the message file.

Example : C:\POWRBBS\FORUM

Fido Pathname : This is the outgoing directory you created in the step above.

Example : C:\ECHOMAIL\LOCAL

Send Private : Since most echos do not allow private messages, this will almost always be no.

PCB Echo On : A complicated feature used for cross conferencing. Just forget about it and set it to NO.

Echohost Net : This is the net number of the BBS you will be receiving the echo mail from.

Echohost Node : The node number of the BBS you will be receiving the echo mail from.

Your Net : Need I explain?

Your Node : Again?

Kill Imported : When this feature is on, all of the Fido *.MSG files will be deleted after they have been imported into the PowerBBS message files. This feature should be YES until you have a better understanding of the echo mail system.

PCB Pack command : This should be NO. We will PowerPack the message bases later.

Erase .BAK : This feature should be YES. It keeps down the number of useless files on your disk.

That's all for setting up PCBGate. Just fill in the above information for each forum you want echo mail in.

Setting up Front Door

At the time of this writing, Front Door 2.01 is the most recent version. Always use the most recent version, older versions may not be allowed in FIDONET.

Start setting up Front Door by creating a directory called FD off of the root. Unzip Front Door in this directory and set it up (if you think I'm going to walk you through setting up all of Front Door, you are obviously taking some sort of controlled substance). Front Door is a very complex program. I will not even attempt to describe fully how to set up the program. What I will do is go over the options that are somewhat PowerBBS specific. These areas are the event manager, folder manager, and errorlevels.

ERRORLEVELS

The most important part of setting up Front Door is setting the errorlevels. The ERRORLEVEL sub-menu is called from the MAILER option on the main menu. The errorlevels you enter here will correspond to the errorlevel Front Door exits with when a human caller connects. I would recommend setting the 300 baud errorlevel at 240, the 1200 baud errorlevel at 241, and continue working your way up. It would probably be a good idea to set all of the errorlevels, even though your modem may not support the higher baud rates. This way if you ever upgrade your modem, you won't have to mess with these options again.

You will also see an option labeled *RECEIVED MAIL* set this errorlevel to 255. The last option on this menu is *Create .BAT File*. Set this option to YES(Use ENTER to toggle).

FOLDER MANGER

The FOLDERS sub-menu is called from the MANGER option on the main menu. Press INSERT to create a new folder. You will now see a menu with seven(7) options, the first one being *Status*. Press ENTER with *Status* highlighted. A menu will appear on the left side on the screen. Move the highlight bar down to *Echomail* and press the SPACEBAR. Now press return. You have just designated this folder as an Echo Mail folder.

Ignore the *Origin Line* option. It should not be changed.

Next, highlight the *Title* option and press ENTER. Input the proper echo mail name here. To keep with the example, we would enter LOCAL. Press ENTER to store the name.

The *Path* option should be the same as the Fido Pathname option in PCBGate for the same forum. In the example it's called C:\ECHOMAIL\LOCAL.

You do not have to worry about the rest of the options. They are for more advanced users and have no effect on PowerBBS.

Just repeat the above steps for each Forum that you want to echo.

EVENT MANAGER

An event is any action that you want Front Door to do at a specified time. Events can be internal to Front Door, like having FD call a BBS to send/receive mail; or they can be external, like running a batch file. If you fail to set up the events properly you will not be able to send or receive mail.

You only need to create three events to begin with. The first event should last all day. This event will define Front Door's behavior all day. The second event is an

external event. This will cause Front Door to exit with a specified errorlevel. This event is used to run your daily maintenance programs and to process outbound mail. The last event is an internal event that will make Front Door call your local echomail hub to get your daily mail shipment. The Front Door documentation will discuss how to set up these events.

Setting Up ConfMail

Unzip ConfMail into the Front Door directory. Next, grab your favorite text editor, create a file called AREAS.BBS in your Front Door directory. This a sample of what a simple AREAS.BBS file would look like :

```
The Last Outpost -Mercer, Pa 412-662-0769 ! Michael Miller
;
C:\ECHOMAIL\LOCAL      LOCAL      2601/100
C:\ECHOMAIL\HUMOR      HUMOR      2601/100
C:\ECHOMAIL\WINDOWS    WINDOWS    2601/506
```

The first line contains the system name separated from the sysop's name by an exclamation point(!). The next line is usually blank, and the remaining lines specify which echos go to which directory, and where you are being sent/received. In the above file, the LOCAL echo is stored in the C:\ECHOMAIL\LOCAL directory, and is being sent/received from net/node number 2601/100. There is one line like this for every echomail area.

The second file you need to create is called CONFIG.DOG. Here is a sample file:

```
NODE 1:2601/531
MAIL C:\ECHOMAIL
FILES C:\INFILES
```

The first line is your net/node number. The second line is the name of you netmail directory, and the last line is the directory where the new message packets can be found. This file will work fine as-is with the on-going example.

Both of these files should be in your Front Door directory.

Setting up the PowerEcho Programs

PowerEcho comes with two(2) programs and one(1) data file; DELTEAR.EXE, EXEBBS.EXE, and EXEBBS.DAT. Copy EXEBBS.EXE and EXEBBS.DAT into your Front Door directory. Next, load EXEBBS.DAT into an ASCII Text editor. The file should read C:\POWRBBS\USERINFO.BBS. If you haven't made any changes other than the ones stated earlier in this document, this should be correct. If not, then change it to the path/filename listed as *Path/Filename of current callers info* in the PowerBBS config program. It is VERY important that you do not change the names of either of these files. Front Door requires that these files keep their names.

To set up DELTEAR.EXE, simply copy it into the same directory as PCBGate. DelTear deletes the tear line added to each message by PCBGate. When ConfMail process a message, it also adds a tear line. Some systems do not like messages with two(2) tear lines. DelTear fixes this problem. To run DelTear, simply type DELTEAR and then the path to the directory that contains the files that you want to process. To process all of the message in LOCAL forum, you would type DELTEAR C:\ECHOMAIL\LOCAL.

Creating Batch Files

You batch files are very important. They are what tie all of the other programs together. Probably the easiest way to describe how to set up the batch files would be to show a completed series of files. If you have copied the actions in this document, the following batch files should work without modification. All of the lines starting with a semicolon(;) can be deleted, and are for reference only.

Filename : C:\POWRBBS\EVENT.BAT

```
; change to the C drive
C:
; make the Front Door directory the active directory.
cd\fd
; LOOP is a label
:loop
  c:
  cd\fd
; execute Front Door
  FD
;check the errorlevel Front Door exited with
  if errorlevel 255 goto inmail      ; Front Door received mail
  if errorlevel 246 goto board      ; Human caller logged on at 19,200 baud
  if errorlevel 245 goto board      ; 9600 baud
  if errorlevel 244 goto board      ;4800 baud
  if errorlevel 243 goto board      ;2400 baud
  if errorlevel 242 goto board      ;1200 baud
  if errorlevel 241 goto board      ;600 baud
  if errorlevel 240 goto board      ;300 baud
  if errorlevel 230 goto local      ;User defined key in FD to generate an errorlevel
of 230 for LOCAL
  If errorlevel 150 goto daily      ; External event errorlevel for daily maint.
  if errorlevel 10 goto userbrk     ; EXIT the BBS
  if errorlevel 4 goto fatal ; Front Door fatal error
  if errorlevel 3 goto dspace       ; Low disk space
  if errorlevel 1 goto fatal ; Front Door fatal error
  goto Loop                          ; Front Door exited with an unknown errorlevel. start
over
;Front Door creates a batch file called DoBBS.BAT. This will execute that file.
:board
  dobbs
; run daily maint
; process on-line games
:Daily
cd c:\osiris\doors\yt
ytmaint
cd c:\osiris\doors\oo
maintoo
ooiitop
cd c:\osiris\doors\ec
ecmaint
cd c:\osiris\doors\cr
campedit
c:
  powrpack c:\powrbbs\frm\local=100 ;power pack the message
bases(IMPORTANT!)
  powrpack c:\powrbbs\frm\humor total=200
  powrpack c:\powrbbs\frm\win total=300
C:
  cd \gate
  del c:\echomail\local\*.msg ;clear the message directories
  del c:\echomail\local\*.
```

```

del c:\echomail\humor\*.msg
del c:\echomail\humor\*.
del c:\echomail\windows\*.msg
del c:\echomail\windows\*.
; move the new message from the PowerBBS message bases
pcbgate to fido
; Process newly created FIDO messages
DelTear c:\echomail\local
DelTear c:\echomail\humor
DelTear c:\echomail\windows
cd \fd
; Have confMail create the outgoing mail packets
confmail export areas.bbs -a pkzip
goto loop
; used to process incoming mail
:inmail
del c:\echomail\local\*.msg ;clear out the message directories.
del c:\echomail\local\*.
del c:\echomail\humor\*.msg
del c:\echomail\humor\*.
del c:\echomail\windows\*.msg
del c:\echomail\windows\*.
c:
cd \powrbbs
powerpack c:\powrbbs\frm\local=100 ;power pack the message
bases(IMPORTANT!)
powerpack c:\powrbbs\frm\humor total=200
powerpack c:\powrbbs\frm\win total=300
; change back to the Front Door directory and run ConfMail
c:
cd \fd
Confmail Import areas.bbs -k -n -f echotoss.log -m -a arce
Confmail Import areas.bbs -k -n -f echolist.log -m -a pkunzip
; change to the PCBGate dir.
c:
cd \gate
pcbgate topcb ; import the new messages into the PowerBBS message
bases.
c:
cd \powrbbs
powerpack c:\powrbbs\frm\local total=100 ; PowerPack the message
bases(IMPORTANT!)
powerpack c:\powrbbs\frm\humor total=200
powerpack c:\powrbbs\frm\win total=300
; all done! start over and load on Front Door
goto loop
:local
local
:userbrk
rem ---User break
cls
echo User break.
goto done

rem ---Disk space error

```

```
:dspace  
cls  
echo  
goto hang
```

FrontDoor reported insufficient disk space

```
    rem ---Fatal condition
:fatal
  cls
  echo                FATAL error reported by FrontDoor.
  goto hang
:done
  stop
:hang
  Echo ***FATAL ERROR***
:lockit
  goto lockit
```

You will also need to create two(2) more batch files. One is for Local mode and the other is for exiting the BBS. They are only one line each.

Filename : C:\FD\LOCAL.BAT

EXEBBS LOCAL

Filename : C:\FD\STOP.BAT

EXEBBS EXIT

That's it. Those are the only batch file you need.

ALL DONE

That's it for adding echomail capabilities. If you have any questions or comments, I can be reached at the Last Outpost BBS at (412)-662-0769. My FIDONET number is 1:2601/531. Enjoy.

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The Last Outpost BBS
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