

## TALK

TALK is a background program for the IBM PC which allows multiple stations to engage in a simultaneous conversation. Messages can be sent to the entire TALK community, to a named group of individuals, or to a single individual. Information is displayed in a pop-up screen window which does not affect an application program in progress.

There is, as yet, no official TALK documentation. Until such exists, this short collection of notes and observations may be useful.

### OPERATION

Once installed, TALK is always active in the background. A window can be caused to appear on the screen which contains four areas: one for the typing buffer used to compose outgoing messages, one for the history script of messages sent and received, one for a list of known station names, and one for a list of known groups.

To make the window appear on the screen, the TALK trigger character may be typed at any time. The default trigger character is <ctrl>-T, but it can be changed to another character at the time TALK is installed. To close the window you can repeat the trigger character, or type Q <return>. You can also arrange for the TALK window to pop up automatically when a message is received.

To send a message to the current destination, simply type a sentence and press RETURN. Many of the usual DOS editing keys are available, including <backspace>, <ESC>, <F1>, and <F3>. If the message is successfully sent to at least one of the destination stations, it will appear in the large script window along with messages you receive from other stations.

The cursor arrow keys are used to change the destination stations. To change from a group to an individual destination or back, use the up and down arrow keys. To change the particular group or individual destination, use the left and right arrow keys.

The top two windows show the current destination by highlighting the

groups or individuals selected. Initially the destination is the group ALL, to which all individuals belong, so the "Group:" header is highlighted as well as the groupname "ALL" and all individuals in the user list. The right and left arrow keys can be used to select a different group, and the group name as well as the individuals in that group will be highlighted. The downarrow key will highlight the "User:" header and allow an individual to be selected by using the right and left arrow keys until the individual's name is highlighted.

In addition to the displayed script page, an additional page is saved and may be viewed by using the PgUp and PgDn keys. New script lines are always added at the bottom of the last page, even if it is not currently visible, and both screens will scroll up.

Various beeps, tweedles, and whoops are generated by TALK to give audible feedback of events. I will not try to describe the sounds, but you may be able to recognize a unique sound for each of the following:

1. A message has been received while the window is closed.
2. A message has been received and the window is popping up automatically.
3. A message has been received while the window is open.
4. A new individual has been added to the TALK community.
5. A message could not be sent to a particular individual and he will be removed from your "Users:" list.

## INSTALLATION

To install TALK, simply invoke the command "TALK". The following optional parameters may also appear on the command line, separated from each other by spaces:

KEY nn  
or KEY 0 mm  
or KEY Fn

This option changes the trigger character from the default of <ctrl>-T to the ascii character whose code is "nn", or the extended keycode character whose code is "mm", or the function key number "n". Numbers may be in decimal, or in hexadecimal if preceeded by a dollar sign. Example: "talk key 0 104" will install talk with the trigger key of <alt><f1>. See the IBM Technical Reference manual for the ascii and extended keycode values.

## POPUP

This option will cause the TALK window to automatically pop up when a message is received.

When TALK has been successfully installed, it will display the message "TALK version x.xx installed". Only one copy of TALK may be installed, and a second installation attempt will result in an error message.

To define your symbolic name and the groups to which you belong, use the DOS "SET" command before TALK is installed as in the following examples:

```
set user=ljs
set group=rnd,staff
```

You may have only one "user" name, and if none is supplied your name will be the station address. You may indicate membership in one or more groups whose names are separated by commas as shown above. A group is defined by the first individual to join it. There is always one predefined group called "ALL" to which all individuals belong.

The SET commands must be in effect before TALK has been installed. Typically the autoexec.bat file on your booted drive will contain "set user" and "set group" statements immediately preceeding the "talk" installation command.

An example TALK window as it appears on the screen:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| screen win<br>progress.  | TALK 0.47<br>Groups: ALL RND OPS PUBS TECH   |
| There is,<br>exists, th<br>useful.                                 | Users: ljs esp Terry doug kcy geh sampc nick njr \$4E zuzu HarryS<br>nick guy_eds clive gary   |
| OPERATION  | cmb>ALL:show station<br>Terry>ALL:huh?<br>Terry>ALL: Anyone for lunch?<br>kcy>ALL:this is a test<br>kcy>ALL:what are these lines at the top<br>ljs>ALL:what lines?<br>HarryS>ljs:hi there!! Louis there??? |
| Once insta<br>can be cau<br>for the ty<br>history sc<br>station na | ljs>ALL:No.<br>ljs>HarryS:I mean, no.<br>ljs>HarryS:See me re Diane McCabe at Morrison Foerster when you get<br>a chance.  |
| To make th<br>may be typ<br>but it can<br>installed.               | Terry>ALL:?<br>ljs>ALL:Well, ? to you too<br>Terry>ALL:When do we eat?<br>:Well, ? to you too  |
| Written OK   | B1 1 23/141  |

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