Getting Started with Outpost

A presentation for the

Alameda County Sheriff's Communications Team

7 January 2009 Jim Oberhofer KN6PE



Topics

1. Introduction to Outpost

- What is Packet Radio?
- Overview
- A Closer Look

2. Getting Started

- Finding Outpost
- Hardware configuration
- Confirm your BBS
- Outpost configuration
- First Message

3. Summary



What is Packet Radio?

... in a nutshell

- Amateur Packet Radio is one of many digital modes that Hams can use to build wireless computer networks
- Amateur Packet is built on the AX.25 protocol, a mature extension of the industry standard X.25. This protocol comes with transparency, error correction, and automatic control
- Data transfer speeds range from 1200 baud up to 19.6K Baud (frequency dependent; higher speeds = wider bandwidth)
- AX.25 Packet establishes a "private connection" between two stations while sharing a frequency with other stations
- Packet can use Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) for dropping off and retrieve messages between users



What is Packet Radio?

What are the components?



- Computer: runs a "terminal emulation" program
- TNC: Terminal Node Controller; similar to a telephone modem; the interface between your radio and your computer; Sound-card TNCs also exist.
- Radio: ...and antenna; transmits the digital data sent to the TNC to another packet station



What is Packet Radio?

What can we connect to?



Outpost Packet Message Manager

What is Outpost?

- A Windows-based packet messaging client
- Supports ARES, RACES, and other amateur radio emergency response teams and their need to pass digital traffic
- Helps automate the packet message handling environment
- Manages all message-handling between you and your BBS
- Lets you read, delete, create, reply to, or forward messages back to the BBS

Main purpose...

 Enables ARES / RACES teams to support the *response efforts* and *requirements* of our local served agencies by pass digital traffic



Outpost Packet Message Manager





Outpost Packet Message Manager

Why use Outpost?

- Leverages the existing packet hardware, network, & BBS infrastructure
 - Compatible with many existing BBSs and TNC PBBSs
 - Uses your existing TNC and packet radio equipment
 - Only a packet client (end-user) change is required
- Hides the complexity of the packet operating environment
 - Similar look and feel to contemporary email programs
 - Shorter learning curve for packet operations
 - Allows users to... "focus on the message, not the medium"
- Implements most local emergency management policies for digital communications
- Still under active development based on user requests and on-going alignment with the Outpost mission



Outpost Packet Message Manager

General Outpost Features

Managing Messages

- Supports the three primary message types: Private, NTS, and Bulletins
- Text Formatting in a free-form message window
- NTS Message Maker with automated ARL message support
- On-line report builder using report templates
- Supports Urgent message, Delivery and Read Receipts

Send/Receive Sessions

- Supports Serial, AGWPE, and Telnet interfacing with over 20 of PBBS and BBSs
- Automatically controls the sequence for initializing the selected interface, connecting to, and sending messages to and retrieving messages from the BBS

Configurations and Setups

- BBS, TNC, and Interfaces manages a list of BBSs & Interfaces
- Message Retrieval choose the message types to be retrieved
- Send/Receive automation 3 ways for automatically initiating S/R sessions



Outpost Packet Message Manager

Managing Messages

- Familiar email-app look and feel
- Separate folders for message storage
- Clear message identification (unread=BOLD, urgent=Red)
- Follows a typical message workflow
- Manages BBS and interfaces
- Various settings to control how Outpost behaves

🔐 Outpost Pack	et Message	Manager						<u> </u>
New		Open	Delete	P	rint Send/Receive			
Folder List	In Tray	/						
	U Type	From	To	BBS	Subject	Date/T	ime	Size
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		KN6PE	NEWUSH	WEVEC 1	Welcome to Uutpost 2.2	04/04/	2007 12:00 2007	11/4
Sent Msgs Archive Draft Msgs Deleted Msgs	В	KNGPE	CARES	K6FB-2	N95 Mask Purchase	04/03/	2007 20:43	241
7 Items, 75 Total	Station ID: I	KN6PE - TN	C: KPC3 BE	S: KN6PE-1			00:00:00	20:58:35



Outpost Packet Message Manager

Creating Messages

- Familiar email-app look & feel
- Supports Private, Bulletin, and NTS message types
- Freeform message formatting before sending
- Set messages to <u>Urg</u>ent
- Delivery and read receipts
- Different ways for originating messages
 - NTS Message Maker
 - Online Reports

Outpost Packet	Message M	lanager Help						
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Outpost Packet Message Manager

Viewing Messages

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

🔐 Outpost Pack	ket Message	Manager					
File Edit Setup	Tools Actio	ns Help					
Nev		Open Del	ete	Print Send/Rec	eive		
Folder List	In Tray						
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To: CARES							
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CARES members.							
Regards,							35
Jim KN6PE							
<u> </u>							
							1

Outpost Packet Message Manager

Application setups

- TNCs: create, update, or delete
 - Configure Serial Comm Ports that are associated with each TNC
- BBSs: create, update, or delete
- Change the Station Identifier (the call sign assigned to the TNC)





Outpost Packet Message Manager

Types of controls

- Controls the flow of each Send/Receive Session
- Sets how messages are created and handled
- Set various data fields to automatically populate on-line reports, messages, other areas
- Set up default Directory Names
- Various Log Settings
- Controls to re-size message listing column widths
- Separate Packet programs for Serial, AGWPE, and Telnet where the user can manually interact with the TNC or BBS





Outpost Packet Message Manager

Aligning features to needs

- **Mission:** How do we support our served agencies in their efforts to minimize loss of life and property, and speed the recovery?
- **Environment:** Environments are different... how do we adapt our tools to our environment?
- **Policy:** In a community of packet users, what policies do we adopt to ensure order, consistency, and efficiency in what we do?



Outpost Packet Message Manager

Helps implement packet operating policies...

- 1. All stations will identify with a tactical call sign
- 2. All messages are sent as private messages
- 3. All messages are uniquely identified
- 4. All messages are as short as possible
- 5. All stations will poll the BBS periodically for traffic
- 6. All stations will poll for specific message types
- 7. All message traffic becomes part of the official event documentation package



Getting Started

Outpost Packet Message Manager

- 1. Finding Outpost
- 2. Hardware configuration
- 3. Confirm your PPB or PBBS
- 4. Outpost configuration
- 5. First message



1. Finding Outpost

Outpost Packet Message Manager

- 1. Where to find it... http://www.outpostpm.org/
- 2. Download the latest version into a temp directory
- 3. Run the install program

4. Choose the install type

- Update for existing users
- First time installation for new users
- Custom installation

5. Outpost is installed in c:\Program Files\Outpost

60	utpost	Packe	t Message	Manage	er Home	epage - Win	dows Int	ernet	Explorer
Solution → [2] http://www.outpostpm.org/									
File	Edit	View	Favorites	Tools	Help				
☆	Å	🏉 Out	Outpost Packet Message Manager Homepage						



Outpost Packet Message Manager Version 2.3.0 Release

Most Recent Version: Outpost v2.3.0 c027 Recent Date: December 31, 2008

Welcome to the Outpost Project Page. Here's what you will find here.

What's New (News, Notes, and Updates) About Outpost About Interactive Packet About Outpost Scripting About Release v2.3 Downloads Documentation (Docs, Application Notes, Training, Presentations) Platform Support (TNCs, O/S, BBS's, Troubleshooting) HOW-TOs (on-line help files) Terms of Use Release Information Feedback Outpost User Group



2. Hardware configuration

Outpost Packet Message Manager

What you should have



- 1. PC Windows'98 or greater
- 2. TNC 1200 baud is the most common speed TNC
 - Several "TAPR2" TNCs mfgrs are supported: AEA/TimeWave, Kantronics, MFJ, Kenwood built-ins (see http://www.outpostpm.org/support.html)
 - Or... AGWPE Software: sound-card packet, KISS-only TNCs

What you need to know

- 1. Interface Type: [TNC serial | AGWPE | telnet]
- 2. PC's Serial Comm Port number: _____
- 3. Serial Baud, data bits, parity, stop bits: (usually 9600,8,none,1)
- 4. When in doubt, consult your TNC manual



2. Hardware configuration Outpost Packet Message Manager Ipserial with Outpost Edit Tools Help Start Logging Connect Create Message **Comm Port Setup** X Manually configure and 1. conform your TNC connection Port: Com1 -Max Speed Echo Use the lpserial.exe program (in the 9600 -C On ● Off c:\Program files\Outpost directory) **Connection Preferences** Flow Control File > Comm Port Settings Data Bits: 8 • ۰ C None None -Parity: Enter your TNC settings... OK C Xon/Xoff -Stop Bits: 1 Power up your TNC sconnected from TNC C Xon/RTS Press Connect... confirm the TNC is present! Ipserial with Outpost 2. Add Comm Port Settings File Edit Tools Help to Outpost Disconnect Start Logging Create Message bü Tools > "Add Comm Port RONICS PACKET COMMUNICATOR III COPYRIGHT 1988-1993 BY KANTRONICS INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. settings to Outpost"... give DUPLICATION PROHIBITED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF KANTRONICS. cmd: the TNC a name, Press OK Congratulations! Your • TNC is configured If you did not get this far, STOP! Do not Proceed! **Getting Started with Outpost** Settings: 9600,N,8,1 on Comm Port 1 00:05:43 Connected to the TNC

3. Confirm your BBS/PBBS

Outpost Packet Message Manager

- 1. Type of your BBS/PBBS
- 2. What is the connect name? _____ (ie: K6FB-2)
- 3. What is the BBS frequency? _____ (ie: 145.050)
- 4. Set the radio frequency, and manually connect to the BBS/PBBS
- 5. For Software BBSs...
 - Register if prompted
 - Set yourself up as Expert
 - Turn off Paging
 - See the Outpost website/BBS Support pages for help

6. You are ready for Outpost!

PBBSs (Firmware-based, resides in TNCs)	BBSs (Software-based)	Support pending (October 2008)
KPC3, KPC3+ KPC9612 KAM, KAM-XL, KAM-98 KAM Plus Kantronics' Data Engine PK-88, PK-232, PK-88 DSP-232 MFJ-1270x MFJ-1278	AA4RE F6FBB MSYS N0ARY DXNET RMS/Winlink W0RLI JNOS TNOS SNOS	KPC3 5.1 MFJ-1274 OpenBCM



4. Outpost Configuration

Outpost Packet Message Manager

1. Run Outpost

- from the Icon on the desktop, or
- Start > Programs > Outpost > Outpost PMM

2. The Station Identification form is presented

- Enter your call sign and name... press OK
- Turn off this prompting at Outpost startup from Tools > General Settings tab

n	Folder	TNC BBS Change SI	tation ID	
	[In T	ray	Type From KN6PE KN6PE	
Station Identification			×	
Legal User Call Sign: KN6PE User Name: Jim				
Tactical Use Tactical Call for all BB Tactical Call Sign: Additional ID Text:	S interaction (6 Charac	cters max)		
	ОК	Cancel	Apply	

File

Outpost TNC Message Manager e Edit Setup Tools Actions H

Help



- 3. Confirm the TNC configuration...
- 4. From Outpost: Setups > TNC
 - TNC Prompts and TNC command default settings should be valid.
 - TNC Comm Port reflects your setup from lpserial.exe.
 - Press OK

		l le	Ти		Type	From
			Туру			KN6PE
						KN6PE
Select an Inte	erface Type					×
Interface Type	TNC Prompts TN	NC Commands	TNC Comm F	Port A	GWPE	Telnet
Choose a Devi	ce Name			_		
Device Name:	KAN-KPC3	•				
Device Name:	KAN-KPC3					
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Device Type				-11	Nev	v
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Outpost TNC Message Manager

TNC...

Edit

Folder

File

Setun Tools Actions Help

Change Station ID...



4. Outpost Configuration

Outpost Packet Message Manager

- 3. Define the BBS configuration...
- 4. From Outpost: Setups > BBS
 - Press New
 - Enter the BBS Connect Name (ie: K6FB-2)
 - Enter a description of the BBS
 - BBS Prompts and BBS Commands default settings should be valid.
 - BBS Path defaults to Direct (change for digipeating or through KA-Nodes/NETROM)
 - Press OK

In Tray	KN6F KN6F
Define a new BBS	×
BBS Name BBS Prompts BBS Commands BBS Path	
BBS Name	
Connect Name: K6FB-2	
Description: Los Combres ARC on 145.050	
BBS Type	
• Let Outpost determine the BBS and set up the prompts	New
O User defines the BBS prompts	Delete
Non-Identifying BBSs	
C AA4RE BBS C AA4RE BBS with Tactical Call Customization	
0K Cancel	Apply

Outpost TNC Message Manager

BBS.

Setup Tools Actions Help

Ahange Station ID...

Tune From

Edit |

Folder

File



4. Outpost Configuration

Outpost Packet Message Manager

5. Note the Status Bar and the current Outpost settings

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4. Outpost Configura

Outpost Packet Message Manager

6. Tools > Send/Receive Settings

- Selects different ways to automate the message send/retrieve sessions
- Select which message types are to be ulletretrieved
- Once a message is <u>received</u>, select what do with it
- Additional controls (Other tab) \bullet manage printing received and sent messages

	Send/Receive Settings
	Automation Retrieving Receiving Other
tion	Automation
	No Automation. Initiate each send/receive session manually.
ѫ	O Schedule a send/receive every 10 minutes (1-999).
	○ Schedule a send/receive at "X" minutes past the hour (0-59)
	Enter 1 or more as a list of
	(i.e.: 5, 45, 59).
	Send a message immediately when it is complete.
💽 Send/	Receive Settings
Automa	tion Retrieving Receiving Other
Retrie	ve these Messages
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E F	
to	
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	nter as a list of filter items (i.e.: UST, KEPS, ARES) separated by commas.
ſ	ACES, SCONON, SCOSOO
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When Receiving Messa	
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Keep messages or	BBS; do not delete after retrieving
N	
2	

26

4. Outpost Configuration

Outpost Packet Message Manager

7. Message Settings

- Define default settings for new messages, includes
 - Default destinations
 - Auto message numbering
 - Message Signature
- Handling replies and forwards
- Set up defaults for requesting message receipts
- Setting for permanently deleting messages

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Outpost Packet Message Manager

5. First Message

Outpost Packet Message Manager

9. Create your first message

- From Outpost main form, press New
- Note what is filled in:
 - BBS
 - From
 - Subject Msg ID
 - Signature
- Address it to yourself for a round-trip message
- Fill in the balance of the subject line
- Fill in the body of the message
- Press "Send" when done
- Message is placed in the Out Tray

	🔐 Outpost Packet Message Manager	
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Private Mess	ssage	
Bbs: K	K6FB-2	
From: K	KN6PE	
To:		4. 7
Subject: S	SSF126:	
Regards,		
EC, Cupertino ARES/RACES		
		-
		///





For more information

Outpost Packet Message Manager



Outpost Packet Message Manager HOW-TOs

Outpost How-To's

The Outpost program does not include any online help. Instead, a series of HOW-TO files are provided with the application and are available on-line here. See the <u>Outpost Users Guide</u> for other details.

Interface How-Tos

- 1. AGWPE Set up
- 2. Telnet Set up
- 3. Telnet Setup for Winlink
- 4. TNC Command file
- 5. TNC Setup

BBS/PBBS How-Tos

- 1. BBS Set up
- 2. BBS Set up for Santa Clara County RACES
- 3. Connecting to a local KPC3/ KPC9612 PBBS
- 4. Connecting to a local MFJ-127X PBBS
- 5. Connecting to a local PK-232/DSP-232 PBBS
- 6. Using KA-Node/ Netrom (BPQ) Access

Messaging How-Tos

- 1. Acknowledge Read, send automatically
- 2. Add a signature
- 3. Annunciation
- 4. Automatic Retrieval
- 5. Creating a message
- 6. Drag and Drop
- 7. Forwarding/Replying
- 8. Numbering messages
- 9. Online reports
- 10. Online Reports, one touch loading
- 11. Printing Automatically
- 12. Requesting Delivery and Read Receipts
- 13. Retrieving selected bulletins
- 14. Send as Urgent
- 15. Sending a text file

Miscellaneous How-Tos

- 1. Enhanced Channel Monitoring
- 2. Tactical Calls



For more information

Outpost Packet Message Manager

Visit the Outpost website... http://www.outpostpm.org

And supporting links...

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- Users Guide... <u>http://www.outpostpm.org/#documentation</u>
 - HOW-TOs... http://www.outpostpm.org/howto.html
 - Support Info... <u>http://www.outpostpm.org/support.html</u>
- Users group... <u>http://groups.yahoo.com/group/outpostpacket/</u>

Send inquiries to... Jim Oberhofer, <u>kn6pe@arrl.net</u>



Thank you! Any Questions?





Getting Started with Outpost