IRC Intro File for IRC Newbies using Windows
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With this IRC Intro file we try to introduce IRC to people using MS Windows. It is assumed you have an Internet Provider and you have some experience with using winsock programs. This intro file focuses on IRC itself. It will not go into details about installing or configuring the programs you need to use IRC, but if you ever managed to install and use programs like WS-FTP, Netscape, Eudora, WS-Archie, Mosaic, WinVN, FreeAgent or similar programs, you will not have any trouble understanding how to install and use an IRC program (client). Most IRC programs, especially the popuplar and better ones, are distributed with excellent help files on setting up and installing these programs. Some very good FAQ's on IRC already exist but they are often written around UNIX based IRC clients, and handle problems and give examples you will never need on a Windows based IRC client. That is why this IRC Intro file is made. We hope you will enjoy IRC!

(1) What is IRC?

IRC stands for "Internet Relay Chat". It was originally written by Jarkko Oikarinen in 1988. Since starting in Finland, it has been used in over 60 countries around the world. It was designed as a replacement for the "talk" program but has become much, much more than that. IRC is a multi-user chat system, where people meet on Channels (rooms, virtual places, usually with a certain topic of conversation) to talk in groups, or privately. There is no restriction to the number of people that can participate in a given discussion, or the number of channels that can be formed on IRC.

(2) How is IRC set up?

As a user you run a Client program which connects to a Server in an IRC network. All servers are interconnected and pass messages from user to user over the IRC network. One server can be connected to several other servers and up to hundreds of clients. Several larger and smaller IRC networks exist. The largest one, called EFnet (Eris Free net), usually serves over 15000 users at any given moment. Smaller ones, like IRCNet (10000), Undernet (10000) and Dalnet (8000), are a little less populated but often offer more stability and convenience.

(3) What does a client do? What is the purpose of a server?

An IRC client reads in the commands and text that you supply to it, and parses them. It filters them and performs the appropriate actions, and if necessary, passes them on to your IRC server. An IRC server can serve many other clients. The server holds information about the channels and people on IRC, as well as other pieces of information, and is also responsible for routing your messages to other users. The IRC Network itself consists of multiple servers which are all connect to each other.

(4) How do I get on IRC?

First, you have to make sure an IRC Client is installed on your system. If you do not have one you should ask your local system admin to install a client on your PC or local area network. If you have a stand-alone PC with internet acces you have to obtain and install a client yourself. (dont worry ..its easy!)

(5) Where can I find an IRC client?

Popular IRC clients (in no particular order) : WSIRC, mIRC, InteRfaCe and ChatMan. You can get an IRC client by anonymous ftp from several sites (use the one closest to you) If you are

not familiar with anonymous ftp, ask your network provider for assistance. FTP sites are :

ftp://ftp.undernet.org/pub/irc/clients/windows/
ftp://cs-ftp.bu.edu/irc/clients/pc/windows/
ftp://papa.indstate.edu/winsock-l/winirc/
ftp://ftp.winsite.com/pub/pc/win3/winsock/

You can also visit the programs' World Wide Web pages to download the clients:

WSIRC	http://ftp.clark.net/pub/csamsi/home.html
mIRC	http://www.mirc.co.uk/index.html
mIRC	http://www-2.nijenrode.nl/software/mirc/index.html
mIRC	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Park/6000/index.html
InteRfaCe	http://www.hijinx.com.au/interfac/interfac.htm
ChatMan	http://www.uai.cl/~burton/chatman/
Virc	http://www.megalith.co.uk/virc/
Pirch	http://www.bcpl.lib.md.us/~frappa/pirch.html

All major FTP sites have some /windows/irc/ directory you can check for IRC programs. Once you have installed and run a simple IRC program, it is easy to ask for and get (!) a better one on IRC !!

(6) What else do I need before I can install an IRC client?

Besides running MS-Windows you need to have a properly installed WINSOCK. If you can use FTP, E-mail, News or other Internet programs from within Windows already, you can safely assume you have a winsock installed and it is working properly. If you do not have a properly working winsock installed on your PC you should install one first. Information on Winsocks can be found in The Winsock Faq by Michael Jason Mezaros at http://mars.superlink.net/user/mook/winfaq.html.

(7) How do I install this client that I found?

Most programs on the internet are transported in a compressed form. The better programs come in self extracting .exe files that also install the program for you. Sometimes you first have to unzip the file to be able to run the program in it. A good unzipper can be found at http://www.winzip.com/. Once unzipped, installing an IRC client (like any program) is mainly a matter of running its setup program or simply placing the files in a separate directory and running the program. After installation, you may have to specify some personal information before you can connect to an IRC server. For detailed instructions read the help files included in the programs (typically a .hlp file or readme.txt). Some IRC clients, like mIRC, have their own FAQ that provides detailed help. Reading such FAQ's is highly recommended!

(8) What do I have to fill in in the client's Setup menu?

The first time you run your IRC client program you have to fill in some information about yourself, such as, your Internet address and the IRC server with which you want to connect. Your client may also have a section for you to specify the Port, Password, Real name, Email address, Nickname(s), IP address and Local Host name. These options are usually found under File/Setup/.

(9) Which server should I connect my client to?

It's usually best to try and connect to a geographically close server, even though that may not always be the best. You can always ask for suggestions when you log on to IRC. Reference to an extensive list of servers is provided at the end of this file.

(10) What is the port number to use to connect to IRC?

In general, the port number to use is 6667. Some, but not all, servers listen to other ports (most commonly in the 6665-6670 range). When in doubt, select port 6667 (Dalnet usually uses port 7000). A port number should be seen as an entrance to a server. If you take the wrong entrance (port) the server will not understand what you are doing, and will disconnect you.

(11) Do I need a password to connect to irc?

Normally you do not need a password to use an IRC server. Most servers allow anonymous access. If you do not have a password for an IRC server then leave the password entry field blank. If you are prompted for a login or password and you dont know what to type, try to connect to another server.

(12) Do I have to give my real name?

No, you do not -have- to give your real name. However, simply filling in nonsense will not make you anonymous. IRC is not inteded to keep you hidden from your friends or enemies. Keep this in mind if you are tempted to behave maliciously. A fake "real name" can be a good way to mask your gender from all the nerds out here ;o) but the PC you use can always be traced so you will never be truly anonymous.

(13) Do I have to fill in my E-mail address in the setup?

Assuming you have an E-mail account somewhere you should fill in the address you can be reached at by mail. In case you do not have an E-mail address you can just fill in your name.

(14) What is a nickname?

On IRC you are known to others by a nickname. You are free to choose any nickname you like, up to 9 characters long. Do not use spaces and avoid unusual ASCII characters in your nickname. It is very common to find people that use the same nickname and you may be asked or choose to switch nicknames to avoid confusion. Only on some IRC networks nicknames can be Owned.

(15) What is my IP Address?

Your IP Address is the address your PC uses on the Internet. It is usually a set of 4 numbers or its equivalent IP Name. Some providers offer you a unique IP Address (static IP) or they assign a different one every time you connect (dynamic IP) to them. With Dynamic IP addresses you have to make sure your client automatically looks up your current IP Address and your Local Host name each time you connect to IRC.

(16) What is my Local Host name?

The Local Host name is the name you or your provider assigned to your PC. It can be a single word or a name equivalent to your IP Address.

(17) I tried to connect to a server and received a "Connection refused," "Connection timed out" or "Unknown host" message.

First of all, always try some other IRC Servers when you are unable to access your favorite one. The server, its machine or the route to the server may just be down or broken. When using a new server name you should make sure a server with the specified name actually exists. The server name you specified could be wrong. If the server exists, you can then try the numeric address of the server rather than its symbolic one (e.g 131.174.124.9 for irc.sci.kun.nl). This will solve problems if your Domain Name Server is down, slow, does not understand the name you gave it or cannot translate it into a numeric address.

(18) When I connect I get a "Not enough user parameters" error?

A "Not enough user parameters" error will occur if you try to connect to a server but you did not have the Local Host name filled in, or had it filled in incorrectly. Check your entry in your client's setup menu. Also check if you supplied your client with a valid E-Mail address.

(19) How do I solve the "You haven't registered" error?

This is a server message to you, it has nothing to do with registering or paying for your IRC client. If you receive this message or if you get disconnected very quickly, your Local Host name or IP Address may be wrong, or not filled in at all. Look in your client's setup dialog and check if the Local Host is correct and if the IP Address is filled in correctly. An easy way to solve an incorrect IP Address is to set the 'On connect, always get' "IP Address" and "Local Host" to "ON" and restart your client. If this does not help you could be trying to connect to a NON-public server. Try another server to be sure.

(20) I get disconnected at startup.... What does "--- Ghosts are not allowed on IRC." mean? What does "--- You are not welcome on this server." mean?

"Ghosts are not allowed on IRC" means that you are banned from using that server. You cannot be completely banned from IRC. Banning exists only on a per-server basis (being banned on one server does not mean you are automatically banned from another). Banning is in one of three forms:
- You are banned specifically, you yourself. Only you can be responsible for this (if you are using a shared account or dynamic IP addressing, this obviously does not apply). The responsibility lies completely with you and you have no one to complain to.
- Your machine is banned. Chances are, you did committed no wrongdoing. Try using another machine on the network if you have one and seeing if you can use that particular irc server.
- Your whole site is banned (where "site" is a "school", "company", "country" or "provider"). This almost certainly is not your fault. Chances of geting the server-ban lifted are slim. Try using another server.
The most general answer is "use another server", but if it bothers you, try writing to the irc administrator of that site (type /admin servername). Be polite in explaining your case.

(21) What is K-lined? Why can't I connect to certain IRC servers? Why do some servers disconnect me?

Some servers restrict access to local users and might therefore close or not even accept a connection from you. Bad behavior by you or your friends, customers from your provider or an entire country may also be restrcited from using certain servers. In each case, an attempt to connect will result in a response similar to the following:

```
--- Attempting to connect (irc.network.net)
Local host: cheops (131.69.136.12)
Catch22 You are banned from this server
```

```
Closing Link: Catch22   [ student.uni.nl ] (K-lined)
--- Disconnected
```

Getting disconnected with the "No authorization" message occurs due to a similar reason. The server does not give your site access. A server administrator can choose which sites can connect to his server via "I - lines" (called invitation lines). Many servers only I-line local sites so you should try to use a server close to you.

(22) Can our firewall be blocking my IRC session?

Yup, that is very well possible.... I only know of mIRC as being a Windows based IRC client being SOCKS compliant at the moment. No other IRC Clients support firewalls. You need a SOCKS compliant IRC client to be able to IRC over a firewall. Ask your internet provider or corporate network managers if you are behind a firewall and, if so, if using mIRC will allow you to use IRC.

(23) OK, I've got a client installed and I'm connected to a server, now what?

It's probably best to take a look around and see what you want to do first. All IRC commands start with a "/", and most are one word. Typing /help will get you help information. /names will get you a list of all nicknames, /list will give you a list of channels, etc. The output of /list is typically something like this:

```
#hack       21    We are your worst nightmare !
#Nippon     53    Speak Japanese here please ?
#nicole           3
#hottub           76    Come in for a friendly chat.
#mirc       27    mIRC Homepage http://www-2.nijenrode.nl/software/mirc/
#irchelp          17    Ask all your IRC questions here.
```

(Note: There are sometimes thousands of channels, this is just a small example.) In this example "hack" is a channel name. "#" is the prefix. Follwing the channel name you will see the number of people on it as well as its topic. All channel names start with a # or &.

(24) What exactly is a channel?

A channel is a 'place' on IRC where group conversations occur. People can join the same channel and see each other. Depending on its topic and time of the day a channel can be VERY crowded. Channels can alsobe quite chaotic, or calm. Channels can be open to everyone but also closed and private and only open to friends. On the large IRC Networks (EFnet) as many as 2000 channels can exist, on smaller networks (corporate or even one-node-nets) there will be fewer channels. Channels on IRC are dynamic in the sense that anyone can create a new channel, and a channel disappears when the last person on it leaves. Once connected to an IRC server, type /list to see all existing channels. All channel names start with a # or a &. The # channels are globally available while the & channels are restricted to users on your local IRC server. For this moment you can forget about the & channels. If people speak of 'the IRC' they refer to the use of the globally available channels with names starting with a #. Whenever you want to refer to a channel's name, it should be prefixed with a # or &. You also need to use the name, including the # or &, to join a channel, to leave it, to set its parameters, etc. (see below)

(25) Now that I've decided on a nice channel. How do I join that channel? And what do I type once I get there? And when I'm done,

how do I leave a channel?

To join a channel, type /join #channelname. Try "/join #irchelp" or "/join #mirc" to give it a try... That's it! Once you get to the channel, you will see people talking. It will probably look like this:

```
{ Avalon }     AUUG is on at the same time as LISA this year and is cheaper.
{ Barron }     backhaul those DS3s to Virginia ;)
{ Barron }     buy a farm
{ FlashPYR }   so is .us going to start charging $50/domain, too?
{ Barron }     or something
{ Tolim }      oops
```

Note that you will often come in during the -middle- of a conversation. Unless you're familiar with the channel you may want to sit and watch it for a minute or two to see what the conversation is about. Often the channel name (for instance, #Twilight_Zone) has nothing to do with what conversation goes on on the channel (#Twilight_Zone does -not- have discussion about the TV show "Twilight Zone"). So if you join #baseball, don't be surprised if you hear about the SuperBowl picks or even the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame Museum! To start talking, just type! And when you're done saying what you have to say, just hit the [return] key. You can start with something simple like "hello!". You don't have to type <nickname> hello! because IRC will insert <nickname> before all of your channel messages. In the channel window that opens once you join a channel you'll see an alphabetical list of people that are on the channel on the right side of the window. Some of them have a @ in front of their name to point out they are the Channel Operators. A Channel Operator is someone who has control over a specific channel. A Channel Operator can also decide if control is shared or not. The first person to join the channel automatically receives Channel Operator status. In the channel's title bar you will see the channel's name and perhaps its topic. If you choose to leave a channel, just type /part #channelname

(26) Ok, now what are the most basic commands?

With most windows IRC clients an extensive help file is included. Dont hesitate to try the /help command.

IMPORTANT NOTE : ALL IRC COMMANDS START WITH A "/".

The forward slash is the default command character. Commands on IRC are not case sensitive, and can be abbreviated to their first letters. Anything that does not begin with "/" is assumed to be a message to someone and will be sent to your current channel, or to a person you are chatting with in a private chat (see below).

HELP	shows general help or help on the given command.
LIST	lists all current channels.
JOIN	to join a channel
PART	to leave a channel (same as LEAVE)
QUIT	exits your IRC session, (same as BYE and EXIT)
NICK	changes your nickname
AWAY	leaves a message saying you're away or not paying attention
WHOIS	displays information about someone
INVITE	sends an invitation to another user
KICK	gets rid of someone on a channel
TOPIC	changes the topic of the channel
ME	sends anything about you to a channel or QUERY

/HELP [command] Shows general help or help on the given command.

/LIST [[{ flags }] { channel mask }] Lists all current channels.
In the list you will see all channels (see below), except for those that are secret, with their number of users and the topic. The displayed list may be quite long, so you can limit it using flags. "/LIST -MIN n" for instance removes channels with less than 'n' users from the output.

/JOIN { #channel } Sets your current channel to the supplied channel.
Upon entering a channel, you are given useful details about it: a list of users talking in that channel, channel mode settings and the topic... Joining a channel does not cause you to leave your previous channel and you can normally join as many channels as your connection can handle or that the IRC server allows.

```
/JOIN #windows
--- Now talking in #windows
```

/PART [#channel] Makes you leave a channel. (same as LEAVE)

```
/PART #windows
--- You have left #windows
```

/QUIT [reason] Exits your IRC session. (Also BYE and EXIT.)
If a reason is supplied, it is displayed to other people on your channels.

```
/QUIT Lunch Time!
```

/NICK { nickname } Changes your nickname to whatever you like.
Everyone who wants to talk to you sees this name. Nicknames are limited to 9 characters max. If your intended nickname clashes with someone else's as you enter IRC, you will not be able to enter until you change it to something else. Duplicate nicknames are not allowed; this is enforced by the IRC servers. Under some circumstances, two individuals may temporarily have the same nick but once discovered, both of them will be killed; a nick collision kill.

```
/NICK Guru
--- Newbie is now known as Guru
```

/AWAY [away message] Sets your status as away with some info.
Sets a message explaining that you are not currently paying attention to IRC. Whenever someone sends you a MSG or does a WHOIS on you, they automatically see whatever message you have set. Using AWAY with no parameters marks you as no longer being away.

```
/AWAY Gone to get a cup of coffee.
--- You have been marked as being away

/AWAY
--- You are no longer marked as being away
```

/WHOIS { nickname } Shows information about someone.

```
/WHOIS Guru
--- Guru is master@some.network.net (Nuclear free)
--- on channels: @#Windows @#Windows95 #mIRC
--- on via server irc.server.net (The best server)
--- Guru is away (making dinner)

/WHOIS Newbie
--- Newbie: No such nickname
```

/INVITE { nickname } { #channel } Invites another user to a channel you are on.

If you want a friend to join your channel you can invite him. He will see a message such as ---Guru invites you to #channel. This is required if your channel is 'invite only'.

/INVITE Friend #windows
--- Inviting Friend to #windows

If you receive an INVITE message, you can type "/JOIN { #channel } ".

/KICK { #channel } { nickname } Kicks a user off a given channel.

Well, you guessed it, if there is a way to invite someone on a channel, there is also the ablility to KICK someone out of it. For example ,if a person is behaving in an offensive manner by annoying people or flooding the channel with unwanted information, they can be forced out of the channel. Only 'channel operators' are privileged to use this command.

/KICK #windows Lamer
--- Lamer has been kicked off channel #windows by Guru

/TOPIC { #channel } { topic for channel } Changes the channel's topic.

Channels have topics, that indicate the current topic of conversation. You can change this topic on a channel with the TOPIC command.

/TOPIC #windows Lets discuss OS/2
--- Guru has changed topic to "Lets discuss OS/2"

/ME { action description } Tells people about what you are doing.

At times, you may want to send a description of what you are doing or how you are feeling or just anything concerning you on the current channel or in a query.

/ME slaps Newbie with a large trout.
- Guru slaps newbie with a large trout.

The same goal can be achieved towards a specific nickname or channel using:

/DESCRIBE { nickname|#channel } { action description }

(27) Ok, Now I'm ready for some less basic commands.

MSG sends a private message
QUERY starts a private conversation
NOTICE sends a private message
NOTIFY informs you when people logging in or out IRC
IGNORE removes output from specific people

/MSG { nickname|channel } { text } Sends a (private) message to specified nickname or channel.

Besides chatting on IRC Channels you can also have private conversations or queries with other people on IRC. On most clients these conversations will be handled by separate window. You can use the /MSG command to send someone a message that only that person can read. If somebody else sends you a message or that person replies to your message a query window icon will pop up informing you somebody wants to talk to you personally.

/MSG Kreet This message can be read by you only.
-Kreet- This message can be read by you only.

In Kreet's screen an icon will pop up with the message you typed; "This message can be read by you only."

If you cannot wait for a reply for someone to message you to open a private window you can use the query command to force your client to open a private conversation window.

/QUERY { nickname } [test] Starts a private conversation with { nickname } and forces a separate window to open.

This command differs from the MSG command only by the fact that it is used to start a private conversation. All text you type that would normally be sent to your chat partner if you used MSG now displays in an immediately opened private window 'to your chat partner' on your screen and is sent to the other person as well.

/NOTICE { nickname|#channel } { text } Sends a private message to the specified { nickname } or { #channel } .

The NOTICE command is just another way to send messages to other people. But, unlike MSG's, NOTICEs will never open a separate window 'to' the other person. It should be seen as a sort of whispering. It is recommended that robots or other automatons on IRC use notices (contrary to messages) to send information to people. You should never automatically (as by remote events or commands) send a message or notice in response to a notice sent to you.

/NOTIFY [nickname|on|off] Toggles the notify function or adds or removes { nickname } to the notify list.

As you start to meet people on IRC, you will want to add certain nicknames to your notify list such that you will be warned when they sign on or off IRC.

```
/NOTIFY wug marl
--- Added wug to Notify list
--- Added marl to Notify list

/NOTIFY
--- wug is on IRC
--- resi is on IRC
--- marl is not on IRC
--- kreet is on IRC
```

/IGNORE [nickname|user@host] Ignore all contact from the specified people.

The day will come when you decide not (never?) to see or hear a specific person on your screen. This can be achieved using the ignore command. If people are flooding channels with useless text or they are otherwise harassing you, a wise response is to ignore those person. Ignore can be set to a nickname or by specifying a user@host format. You can use all kind of wildcards.

```
/IGNORE looser
--- Added looser to Ignore list

/IGNORE
--- Ignore is ON
--- Ignoring: -.-@-.unicomp.net -!-ap@159.148.109.88 -!-
fishy@-.interaccess.com looser

/IGNORE looser
--- Removed looser from Ignore list
```

(28) What language should I speak? How do I behave on IRC?

The most widely understood and spoken language on IRC is English. However, as IRC is used in many different countries, English is by no means the only language. If you want to speak some language other than English, (for example with your friends), go to a separate channel

and set the topic to indicate that. Similarly, you should check the topic when you join a channel to see if there are any restrictions about language. On a non-restricted channel, please speak a language everybody can understand. If you want to do otherwise, change channels and set the topic accordingly.
It is not necessary to greet everybody on a channel personally. Usually one "Hello!" or equivalent is enough. Also, don't expect everybody to greet you back. On a channel with 20 people that would mean one screenful of hellos. It makes sense not to greet everyone, in order not to be rude to the rest of the channel. If you must say hello to somebody you know, do it with a private message. The same applies to goodbyes. Also note that using your client's facilities to automatically say hello or goodbye to people is extremely poor etiquette. Nobody wants to receive autogreets. They are not only obviously automatic, but while you may think you are being polite, you are actually conveying yourself as insincere. If somebody wants to be autogreeted when they join a channel, they will autogreet themselves. Remember, people on IRC form their opinions about you only by your actions, writings and comments, so think before you type. If you use offensive words, you'll be frowned upon. Do not "dump" (send large amounts of unwanted information) to a channel or user. This is likely to get you kicked off the channel or killed off from IRC. Dumping causes network "burps", causing connections to go down because servers cannot handle the large amount of traffic. Other prohibited actions include:
- Harassing another user. Harassment is defined as behavior towards another user with the purpose of annoying them.
- Annoying a channel with constant beeping. (Therefore most clients cannot beep at all)
- Any behavior reducing the functionality of IRC as a CHAT medium.

(29) What is a channel operator? What is an IRC operator?

A channel operator (ChanOp or Op) is someone with a "@" by their nickname in a channel's names list, or a "@" before the channel name in a /whois or /uwho output. Channel operators are the 'rulers' of a particluar channel. This means they can kick you out of their channel for any reason. If you don't like this, you complain to them or start your own channel and become a channel operator there yourself. An IRC operator (IRCop) is someone who maintains a server or part of the IRC network. They cannot fix channel problems. They cannot kick someone out of a channel for you. They also cannot /kill (disconnect a user from their IRC server temporarily) someone just because you gave the offender channel operator privileges and said offender kicked -you- off. IRCops have better things to do than interfere in channel affairs.

(30) How do I create a new channel?

A Channel is automatically created as soon as the first person joins it. If you join a channel and you find your name as the only one there, you just created that channel. Channels on IRC are dynamic in the sense that anyone can create a new channel, and a channel disappears when the last person leaves it.

(31) What are good channels to try while using IRC?

The famous channels #hottub, #friendly, #chat and #riskybus are almost always filled with people. #hottub is meant to simulate a hot tub, and #riskybus is a non-stop game. Just join to find out! Besides chat channels there also exist channels specialized towards helping other users. Examples are #windows95, #winsock, #irchelp, #ircnewbies and #mirc.
To get a list of all available channels with their names and topics, type /list. To see only the most active channels type /list -min 20 which will show you channels with 20 or more members. You can also do this for smaller numbers. Even very crowded channels can be silent, so if you join a channel and don't hear much talking, it may be because you joined, but just because the people on that channel are doing other things.

(32) Someone is using my nickname, can anyone do anything about it?

In the past on EFnet, NickServ registered nicknames. On smaller networks some nickname registration still exists (see below). It is important to understand that there are not always enough nicknames to have nickname ownership. If someone takes your nickname while you are not on IRC, you can ask for them to give it back, but you can not -demand- it, nor will IRC Operators /kill for nickname ownership normally.

(33) Someone is using my channel, can anyone do anything about it?

There are, literally, millions of possible channel names, so if someone is on your usual channel, just go to another. You can /msg them and ask for them to leave, but you can't -force- them to leave.

(34) Help! Someone kicked/banned me from a channel. Whom do I complain to?

The answer to this question is the current channel operators, and them alone. Given the dynamic nature of channels, channel operators do not need to have a -reason- to kick you off. They decide what goes on in the channel. Complaining either to IRC Operators or to the system administrators about being kicked or banned from a channel is considered extremely childish, and will not result action. IRC operators do not meddle with channel politics - that's the job of channel operators. Proper IRC netiquette is to keep IRC issues within IRC, because system admins have little time to deal with IRC issues and many would rather shut it down rather than deal with problems arising from it. If you should get banned or kicked from a channel, you are always free to start your own channel and decide what is appropriate content there. Imagine channels as houses. The owner of the house can decide to share ownership with someone else and can decide to prevent any individual from entering his house. In your own house, -you- call the shots. :-) Feel free to Create your own channel, and set up your own rules for it.

(35) There aren't any channel operators on my channel, now what?

(Channel operators are the owner(s) of their respective channels. Keep this in mind when giving out channel operator powers. Do not give out channel operator status to -everyone-. This causes the possibility of mass-kicking or otherwise harassing by unknown ops and the channel be left without any channel operators. However, always make sure to give ops to enough people so that all of the channel operators don't unexpectedly diappear and leave the channel without any operators. If no ops have stayed on your channel you have one option. You can ask everyone to leave and rejoin the channel. This is a good way to get channel operator status back. This does not work on large channels or ones with bots, for obvious reasons. On Dalnet ChanServ allows users to register and maintain absolute control over channels as far as who gets channel operator status and how that privelege is governed. Other channel modes are also optionally maintained by this bot, with the only exception of bans.

(36) What is a "bot"?

A "bot" is short for "robot". It is normally a script run from a client or a separate program (in perl, C, and sometimes more obscure languages). Bots are normally not needed on IRC. A bot generally tries to "protect" a channel from takeovers. It is important to know that many

IRC servers (especially in the USA) ban ALL bots. Some IRCOps ban domains if you run a bot on their server (See the segment on K: lines). On IRC you will find a lot of people with a love/hate attitude towards bots. Some bots do good work as file- or info-servers. Some will even entertain you with funny or brain teasing games. These bots can be useful and desireable. Contrary to these bots, you will find lots and lots of bots performing useless 'carekeeping' of channels, harassing and boring people and sometimes created with the sole purpose to produce garbage. You can imagine that these bots are disliked by the IRC community. In this context it is good to advise you to -never- -never- ever take bot code, .ini-files or strange commands from someone and run it without exactly understanding what it does. Blind trust is a common mistake among newbies. If you feel you just -have- to run a bot, at least learn the programming. At this moment no Windows based bot programs or script handling clients exist.

(37) What was NickServ? Is NickServ ever coming back?

On EFnet NickServ was a nickname registration service run in Germany. It was a Bot that told people who used a registered nickname to stop using that nickname. NickServ has been down since the Spring of 1994. It is not likely that NickServ will be back. Remember, nicknames aren't owned on most IRC networks. On the Dalnet and Underent IRC networks a kind of NickServ is still active. Dalnet's NickServ allows users to register and effectively own nicks. This version of the services is considerably more potent than it's EFnet predecessor since it has the capability of killing anyone who claims a nick registered by someone else. Therefore, it is not wise to simply ignore this one :-)

(38) Help, I get disconnected after the LIST command.

If you use the LIST command the server generates a list of all channels (about 2000 on Efnet) and quickly sends that list to you. But, because the data throughput is finite, the entire output of the LIST command is queued in a buffer on the server. At some point that buffer is overrun, and the server, detecting this ('reached maxsendq'), disconnects you. This mechanism is designed to disconnect people who generate more characters per second than any 'normal' person uses for normal conversations. It is a server protection mechanism, but unfortunately the server does not recognize that the data stream you caused is simply the result of your harmless LIST command, and disconnects you. On most IRC clients you can filter the channels list to show only channels with a minimum and a maximum number of people. You can also specify a text string so that your client will only list channels with that string in their name or topic. However, for the problem described, this does not help at all. The server always sends you the entire channels list and your client takes care of the filtering. So, asking for a partial list to prevent you from disconnecting won't make ANY difference. It is unfortunate, but there is nothing you can do to prevent this from happening. It is just one of the all-too-many IRC oddities. Try using some other server, as many are more forgiving.

(39) I've done a /whois on myself and other people, and I notice that my real name shows up in parentheses. I don't like this! It doesn't show up in other people's parentheses. How can I change it?

In the setup of your IRC client simply state a fake real name.

(40) What is a netsplit? Why does everybody keep signing on and off?

What does it mean when I see: ---NickName has quit IRC (-.bu.edu eff.org)?

Netsplits are (unfortunately) a routine part of IRC life. The above message means that

NickName, who was on a channel with you, was on a different server from you and this server split off from the part of the net you are on.

```
A   --------------   B ---- C
|                            |
D                            E
```

Lets assume a small IRC network where A, B, C, D and E are servers. Let's say that you are on server D, and server A splits from server B. In this case, you will see all users on the servers B, C and E, "sign off". On large IRC networks and crowded channels you will see a huge amount of people 'quiting IRC'. When A and B rejoin, you will see users from B, C and E "rejoin" the channel you were on.
Note that netsplits are all from the point of view of the user. After a netsplit rejoins people might ask where you went -- because from their perspective, -you- split off. The only thing you can do during a netsplit is wait for the net to merge itself. Changing your server during a netsplit is a Bad Idea, because you are likely to have your nickname collided. A "split" often occurs due to faults in the underlying -physical- network. It can also occur due to other reasons, such as if the machine on which the IRC server runs crashes, or if it is too overloaded to handle connections as happens on bigger nets, or if an IRC operator willfully disrupts the connection between two servers to achieve better routing (server - server connections).

(41) What is a Nick Collision Kill?

After a Netsplit, a net-join begins and on both halves of the merging network, and people that existed with the same nicknames can be killed. This can happen frequently with popular nicknames. This phenomena is called a Nick Collision. As soon as a Nick Collision is detected (in general) both persons involved will be disconnected (killed) from their IRC servers. Nick Collisions can be caused on purpose by people who just want to harrass others or try to take over their channel. In general, this behavior is considered very abusive and can easily lead to a K-line!

(42) What is a Server-op? ---irc.server.net sets mode: +ooo Nick1 Nick2 Nick3

After a Netsplit, during the net-join process, servers on both sides of the split try to update all kinds of information they may have missed. New users, their nicknames, the channels they are on and most of the channel settings are exchanged. The servers involved in the split will also make sure on both sides of the split on all channels the same channel operators are set. This process is called server-opping. Server-ops show like :

---irc.server.net sets mode: +ooo Nick1 Nick2 Nick3

Server-ops are famous for its use in malicious behaviour. People can use net-splits to get operator status on a channel on one side of the split and on the moment of net-join de-op the rightfull channel operators. The Undernet has an improved server-server protocol which prevents server-op abuse as well as channel desynchs and intentional nick collides.

(43) What is an Ident server? Why am I unidentified and why does it matter?

An ident server normally is maintained by the Unix machine of your network provider. It is a kind of nameserver that guarantees your Identity. Since most standalone windows machines are not correctly backed up by an ident service, you sometimes have to run your own ident server. Several windows based ident servers exist but some IRC clients also have such a server built into their code to help you. Examples are WSIRC and mIRC. IRC servers can

perform an Ident request to your Ident server and then expect a standardized repsonse. More and more IRC servers require you to be identified in some way, and they will disconnect you if you are not identified! Also if you don't react, or do so in the wrong way, they can decide to disconnect you. You can check if you're properly identified by doing a /whois on yourself. The first line in the reply should NOT contain a ~ (tilde) or a - (minus) before your userid. If you have a ~ or a - in it try activating the Ident server built into your IRC client or use a separate Ident server and restart your IRC client and see if it helps.

(44) What are Channel and User Modes?

Channels can have additional constraints, which can be set by the MODE command. To understand this, recall that the first person that joined a channel effectively creates it and is, at least initially, in charge of the channel. He or she becomes a Channel Operator or chanop or 'op'. He can set constraints to the channel and make other people chanops as his wishes. The command that allows channel operators to change channel modes, or any user to change their personal mode is :

/MODE { channel|nickname } [{ +|- } { modechars } [{ parameters }]]
A + or - sign determines whether the mode should be added or deleted.

Channels can be moderated, secret, private, with a limited number of users, anonymous, invite-only, topic-limited, with a list of banned users...

/mode { channel } +b { nick|address } ban somebody by nickname or address mask (nick!account@host)
/mode { channel } +i channel is invite-only
/mode { channel } +l { number } channel is limited, with { number } users allowed maximal
/mode { channel } +m channel is moderated, only chanops and others with 'voice' can talk
/mode { channel } +n external /MSGs to channel are not allowed
/mode { channel } +p channel is private
/mode { channel } +s channel is secret
/mode { channel } +t topic limited, only chanops may change it

/mode { channel } +o { nick } makes { nick } a channel operator
/mode { channel } +v { nick } gives { nick } a voice

The MODE command also allows you to modify your personal parameters, your "user mode". You can check your usermode with the command "/MODE { yournick } ". Note that user mode +i may be the default on some servers, in order to protect privacy of users. This should not be seen as a problem, since any user can change his/her personal mode from whatever defaults a server may set.

/mode { yournick } +r sets your access to restricted. You cant do a -r mode change!!
/mode { yournick } +i makes yourself invisible to anybody that does not know your nickname
/mode { yournick } +o gives IRC-Operator status, can only be set by IRC-ops with OPER
/mode { yournick } +s lets you receive server notices
/mode { yournick } +w makes you receive wallops; messages to IRC-Ops (abused and deprecated)

(45) What do these Channel and User Modes mean?

A channel is Public by default. Anyone can notice a public channel, see its users and join the

conversation. In a list of channels you can see a public channel's topic. When someone is on a public channel, he can be easily found by all other users as long as his personal user mode is not set to invisible (see below).

An Invite-only channel can only be joined if you are invited by one of its channel operators.

Private channels turn up normally in the channels list. People can see you are on a private channel somewhere, but they can never find out on -which- private channel you are unless they search all (private) channels by brute force. With the names command your nickname will not show up, but it will with the /who { channel_name } command unless you hide by setting your personal user mode to 'invisible'.

Secret channels do not show up in a channels list and you cannot find out its topic unless you join it. If you are on a secret channel, someone who is not on the same channel can't see that you are there, regardless what your personal user mode is set to. Your name does not show up in a names list of people on IRC if you are on secret channels only.

Your user mode can be set to Invisible meaning that other people cannot find you by searching on IRC unless they know your exact nickname. No (wildcarded) search on you by the /who command on your IP Address or real name will deliver your current nickname or other likewise info to others.

When your user mode is restricted you do not have the power normal channel operator have on channels (you cant use /mode, /kick, ..etc.) and you can not change nickname (/nick). But you can chat normally.

(46) What server do you advise me to use?

Try to choose a server that is close to you. As a rule of thumb, servers that are close geographically are also close network-wise (which is what matters) but this rule of thumb is not always true. If in doubt ask some people from the same neighbourhood what servers they use. The larger the distance to the server the larger the chance it refuses you or gives you only restricted access.
All people in need of a list of servers for EFNET, UNDERNET and DALNET and more information follow the following URL's

EFnet Servers	http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~pirovich/efnet.html
	http://www.sisna.com/users/danib/irclist.html
Undernet Servers	http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~pirovich/under.html
	http://http2.brunel.ac.uk:8080/~cs93jtl/servers.html
Undernet Home page	http://www.undernet.org/
Dalnet Servers	http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~pirovich/dalnet.html
	http://www.xmission.com/~dragon/dalnet/server.html
	http://www.bazza.com/sj/irc/servers.html
Dalnet Home page	http://www.dal.net

(47) In other IRC FAQ's and help files I see more and sometimes totally diffferent commands and problems explained, how come?

This IRC INTRO file focuses on situations a typical user on a Windows based IRC client may face. This restricion eliminates a lot of hassle (and their solutions) the average IRC user on UNIX has to cope with. In this file you will not find info on the UNIX command "set" (set NOVICE off, set SCROLL_LINES 2) or similar commands since you don't need them in Windows. I'm sure you dont want to be bothered by ' vt100 compatible terminals', 'How to scrollback using special key bindings' and 'UID PID PPID'. Also, all references to .ircrc and similar files are filtered out or where needed replaced by their Windows equivalent.

(48) Where can I get more info?

IRC RFC
The Internet Relay Chat (IRC) Protocol is explained and defined in the Request for Comments (RFC) number 1459 written by the founder of IRC J. Oikarinen and D. Reed. This RFC is available by FTP from

ftp://cs-ftp.bu.edu/irc/support/rfc1459.txt
ftp://ftp.tohoku.ac.jp/pub/doc/RFC/rfc1459.txt

IRC Primer
A good, simple and basic introduction to IRC is found in the IRC Primer by Nicolas Pioch. Get it by FTP from

ftp://cs-ftp.bu.edu/irc/support/IRCprimer1.1.txt
http://mistral.enst.fr/~pioch/IRC/hints.html

IRC FAQ
The IRC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) by Helen Trillian Rose provides excellent information on a lot of IRC issues. The IRC FAQ is available by FTP at

cs-ftp.bu.edu:/irc/support/alt-irc-faq
ftp.kei.com:/pub/irc/alt-irc-faq
http://www.kei.com/irc.html

Undernet FAQ
The Undernet IRC FAQ consists of 2 parts. The initial version was written by Paul Grant and later versions by Mandar M. Mirashi. The latest version can always be found at:

ftp://ftp.undernet.org/undernet/docs/

URL's to the World Wide Web version of this FAQ are:

http://www2.undernet.org:8080/~cs93jtl/underfaq/
http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu/hypertext/faq/usenet/irc/undernet-faq/part1/faq.html
http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu/hypertext/faq/usenet/irc/undernet-faq/part2/faq.html

WWW
On the world wide web a lot of additional info can be easily found. Do some simple searches on Yahoo or Webcrawler to find tons of info !!

http://www2.undernet.org:8080/~cs93jtl/IRC.html
http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/Chatting/IRC/
http://uptown.turnpike.net/L/Larry14/irc.html

You can also visit some Windows IRC clients World Wide Web pages to get more info :

WSIRC	http://ftp.clark.net/pub/csamsi/home.html
mIRC	http://www.mirc.co.uk/index.html
mIRC	http://www-2.nijenrode.nl/software/mirc/index.html
mIRC	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Park/6000/index.html
InteRfaCe	http://www.hijinx.com.au/interfac/interfac.htm
Chatman	http://www.uai.cl/~burton/chatman/
Virc	http://www.megalith.co.uk/virc/

Usenet
The Usenet alt.irc.- newsgroups provide a lot of information to both newbies and experienced people on IRC. I can highly recommend 'lurking' there for a while!

IRC

On IRC you will find several channels intended to help you with simple as well as more difficult problems. You could give #irchelp, #ircnewbies, #new2irc, #newbies and #wasteland a try. Also most of the popular Windows based IRC clients have their own IRC channel. Check out #mirc, #virc, #interface and #wsirc. Please don't demand help though; we are all volunteers there.

(49) Credits!

I am fully aware that a lot of the information found in this file can be found in the same or similar form in several other IRC releated FAQ's already. I have tried to combine the best of worlds, by filtering out all UNIX related references and adding Windows specific problems and questions. I hope I was succesful. All information contained in this file is based on the work and time various people invested by answering questions in the Usenet alt.irc newsgroups and in the already existing IRC related FAQ's. I especially want to mention Helen Trillian Rose, Nicolas Pioch and Mandar M. Mirashi for the time and effort they spend on their IRC ambassador job! Of course I am the only one responsible for all omissions and mistakes in this file, but I hide behind the usual disclaimers....

Tjerk Vonck.

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