Windows/Waffle Read News v0.94 beta

 Welcome to WRN. WRN is a Windows-based Usenet news and mail user interface for the DOS-based WAFFLE v1.65 UUCP news & mail system. WRN provides easy-to-use, icon-based access to mail and/or news which Waffle has downloaded from a Unix host. The user may then reply to or send mail, or post news items. These are stored by WRN, ready for Waffle to upload to the host site when it next connects.

 WRN is designed for a single user who has been using Waffle simply as an offline Unix mail/news system. To this end:

* *   There is no login/password mechanism

* *   Once a newsgroup has been read, it is deleted

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Setting Up WRN

 WRN is written in Visual Basic, so VBRUN100.DLL must be accessible in your PATH. VBRUN100.DLL is freely available from many sites; it is not included in this archive to reduce network load and file transmission times.

 WRN is a user interface for Waffle 1.65. You must first install Waffle and get it running correctly, downloading files and uploading replies. I won't describe that process here, partly because it is long and involved, partly because it's described in the Waffle documentation, and partly because it's not really my problem. Once Waffle is working correctly, you can probably discard large parts of it.

 You're now ready to get WRN itself set up and running.

 You need to create a file called WRN.INI in the directory from which you will be running WRN. I suggest that you keep all the WRN files in the same directory. WRN.INI will contain 17 lines of plain ASCII text (each terminated by CRLF), with one entry per line. It is a standard Windows .INI file. I've included my WRN.INI file in this release as an example

 The following entries are required:
   [WRN]
       The group identifier

   UseNetFile

   NewsDir

   QuotePrefix

   StaticFile

   UserID

   UserCode

   TimeZone

   SiteID

   UserName

   Organisation

   MailOutDir

   SeqFile

   NewsReply

   NewsOutList

   SigFile

   UUDecode

UseNetFile

Location of your Waffle newsgroups file. This is normally called USENET and located in your WAFFLEdirectory. It contains a list of all the newsgroups that Waffle expects/knows about, and the directories where it places articles belonging to these newsgroups.

e.g. UseNetFile=C:

NewsDir

Name of your Waffle news directory. This is the "root" of the directory structure in which Waffle will place your news articles.

e.g. NewsDir=C:

QuotePrefix

This string is added to the beginning of each line when you reply to a mail or news message.

e.g. QuotePrefix="> "

StaticFile

 The name and location of your Waffle STATIC file. This will be in the same directory as your USENET file. It contains information that Waffle needs for communications, etc. Some of that is useful to WRN too.
 e.g. StaticFile=c:

UserID

Your username on your Waffle system. This is used by Waffle (& WRN) to locate your mail, and included as part of your Email address.

e.g. UserID=frank

UserCode

 This number will be sent to you when you <u>register</u> WRN. It is calculated from your full name. After registering, you'll be able to add your own signature to your messages, and the introductory reminder screen won't appear.
 e.g. UserCode=12345

TimeZone

> Your time-zone: appended to the date and time of your messages.
> e.g. TimeZone=NZT

SiteID

Your site's "Internet name". Typically this will be a name, you've chosen tacked onto the front of the name of the site you get your newsfeed from.

e.g. SiteID=whare.cavebbs.welly.gen.nz

UserName
Your full name; put whatever you like here, but if you change it, you're going to have to re- <u>register</u> .
e.g. UserName=Frank van der Hulst

Organisation

> Your organisation's name: included in outgoing message headers. Put whatever you like here.
> e.g. Organisation=Tech-Soft Systems, Wellington, NZ

MailOutDir

Directory where outgoing mail is stored until it can be uploaded to your host site. Waffle on my system uses my host's siteID as part of the path. The spool variable in my WAFFLE/SYSTEM/STATIC points to C:\SPOOL.

e.g. MailOutDir=c:

SeqFile
   The name of Waffle's outgoing sequence file. Waffle keeps track of outgoing messages by storing the number of the last message sent (or is it the next message to send) in a file in its UUCP directory. My WAFFLE/SYSTEM/STATIC file's dialers variable points to the same directory.
    e.g. SeqFile=c:

NewsReply

Directory to store your outgoing news postings until they can be uploaded to your host site. These files are stored in a different format from outgoing mail, and in a different directory. You will need to delete messages from here periodically, otherwise your disk will gradually fill up with out-of-date replies. I've created a directory off the WAFFLEdirectory, but you can put them wherever you want.
 e.g. NewsReply=c:

NewsOutList

    File to store a list of replies until they are batched and sent to your host. This name is created by appending your host's name to SPOOL

    e.g. NewsOutList=c:

SigFile

Location of your signature file. After registering WRN, you will be able to add a signature to the end of outgoing messages. The signature file may be as long as you like, containing ASCII text. You may find it convenient to use the same signature file as Waffle uses.

 e.g. SigFile=c:

UUDecode
    The name of your UUDecode executable program. This allows you to specify what program WRN
    should execute when you select its UUDecode function. WRN will execute this program, with the full
    path of the currently selected message as a command-line parameter. There is no support for multi-
    part messages.

 I recommend Extract 3.00, which is a shareware program written by Darren E. Penner. EXTRACT is free
to individuals who should register with Darren. Corporate/Educational cost is $10. Darren can be
contacted by Email at dpenner@ee.ualberta.ca or by snail mail to

    Darren E. Penner
    #904-17327 69th Avenue
    Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5T 3S8

 e.g. UUDecode=c:.exe

Waffle is a program which acts as a bulletin board system. It allows users to call it and read and post news messages, and to read and send mail. It also calls other systems to exchange news and mail with them.

WRN Screen Forms

 WRN's screen layout consists of three separate windows or "forms" which you can place where you like on the screen.
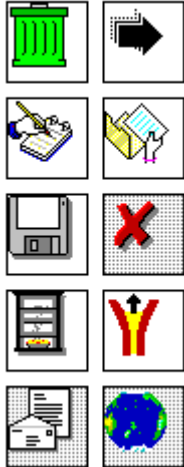
Toolbox form
Message List form
Message Text form

The Toolbox form

Near the top of the screen is a "tool-box" form; a set of icons to perform various functions.

[Catch-up](#)
[Next message](#)
[Write new message](#)
[Load message from file](#)
[Save message to file](#)
[Cancel Edit](#)
[Rot-13 encrypt/decrypt messages](#)
[UUDecode File](#)
[Send message as mail](#)
[Post message to newsgroup](#)

The Catch-up Tool

 The Catch-up icon DELETES ALL MESSAGES in the selected newsgroup/mail. WRN was designed for a system like mine... one user downloading newsgroups and/or mail overnight. So once you've read the group there's no need to keep it clogging your disk.

The Next Tool

The Next icon skips to the next message in the current newsgroup. At the end of a group, it will skip to the first message of the next group. This does not delete messages in the current group.

The New Tool

 To send new mail or post new news to a newsgroup, click on the New icon, then type your message in the message window, followed by clicking on either the Mail or the News icon.

The Load Tool

 To mail or post an ASCII file, click on the Load icon... You will be prompted for the source drive/path/filename. When you've selected the file, it will be loaded into the message-box, and can then be sent by clicking on the Mail or News icon.

The Save Tool

 The Save icon is used to save the displayed message to a file... a dialog box allows you to select the destination drive/path/filename. If the file already exists, the message is appended to the existing file. Note that this saves the entire file, including the header.

The Cancel Tool

The Cancel tool is used to abort editing the displayed message.

The Rot-13 Tool

 To decrypt a message which has been Rot-13'ed, use the Rot-13 icon. Similarly, to encrypt a message in Rot-13 format, use the Rot-13 icon.

The UUDECODE Tool

 To extract a file which has been UUEncoded, select the UUDecode icon. This will run the external UUDecode program specified in your WRN.INI file.

The Mail Tool

 To reply via Mail, click on the message-box (quote marks should appear at the beginning of each line) & edit it. Use the Mail icon to send mail; you will be prompted for a Subject, and who to send it to. You also get the chance to add a signature (contained in a file specified in WRN.INI) to the end of your message. If you have second thoughts, use the Cancel tool.

The News Tool

To follow-up to a newsgroup, click on the message-box, edit it, and use the News icon to post it; you will be prompted for a Subject, Newsgroups to post to, and whether to append your signature file.

The Message List Form

 The Message List form contains a combo box giving available news groups and a list box containing available messages in the current group.

The Message Text Form

The Message Text form allows the user to read and edit text.

Running WRN

The following items contain information on running WRN under Windows.
 Change to the directory where WRN.INI and WRN.HLP are located (I suggest putting these files in the same directory as WRN.EXE), then run WRN.EXE. You could do this

*   from PROGMAN's Run command,
*   by creating an icon in a PROGMAN group
*   by using a PIF file
*   from an icon bar such as CLYSMIC

Hints and Tips Done

 To generate a blank line between 2 groups of text use the \sa300 command in the paragraph format
string for the first paragraph.

Some text **Done |**
Done |
More Text ●●

Registration

This is a beta-test version of WRN. You may use it for up to one month, after which you should register it. Registered users will be able to upgrade their registration to new versions when they are released. This is distributed as share-ware; you may make as many copies as you wish, and distribute them wherever you wish, so long as the entire contents of this archive are kept together, and not modified.

As an incentive to registration, this program displays a reminder screen when it is started, and always appends an "Unregistered user" signature to messages you send. Both of these are disabled when you register.

Registration costs US$10. This may be sent to me as a cheque, money order, cash or whatever, in any currency you like, so long as I can convert it to about the equivalent of US$10 here in NZ. Funds should be sent to:

Tech-Soft Systems
101 Epuni St
Lower Hutt
Wellington
New Zealand.

In return, I'll send you a UserCode to plug into WRN to make the incentives go away. You'll also be encouraging me to produce more shareware (let's keep the price of software down). You'll also get a nice warm righteous feeling in the pit of your tummy...

Using WRN

Note that Edit is accessed via the Menu entry... it pulls down a sub-menu giving the usual Cut, Copy, and Paste options to exchange data via the system clipboard. All other tools are accessed via their icons.
Below the tool-bar are two list boxes; the left-hand one (yellow background) shows newsgroups (including MAIL if you have some mail waiting) which contain messages. A newsgroup may be selected by clicking (why does Windows need double-clicks every-where?) once on the group you want to read. The right-hand list box (green background) contains a list of message subjects (and authors) in the currently selected newsgroup.
Click on the message you want to read, it appears in the large message-box (white background) at the bottom of the screen.

Planned Improvements

*   Proper context-sensitive help
*   Fix a problem which (because of strange internals in VB) limits messages to 16K. Currently, if one is displayed which is more than 16K, WRN will beep at you and add a "*** Truncated ***" line to the beginning of the displayed text. If you select Save, it will still save the *entire* file.
*   One alpha-tester asked for Catch-up to work like Waffle... (i.e. don't delete old messages) so that it can be used in a multi-user system. If more people ask, that may be added (although I like it as it is :-)
*   Combo-box for newsgroups when posting.
*   Any other suggestions??

Revision History

v0.90 alpha

 First released to one or two sites

v0.91

 Icon buttons added

v0.92

 Rot-13 added

v0.93 beta

 UUDecode link added Released to local BBSs, Simtel, garbo

v0.94

 Bug fix (^Z in header handled) Edit menu added

Feedback

Please send any comments (both positive and negative) or suggestions to me so that I can improve this product. That still applies even if you don't <u>register</u> .
I can be reached via Internet Email at:
f_vander@comp.vuw.ac.nz
frank@cit.ac.nz
frank@whare.cavebbs.welly.gen.nz
If you don't have Internet access, you could even resort to Snail-mail.