

Outpost

TNC Message Manager

Version 1.1

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Agenda

Outpost TNC Message Manager

- **Introduction**
- **Features**
- **Setups**
- **Controls and settings**
- **Creating messages**
- **A typical session**
- **Limitations and Constraints**
- **Futures**
- **Questions**



Introduction

Outpost TNC Message Manager

What is Outpost?

- Windows-based packet message client
- Compatible with many existing BBSs and TNC PBBSs
- Aimed at ARES, RACES, and other amateur radio emergency response teams
- Allows users to focus on the message, not the medium

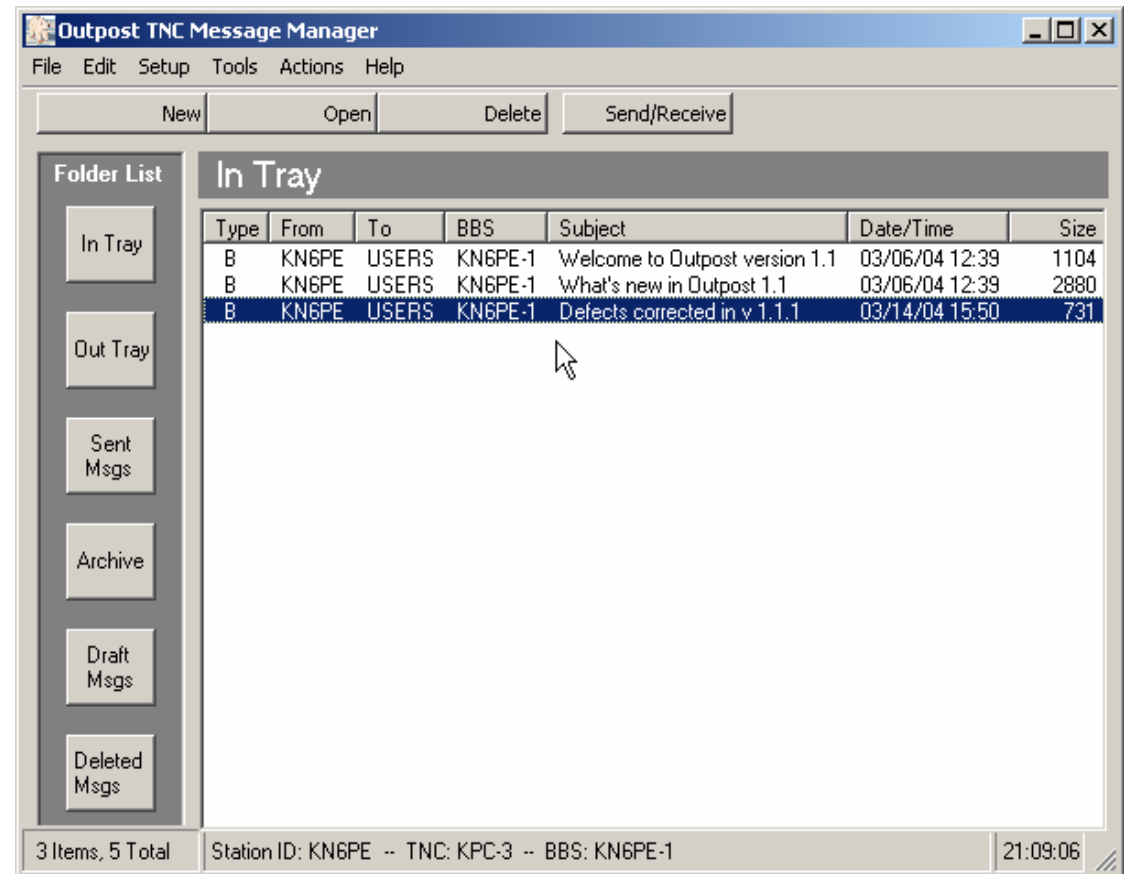


Features

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Message management

- Familiar email-like look and feel
- Separate folders for storage
- Follows a formal message workflow
- Manage BBS and TNC setups
- Additional settings to control how Outpost behaves

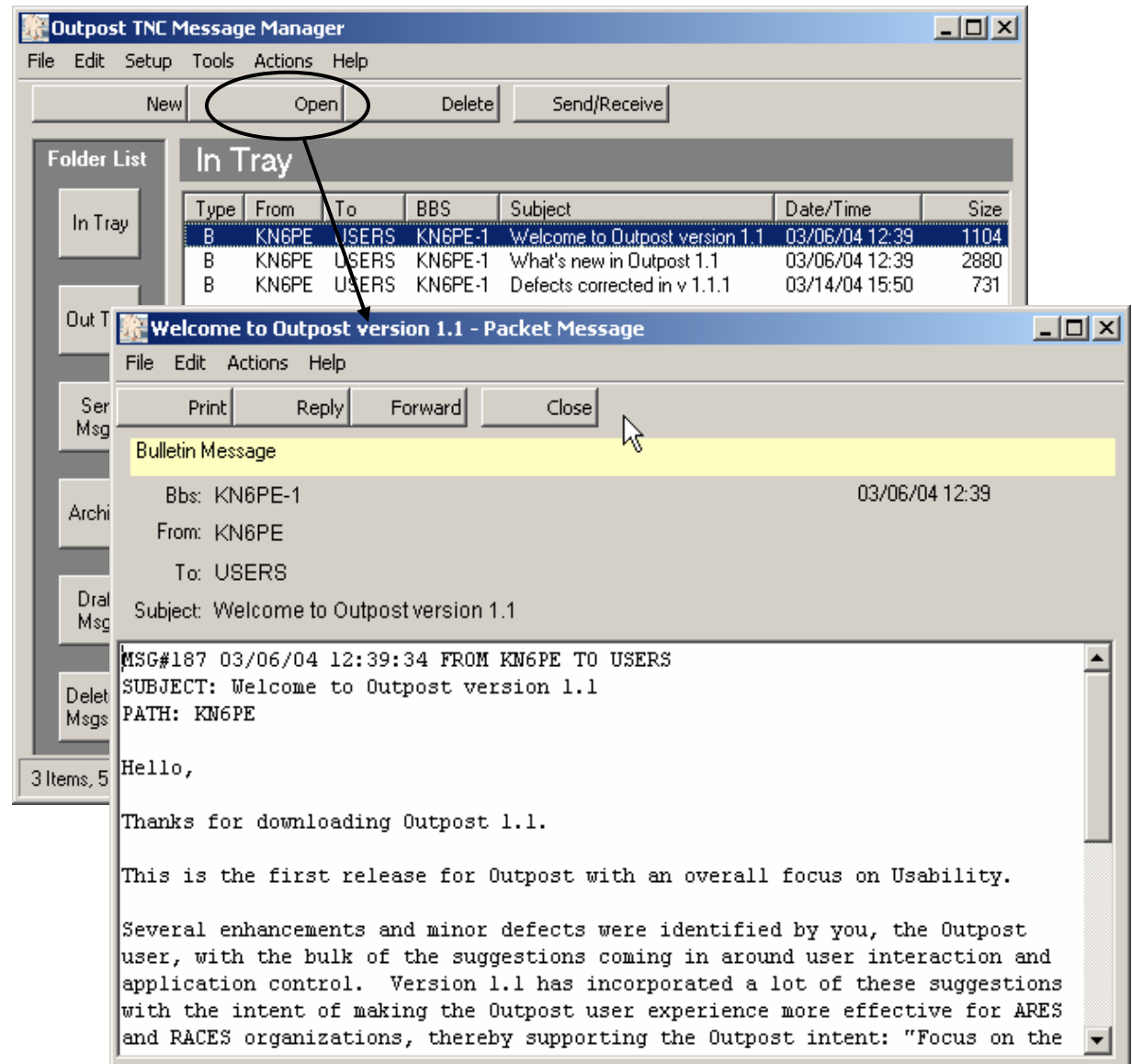


Features

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Message viewing

- Supports viewing, printing, or saving a message to a local file
- Reply and Forward message formatting

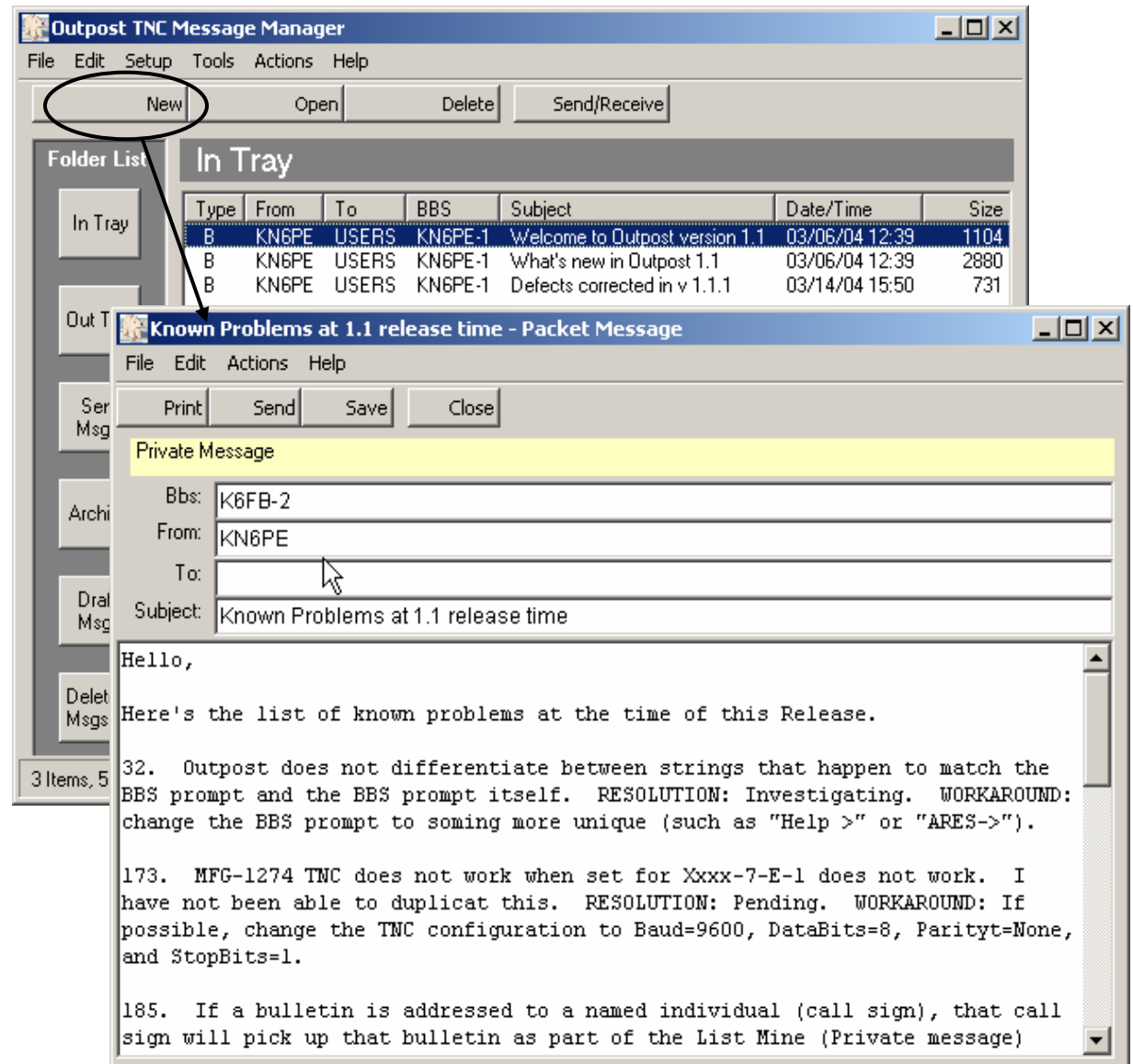


Features

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Message creation

- Supports Private, Bulletin, and NTS message types
- Message formatting before sending
- Different ways for originating messages
- NTS Message Maker

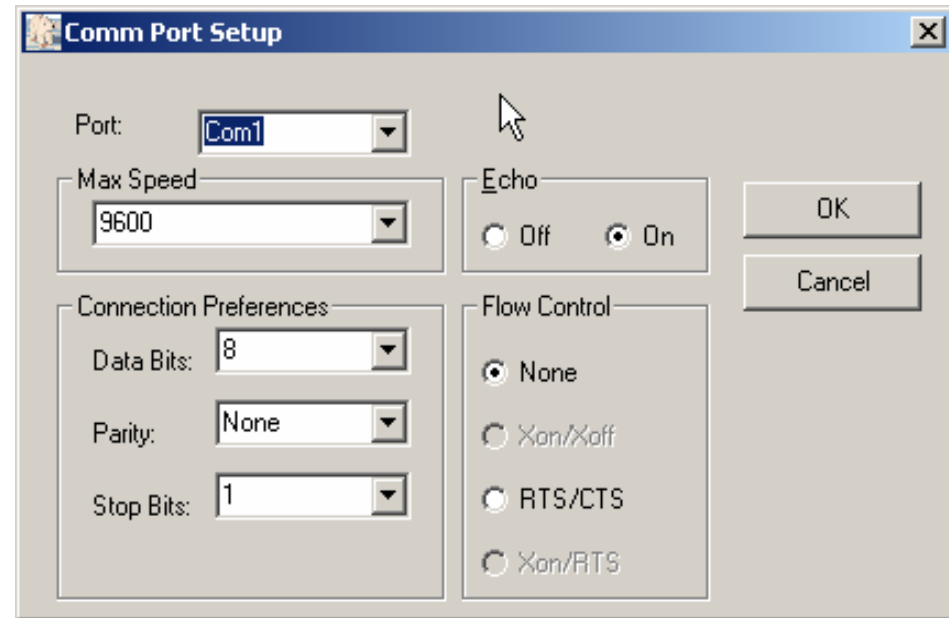


Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

- Comm ports
- TNCs
- BBSs
- Station ID (call signs)
- Tactical Calls (if required)



Support for...

- Hardware Flow Control
- USB-to-Serial port adapters



Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

- Comm ports
- TNCs
- BBSs
- Station ID (call signs)
- Tactical Calls (if required)

Considerations...

- Defaults are the most common TNC commands

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Select a TNC". It contains several sections for configuring a TNC:

- TNC Name:** A dropdown menu showing "KPC-3".
- Name:** A text field containing "KPC-3".
- Prompts:**
 - Command:** A text field containing "cmd".
 - Timeout:** A text field containing "*** retry count exceeded".
 - Disconnected:** A text field containing "*** DISCONNECTED".
- Commands:**
 - Mycall:** A text field containing "my".
 - Connect:** A text field containing "connect".
 - Retry:** A text field containing "retry".
 - Reset:** A text field containing "reset".
 - DateTime:** A text field containing "daytime".

A note on the right side of the dialog reads: "NOTE: Do not change the settings in these fields if your TNC is TAPR-compatible." On the far right, there are buttons for "New", "Update", "Delete", "OK", "Cancel", and "Comm Port".



Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

- Comm ports
- TNCs
- BBSs
- Station ID (call signs)
- Tactical Calls (if required)

Select a BBS

BBS Name: KN6PE-1

Name
Connect Name: KN6PE-1 VIA (opt):

Prompts
Command: Help > Tactical Call required
Tactical Call:

Commands

Send Private: SP
Send Bulletin: SB
Send NTS: ST
List Mine: LM
List Bulletin: LB
List NTS: LT
Read Message: R
Delete Message: K
Bye / Log off: B

Message List Layout
This version of Outpost only supports message list header formats arranged in the following order:
1. Msg No
2. Status
3. Size
4. To
5. From
6. Date
7. Subject

New
Update
Delete
OK
Cancel

Considerations...

- Defaults are the most common BBS commands
- Need to be careful with BBS prompt uniqueness



Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

- Comm ports
- TNCs
- BBSs
- Station ID (call signs)
- Tactical Calls (if required)

The screenshot shows the 'Select a BBS' dialog box with the following fields and options:

- BBS Name:** WBXSC-1 (dropdown menu)
- Name:** K6FB-2 (dropdown menu)
- Connect Name:** WBXSC-1 (dropdown menu)
- Prompts:** Command: Help> (text box), Tactical Call required:
- Tactical Call:** Please enter your tactical ca (text box)
- Commands:** Send Private: SP, Send Bulletin: SB, Send NTS: ST, List Mine: LM, List Bulletin: LB, List NTS: LT, Read Message: R, Delete Message: K, Bye / Log off: B
- Message List Layout:** This version of Outpost only supports message list header formats arranged in the following order:
 1. Msg No
 2. Status
 3. Size
 4. To
 5. From
 6. Date
 7. Subject

Buttons on the right: New, Update, Delete, OK, Cancel.

Considerations...

- Support for Secondary Tactical Call Logon prompt

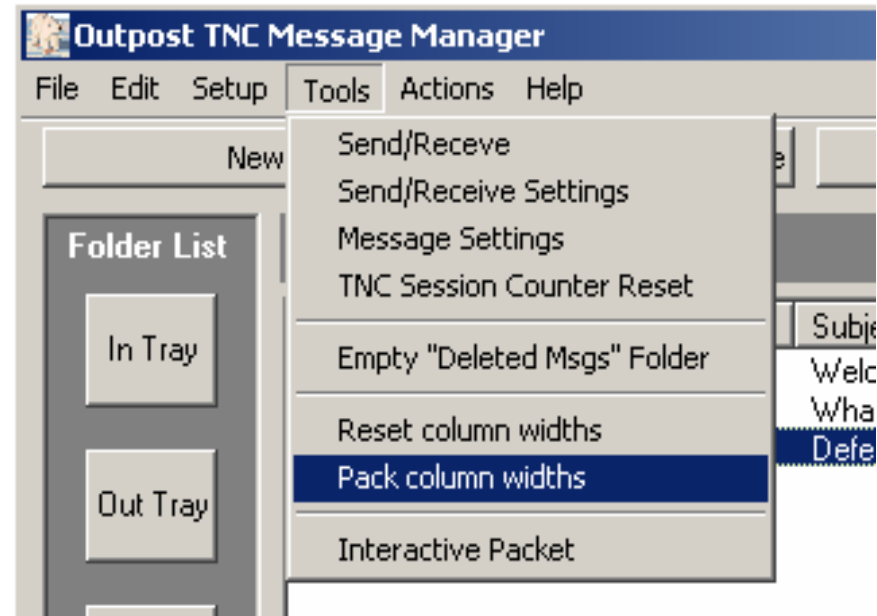


Controls and Settings

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Display controls

- Resets column widths to original setting
 - Packs column widths for optimal viewing
 - Manual control to resize or hide any column
-

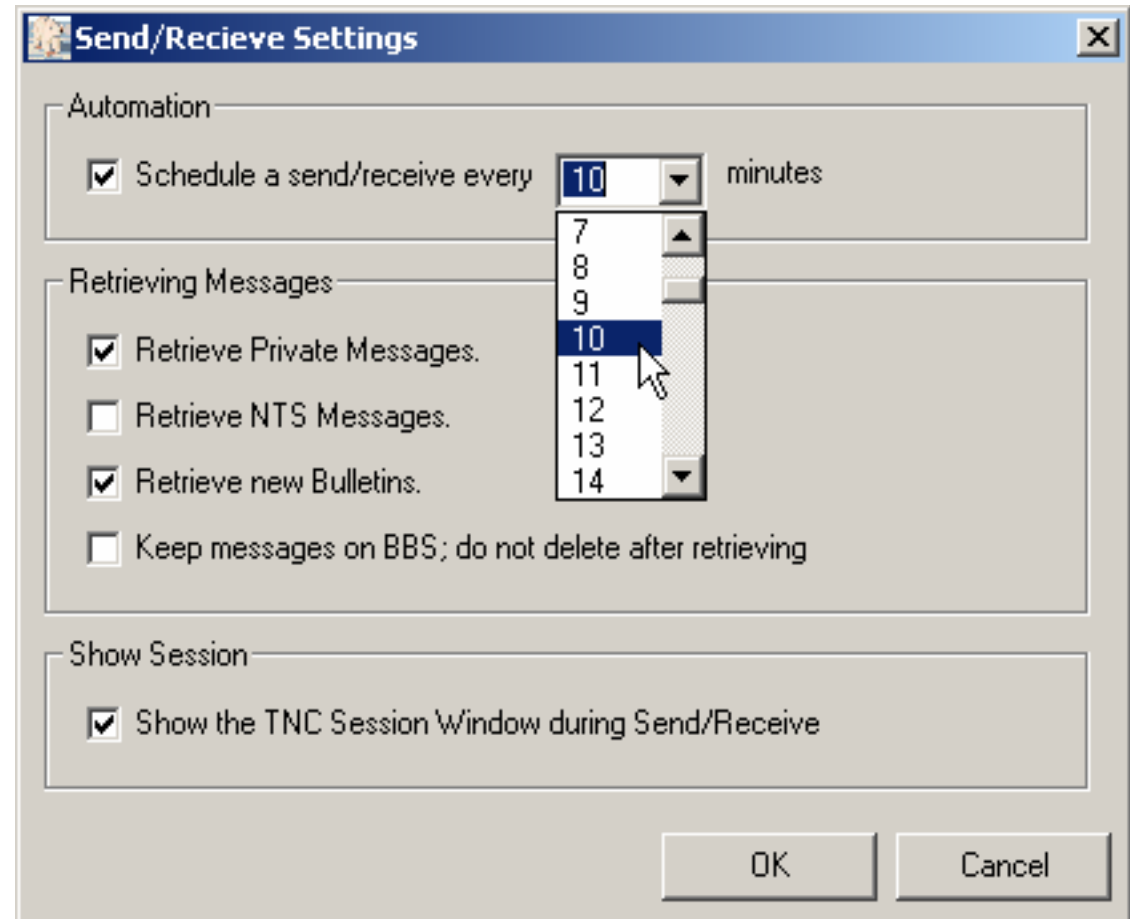


Controls and Settings

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Send/Receive settings

- Automatically initiate message send and retrieve sessions
 - Selective retrieval for Private, NTS, and Bulletins
 - Force messages to be left on the BBS after retrieving them
-

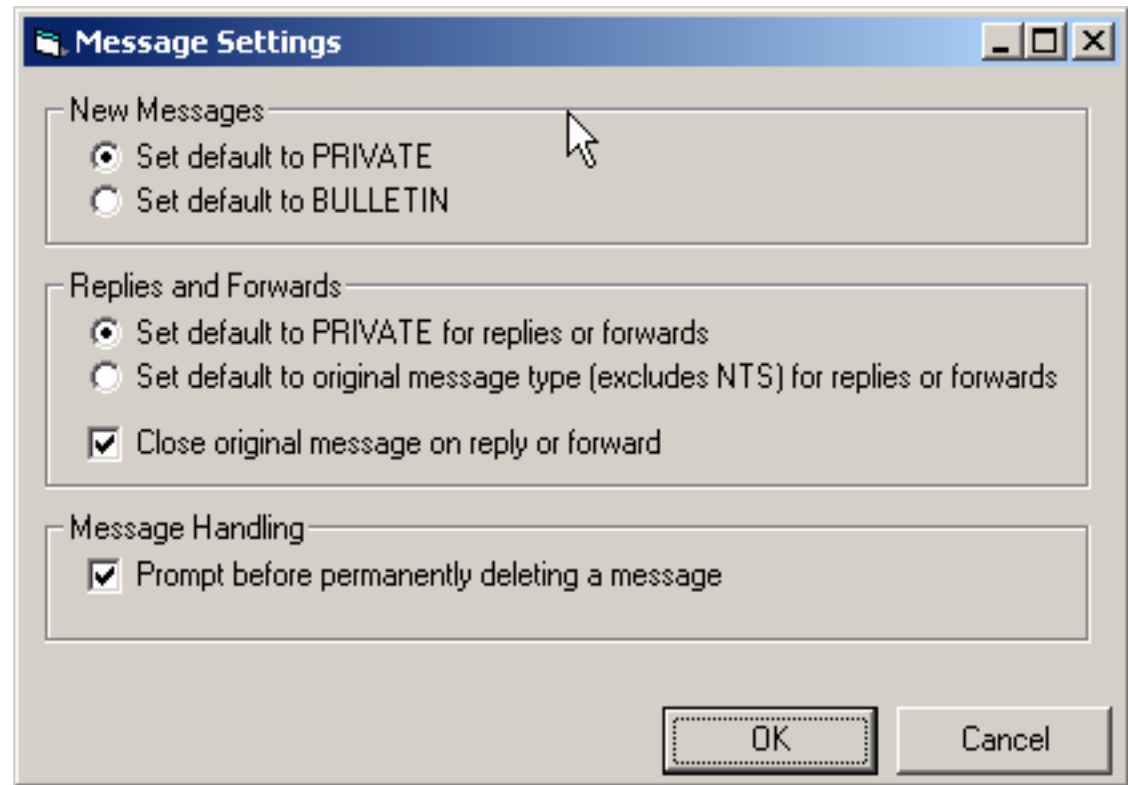


Controls and Settings

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Message settings

- Define message type for new messages
 - Define message type for replied-to or forwarded messages
 - Message form control and prompts
-



Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Direct entry

- Allows cursor placement within the text field
- Supports TAB characters thereby reducing character count
- Allows text files to be directly imported into the message form

New Packet Message

File Edit Actions Help

Print Send Save Close

Private Message

Bbs: W6XSC-1

From: CUPEOC

To: XSCEOC

Subject: Status of the EOC

The following operating positions are staffed at the EOC.

Director Emergency Services	Dave Knapp	777-1234
Planning/Intel Section	Bob Knight	777-2345
Logistics Section	Ken Smith	777-3456
Operations Section	Bill Wright	777-4567
Finance Section	Trudy Collins	777-5678

All phone numbers are 408 area code.

Jim O KN6PE



Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

NTS Message Maker

- Step 1: Forms-based with field validity checking

NTS Message Maker

File Edit

Check Save Clear Msg Close

Preamble

Msg No: 101

Precedence: R

Handling Instr: HX

Station of Origin: KN6PE

ARL Message

Check:

Place of Origin: CUPERTINO

Time of Origin:

Date of Origin: FEB 22

Destination Address

Name: Dave Larson

Call Sign:

Address: 5304 East Ranch Road

City: SACRAMENTO

State: CA Zip: 95825

Phone No: 915 555 1212

Message

Cannot attend the meeting next week. All airports are closed. Please advise the Repeater Committee that the project is almost done.

Signature

Jim KN6PE

Ready for NTS message entry



Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

NTS Message Maker

- Step 1: Forms-based with field validity checking
- Step 2: Press Check; reformats the message per the agreed NTS Packet message standard

NTS Message Maker

File Edit

Check Save Clear Msg Close

Preamble

Msg No: 101

Precedence: R

Handling Instr: HX

Station of Origin: KN6PE

ARL Message

Check: 24

Place of Origin: CUPERTINO

Time of Origin:

Date of Origin: FEB 22

Destination Address

Name: Dave Larson

Call Sign:

Address: 5304 East Ranch Road

City: SACRAMENTO

State: CA Zip: 95825

Phone No: 915 555 1212

Message

Cannot attend the meeting next week X All airports are closed X Please advise the Repeater Committee that the project is almost done X

Signature

Jim KN6PE

Message looks good!



Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

NTS Message Maker

- Step 1: Forms-based with field validity checking
- Step 2: Press Check; reformats the message per the agreed NTS Packet message standard
- Step 3: Saves the message to a message window; message type is NTS. Press Send when ready.

New Packet Message

File Edit Actions Help

Print Send Save Close

NTS Message

Bbs: KN6PE-1

From: KN6PE

To: 95825@NTSCA

Subject: QTC 1 R SACRAMENTO CA (915-555)

Nr 101 R KN6PE 24 CUPERTINO FEB 22
BT
Dave Larson
5304 East Ranch Road
SACRAMENTO, CA 95825
(915)555-1212
BT
Cannot attend the meeting next
week X All airports are
closed X Please advise the
Repeater Committee that the project
is almost done X
BT
Jim KN6PE



Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Cut-and-Paste from other apps

- From Excel, highlight the fields to be copied, then paste into an Outpost message.
- At the receiving station, highlight and copy the message, then paste into Excel.
- Preserves the Tabs so the message can be pasted back into another spreadsheet.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled 'Shelter Requirements.xls'. The spreadsheet has columns for Item Number, Description, On Hand Units, Qty needed, Req Date, and Req Time. The data is as follows:

Item Num	Description	On Hand	Units	Qty needed	Req Date	Req Time
1	cots	30	ea	25	18-Mar	18:00
2	blankets	45	ea	15	18-Mar	18:00
3	water, 12 oz bottles	200	bottles	100	19-Mar	12:00
4	First Aid kits	3	kits	12	ASAP	
5	Toilet paper	50	rolls	250	19-Mar	12:00

Overlaid on the spreadsheet is a 'New Packet Message' dialog box. The dialog box has a menu bar (File, Edit, Actions, Help) and buttons for Print, Send, Save, and Close. The 'Print' button is highlighted. Below the buttons, there is a 'Print Message' section with a checkbox and the text 'Print this message to the default printer'. The 'Bbs:' field is set to 'W6XSC-1', 'From:' is 'CUPEOC', 'To:' is 'XSCEOC', and 'Subject:' is 'Shelter Material Requirements'. The main text area of the dialog box contains the following text:

Please send the following material to our shelter.

Item Number	Description	On Hand	Units	Qty needed	Req Date	Req Time
1	cots	30	ea	25	18-Mar	18:00
2	blankets	45	ea	15	18-Mar	18:00
3	water, 12 oz bottles	200	bottles	100	19-Mar	12:00
4	First Aid kits	3	kits	12	ASAP	
5	Toilet paper	50	rolls	250	19-Mar	12:00
6	tooth brushes	10	ea	50	ASAP	
7	tooth paste	5	ea	55	ASAP	
8	note pads	0	ea	25	19-Mar	18:00
9	pecils	0	ea	25	19-Mar	18:00
10	MRE	10		300	18-Mar	18:00



A Typical Session

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Outpost TNC Message Manager

File Edit Setup Tools Actions Help

New Open Delete **Send/Receive**

Folder List

- In Tray
- Out Tray
- Sent Msgs
- Archive
- Draft Msgs
- Deleted Msgs

In Tray

Type	From	To	BBS	Subject	Date/Time	Size
B	KN6PE	USERS	KN6PE-1	Welcome to Outpost version 1.1	03/06/04 12:39	1104
B	KN6PE	USERS	KN6PE-1	What's new in Outpost 1.1	03/06/04 12:39	2980
B	KN6PE	USERS	KN6PE-1	Defects corrected in v1.1.1	03/14/04 15:50	731

3 Items, 5 Total Station ID: KN6PE -- TNC: KPC3

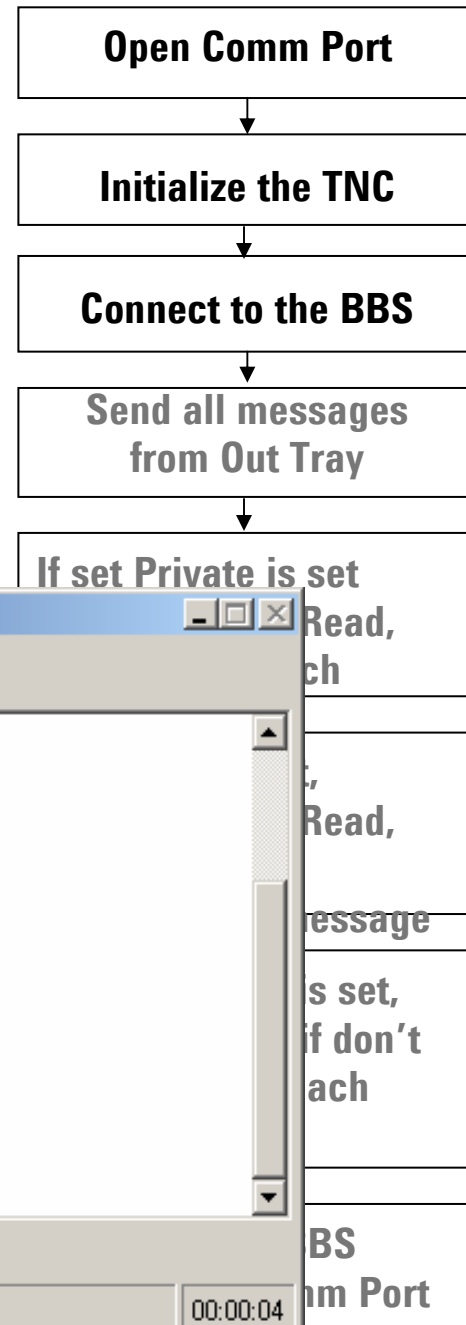
TNC Session Manager

Abort Session

```
ECHO was ON
cmd:my KN6PE
cmd:Mon off
MONITOR was OFF
cmd:daytime 040220105032
cmd:connect K6FB-2
cmd:*** CONNECTED to K6FB-2
[KPC3-5.1-HM&]
91200 BYTES AVAILABLE
THERE ARE 13 MESSAGES NUMBERED 24-675
Welcome to the LCARC packet mailbox.
ENTER COMMAND: B,J,K,L,R,S, or Help >
LM
```

Always show this window during a Send/Receive session

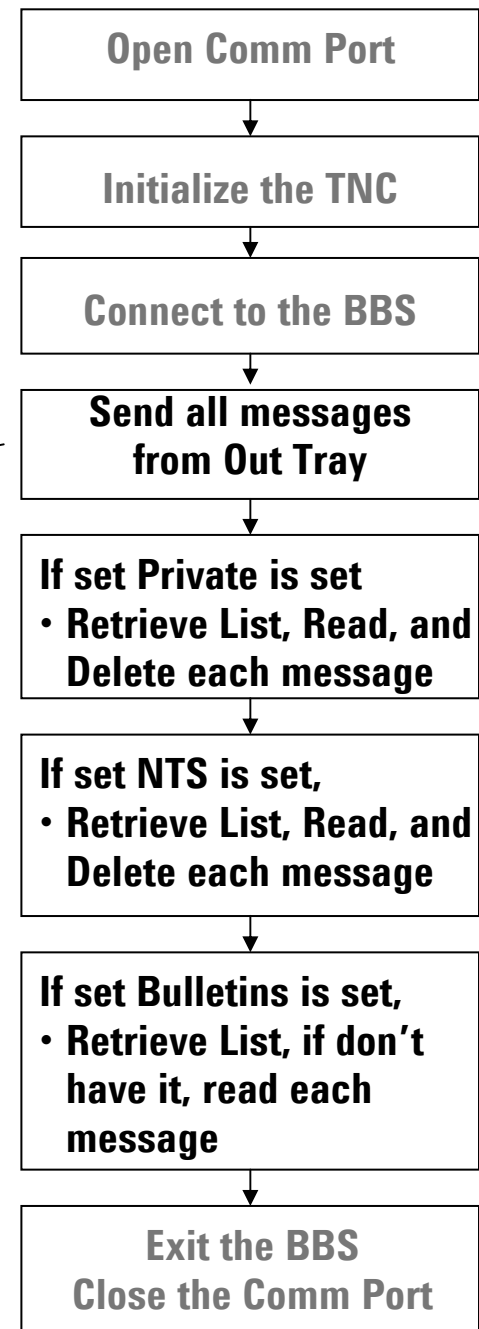
Retrieving Message List... 00:00:04



A Typical Session

Outpost TNC Message Manager

- **Influenced by...**
 - Send/Receive Settings
- **Send Messages**
 - Only sent from the Out Tray
 - Messages must have been "Sent" not "Saved"
 - Moved to Sent Folder when sent
- **Retrieve Messages**
 - Depends on the Retrieve settings; if none are selected, none are retrieved
 - Depends on the "Keep on BBS" setting
 - Bulletins are never deleted
 - Stored in the In Tray



Considerations, Limitations and Constraints

Outpost TNC Message Manager

What Outpost does not do

- No support for FBB bulletin board SW protocol
- No direct internet access
- No support for common mail protocols (POP3, SMTP, etc.)

Things to avoid

- Sending bulletins to a named person (instead of a group Identifier such as ALLEOC, etc.) will cause repeated retrievals
- Embedding the BBS prompt in a message (uniqueness of the prompt) will cause unintended results



Futures

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Planned Enhancements

- Report builder v1.2
- Message Acknowledgements (manual, auto) v1.2
- Trace Logging v1.2
- Online Help v1.2
- SW Flow control handshake tbd
- Reply Formatter tbd
- Separate TNC Session and message processes tbd

Planned Fixes

- Message Sorts v1.2
- Dealing with embedded BBS prompts tbd



For more information

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Visit the Outpost website...

<http://www.CupertinoARES.org/projects/outpost>

Send inquiries to...

kn6pe@arrl.net



