Outpost v2.3.0 Release Content Description

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1. Introduction

This Release Content Description provides information about new or changed functionality that will be available in Outpost Packet Message Manager Release 2.3.0. This information is organized under the following sections:

- ***New Features:*** A new capability that did not exist in any prior version of Outpost in any form.
- ***Enhancements:*** A change to an existing feature that further improves the performance or usability of the application. Enhancements include minor changes, internal changes (that may not be evident to the user, but contribute to improved supportability increased stability, or application performance) and bug fixes.
- ***Changes since Version 2.2.2:*** A list of the various changes that were introduced in maintenance or defect releases since the original v2.2.2 release.

2. New Features

2.1. ER#599: Outpost Scripting

Finally! Outpost Scripting is ready for a first release.

Over the years, there have been different requests for features that just did not make sense to add to the main Outpost program. This included requests for additional automation such as polling a list of BBSs in turn or detecting a file on the PC and writing it out as a new outbound message to name a few.

This is a first release of Outpost scripting as a means for increasing packet messaging automation and user productivity. Scripting refers to processing a user-created file made up of commands and statements that control a specific sequence of events. For this first release, over fifty (50) script statements and commands will be delivered.

I am excited about the potential of what scripting can offer. I also recognize that this increases the complexity of working with Outpost and packet. Having some exposure to a structured programming language will definitely help. If you intend to venture into Scripting, and then please make sure you review the Outpost Script User Guide and step through all tutorial sessions. See the Outpost Scripting Resource Page http://www.outpostpm.org/scripts for more details.

3. Enhancements

ER#673: Enhanced Telnet logon support. Currently, users would define the telnet session logon (Setup > TNC, tab 6) independently from the Station ID (Setup > Identification). Additionally, with the introduction of Outpost Scripting, users would have to define multiple TNC entries for each logon they wanted to use.

This change does 2 things: (i) On the Setup > TNC, tab 6 where Telnet Logon is defined, a control is added that lets the user select to use the Station ID instead of the locally defined field. This lets you change your ID in one place for multiple purposes. (ii) Adds a control to mark this telnet session as requiring Telnet Transparency (adds the "." in front of the logon name, as needed for WL2K access). The condition is handled in the event users continue to put or leave the "." in front of any manually entered logon name.

ER#697: Save deleted message db. Currently, Outpost lets you delete the entire message database. While this is usually deliberate on the user's part, there are times when you wished you really didn't want to do it. Now, instead of just deleting it, this enhancement renames the message database as

Opyymmddhhmmss.odb, where the date and time is embedded in the file name, and then creates a new Outpost.odb file.

ER #706: Add support for the NNA BBS.

ER#719: Do not retrieve KPC3 Status "B" messages on Private. Occasionally, users have reported sending bulletin messages to individual call signs. This in not a good practice not only because it is misleading on the receiving end when EVERYONE gets a chance to retrieve your bulletin, but also confuses Outpost when retrieving private messages. This is particularly true for KPC3 PBBSs.

The primary implication is to the user whose call was placed in the TO: field for a bulletin. He can retrieve the message during a retrieve private because KPC3 matches the LM command with his call sign. However, he cannot delete it because he was not the originator of the bulletin. As a result, he ends up retrieving the message again the next time he runs this session.

For KPC3 PBBSs, this change checks if the message status is set as "B" when retrieving personal messages (LM). If it is, it is skipped. It should then be retrieved with the Retrieve Bulletin option.

ER#720: Identify all virtual Comm Ports. In the good old days when a PC had only a couple of real serial ports, listing COM1 thru COM16 seemed like plenty of choices. Now, with USB-to-Serial port adaptors in regular use, Comm Port numbers have been reported as high as 62. This has been a problem for Outpost which didn't support anything higher than 16.

This enhancement does 2 things: (i) replaces the Comm Port number pull-down menu found on the Setup > TNC, Tab 4 (TNC Comm Port) with a "fill-in-the-blank" field. Now, if you know the Comm Port number, it can be can be entered; (ii) if you do not know the Comm Port number, a new button labeled "Show Comm Ports" has been added that, when pressed, will display all available and currently unused comm ports currently on the system. NOTE that if some other program has already opened a comm port, that port will not be listed as available.

This change applies to both Outpost.exe and Ipserial.exe.

ER#723: Do not retrieve F6FBB messages with status of "F" or "K" set. The "F" status is placed on a message that has been forwarded. The "K" status means the message has been deleted. These messages apparently remain in the system until the housekeeping job runs and removes them from the system.

In most cases, these messages are not viewable unless (I believe) you have sysop capabilities. In this case, if you are running Outpost, a deleted or forwarded message will still show up for retrieving, and subsequent downloading. Now, for F6FBB BBSs, this change now checks whether these flags are set and does not download them.

3.1. Resolved Problems

ER#605: Resolves the work-around required to handle Winlink Telnet Transparency.

ER#721: Fixes a TNC Initialization File bug where the TNC Initialization file was not found the first time Outpost started.

ER#722: Fixes a problem retrieving some Bulletins.

ER#724: When adding a file or opening a report in a message form, Outpost was placing the opened file after the signature. This change now lets the user place the file at the current cursor position.

ER#726: With the introduction of Opscripts.exe, and as seen with the Opdirect.exe program, duplicate subject line identifiers were being generated from these other programs. This was caused by the non-exclusive access to specific data structures that managed the message Identifier number.

Now Opscripts.exe and Opdirect.exe will not longer insert subject line identifiers into messages they originate. Instead, this task will remain solely with Outpost.exe.

To make this happen, messages originating from Opscripts.exe and Opdirect.exe will initially be placed in the Out Tray with the 2 characters "++" immediately preceding the subject text. When either opening the message, or during a Send/Receive session, if Subject Line identification is turned on (Tools > Message Settings, "Add Message Number to Subject Line), the "++" will be replaced with the next identifier. In it is not set, the "++" are removed.

ER#727: Resolved problem when using the NTS Message Maker and processing Handling Instructions. This change now checks that the <miles>, <hours>, or <date> tags are replaced with a real value.

ER#728: Resolved problem with handling Tactical Calls with Winlink. Outpost was not picking up messages addressed via tactical calls. This is now resolved. NOTE: Tactical Call must be registered with Winlink for this to work.

ER#730: Resolves a problem where Opdirect.exe was not always found.

4. Changes since v2.2.2

ER#713: Resolved Hour Glass problem where it did not revert back to pointer after pressing Delete.

ER#716: Manual Comm Port changes. Disallowed the user to directly enter a comm port. This issue has been superceded by ER#720 as described above.

ER#717: Resolved notification Form being blacked out. This was caused whenever the user selected a specific combination of the Windows Theme (WindowsXP) and Color Scheme (Silver).

ER#718: Resolved TNC Init file command send problem.