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Appearance

Newsbot supports several difference appearances that may be selected for the main window. You may choose which ever one you like best.

Host Name

To communicate with the NNTP server, you need to supply a valid NNTP Host Name. This name is usually provided by your Internet Service Provider (ISP). It usually looks something like:

"news.ispname.com"

If you are unsure of the host name, then you have several options.
1) Contact your ISP and ask them what it is.
2) Look in an existing news program that is running on your system (i.e. Netscape News, Free Agent, etc) and see what it has specified.

Download Path

You must specify a path where downloaded files will be placed. All files that Newsbot downloads will be placed in this directory or a subdirectory of it (depending on what Path Expansion is set to).

Any valid DOS path will do, but you might want to choose a drive that has a lot of free space available.

Path Expansion

By default, all files will be downloaded into the download directory that you have specified. However, this can lead to confusion, since you will not know which files came from which newsgroups. Thus, there are several "path expansion" options that will create a sub-directory tree for the individual groups. The options are:

1) None: All files go into the same subdirectory
2) Group Number: Files are placed in numerical directories, according to their order in your newsgroup list.
3) Expanded Group Name: Each field of the Newsgroup name is made into a subdirectory name. For example, "alt.binaries.pictures.misc" would become "alt\binaries\pictures\misc". This option is useful for Windows-3.1 systems, since subdirectory names may only be a short length.
4) Full Group Name: The entire Newsgroup name is used as one big subdirectory name. This is only available in Windows-95 with long filename support.

Path Expansion Example (alt.binaries.pictures.misc)

Path Exp Setting	Resultant Path
None	c:\download\
Group Number	c:\download\group1\
Exp Group Name	c:\download\alt\binaries\pictures\misc\
Full Group Name	c:\download\alt.binaries.pictures.misc\

For the "group name" options, you may wish to trim repetitive prefixes from the front of the path name. For example, there's no need to include "alt.binaries.pictures" in the beginning of each pathname -- it just leads to wasted space. The *Path Prefix Removal* box is used for this purpose. Any string(s) that you enter in this box will be removed from the front of the newsgroup name before the path is generated.

Miscellaneous Preferences

This area contains a variety of things that don't really fit anywhere else.

Logging:

Logging options control the creation of the newsbot.log file. The log may be useful so that you have more information about the files   that you have downloaded. The log filename is "newsMMDD.log", where MM is   the current month and DD is the current day. For example, the log for   June 6 would be saved in "news0606.log". The log is plain-ascii and may   be viewed with any text editor, or by using the dos "type" command.

- *Log Enabled*: if checked, then a log file will be written. Otherwise, no log will be written.
- *From user name*: records the name of the person who posted the message.
- *Subject*: records the subject line of the message.
- *Comments*: records the first few non-file lines of the message.   Useful if the sender has prefaced the message with some explanation of it's content.
- *Too Small*: Messages that are below the minimum message line limit   (see below).
- *Too Long*: Messages that are above the maximum message line limit (see below).
- *Dupe File*: Files caught by the dupe-file checker.
- *Dupe Subject*: Messages caught by the dupe-subject checker.
- *Mime Headers*: Really just debugging info for me....
- *Delete old Logs*: If checked, then any log files not equal to the current date will be deleted when newsbot is run. This minimizes

Case Conversion:

These options will convert the case of the filename to a uniform format. Due to limitations in the 16-bit application model, filenames will probably be always upper case in the 16-bit executable.

- None: Leave filename case as it appears over the modem.
- Lower: Convert all filenames to lower case.
- Upper: Convert all filenames to upper case.

Disconnect/Reconnect:

The disconnect/reconnect system will automatically disconnect and reconnect the current nntp session in order to abort a   message that is being transmitted. This is used to save time, rather than downloading entire messages which are not stored on disk. If you disable disconnect/reconnect, then Newsbot will receive the entire message, although the message will not be written to disk. You may toggle disconnect/reconnect on or off for several subcases:

- No-Data: Messages with more non-encoded lines than the no-data   threshold set below.
- Dupe-File: Files caught by the dupe-file checker (not relevent to   the dupe-subject checker, as the dupe-subject checker won't download the message in the first place)
- No-Mask: Files which do not match an acceptable file mask.
- Current-Delete: Files which were deleted during transfer by a user request.
- Lockout-File: Files whose names are matched by the lockout filename system.
- Lockout-XRef: Messages where a string in the XRef field matches the lockout-xref system.
- Lockout-Host: Messages where the NNTP-Posting-Host name matches the lockout-host system.

Note: Sometimes the Disconnect/Reconnect options may cause your news   server to record an excessive load. This is because Newsbot will disconnect the connection, but your news server may continue to keep the connection open for a short period of time. Thus, the news server may think that you are using more connections than you really are. This situation is unlikely, but if it does present a problem, then you may wish to disable the disconnect/reconnect options.

Message Line Limits:

Newsbot can limit which messages are downloaded based on the length (number of lines) of the message.

- Minimum Lines: Messages with fewer than the specified number of   lines will not be downloaded. The rationale is that small messages do not contain any useful information (pictures are big!) and some efficiency may be obtained by not downloading them.
- Maximum Lines: Messages with greater than the specified number of lines will not be downloaded. The rationale is that really huge messages are a waste of time. It's usually the case of someone who scanned in a picture at too fine a resolution.
- "No Data" Threshold: This specifies the number of lines that can be in a message when no attached files (eg images) can be found before the message is skipped. For example, if 500 lines are scanned, and   no attached image is present, then the message is probably grunged, a misplaced part of a multipart encode, or some other useless data.

Maximum XRef Limit:

Many people have complained about an excess of off-topic advertisement messages (i.e. SPAM) being present in the newsgroups. This option is designed in an attempt to avoid these advertisements. Typically, advertisers will post their messages to a large number of newsgroups, and thus the XREF list for the article will have many entries. Newsbot can be set to filter messages with too many XREF's out. The default is set at 999 which effectively disables XREF filtering. You can enable XREF filtering by entering a lower number here   (10 is a good place to start).

 Preload XRef hdrs:

By default, the "lockout XRef" and "Maximum XRef   Limit" systems do not filter out an invalid message until the download has begun. This is because the XREF line is not transmitted until the message is sent. However, you can tell Newsbot to download allthe XREF headers ahead of time, before any messages are downloaded. Thus, Newsbot will know the XRef information ahead of time and can avoid the unwanted messages entirely. However, XRef information is somewhat bulky, and does require a fair amount of time to download the headers. Thus, there is a trade-off involved. Feel free to experiment.

Confirm Delete:

By default, when you use the Current:Delete or Previous:Delete functions, there is a confirmation dialog box to make sure you wish to perform the deletion. Unchecking this option will remove the confirmation dialog.

Lockout Lists

The lockout lists are used to lock out messages that contain certain text strings. For example, you may not wish to download messages written by a certain person, or messages whose title contains a certain string. There are several types of lockout listssupported:

- Lockout Poster (i.e. Author): Applies to the "From:" line of the nntp message. Use this if you wish not to receive messages from a specific person.
- Lockout Subject: Applies to the "Subject:" line of the news message. This is useful if there are certain keywords which you want to lockout if they are present in the subject field.
- Lockout FileName: Prevents specific filenames from being downloaded. You can type a specific filename or a wildcard specification to lockout a group of files.
- Lockout Host: Checks the "NNTP-Posting-Host" field of the news message. This is useful to eliminate posts from a specific news server. Many obnoxious posters will alter their email name in the from field, making them impossible to lockout by normal means. However, the news server usually will put it's correct host name in the"NNTP-Posting-Host". Thus, this field may be used to weed out the obnoxious poster. However, be warned that locking out a NNTP-Posting-Host will lockout all users who post from that host!
- Lockout XRef: Checks the "XRef " field of the news message. The XRef field contains a list of other newsgroups that the message is cross-posted in. Sometimes a person will post a message into several groups at once—this is called crossposting. Sometimes an obnoxious poster will cross-post their messages into groups that they don't belong in.

Lockout's are specified by using a lockout text string.

The lockout list dialog supports several command buttons:
Add
Edit
Test
Delete

Note #1: The "NNTP-Posting-Host" and "XRef" lines of a message are not normally displayed by SBNews, so you might be wondering where to get the information to type into those lockout lists. If you notice a particularly annoying message, you can use the Headers button to bring up a header listing for the group, then use the Read button to display the full text of the annoying message. Inside the read screen will be a header listing where you can find NNTP-Posting-Host and XRef fields.

Note #2: Some lockout settings, such as Lockout Poster and Lockout Subject can be determined before the message is downloaded. Thus, Newsbot will bypass the message completely. Others, such as Lockout File, Lockout Host, and Lockout XRef, can not be determined until the message has begun to be received. Thus, Newsbot must start receiving the message and then abort the message while the download is in progress.

Lockout Text Strings

All lockout lists are case insensitive (i.e. capitalization does not matter).   All lockout lists support wildcard characters, * and ?. "*" is interpreted as "any sequence of zero or more characters" and "?" is interpreted as "any single character". Here are a few sample wildcard strings:

- (Lockout-Poster) "joe@fubar.com" would refuse any messages from joe@fubar.com
- (Lockout-Poster) "*@foobar.com" would refuse messages from ANYONE at fubar.com
- (Lockout-Poster) "joe@*" would refuse messages from "joe" no matter where he posts from
- (Lockout-Filename) "*.zip" would refuse any file that had an extention of ZIP
- (Lockout-Filename) "fastcash*.*" would refuse any file which had "fastcash" as the first 8 characters.
- (Lockout-Filename) "index-?.jpg" would refuse any file which had "index-", exactly one more character, and then ".jpg" as an extension.
- (Lockout-Host) "news.somehost.com" would refuse any messages posted on "news.somehost.com"
- (Lockout-XRef) "alt.binaries.pictures.erotica" would refuse any messages that are cross-posted into "alt.binaries.pictures.erotica"

Lockout Test

There is a TEST button on the lockout dialog which will let you enter a string and see if it matches anything. This is useful if your a little confused about the wildcard strings and want to make sure what you entered does actually do what you think it should.

Lockout Delete

Quite simply, this deletes (removes) the currently hilighted lockout from the lockout list.

Add/Edit Lockout

To edit a lockout, you will need to hilight one of the existing lockouts in the lockout list. To add a new lockout, you need only press the add button.

The main item of interest is the listbox entitles *search pattern.* This listbox is where you enter the text that you wish to lockout. For more, information, see <u>lockout text strings</u>.

Scope of Match

A match can be applied either to all of the newsgroups or to just a specific newsgroup. Normally, one would wish to lock an annoying user out of all groups, but there are times when you might wish to lockout an invalid filename or subject from just a single newsgroup where it is off-topic.

Match Position Criteria

This toggle lets you set whether the string must match from the beginning to the end of the text or match at any position inside the text.

- Exact-Match: The search pattern must match all of the text exactly; There can be no leading or trailing characters. For example, "abc" would not match "abcd" or "xabc".
- Match-Any-Position: The search pattern can match any position in the text. There can be leading or trailing characters. For example, "abc" would match "abcd" and "xabc".

Temporary

The temporary checkbox, if checked, will cause the particular lockout not to be saved to disk. This may be useful if you notice some inappropriate posts that you do not wish to receive during the current session, but you don't want to lock them out in case something appropriate may come along in a future session.

Authentication

The authentication options are used for news servers which require a user name and password to access the newsgroups. If your news server does not require a name and password, then you should leave this option alone. Authentication is located under the Configure menu.

Acceptable File Masks

Newsbot allows you to specify which types of files will be downloaded. Specifying "*.*" will enable any file to be downloaded, and this is the default. For example, if you only wanted to receive images, then you may wish to remove *.* and add in *.gif and *.jpg. If you only wanted archives, add in *.zip. etc.

Dupe Checker

Two different types of duplicate checking are supported. They may be used independantly, or you can use both of them at the same time if you wish. By default, the dupe checkers maintain a list of approximately the most recent 2048 messages received.

- Subject Dupe Checker: Remembers duplicates by keeping track of the subject of the message. Normally, the Dupe-Subject checker should be used with the "Consider 'From'" setting checked as enabled. Thus, if the same person posts multiple messages with the same subject, the message will be flagged as a dupe. This is useful for preventing download of crossposted messages (i.e. identical messages posted in multiple groups)
- Filename Dupe Checker: Remembers duplicates by keeping track of the names of the files that were downloaded. This is very effective at weeding out dupes, but has the side effect of sometimes deleting messages that are not really duplicates. For example, there are a lot of files name "1.JPG" out there!

Both of the two above mentioned dupe checkers have some options that control their behavior:

- Reject Duplicates: If checked, then dupe checking will be performed as stated above. If not checked, then no dupe checking will be performed.
- Save dupe list: If checked, then dupe information will be saved from session to session. If not checked, then dupe information will only be kept for the current session.
- Items to Keep: This is the number of items to "remember" for the dupe checker. A bigger number here will remember more messages (or files), but will also require more memory and/or disk space to hold to dupe checker information.
- Consider "From": If enabled, requires the from fields of two messages to be identical for the files to be considered duplicates. A good idea for the dupe subject checker, but probably not advisable for the dupe file checker.
- Consider "Lines": If enabled, requires the number of lines of two messages to be within a 10% tolerance for the messages to be considered duplicates. For multi-part files, only the first message is considered.

Auto-Scanning:

The Dupe File Checker also includes some extra options for "**Auto-Scanning**" your hard drive. This option is used to have SBNews automatically scan file directories at start-up and treat any files in those directories as if they were entries in the duplicate file list.   You can add as many paths as you like to the auto-scan list. Each path will be recursively scanned for files. (i.e. adding the path c:\IMAGES would automatically scan any subdirectories of c:\IMAGES).

The auto-scan feature is useful if you already have a large collection of files on your hard drive. You must enable the dupe file checker (i.e. check "Reject Duplicates") for this function to work.

Check Filename in Subject Field:

This option will cause SBNews to scan for duplicate file entries in the subject header line of the news message.   Since most people who post messages include the filename on the subject line, this can be a useful performance boost.

AutoSave

Automatic save is used to automatically save the current state of Newsbot periodically during operation. This is useful since if Newsbot crashes, Newsbot will be able to start back up at the correct position in the newsgroups and with all of your dupe checking and lockout information enabled. There are two types of autosave:

- AutoSave Pointers: Saves message pointers. These pointers tell newsbot your current position in the newsgroups, i.e. how many messages you have already seen in each groups.
- AutoSave Everything: This saves all state information, including the dupe checkers (assuming the dupe checkers have saving enabled), HTTP grabber, lockout lists, messages pointers, etc.

Auto-Encryption

Auto-Encryption is intended to keep files that you download "private". This is primarily in case you are downloading sensitive information that you don't want unauthorized people to be able to access. If Auto-Encryption is enabled, then files will be encrypted with a key that you specify. Only those persons who have this key will be able to retrieve the information in these files.

Note #1: Be careful when you pick an encryption key. If you forget what you picked, then there is no way to "find out" what it was. Case is important, so make sure you know what parts (if any) are capitolized. Longer encryption keys do offer better protection. However, my algorithm is by no means perfect, and someone with enough time and computing power could undoubtably crack the code.

Note #2: Encrypted files cannot be "read" by another other programs until they are decrpyted in some manner! No other program except Newsbot and it's associated utilities can deal with files encrypted in this manner.

There are two ways to retrieve (or "decrypt") encrypted files:

- With the built-in jpeg viewer. The built in jpeg viewer will automatically detect encrypted files and prompt you for the decryption key if necessary.
- With decrypt.exe. Decrypt.exe (and for that matter, Encrypt.exe) are standalone utilities that you can use to encrypt and/or decrypt a series of files. Once decrypted with decrypt.exe, a file may be read by any other program. To decrypt files, use a command line similar to the following:

  decrypt key filename.ext

  Where "key" is the decrpytion key and "filename.ext" is the filename that you want decrypted. You may use wildcards in the filename and decrypt.exe will decryypt all files matching the specification. Decrypt.exe will not "mess up" unencrypted files, nor will it improperly decrypt a file if an improper key is supplied.

  Decrypt.exe and Encrypt.exe have some additional options. Run the program without any command line parameters to get a list of applicable options.

Files.BBS Generation

FILES.BBS files are used by bulletin board systems to catalog files in download directories. If you're the sysop of a bbs, then you may find the automatic FILES.BBS generation useful. Otherwise, it probably won't be of much interest to you.

Newsbot can create a variety of different FILES.BBS styles; You may select whichever one works best with your bbs. If none of them do, then you can probably find a conversion or import program for your bbs software which will do the trick. The various styles are listed in the listbox. Selecting "none" will disable files.bbs generation.

By default, Newsbot will generate a FILES.BBS file in each directory that files are downloaded into. The FILES.BBS file will be "appended", not "overwritten".   You may specify an alternate filename if you wish. If you include a drive/directory in the filename, then all groups will be listed in one big file.

The "Convert to 8.3" option will put standard DOS 8.3 (filename.ext) filenames in the FILES.BBS rather than the Windows-95 long filenames. For example, "longname.jpg" would be entered as "longna~1.jpg". This may be useful for bbs programs which do not understand long filenames.

Save Preferences

This will save the current preference settings to disk. Preferences are normally saved automatically by newsbot at various times. However, if you want to save them immediately, then you can use this option to do so.

Fonts

You can alter the font settings for several of newsbots dialogs and listboxes. The fonts are a purely cosmetic detail, and you are free to set them pretty much however you like. Experimentation is probably the best way to determine your preference.

Colors

Newsbot allows you to set the color for different items and/or different fields in several key listboxes. The color is a purely cosmetic detail, and you are free to set the colors however you like. Experimentation is probably the best way to determine your preference.

Connect

This command will cause Newsbot to connect to your internet service provider. Newsbot will connect using the nntp host name that you have specified. If you are already connected and push connect, then probably nothing will happen.

Newsbot may be configured to auto-connect when the program is started by including the "-autostart" command line option on the command line. You may also force an auto-connect by setting Newsbot to "load minimized" by using a Windows-95 shortcut or an automated loader like Dunce or System-Agent.

If you have not registered your copy, then the about box and timer will appear regardless of any autostart settings.

Disconnect

This will cause Newsbot to immediately terminate the nntp processing. If a message is currently being downloaded, then it will be halted at the current point. The disconnect button is useful as a way to semi-gracefully shutdown newsbot if you wish to shutdown your computer or run other internet programs.

Newsbot will automatically Disconnect at the end of a session when all groups have been processed.

Add Newsgroup

If you already know the name of the group you wish to add, you can type it's name into the entry box provided. Popular picture-oriented newsgroups usually follow the naming convention "alt.binaries.pictures.x", where x identifies the specific subject of the group.

If you do not know the name of the group, you can use the browse button to search through a list of available groups. To use browse, you must have a newsrc.txt file present.

The file SAMPLE_G.TXT, included in the SBNews archive, contains a listing of popular alt.binaries.pictures newsgroups

An example of a newsgroup name is "alt.binaries.pictures.animals", which contains pictures of animals.

Delete Newsgroup

This command will delete a newsgroup from the lists of newsgroups to download from. You should make sure the hilight bar in the Newsgroup window is positioned on the group you wish to delete. Once deleted, Newsbot will no longer delete messages from that group, and the message pointer information for that group will be discarded.

Enable Newsgroup

This command will toggle the enabled status of the newsgroup that is currently selected in the newsgroup window. If the group is currently enabled, it will be set to disabled. If it is currently disabled, it will be set to enabled.

If a newsgroup is set to disabled, then Newsbot will "skip" it while processing downloads. The enable function is handy to temporarilly bypass a group without deleting it from the list.

Jump-To Newsgroup

The Jump-To command will cause Newsbot to suspend processing of the current newsgroup and jump directly to the group which is hilighted in the newsgroups window. If a message is currently being downloaded, then Newsbot will finish downloading that message before switching groups.

Headers (Manual Header Selection Dialog)

The headers button will bring up a listing of message headers for the group that is currently selected in the newsgroup window. Inside this dialog, you can browse through all of the headers for the group, and selectively accept or reject messages that you want to download.

There are several command buttons for the header selection dialog:

Accept	Accept-Author
Reject	Reject-Author
Find	Find-Next
Read	Lockout
Toggle-Seen	Done

Headers: Accept & Accept-Author

The accept buttons will change an article's status from reject to accept. If the article is already set to accept, then the command will do nothing.

The *Accept* button only acts upon the currently hilighted article(s). The *Accept-Author* button will search the newsgroup for all articles written by the author of the currently hilighted article(s) and act upon all those that match.

For more, information, see <u>accepting & rejecting</u>.

Headers: Reject & Reject-Author

The reject buttons will change an article's status from accept to reject. If the article is already set to reject, then the command will do nothing.

The *Reject* button only acts upon the currently hilighted article(s). The *Reject-Author* button will search the newsgroup for all articles written by the author of the currently hilighted article(s) and act upon all those that match.

For more, information, see accepting & rejecting.

Headers: Accepting and Rejecting - Basics

Each article in the newsgroup has associated with it an accept/reject status. If the staus is set to accept, Newsbot will process that message. If the status is set to reject, then Newsbot will not process the article. The accept/reject status is toggled by using the following buttons:

Accept   Accept-Author

Reject   Reject-Author

Note that if an article has already been *seen* (i.e. the seen flag is lit), then the article has already been processed and will not be processed again by Newsbot regardless of it's accept/reject status.

Headers: Find & Find-Next

The find buttons are used to search the header listing for a pattern. The *Find* button will initiate a new search while the *Find-Next* button will continue an existing search.

Headers: Read

The read button will open up a reader window and display the text of the currently hilighted news article(s). The reader has very basic capabilities and is only intended for minor use. You should probably use a full-featured news reader if you wish more extensive capabilities.

The read button is useful if you notice something of interest while browsing the headers and want more information on it.

Headers: Lockout

The lockout button will display a dialog box asking if you wish to add the author(s) of the currently selected news article(s) to the lockout poster list.

Headers: Seen

The Seen button will toggle the seen status for the currently selected news article(s). The seen status is an indication whether Newsbot has processed the message or not.

Please note, that changing an article from [Seen] to [Unseen] will not necessarily re-download the article. You may need to use a <u>Pointers</u> button on the main window to reset the current message pointer to at or below the article(s) that you have reset.

Headers: Done

This will exit the header window.

Newsgroup Pointers

Each newsgroup has a pointer to the highest-seen article. This pointer is used so that Newsbot knows "where it left off" and can start at the same point next time Newsbot is loaded. Normally, you do not wish to mess with this pointer.

However, there may be times when you wish to manually adjust the pointer, such as if you want to only download the most recent messages in the group. In this case, you may use the pointers button to manually raise or lower the message pointer.

If Newsbot has already begun processing the message in the current session, then the highest and lowest message numbers will be available, otherwise they will be listed as unknown.

If you raise the pointer beyond it's current value and headers are loaded (i.e. Newsbot has already begun processing the group and highest/lowest numbers are present), then Newsbot may still download some messages below the new pointer setting if Newsbot suspects that previous messages may be part of a thread of a new message. So it is possible for newsbot to download some messages below the message pointer. (If that doesn't make much sense, then just ignore what I said… it's not that important)

Viewer Enable/Disable

Newsbot normally includes two thumbnail viewers along the right side (or bottom) of the main window. These thumbnail viewers display images as they are downloaded. There may be times when you wish to disable the viewer; You can use the enable/disable buttons to do so.

Note: The setting of the enable/disable button does not take effect until the next image begins processing. The current image will remain displayed (or hidden) until it has finished downloading.

Connection Status List

This listbox contains various miscellaneous messages about the status of the current connection. Most of this is technical information and is not of interest to the casual user. However, even if you don't know much about the technical aspects of Newsbot, you may find something of interest in here.

Newsgroup List

        This listbox contains a list of the Newsgroups which you have selected to download from. Each entry includes the newsgroup name and an indicator of whether the newsgroup is Enabled or Disabled. There is an array of buttons to the left which act on the newsgroup entries in this list:

        Add Group
        Delete Group
        Enable Group
        Jump To
        Headers
        Pointers

Log List

      The log list contains a summary of the information that is written to the log file. Most notably, this includes [RECEIVED] entries for pictures that have been downloaded. There may also be an occasional error messages as well as other information for messages that have been skipped.

Logging options may be configured from the <u>Miscellaneous Preferences Dialog Box</u>.

Current Image Thumbnail

The current image thumbnail displays the current image that is being downloaded. The viewer may be enabled/disabled by using the <u>Enable/Disable Viewer buttons</u>.

Previous Image Thumbnail

The previous image thumbnail displays the previous image that was downloaded. You may click on this image to bring up a fullscreen display of the image. The viewer may be enabled/disabled by using the Enable/Disable Viewer buttons.

NewsRC.Txt File Overview

The NewsRC.TXT file is a text file consisting of a listing of available newsgroups. This information is downloaded from your news server.

If the "Maintain NewsRC" flag is checked in <u>Configure:Preferences</u> then Newsbot will automatically download and maintain the newsrc.txt file. The very first time you connect (i.e. press the connect button), Newsbot will download the entire file. This may take some time. Subsequent times, Newsbot will query the news server for any new groups without re-downloading the entire list. This will occur much faster.

Once a NewsRC.Txt file is present, you can use the Browse button in the <u>Add Newsgroup</u> dialog to browse through the listing of available groups.

If you do not have a NewsRC.Txt file present and cannot figure out how to download one, here are the specific steps:

1. Make sure the "Maintain NewsRC" flag is checked in the <u>Configure:Preferences</u> pulldown menu.
1. Click on the connect button on Newsbot's main window. Newsbot will connect to your nntp server and should proceed to download the newsrc file.
1. If no NewsRC.Txt file is present, Newsbot will download the entire file (this may take a while). Otherwise, Newsbot will download only the new newsgroups that have been added since the last time.
1. Once the NewsRC.Txt file has been downloaded, Newsbot will continue along with normal business.

About

Displays copyright and version information.

Exit

Exits the program!

View Jpeg

Executing this option will load the Jpeg viewer window. The Jpeg viewer window is independent from the Newsbot main window and you may use it to browse through your file system and view images that you have downloaded by Newsbot (or any program, for that matter).

For more information, see the Jpeg Viewer Contents.

Timeouts

The timeout settings are used to control what Newsbot will do if no input has been received for a significant amount of time. For example, it is possible that your news service or connection could go bad and need to be reactivated.

There are two timeout settings. The first is the Timeout Delay Interval. This is the time interval (in seconds) that if no input is received, newsbot will automatically restart the connection. 300 seconds (i.e. five minutes) is a good default value.

The second is the maximum timeout count. This is the maximum number of timeouts that may occur before newsbot will automatically shut down.

Default Command Line Options

These options control some basic load-up behavior settings of Newsbot. These options may all be entered from the command line as well. For example, executing "newsbot -auto" would cause Newsbot to automatically start. The reason for allowing these options to be set from the command line is so that Newsbot can be setup with different configurations from batch files, windows shortcuts, schedulers, etc.

You can specify the default values for several options.

- -auto: Automatic Start. Checking this option will cause newsbot to automatically initiate a connection and begin downloading immediately upon loadup.

- -autoexit: Automatic Exit. This will cause Newsbot to automatically exit after all groups have been downloaded.

- -autocat: Automatic Catalog Generation. This will generate image catalogs in all download areas after download has been completed (an image catalog is a graphic file containing thumbnails of all the files in a download directory)

- -noabout: No About Dialog. This will disable the about dialog that appears when Newsbot is loaded (registered users only)

- -diag: Diagnostic log enable. The diagnostic log will record all information that is transmitted between you and the news host. It may be helpful to aid me in diagnosing a problem that you might be having. The input is LARGE, so don't send it to me if I don't ask for it!   The data will be stored in the file 'diagnost.log' in your newsbot directory.

Catalog all Groups

Executing this option (located under the file menu) will generate image catalogs for all newsgroups that are in your download list. When browsing downloaded images, you can use the catalog as a means to get an overview off what has been received.

The catalog generation options are taken from those set in the jpeg viewer (using the File:Generate Catalogs option in the Jpeg viewer).

Executing Catalog all Groups simply loops through all your download directories and generating the catalog files in each directory. It's pretty straightforward.

SBJV Jpeg Viewer Help Contents

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New Jpeg Viewer

Creates another Jpeg viewer window. Useful if you'd like to view more than one picture at a time. Both windows are completely independent and may view different directories if desired.

New Index Window

The visual index system is a feature designed to allow you to get a quick overview of the pictures in a particular directory. The visual index window displays a rectangular grid of thumbnail images which are generated automatically on-the-fly. You may scroll this grid up and down to get a view of the entire directory of images.

The visual index window can be opened in two ways: 1) with the New Index Window command on the Jpeg viewer main window's pull-down menu, and 2) with the Index button on the Jpeg viewer main window file/directory pane.

Double clicking on any thumbnail image will cause a full-size Jpeg viewer window to be opened.

Generate Catalogs

What are catalogs?

SBJV includes a catalog image generator. Catalog images are images that contain a collection of thumbnails. They are useful in case you wish to distribute a summary of your collection of images to another user. For example, catalogs are used widely in binary picture newsgroup to give an overview of a selection of pictures before they are uploaded.

How do you generate them?

The option to generate catalogs is located under the File menu in the main window of SBJV. First go into the directory you wish to generate the catalogs from. Then, select "Generate Catalogs" from the file menu. You will be presented with a rather complex dialog box of options. Most of these are already set to the default values and need not be altered. Click on "Ok". Your catalogs will be placed in your SBJV/SBNews directory (unless you have specified otherwise).

What are all those complicated options?

There are several options that control the output of the catalogs. Most are set to defaults and need not be modified. Here is a descriptive listing:

> Background Style
>
> Blend Filename
>
> Thumbnail Image Properties
>
> Output File Path
>
> Output File Name
>
> Cat-Number Padding
>
> Initial Cat-Num
>
> Output Image Size
>
> Number of Columns/Rows

There is also a button called "Annotate" which will let you configure a header (text across the top of a page) and a footer (text across the bottom of a page) to be added to the catalogs. This is a good place to put a title or copyright information.

Background Style

This controls the background appearance of the catalogs (i.e. the area that is not covered by the thumbnails). Several different styles are available depending on your personal preference.

- Raised Groupbox / Sunken Groupbox. These simulate a 3-dimensional box around each image. The background color is automatically chosen to be light gray.
- Flat Gray / Flat Black / Flat White. These are pure colors.
- Tiled "Blend" of image. This takes another image (specified in the <u>blend field</u>) and tiles it for use as the background. The effect is similar to how MS-Windows can tile an image for wallpaper on your desktop.
- Stretched "Blend" of image. This takes another image (specified in the <u>blend field</u>) and stretches it to fill the background. Aspect ratio is not preserved, so some images may not look right in this perspective.

Blend Filename

This is the name of the file that will be blended into a background if you specified Tiled/Stretched blend as the background style above. Any JPG/GIF/BMP file will work.

Thumbnail Image Properties

This is a selection of miscellaneous properties for the thumbnail images.

- Center image in box. This causes each thumbnail image to be centered within it's box rather than aligning it to the upper left corner.
- Fast integer scaling. Causes images to be scaled to a multiple of ½, ¼, or 1/8. The image will probably not fill the whole box in this case. You probably should NOT check this option unless you have a good reason for doing so.

Output File Path

This specifies the path to which output files will be written. It defaults to the directory in which SBJV/SBNews was loaded.

Output File Name

This is the name of each catalog file. Do NOT specify a path or extention for the filename. The extention "jpg" will automatically be added. Catalog numbers will also be added automatically.

Cat-Number padding

This controls how numbers are represented in the filename. This is best shown by example:

- No Padding: example "cat1.jpg", "cat2.jpg", ..., "cat99.jpg"
- Pad 1 digit: example "cat1.jpg", "cat2.jpg", ..., "cat99.jpg"
- Pad 2 digits: example "cat01.jpg", "cat02.jpg", ..., "cat99.jpg"
- Pad 3 digits: example "cat001.jpg", "cat002.jpg", ..., "cat099.jpg"

Initial Cat-Num

This is the starting number for the catalog filenames. You can start it anywhere you'd like, but "1" is usually a good bet.

Output Image Size

This specifies the resolution of the catalog files. You may choose anything you like—larger resolutions offer better quality and/or more images per page, but require a higher resolution display to view them fullsize. 800x600 or 1024x768 is usually a good choice.

Number of Rows/Columns

- Number of Columns. The number images across a page from left to right.
- Number of Rows. The number of images down a page from top to bottom.

Next/Previous Image

There are several ways to navigate through images in the Jpeg viewer:
- Use the *Next Image* or *Previous Image* command on the File pulldown menu.
- Scroll the file listbox and double-click on a filename. (assuming file/directory pane is open)
- Press the << or >> buttons. (assuming file/director pane is open)
- Press *Control-N* for next or *Control-P* for previous

Open File

Executing this command will present you with the Standard Windows File-Open dialog box. This may be useful if you know a specific file that you wish to view and you can find it more quickly this way rather than navigating through the Jpeg viewer's file and directory listboxes.

The Open File dialog is a standard Windows common dialog box and should function similarly to the Open File dialogs in other Windows programs that you are used to.

SBJV/Jview supports several different file <u>formats</u>.

Delete File

This command will delete the current image that you are viewing. The file will be deleted from your hard drive and will not be retrievable in the future.

By default, a confirmation dialog will be presented to make sure that you wish to delete the file. You may disable this confirmation dialog by using the "Confirm Delete" preference on the options menu.

Save as BMP

This will save the current file that you are viewing as a <u>Windows Bitmap (BMP)</u> file. A dialog box will prompt you for the filename you wish to save it as. The BMP format is a useful format to use when communicating with other Windows programs.

File Types

SBJV/Jview supports the following file types:

- Jpeg (JPG): Jpeg is a lossy compression format. It uses a complex mathematical procedure to remove certain less-important information from the image. Thus, if an image that was originally not in the Jpeg format is converted to Jpeg, some loss of data will occur. However, this loss is calculated to be imperceptible to the human eye. Since Jpeg is a lossy compression algorithm, it is able to achieve high compression ratios (i.e. small files) and is an excellent format for transmission to and from the internet.
- Windows Bitmap (BMP): The Windows Bitmap format typically does not employ any compression and hence may have a very large file size. The simplicity of the format makes it very easy for programs to use and it is widely supported by Windows programs.
- Graphics Interchange Format (GIF): The GIF format employs a lossless compression method, so no data is lost in the compression process. It is historically a very popular format, but recently has been losing much of it's popularity to Jpeg. GIF is a good format to choose if you want your data compressed, but cannot afford to lose any data.

Set as Wallpaper

Executing this command will instruct Windows to set the current image as wallpaper. Wallpaper is the background of your desktop. SBJV/Jview will first convert the current image to a BMP, then save it in your SBJV/Jview directory as PAPER.BMP, and finally instruct Windows to use PAPER.BMP as wallpaper.

Thus, the file is actually copied and you may delete the original if desired.

Print

This will print the current image on your printer. There are two types of printing that can be performed:
1. *Print at actual size*: This will print the image to the printer at screen resolution. The image may be smaller (or larger!) than the paper and thus it might not fill the paper optimally.
2. *Print   scaled to paper*: This will scale the image so that one axis of the image will will the entire page. This will use an optimal area of the paper, but it does have the effect of *magnifying* very small images and they may appear pixelated.

Global Mark Commands: Mark All, Mark None, and Invert Marks

These three commands (Mark All, Mark None, and Invert Marks) all operate on the entire list of files. They do not depend on the current file that is hilighted in the listbox.

- Mark All: Sets every entry to marked status
- Mark None: Sets every entry to unmarked status
- Mark Invert: Anything that is marked will become unmarked, and everything that is unmarked will become marked.

Hint: You can use the Mark All command and the Delete command to delete an entire file directory with just a few keystrokes.

File Mark Commands: Mark Current File and Unmark Current File

These commands act on the file that is currently hilighted in the file listbox. They affect the marked status of that file only.

Wildcard Mark Commands: Mark Wildcard and Unmark Wildcard

These commands use a wildcard specification. A wildcard is a text string with the special characters * and ?. The * character will match any string of characters, and the ? character will match any single character.

The Wildcard Mark commands will apply the wildcard string you enter to each filename in the filename list and mark each filename appropriately.

For example, if you used "a*.jpg" as your wildcard string, all Jpeg files beginning with the letter "a" would be marked.

Slideshow General Information

The slideshow mode will display the pictures in a directory automatically, with each new picture being displayed at a fixed time interval. There are two ways to initiate a slideshow:

1. Use the Start/Stop menu item on the Slideshow pulldown menu.
2. Press the play ">" button on the file/directory pane.

Once a slideshow has been activated, there are two ways to stop it and return to normal mode:

1. Use the Start/Stop menu item on the Slideshow pulldown menu.
2. Press the stop "o" button on the file/directory pane. (The play button automatically changes to the stop button when the slideshow was started)

There are several different options that may be selected for the slideshow:

- Interval
- Normal/Wallpaper
- Forward/Reverse/Random
- Only include marked items

Hint: While the slideshow is playing, you may wish to hide the file/directory pane and/or the categorization pane to get a larger viewing field for the pictures. The panes may be hidden by using the Options pulldown menu.

Slideshow Interval

The interval is the amount of time that will elapse before the picture is changed to the new one. Setting a small interval will cause a fast slideshow and setting a large interval will cause a slow slideshow. The interval may be changed before or during the slideshow presentation.

Slideshow: Normal vs Wallpaper Mode

The *Normal* mode will cause the slideshow pictures to be displayed in the Jpeg Viewer window. This is the default behaviour and should be suitable for most modes.

Wallpaper mode will cause your Windows wallpaper to be updated by the slideshow.

Hint: You could use Wallpaper mode, set a large <u>interval</u>, minimize the Jpeg viewer, and then your Windows wallpaper would change automatically while you were working in other applications (kind of a slideshow in the background).

Slideshow: Forward, Reverse, or Random

This sets the order that the pictures will be displayed. Forward will display each picture successively moving down the directory. Reverse will display each picture moving up the directory. Random will choose each image at random (i.e. without any order whatsoever).

Slideshow: Only display marked items

This will limit the slideshow to items that you have marked with the mark commands (located under the edit menu). This may be useful if you would only like to include a subset of the files in the current directory in the slideshow.

Note that if no items are marked, this option will be ignored and all items will be displayed.

Automatic Color / Grayscale

These two options control whether images are displayed in color or grayscale (black and white). If *Automatic Color* is checked, then images will be displayed in color or grayscale depending on the type of the image. If *Grayscale* is checked, then the image will always be displayed in grayscale, regardless of the image's color content.

Jpeg images can be decoded quicker in grayscale mode, since the color component need not be decompressed. Thus, if you wish to quickly scan a series of images, you may wish to select grayscale decoding.

Automatic Color Depth / Forced 8-bit

Color depth is the amount of color information that is stored for each pixel. There are several different color depths available under the Windows operating system:
- 2-bit (monchrome): Only two colors, black and white.
- 4-bit: Sixteen colors, from an indexed palette
- 8-bit: 256 colors, from an indexed palette
- 16-bit: 65536 (or 32768 in some settings) colors.   True Color.
- 24-bit: 16 million colors. True Color.

Each successive color depth setting requires more memory (for uncompressed data). For example, a 24-bit image requires three times the storage space of an 8-bit image.

Most people run their system in either 8-bit (256-color) or one of the True Color (16-bit, 24-bit) modes. The Jpeg viewer will normally automatically determine what mode you're running in and adjust it's output accordingly. This is the *Automatic Color Depth* setting.

If you are running in one of the True Color modes and you'd like the images to be processed in 8-bit mode, you can check the *forced 8-bit* option.

Shrink / Fullsize / Stretch

The Jpeg viewer supports several different methods of displaying the image on-screen:

- *Shrink by Integer Scaling*: This is the fastest method. The Jpeg decompression routines can automatically shrink an image to ½, ¼, or 1/8 scale. Shrunk images can be decompressed faster, so there is a noticeable speed gain. However, since the image is a fixed scale, it will probably not fill up the window, and will probably be smaller than you would like.
- *Display full size*: This will display the image at it's full size resolution. The image may be larger than the available window space, and scrollbars will be enabled to let you pan or scroll the image around in the window.
- *Stretch to Window*: The image will be stretched so that it fills the largest possible area of the window while still preserving aspect ratio. If you have a very small image, then it may be stretched significantly beyond it's true size. This method is comparably slower than the others.
- *Stretch to min(Window,Fullsize)*: Similar to the previous option, but it will not stretch an image beyond it's real size. Thus, a very small image will remain very small. This may also be slow.\

Center in Window

If checked, then the image will be centered in the window. If you don't check it, then the image will be aligned relative to the upper left corner.

Set Decryption Key

The Jpeg viewer may be configured to automatically decrypt files that have been encrypted with the Encrypt.Exe program or directly by SBNews/Newsbot. If an encrypted file is detected, then you will usually be prompted for the key, but you may also enter the key manually by selecting this option.

Display File/Directory Pane

If checked, then the file/directory pane will be displayed along the left side of the window. If unchecked, then it will not.

The file/directory pane contains a series of buttons and listboxes designed to allow you to easily navigate through a directory of images. Normally, you probably want to leave it enabled. However, if you want to maximize window room for the image (such as when running a slideshow), you may wish to disable it.

Display Categorization Pane

The categorization pane allows you to easily move files to other directories. It is displayed on the right side of the main window.

Confirm Delete

If checked, then a confirmation dialog will appear whenever you delete a file. This is helpful to keep you from accidentally deleting something you do not want to. However, if you're an expert user then you may wish to disable the confirmations.

Confirm Move

If checked, then a confirmation dialog will appear whenever you move a file using the categorization options. This is helpful to keep you from accidentally moving a file to the wrong directory. However, if you're an expert user then you may wish to disable the confirmations.

Next Picture Lookahead

The next picture lookahead will automatically begin preloading the next image when you start veiwing an image. Thus, if you are viewing images sequentially down a directory, this will speed things up. However, if you are not viewing images in a sequential manner (i.e. you're jumping all over the place for some reason), then this may slow things down.

Save Defaults

This will save the options that you have currently selected as defaults which will be used next time you load the program.

Join Directories

This command is best illustrated by example...

> I routinely back up my image file collection to CD-R (writable CD-ROM drive) media to save my more precious hard drive space. Thus, the bulk of the files are located on a CD-ROM disc. Now, as I download new images, I categorize them into a directory on my hard drive (after all, I wouldn't want to burn a new CD every time I downloaded a new file). Thus, I have two separate directory structures, one on CD and one on my hard drive. To browse pictures, I would normally have to switch between these two directories.

The *join directories* command was designed to deal with situations like this. It will allow you to join (or "merge") one physical directory into another, so you can see the files in more than one directory at a time.

Following my example above,

> I place files on my hard drive in a directory called D:\IMAGES. This directory has several subdirectories, such as D:\IMAGES\CARS, D:\IMAGES\PLANETS, etc. The CDR backup has an identical directory structure, on drive H:, H:\IMAGES\CARS, H:\IMAGES\PLANETS, etc. What I would like to be able to do is to merge these directories.

> I set up a join mapping in SBJV by setting *source directory* to D:\IMAGES\ and *join directory* to H:\IMAGES\. Now, any time I look at any picture in the D:\IMAGES\CARS\, the files in H:\IMAGES\CARS\ will automatically be added to that directory.

Specifically, this is what the join directories command does: Any time SBJV searches a directory for filenames, it will check to see if that directory matches any join *source directories*. If a source directory was matched, then the SBJV will also search the directory specified by the *join directory*.

For example, assume you set the following:
> Source Directory = C:\PICTURES\DOGS
> Join Directory = C:\PICTURES\COWS

Then, if you loaded up C:\PICTURES\DOGS, you would also see all of the pictures located in C:\PICTURES\COWS. Furthermore, if you loaded up C:\PICTURES\DOGS\POODLES, then you would also get any pictures in C:\PICTURES\COWS\POODLES (unlikely, but possible).

There are several uses for the join directories command:
- Merging the contents of directory structures located on different hard drives.
- Join the contents of several small directories into one large one. Good to display a slideshow of ALL the pictures on your hard drive.

Temporary Registration Code Expired

Your temporary registration code expired. My official policy (for Online Credit Card Registrations) is as follows:

1) You log on to my web site at http://smbaker.simplenet.com/sbnews/sbnews.html and press the <Register> button.

2) You are then guided through an online credit-card registration process.

3) When the process is completed, you are immediately issued a **TEMPORARY** registration code. This code is only good for a maximum of **7 days**.

4) Usually within 72 hours of registering, you will receive via email a **PERMANENT** registration code keyed to the email name you supplied. You may then enter this code into SBNews and it will be good forever. You may discard the TEMPORARY code at this point.

If you have not received your **PERMANENT** registration code within the time period that the TEMPORARY code has expired, then something has gone wrong. The email message may have been lost, or I may have somehow missed processing it. Please send an email immediately to **smbaker@primenet.com** and I will look into the situation and get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support.