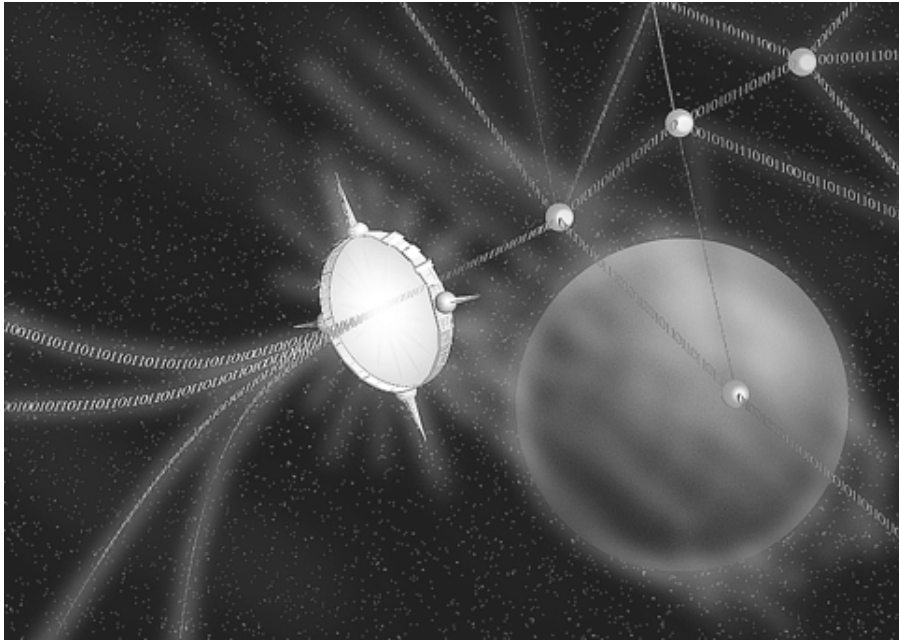


WICOMSOFT



Addendum to User Guide

For Macintosh

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1 Introduction

New Features in Version 6

The Vicomsoft router products now combine integral data caching facilities with state of the art Network Address Translation for shared Internet access to enhance real-life Internet performance and to make better use of available bandwidth.

The new Internet Gateway and SoftRouter Plus include the following features:

- The Vicomsoft WebCache Server is a high performance caching server module for web objects (HTML pages, graphics etc.). It provides high speed shared local access to frequently-used pages, and off-line browsing for group environments such as classrooms, and operates in conjunction with the Vicomsoft Internet Gateway or SoftRouter Plus to provide Transparent caching for the Router clients.
- Transparent web cache access is provided within the router, eliminating the need to configure each individual client to use the WebCache Server.
- Integral DNS Caching and Name Server facilities reduce name resolution delays, and cooperate with the DHCP Server to provide comprehensive local name resolution.
- Support for Apple CCL scripted modem access, selected using the Modem control panel.

These features are described in more detail in the next Chapters of this document, which also provide installation and operation instructions. All references to "Vicomsoft Router software" or "the Router" in this document apply equally to the Vicomsoft Internet Gateway and Vicomsoft SoftRouter Plus.

Vicomsoft WebCache Server System Requirements

The Vicomsoft WebCache Server module may be installed on the same machine as the Vicomsoft Router, or on a separate machine. In either case, it requires the following minimum system resources.

CPU:

- A Macintosh 68040 CPU, or PowerPC, running MacOS 7.6.1 or later and Open Transport 1.1.1 or later.

Memory:

- 5 MBytes RAM available for the WebCache module.

Interfaces:

- A LAN interface with access to the Internet.

Disk space:

The WebCache Server module requires adequate free disk space to store its web objects. For practical use it is likely to need at least 100 MBytes.

Software Installation

The Installer offers Complete or Custom options. Select the Complete option to install both the Router and the WebCache Server module on the computer. Select the Custom option if you wish to install each software item separately.

The WebCache module is installed in a Folder containing the application, together with a Folder called LocalHTML which contains the web pages used for remote access.

Full details of router installation are given in the Vicomsoft Internet Gateway and SoftRouter Plus Installation and Quick Start Guides.

Getting Started

If you have not installed the router software before then you can launch the router and configure it using the Auto-Setup process. The configuration process is documented in the Installation and Quick Start Guide for the product.

If it is an upgrade for an earlier version then it will read the old settings, and create a backup copy of the previous Preferences file in case you wish to revert.

If the WebCache module has been installed on the same system as the router then it launches automatically when you launch the router. The Router's default configuration options are set up to enable transparent Web caching and Domain Name Serving, so when you have configured the router and started it, the new facilities will start to operate immediately.

The next Chapters describe the configuration and operation of the WebCache and DNS facilities.

2 Setting Up Transparent WebCache Access

What is the Vicomsoft WebCache Server?

The Vicomsoft WebCache Server is an application module that captures copies of Internet web pages and images that are requested by its clients, and serves them locally when they are asked for again.

Web caching can enhance performance for network users, as each client benefits from the locally stored information requested by all users. It can also reduce Internet bandwidth utilization by reducing repeated downloads of the same information. These benefits apply regardless of the performance of your direct Internet connection.

The Router products provide integrated transparent access to the WebCache Server. When Transparent mode is switched on all web connections to port 80 are redirected to the specified caching server address, and caching server responses are returned through the Router to the client. If Transparent Access is switched off then cache redirection is disabled and all web connections are routed normally. The client and the caching server are unaware of the redirection process, and neither need to be reconfigured when the Transparent mode is enabled or disabled.

The transparent access feature can be used with the Vicomsoft WebCache Server module, or you can use it to direct clients to your existing web caching server.

The Vicomsoft WebCache module can be run on the same host machine as the Router software, or on separate hardware, allowing you to optimize your network and hardware usage and performance.

It provides an "Off-line" operational mode that allows web pages to be cached for later viewing while disconnected from the Internet. This can be used in educational situations for example, where a teacher can focus student attention on specific pre-selected web content.

The WebCache Server module provides a catalog of cached items that can be viewed and browsed by any client. This facility is particularly useful in Off-line mode, when only the cached pages can be accessed. It can also be configured using password-protected web browser access.

The Server has been carefully optimized to deliver high throughput with minimum transit delay. Incoming data from a remote Internet web server is pipelined to multiple requesting clients and to disk concurrently, while it is being received, to minimize the delay for access to new pages. When a new request is received that requires data from a remote web server the WebCache forwards the request. As the data is received from the remote server it is pipelined to the requesting client in real time with minimal delay.

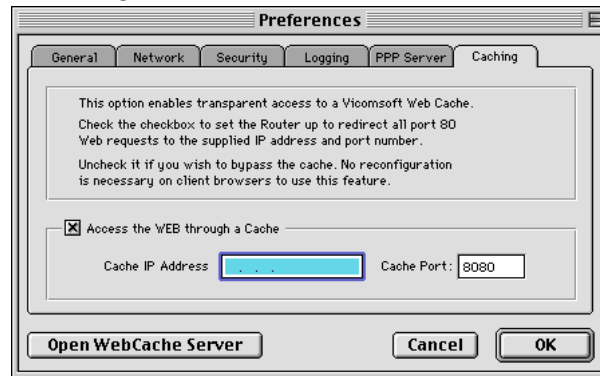
New client requests for data that is already being received are served at LAN speeds from the disk cache until they catch up with the incoming data stream from the remote server. They then receive the remaining data in real time as it arrives.

This Chapter describes how to set up and operate the features and facilities of the Vicomsoft WebCache Server.

Vicomsoft WebCache Server Transparent Access

The Routers are configured by default to route all web page requests to the caching server. You can switch this option on or off as follows:

- Open the Preferences window.
- Select the Caching tab



- Click the check box to enable or disable Transparent Caching.
- Ensure that the web cache server Port number in this screen is set to the TCP port number on which the caching server is operating. The default port number for the Vicomsoft WebCache Server is 8080. Other caching servers typically use port number 8080 or 8000.
- Enter the address for the caching server's host machine.

If the WebCache Server module is co-resident with the Router then the server address can be left blank.

On a MacOS server this should be the IP address in the TCP/IP Control Panel of the server machine.

- Close the Preferences window.
- If you enable Transparent web caching then ensure that the WebCache Server module is running. The module is launched automatically when the Router starts up in its default settings.

In order to use the Transparent caching mode, all client web server requests must pass to the Internet via the Router. This can be done most easily by setting up the clients to use the Router's DHCP Server function. For manually-configured clients, set their default router to be the Router's address.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you wish to run a browser on the same machine as the caching server and use it to access the cache then this browser must be set up in Proxy mode. This browser cannot use the Transparent access mode as the Router would not be able to distinguish between its web requests and outgoing requests from the caching server on the same machine.

To do this, open the Browser settings and select the Proxy options. Enter the local host address 127.0.0.1 and port 8080 for HTTP proxy access.

3 WebCache Server Operation

The Vicomsoft WebCache Server module is installed with default settings that enable it to operate immediately on startup.

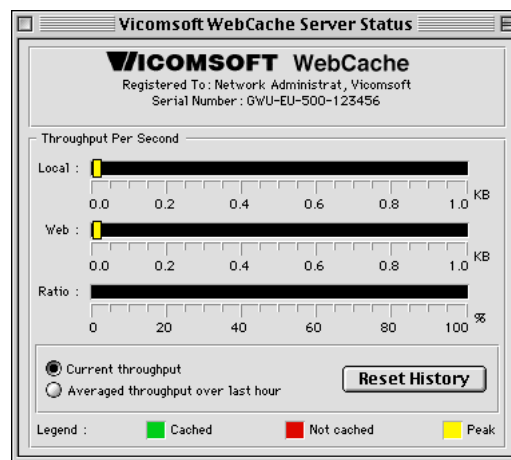
If you have set up the Router to use the WebCache Server then client web requests will be passed to the WebCache, and it will start to store the pages and objects that they access.

Status Window

The Server Status Window can be opened on the MacOS version using the File menu items Show Status, and closed using the File/Close menu item.

The Status Window displays the Server activity levels as bar graphs of locally served and remotely served traffic levels. Markers on the bar graphs show recent peak values, and the Ratio bar indicates the proportion of locally and remotely served data.

The radio buttons allow you to toggle between current throughputs and averages over the previous hour. Click the "Reset History" button to clear the recorded throughputs that are used to display the averages.

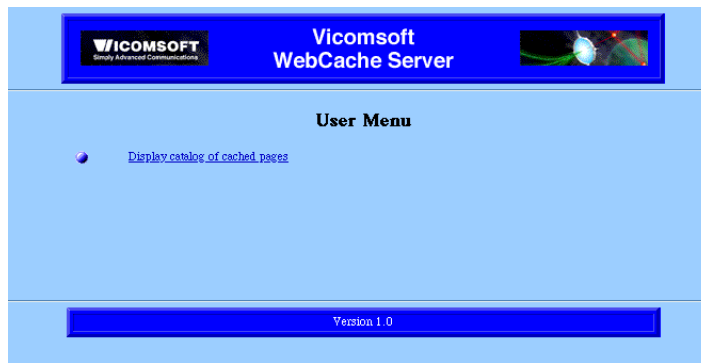


Offline Mode

The server can be switched to Offline operation using the Preferences dialog item "Offline". In this mode the Server will not attempt to request new or out-of-date pages from the Internet, and will only serve pages that are already cached.

In the Off-line mode it is important for clients to be able to find out which pages are cached, as these are the only ones they can view in a browser. The WebCache Server provides a "Catalog of cached pages" facility to make this possible. The Catalog is available to clients at any time, whether or not the WebCache Server is off-line.

To open the User Menu, enter the URL <http://webcache.local/> at a browser that is using the WebCache Server.



Click the User Menu item "Display catalog of cached pages" to show a list of web sites that are stored in the Server. Note that it may take several seconds to display catalog lists if the server is running on slow hardware and has a lot of cached data.



You can click on any host name to see the items currently cached from that server, and view any page by clicking its name.

Pages and other items are sorted alphabetically, under separate subheadings according to their types. The main Home and Index HTML pages are at the top of the list, and movies, sounds and images are listed with distinctive icons.

Items that are out of date have faded icons, and will be refreshed if they are viewed when the cache is online. If an item has been Protected by the Administrator from update or deletion, then a padlock is shown on its icon.



4 WebCache Server Administration

About this Chapter

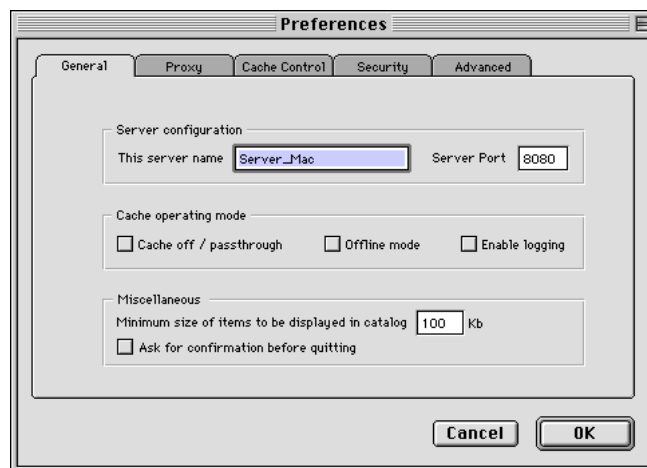
You can administer the WebCache Server locally by selecting Preferences in Edit menu. You can also view or modify the preferences remotely, using any web browser. These two methods are described in the next two Sections.

Local Administration

The Preferences menu option opens a multi-tab dialog with OK and Cancel buttons. Click Cancel at any time to close the dialog and discard all settings made in any tab. Click OK at any time to enter all the changes made in any tab.

The next sections describe the settings in each tab of the dialog.

General



This Server Name: this is the name used by this Server when it sends requests to remote web servers. It defaults to the machine's name.

Server Port: The port number the WebCache Server listens to, defaults to 8080. If you change it you must also change the Port number configured in the Router's Cache setup for transparent operation.

Cache off/passthrough: check this box to disable the caching function. All client requests are then forwarded directly to the remote web server, and no pages are cached by the server.

Off-line mode: check this box to take the Server off-line from the Internet. In this mode the Server will continue to serve web objects that it has cached, but will return an error page if it does not have a cached copy of a requested object.

Enable logging: Check this box to switch on activity logging. In this mode a text log is generated in Extended Common Log Format (CLF) that lists all served web items. The log file replaces the Referrer field in the Extended CLF structure with text that records whether each item was served from cache or directly from the remote web site.

The log file can be processed by any utility that recognizes CLF to produce activity reports. One popular log analyser utility is called "Analog". The WebCache installer includes a sample configuration file that you can use with Analog. Analog is available at <http://www.statslab.cam.ac.uk/~sret1/analog/>.

For ease of use, the "WebCache - analog.cfg" file should be copied into the Analog 3 folder. To use it, drag and drop the "WebCache - analog.cfg" file onto the Analog 3 application.

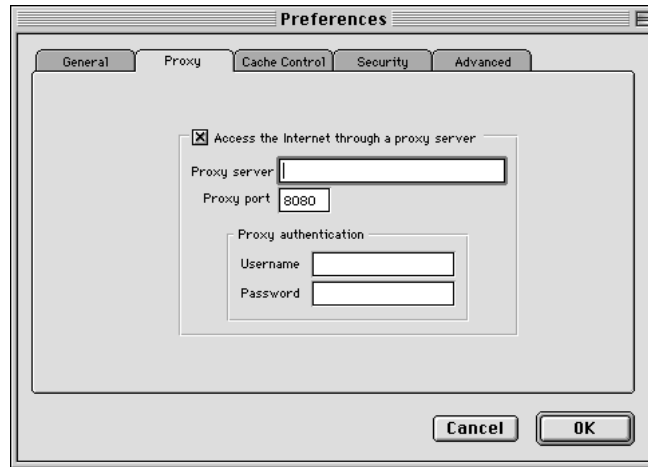
The config file looks for and processes files that end with "CacheLog.txt" that are located in the Analog 3 folder. The output web page is saved into the same folder as the "WebCache - analog.cfg" file (i.e. the Analog 3 folder) and is called "webcache.stats.html".

Minimum size of items to be displayed in catalog: the catalog of cached items can be viewed in any browser. It displays a list of all HTML pages that have been stored, and also lists movies, sounds and image files. Users will normally not wish to see all of the small embedded image files in the list, so you can restrict multimedia files listed by setting a minimum size here. The default is 100 KBytes.

Ask for confirmation before quitting: a warning message is displayed if Quit is manually selected, to reduce the risk of inadvertently shutting down the Caching Server module. If you prefer, you can suppress the warning by unchecking this checkbox.

Proxy

Use this screen only if you want to set up the WebCache Server to work via an upstream Proxy Server, for example a corporate firewall, or a web caching server operated by your Internet Service Provider.

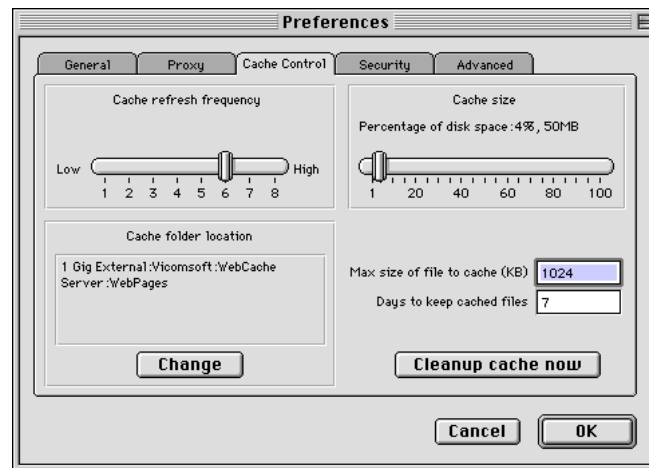


Access the Internet through a proxy server

Click in the checkbox and enter the following details that are required for access to the upstream server:

- Proxy address
- Proxy port (typically 8000 or 8080)
- Proxy authentication (if required)

Cache Control



Cache refresh frequency: for each request it receives, the caching server must decide whether to serve a cached copy of the requested object or to seek a fresh copy. This decision is based on information in the request, information received from the original web server, and the time since the object was last refreshed. If the Server checks for a fresh copy very frequently then it must wait more often for Internet delays before responding to requests. If it checks very infrequently then there is a risk that it will serve an out-of-date copy of the information.

You can use the slider to select one of eight decision profiles to choose the optimum refresh frequency for your users. The eight profiles are preset, but the Advanced tab allows you to customize them to meet your specific needs.

Cache folder location: cached web objects are stored on disk in a folder called "WebPages". This box shows the current path to the location of the WebPages folder. Click on the "Change" button to select a different location.

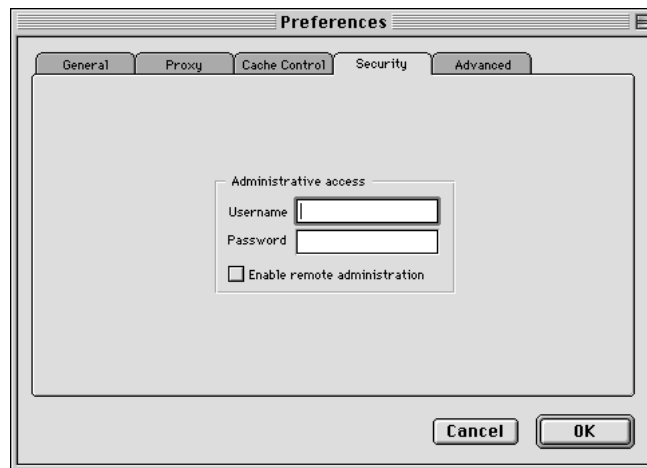
Cache size: use this slider to limit the amount of disk space used by the Server for cached objects. The slider is calibrated as a percentage of the total disk capacity, and as you move it shows both the actual number of MBytes selected and the percentage.

Max size of file to cache (KB): adjust this limit to avoid filling a limited cache capacity with large downloaded files. If you have a large disk then you can safely increase this limit if users wish to cache large objects.

Days to keep cached files: A housekeeping task executes periodically in the background to clear out old files. You can set this limit to ensure that old files are removed from the cache during this cleanup.

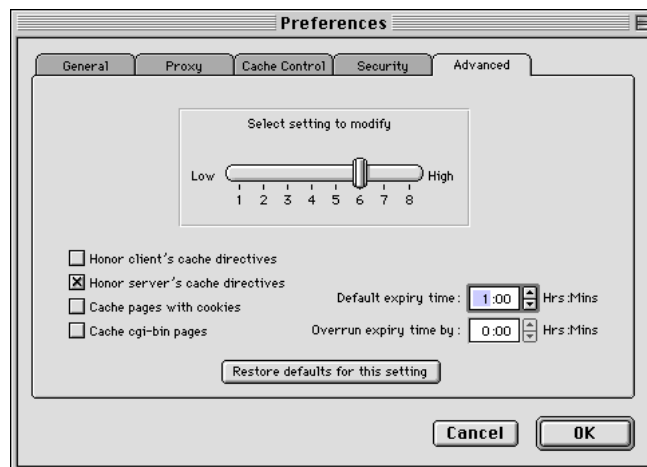
Cleanup cache now: use this button to trigger the housekeeping task immediately if you have just reduced the "Days to keep cached files" setting and want to release cache space immediately.

Security



Set an Administrator name and password in this tab to control remote web access to the Server settings. The checkbox cannot be set to enable remote administration until a User Name and Password have been entered.

Advanced



This tab allows you to view and/or customize the Server's eight refresh frequency decision profiles. These profiles tune the frequency with which the WebCache Server checks the freshness of its cached data by asking the remote web server. More frequent checks result in delays while the remote server responds. Less frequent checks increase the risk of serving out-of-date or inappropriate versions of requested information.

To view the default settings supplied by Vicomsoft, select the setting you wish to modify using the slider. A table of these settings is listed below for reference.

To modify a setting, select it and change its profile items. You can use the "Restore defaults for this setting" button to revert any setting to the values as delivered.

Profile options you can tune are:

Honor client's cache directives: the client's browser may send a no-cache directive in its request. Some browsers always do this. If you set this checkbox then the Server will obey this directive and will not cache any pages requested by these browsers. This will reduce the effectiveness of the cache.

Honor server's cache directives: web servers may send a no-cache directive for pages that are known to change very frequently or to contain dynamic or user-specific information. It is normally preferable to obey this directive to avoid serving stale or personal information to the client. However you may want to override the remote server if you know that you want to be able to use the served information off-line.

Cache pages with cookies, Cache cgi-bin pages: you can choose to cache pages that are requested with cookies or whose URL includes a cgi-bin reference. A cookie or a cgi request may include personal profile information that determines the responses of the web server, so if you enable this option you risk caching user-specific or stale data. Again, this may be your intention for off-line browsing or in situations where you are prepared to take these risks to improve caching performance.

Default expiry time: the HTTP specifications allow servers to specify the expiry time for a web object so that caches can determine when they should seek a fresh copy. However, this option is seldom sent by servers, so the cache administrator must decide how frequently to check for new information. This setting determines the default expiry time for such objects. After this time the Server will check with the remote web server to see if the object has changed before sending its cached copy to the client.

Overrun server's expiry time by: if the remote web server has specified an expiry time then the cache can be set to overrun this deadline before re-checking with the remote server. This can be useful in situations where the remote server sets a very short expiry time, for example as a way to ensure that each user refresh delivers a different version of the page.

Default refresh frequency profiles: the following table summarizes the initial default values for the eight profiles.

Refresh rate	Low 1	2	3	4	5	Default 6	7	High 8
Honor client's cache directives	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Honor server's cache directives	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cache pages with cookies	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Cache cgi-bin pages	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Default expiry time	12 hr	8 hr	4 hr	2 hr	1 hr	1 hr	30 min.	15 min.
Overrun server expiry time by	4 hr	1 hr	1 hr	30 min.	30 min.	0	0	0

Remote Administration

The remote administration option provides similar controls to those in the local interface, using a web browser to access the WebCache. Some of the administration features are only available if your browser has JavaScript capability. This has been tested with Netscape Communicator and Microsoft Internet Explorer version 3 and later on MacOS and Windows systems.

To connect to the Server from any browser, open the URL `http://webcache.local/admin`. Note that this host name is the same as that used for clients to reach the Catalog of cached pages, but the "admin" directory is protected by the password defined in the Preferences.

Enter the Administrator access name and password to display the web administration main menu page:



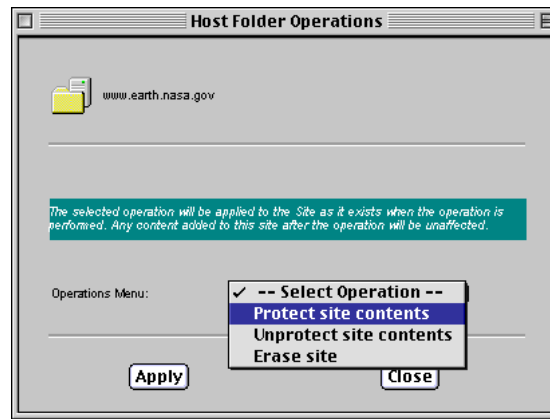
The main menu provides Administration access to the catalog of cached pages, and to Configuration pages where you can change the WebCache settings.

Administering cached web sites

Click "Display catalog of cached pages" to see a list of web servers for which the cache contains stored pages. This catalog is similar to that seen by clients, but includes a "Toolkit" icon beside each item. Note that it may take several seconds to display catalog lists if the server is running on slow hardware and has a lot of cached data.



Click the "Toolkit" icon beside a server to open a "Host Folder Operations" window for the server.



You can use the menu in this window to select operations to Protect, Unprotect or Erase all currently-cached items for the selected server. When you have selected an operation in the menu, click "Apply". Some browsers will close the operations window at this point. On others you should click "Close" .

Protect site contents: this option prevents the WebCache Server from deleting or refreshing any of the currently cached items for this Server. It can be used to preserve large cached files beyond their normal expiry times. If new pages are later cached then these will not be protected unless this operation is repeated.

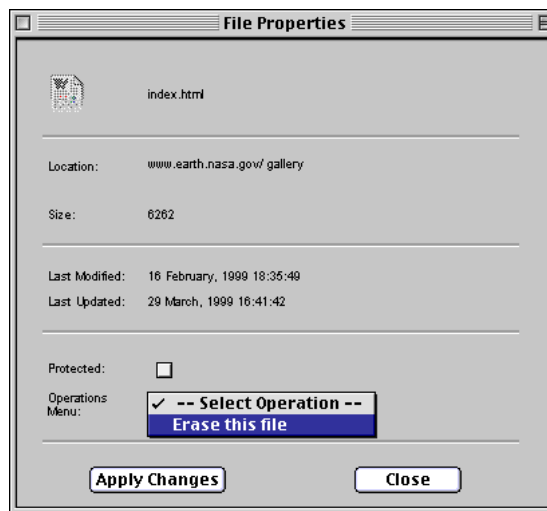
Unprotect site contents: this option removes the protection for all of the currently cached items for this Server. They can then be deleted or refreshed by the Server in the normal way.

Erase site: this option deletes all currently cached items for the selected site immediately. When you refresh the Catalog this web server will not be listed until new copies of its pages are cached.

Administering individual items: if you click on the name of a server you will see a list of the individual items stored for that site.



Each has a "Toolkit" icon that opens a Properties window for the item.



This window displays the file name, size and date information for the item, and its Protected status. You can use the controls to change its Protected state, or Erase it from the cache, then click "Apply Changes".

Protected: this checkbox shows if the cached item has been Protected from update or deletion. Click the checkbox to change the item's Protection state.

Erase this item: select this menu option to delete the currently cached copy of this item. When you refresh the Catalog it will not be listed until a new copy has been cached.

Remote WebCache Configuration

Click WebCache configuration to open the main configuration page:

These settings are described in detail in the previous section. When you have made changes, send them to the Server using the button "Activate New Settings".

The Advanced WebCache Configuration screen allows you to customize the refresh frequency settings. It displays a table showing the current settings for the eight profiles, and provides editing controls that you can use to select any profile and modify its settings. If you make any changes, click "Activate New Settings" to send the changes to the WebCache Server.

Rule	1 (Low)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (high)
Honor client's cache directives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Honor server's cache directives	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cache pages with cookies	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Cache CGI pages	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Default expiry time	12:00	08:00	04:00	02:00	01:00	01:00	00:30	00:15
Overrun expiry time	04:00	01:00	01:00	00:30	00:30	00:00	00:00	00:00

The bar at the bottom of each page, or the browser's "Back" button, will get you back to the main menu.

5 The Domain Name Server

Introduction

Whenever a client wants to reach a remote server across the Internet, the name of the target server must be looked up by the client machine, and converted into a numeric IP address. This applies for all services - web, email, FTP etc.

If the machine has not recently connected to the required server and remembered its IP address it will ask a Domain Name Server (DNS) to do the lookup for it. This must happen before the client machine can send any request to server, and can cause significant connection delays when the Internet is busy.

The Vicomsoft routing products include integral Domain Name Caching and Serving options to provide improvements in performance and flexibility. This Chapter describes these features and provides configuration instructions for them.

Domain Name Caching

When DNS Caching is enabled the Router monitors and caches the results of client requests to remote name servers. If it can resolve a client request using cached information then it does so, giving a faster response. All other requests are routed to the remote DNS address defined by the client.

To use this mode, client machines are supplied with the addresses of remote DNS servers in the usual way. DHCP clients will receive the addresses configured in the Network Preferences tab of the Router, and manually configured clients should have DNS addresses entered in their control panels.

Domain Name Serving

When DNS Serving is enabled the Router's address can be set as the DNS address for its clients. It then serves all their DNS requests itself.

When a client asks the server to resolve a name the DNS returns the address immediately if it knows it. Otherwise it forwards the request to the upstream servers, making recursive requests if necessary, returns the results to the client, and caches resolved addresses for reuse.

To use this mode the client is set up with the Router address as its DNS address, so all client name server requests are sent directly to the Router's DNS function. If the Router is set up in this mode then it serves its own address to DHCP clients whenever they ask for their IP and DNS address information.

Local Name Resolution

The Vicomsoft DNS also provides local name resolving features which operate when DNS Caching or Serving are enabled.

The DNS can be given, or will learn, the names of servers on the local network, and will resolve these to the correct IP addresses. Local server names and addresses can be entered manually, or they can be learned as a result of address assignments by the integral DHCP Server.

Fixed Address Resolution

If you assign fixed names to IP addresses using the DHCP Names File then the integral DNS will resolve these names for local network users. For example, you may have a DHCP Names file entry:

- 192.168.1.25 TheWebServer

Users on the local network who are set up to use the Router for DNS can then enter the URL "http://TheWebServer.local/" in their browsers, and they will connect to a web server at IP address 192.168.1.25.

For more advanced DNS configurations you can create a Gateway Names file as a text file. This file should be created in standard UNIX Hosts file format, and a sample file is installed with the software. The DNS does not support Zone or wild card queries, so it will not currently operate in a primary/secondary DNS configuration.

DHCP Address Resolution

Users whose IP addresses are assigned via DHCP may not always receive the same IP address, unless the DHCP Clients file has been configured to reserve a fixed address for them. So personal servers are difficult to access on these machines. The Vicomsoft DNS solves this problem by linking the name server with the DHCP server.

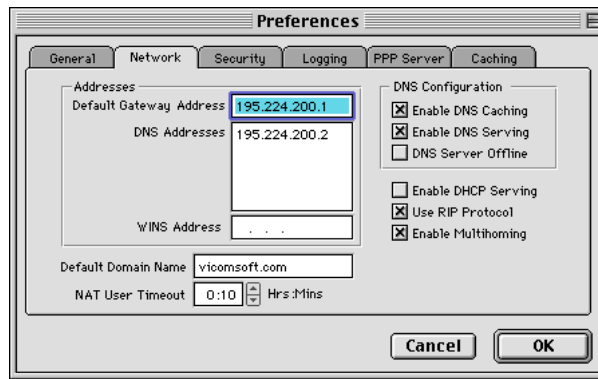
Most DHCP clients can specify a Host Name when requesting a DHCP address, or the Host Name may be defined in the DHCP Names File. So, if you are using the Router as both DHCP Server and Domain Name Server then it can track the assignment of IP addresses to client machines, and resolve a client machine's Host Name to its currently-assigned DHCP address.

For example, suppose a machine is configured with a Host Name of "MyServer, and has acquired its IP address from the DHCP Server. If it is running a personal web server, this can be reached by other LAN clients using the URL "http://MyServer.local/" without needing to know its current IP address.

Enabling the DNS

The Domain Name Caching and Domain Name Serving functions can be enabled as follows:

- Open the Preferences window in the Router application.
- Select the Network tab



- Enter the Upstream DNS address.
- Click the check boxes corresponding to the DNS options you require.
- If you want users to access an existing DNS then select Enable DNS Caching.
- If you want users to access the Router as their DNS then select Enable DNS Serving.
- Close the Preferences window.

In order to use the DNS features, ensure that all client DNS requests reach the Router. This can be done by setting up the clients to use the Router's DHCP Server function, or by setting the default router for manually-configured clients to be the Router's address.

Offline DNS Mode

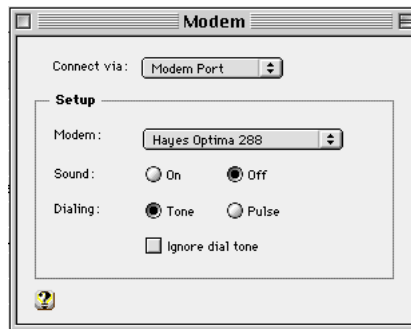
The Off-line checkbox in the Preferences screen can be enabled when the Router is being operated off-line from the Internet. The router will not then attempt to forward domain name requests to a remote DNS, and will only serve cached or local addresses it already knows.

The DNS Offline mode will normally be used in conjunction with the Vicomsoft WebCache Server's Off-line feature, permitting transparent off-line operation. For more details, see the section on Transparent Cache Access.

6 Modem CCL Script Support

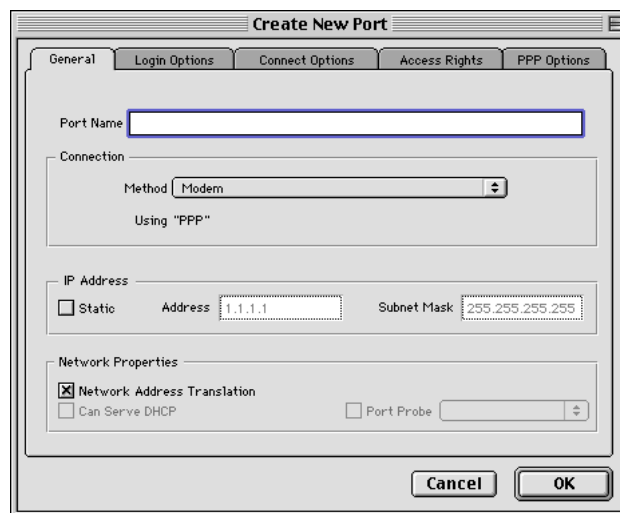
Modem Control Panel Support

The Vicomsoft Internet Gateway and SoftRouter Plus now support CCL scripted modem drivers in addition to the Comms Toolbox drivers supported previously.

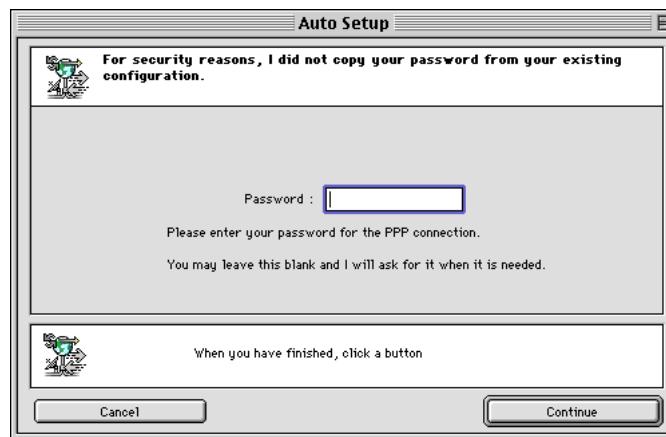


The Modem Control Panel provides facilities to select a single modem type and to define the Serial port it is connected to.

If you then select the "Modem" method when you create a PPP port it will use the modem that is currently configured in your Modem Control Panel when it connects.



The Auto-Setup process will also attempt to copy an existing Open Transport PPP configuration to create an Internet connection. If it finds a suitable configuration it will ask you to enter the Password for your ISP account. This configuration will then use the modem that is selected in the Modem Control Panel.



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