Outpost
TNC Message Manager
Version 1.1

Author	Jim Oberhofer KN6PE
Title:	Tour and Training
Document Rev:	1.2
Release Date:	22 March 2004
File:	OutpostTnT110.pdf

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?

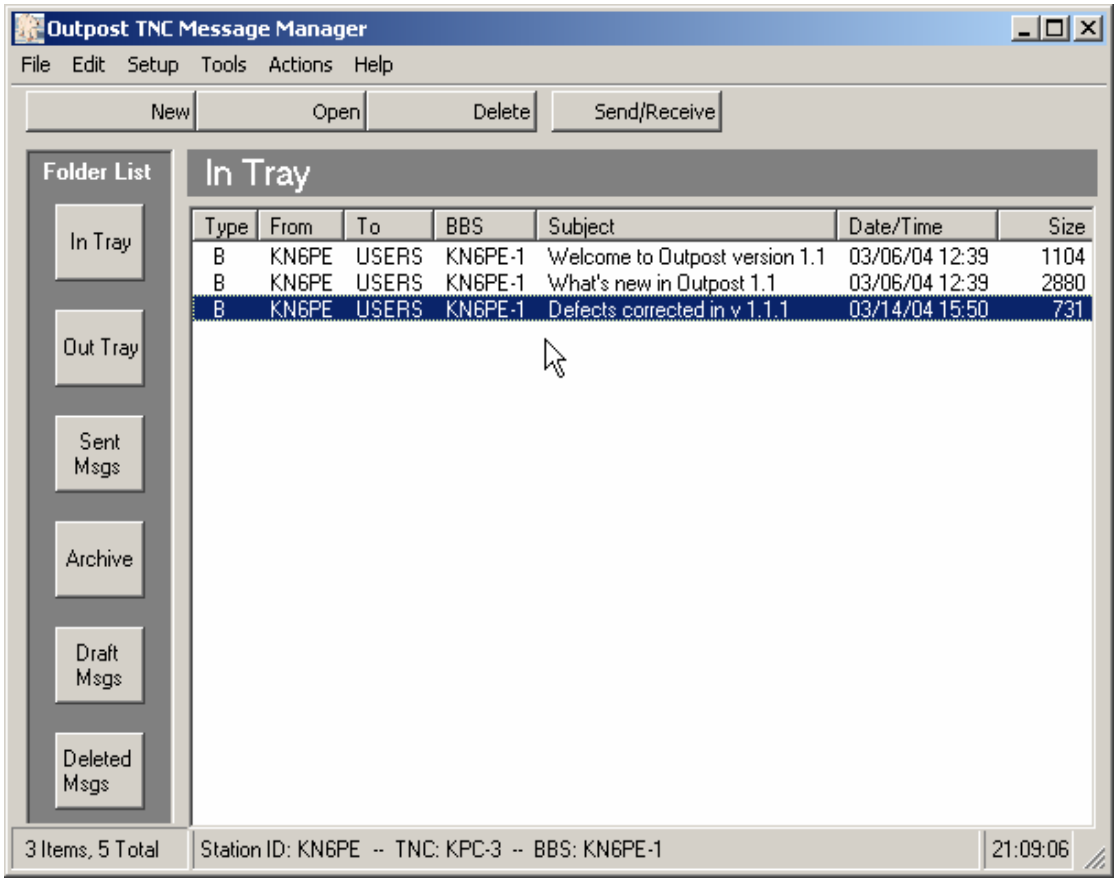
- Windows-based packet message client
- Compatible with many existing BBSs and TNC PBBSs
- Aimed at ARES, RACES, and other amateur radio emergency response teams
- Allows users to focus on the message, not the medium

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

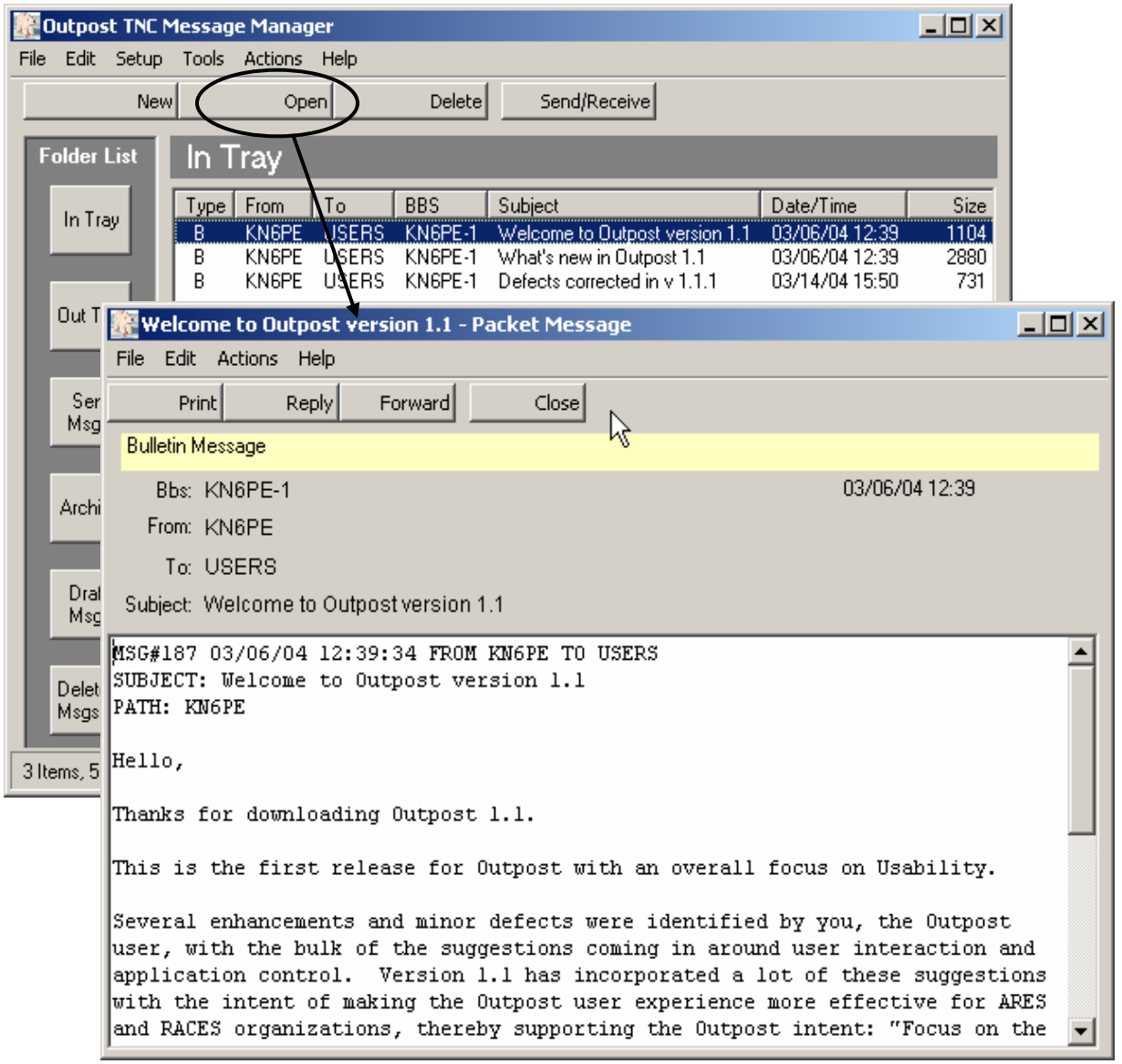


Features

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Message viewing

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

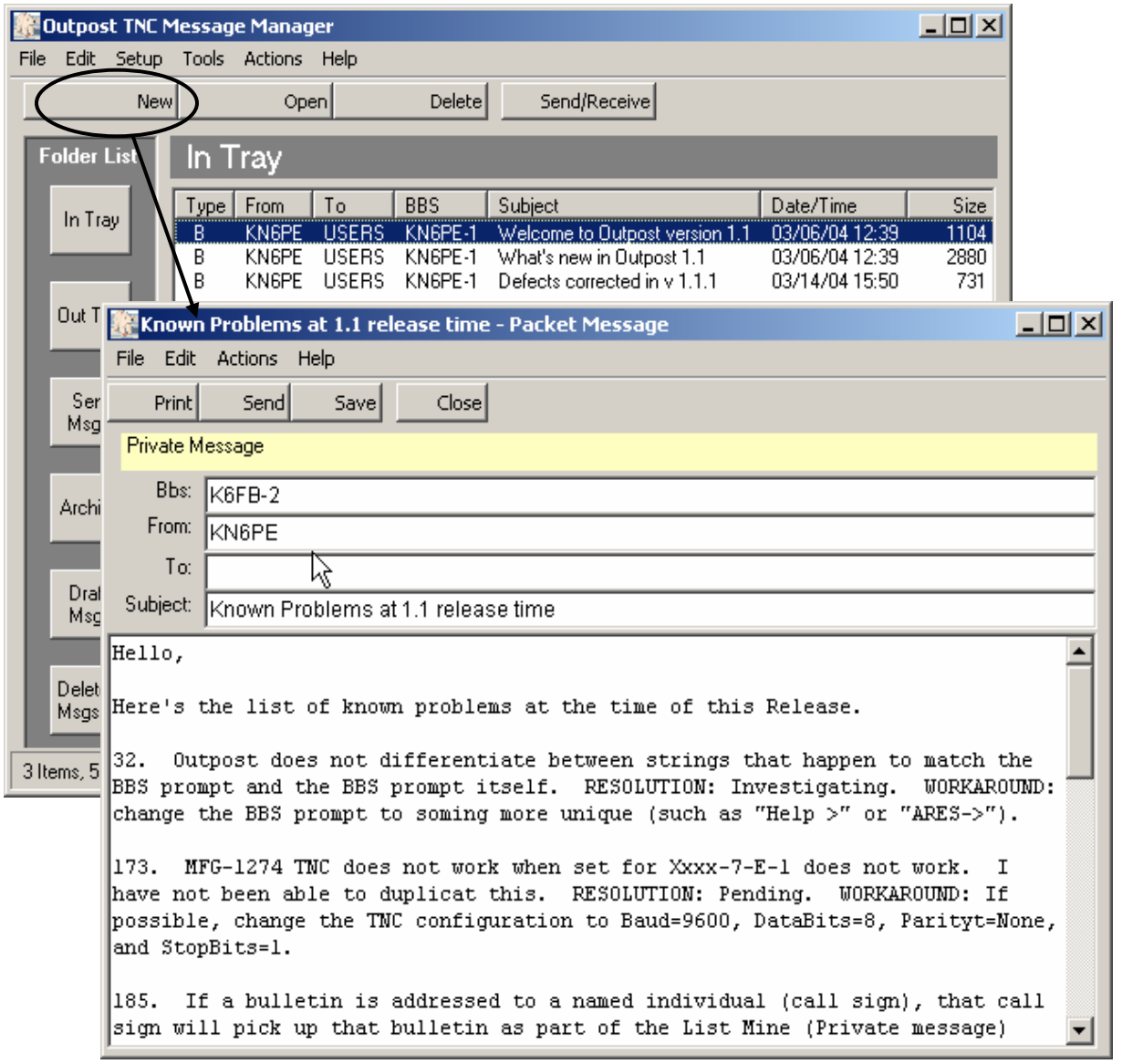


Features

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

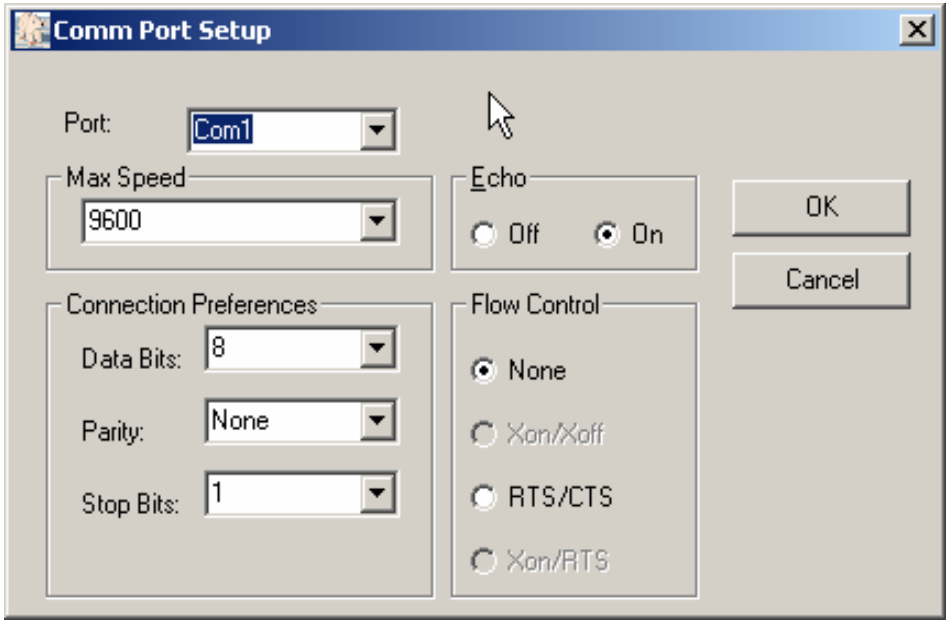


Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

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



Support for...

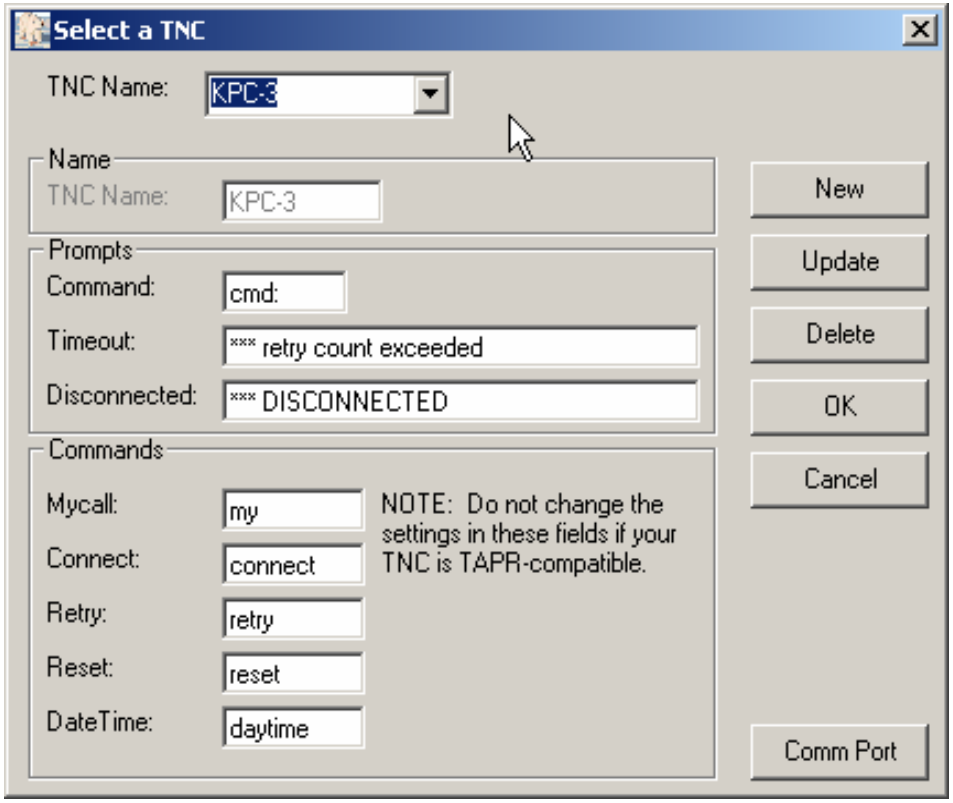
- Hardware Flow Control
- USB-to-Serial port adapters

Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

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



Considerations...

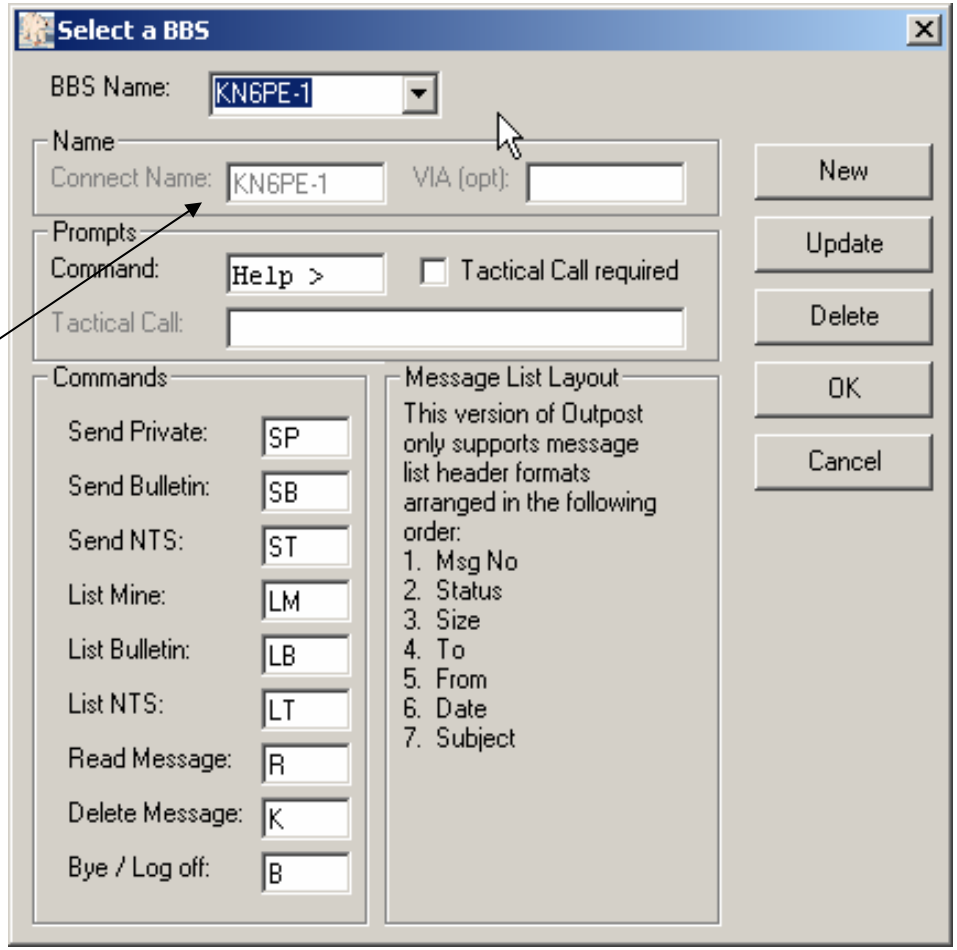
- Defaults are the most common TNC commands

Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

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



Considerations...

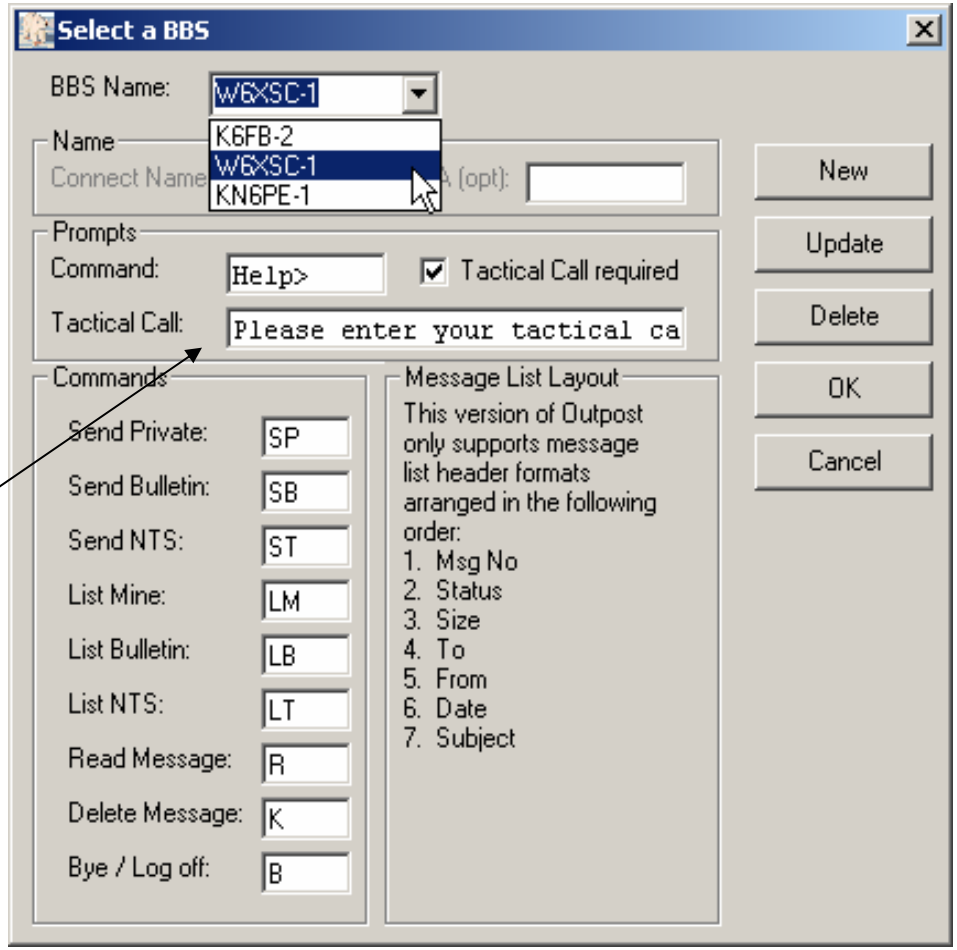
- Defaults are the most common BBS commands
- Need to be careful with BBS prompt uniqueness

Setups

Outpost TNC Message Manager

Application setups

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



Considerations...

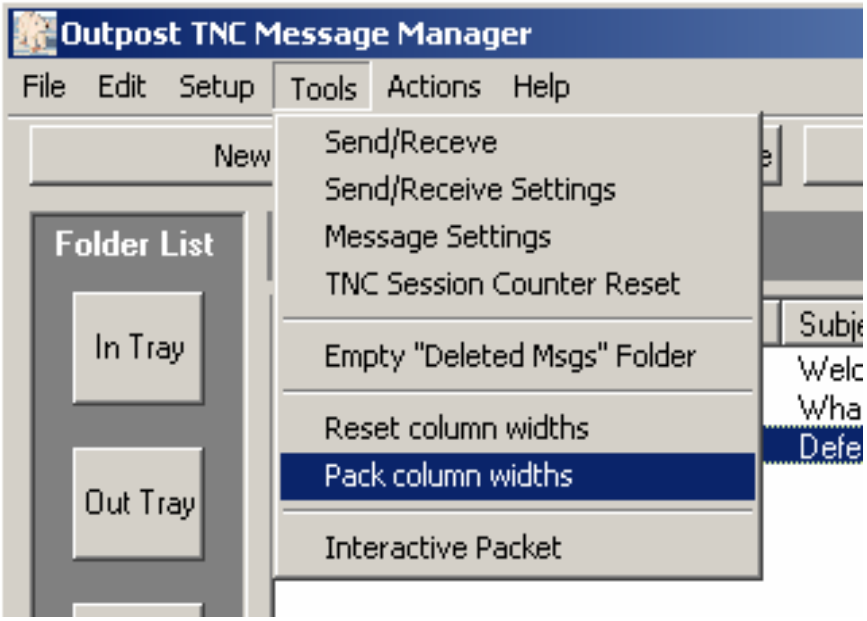
- Support for Secondary Tactical Call Logon prompt

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

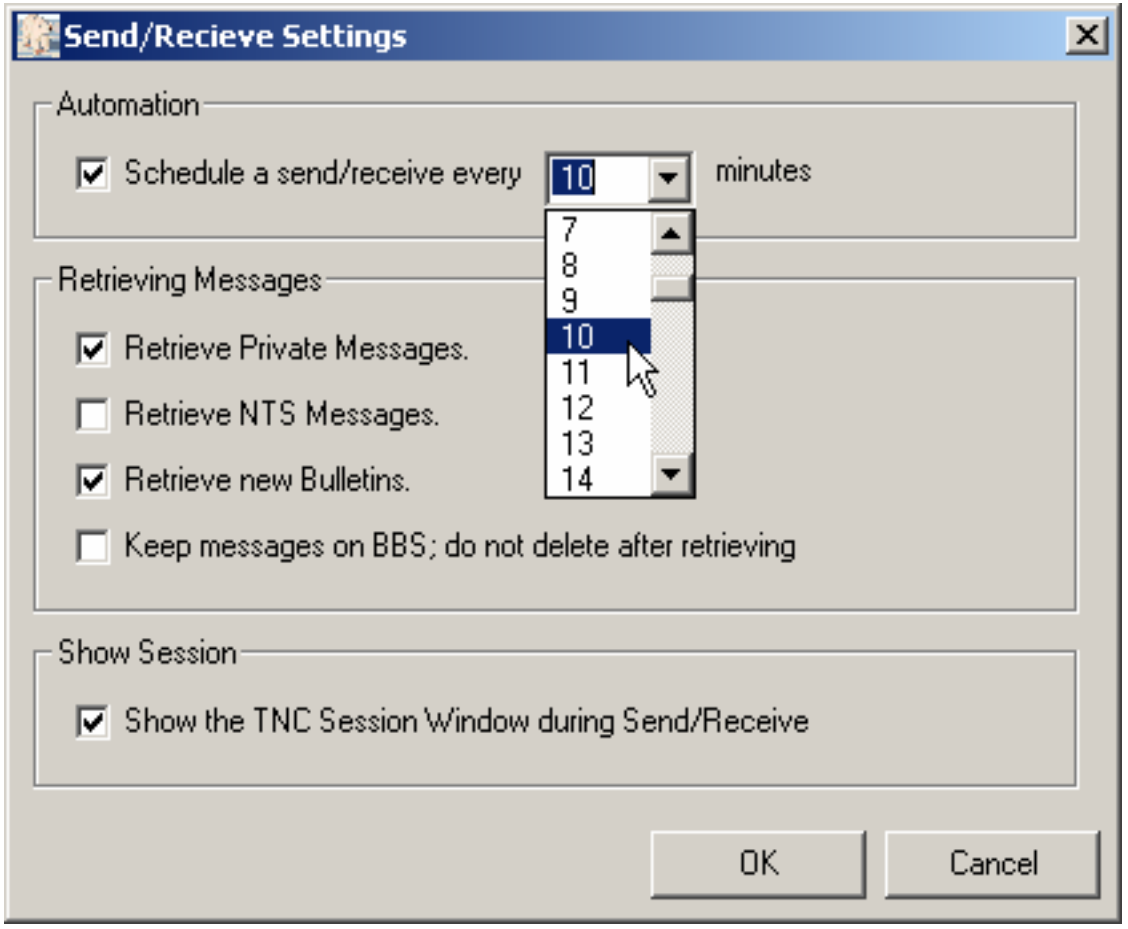


Controls and Settings

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

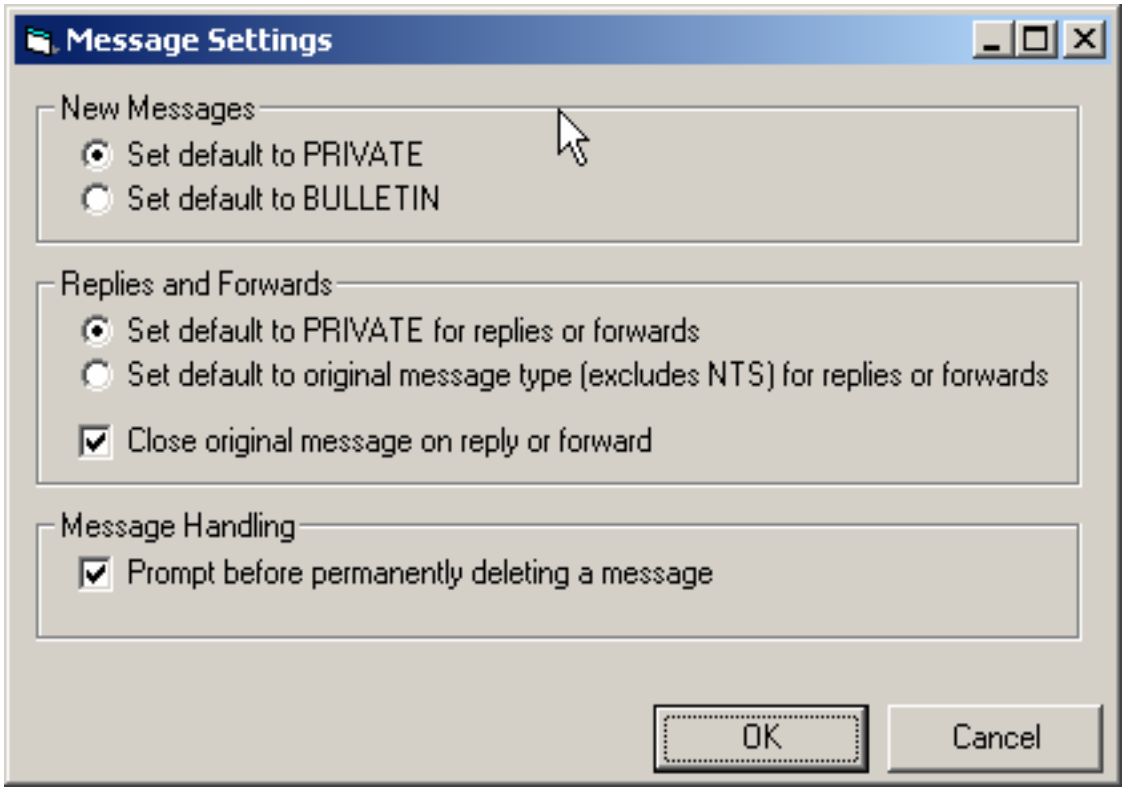


Controls and Settings

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

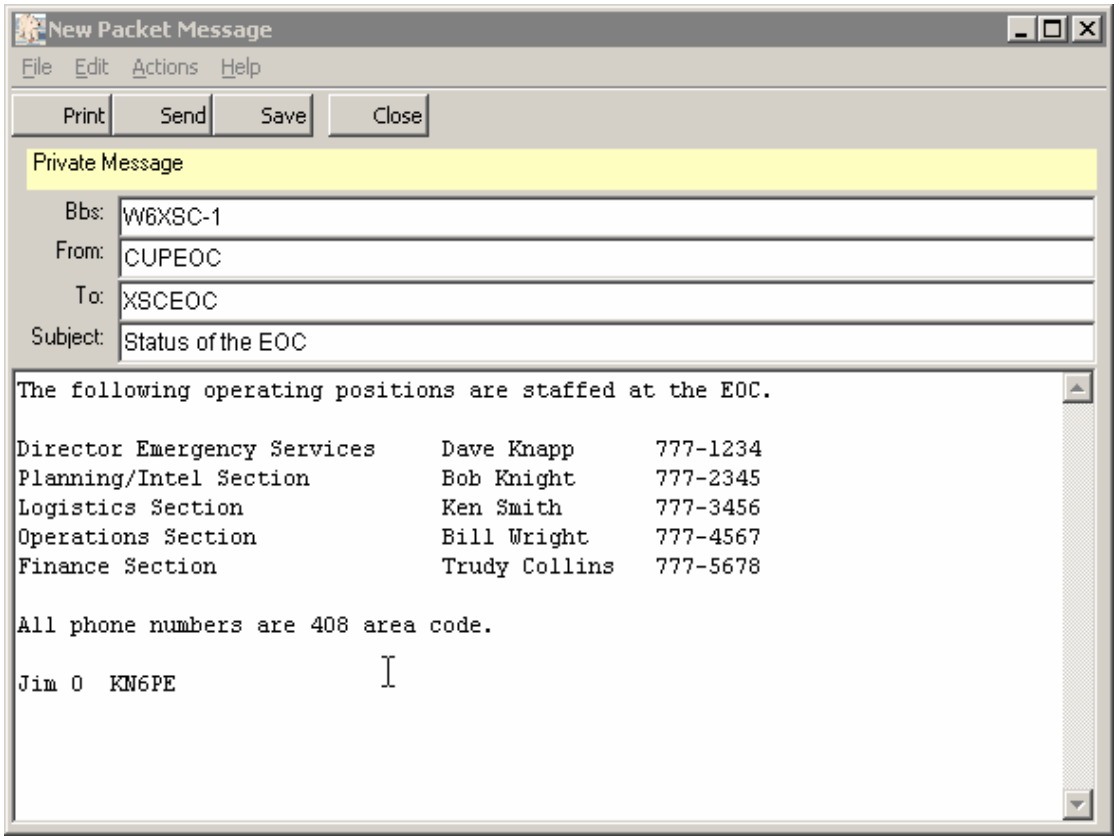


Creating Messages

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

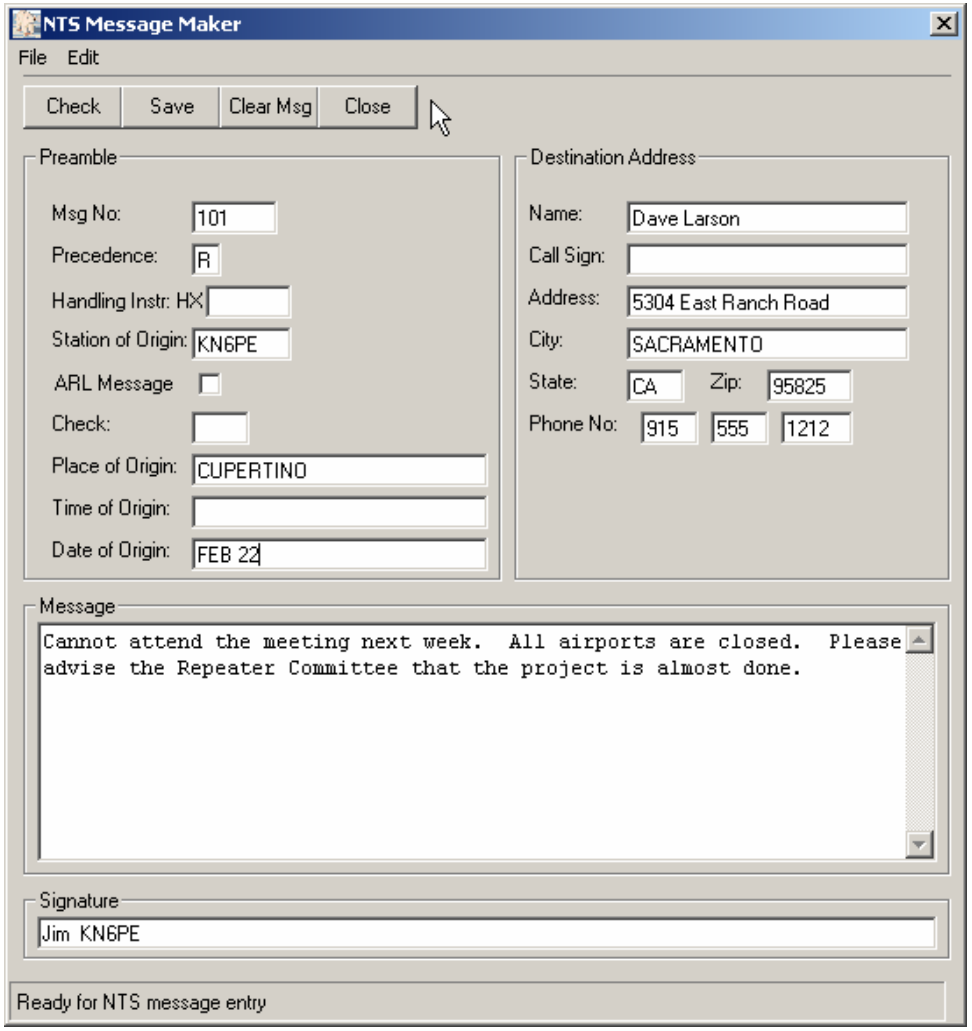


Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

NTS Message Maker

- Step 1: Forms-based with field validity checking

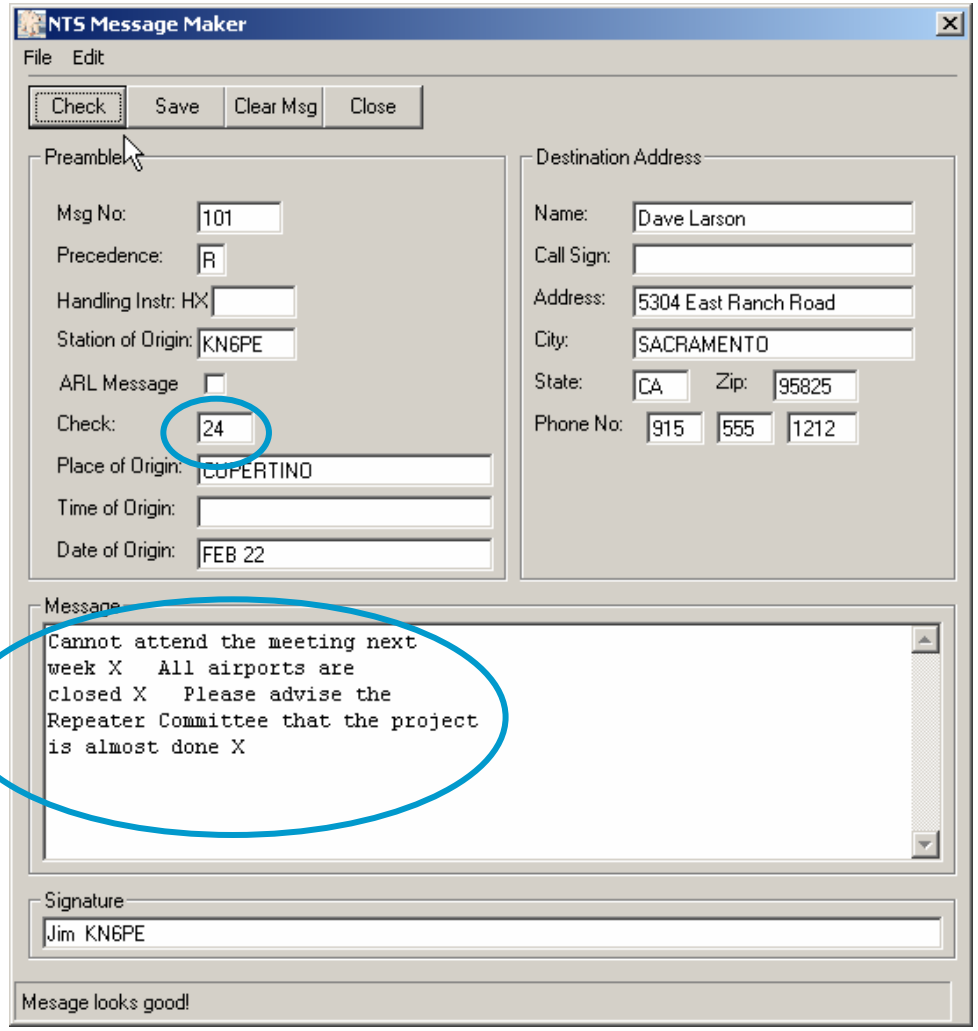


Creating Messages

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

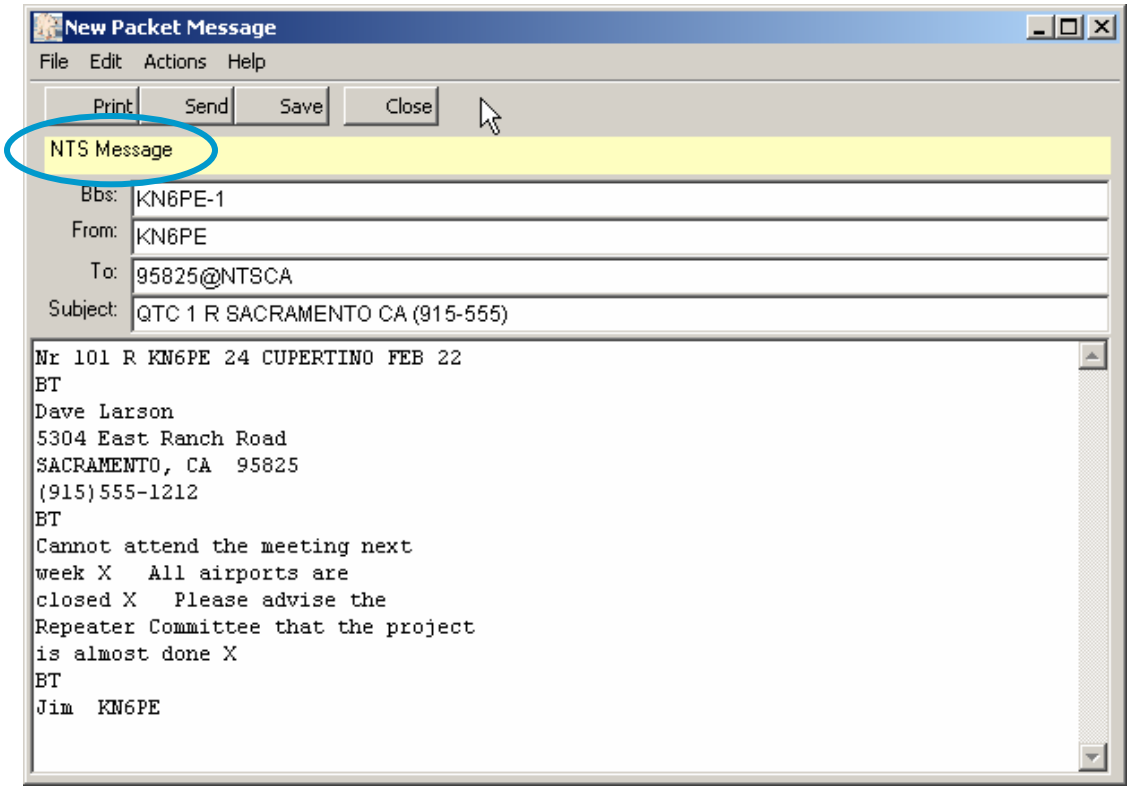


Creating Messages

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.

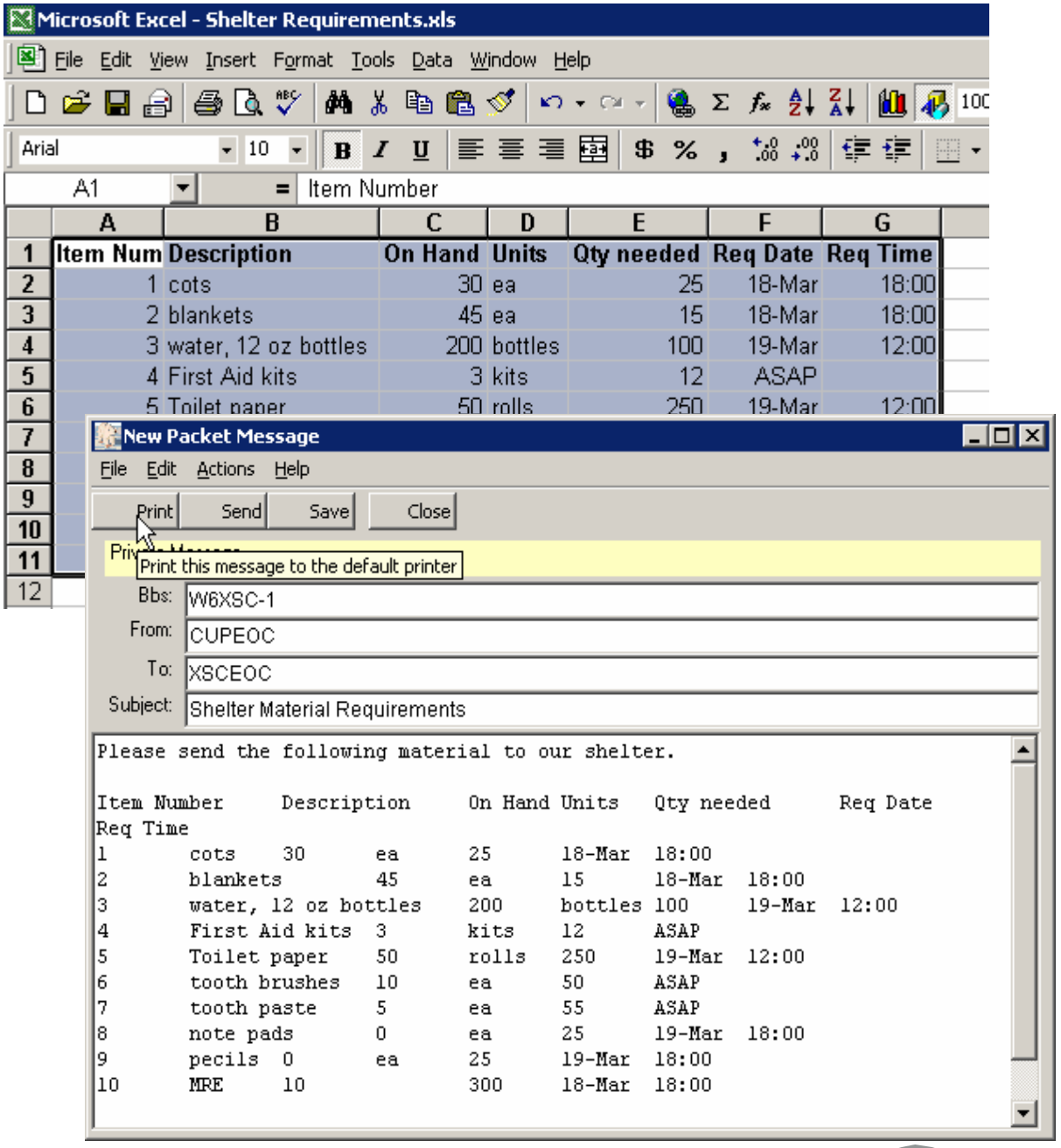


Creating Messages

Outpost TNC Message Manager

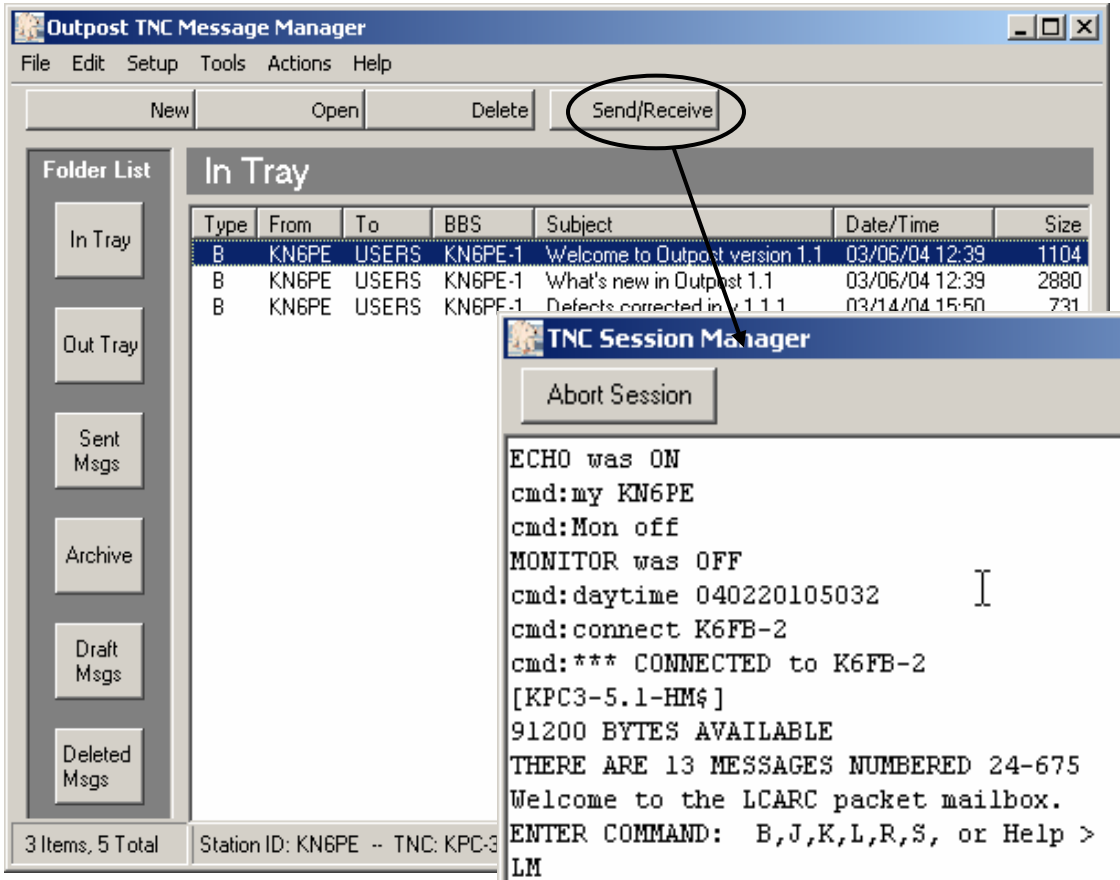
Cut-and-Paste from other apps

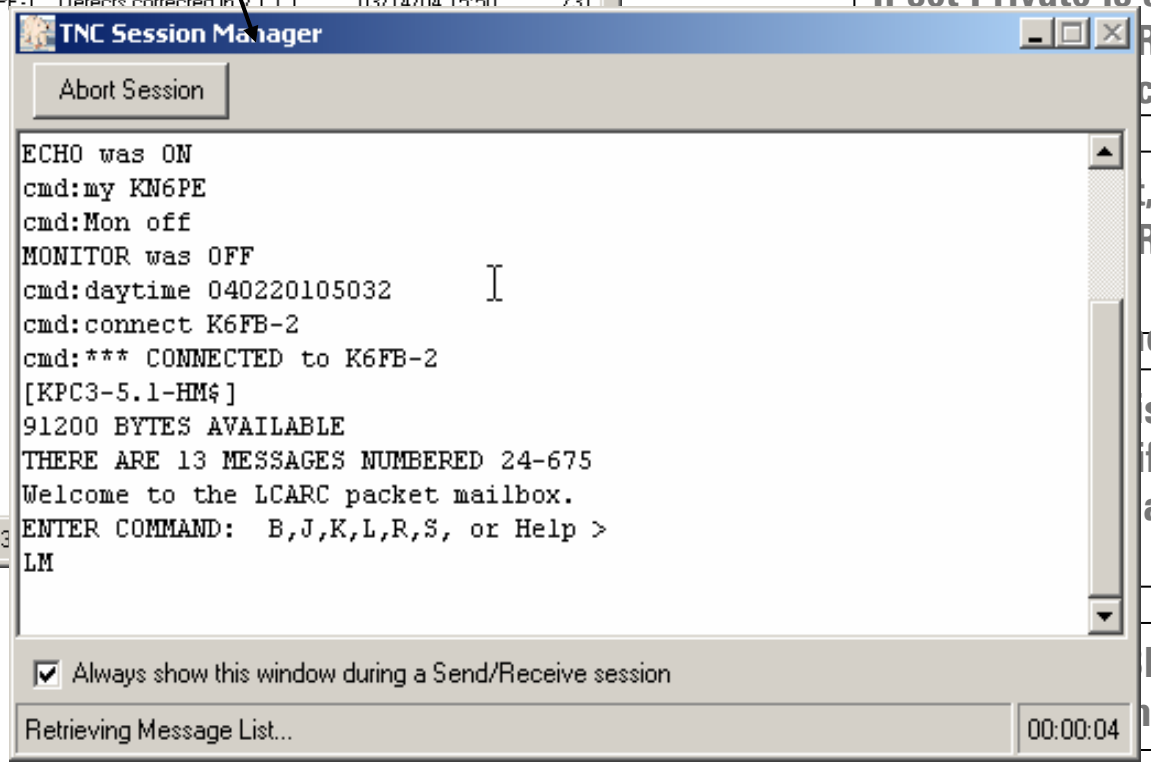
- From Excel, highlight the fields to be copied, then paste into an Outpost message.
- At the receiving station, highlight and copy the message, then paste into Excel.
- Preserves the Tabs so the message can be pasted back into another spreadsheet.

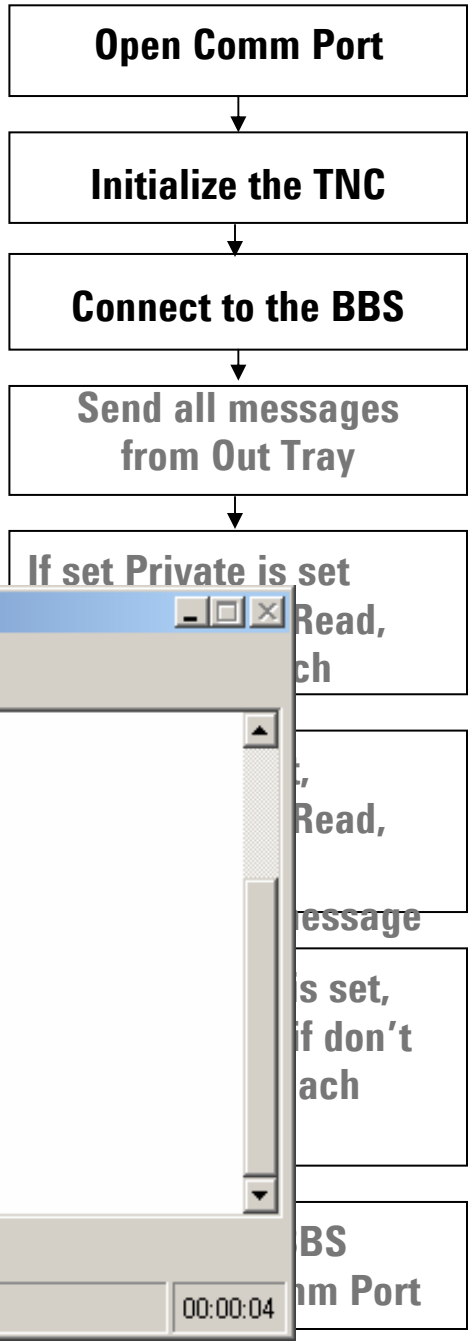


A Typical Session

Outpost TNC Message Manager



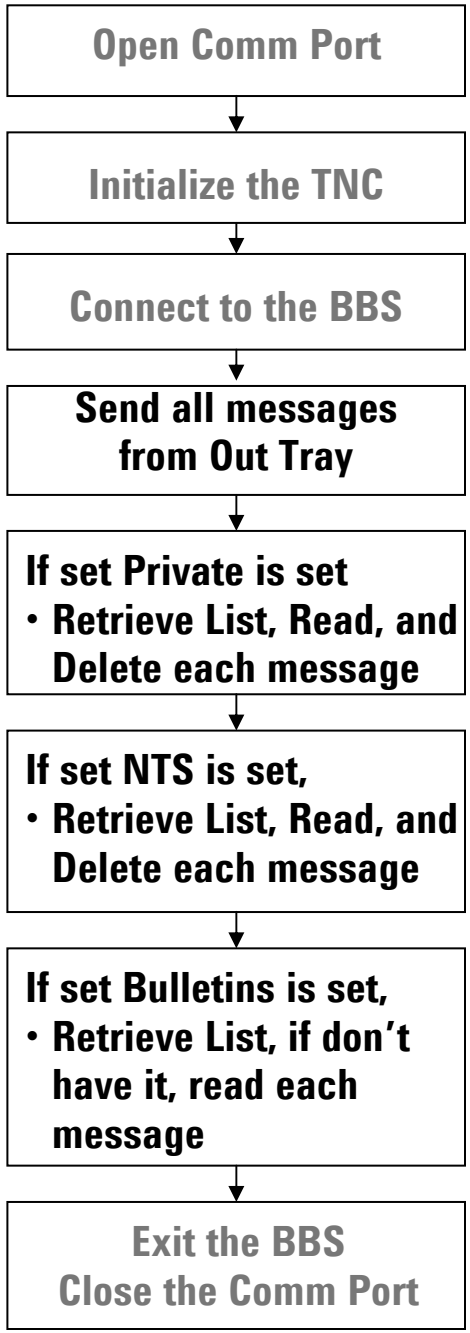




A Typical Session

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

?
Questions?