# FLNET Users Manual

7.1

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# Contents


**1 FLNET Users Manual - Version 7.1** **1**

1.1 FLNET Description . . . 1

1.2 Main Control Dialog . . . 1

1.2.1 Program Execution . . . 1

1.2.1.1 FLNET Window . . . 1

1.2.1.2 Main Window Layout . . . 3

1.2.1.3 Aborting the selection process . . . 3

1.2.1.4 No calls appear in the pick list . . . 3

1.2.2 Closing down the program . . . 4

1.2.3 Opening a new database . . . 4

1.2.4 Files / Locations . . . 4

1.3 Editor Dialog . . . 4

1.3.1 Transferring Data from FLDIGI to FLNET . . . 5

1.3.2 Transfer selected DB entry to Call-in List . . . 5

1.3.3 Importing data from QRZ database . . . 6

1.4 Functions Keys . . . 6

1.5 Data File Format . . . 7

1.6 Importing data from pre flnet 7.x . . . 8

1.7 Configuring flnet . . . 8

1.8 FLNET to/from FLDIGI Communication Error . . . 10

1.9 Command Line Parameters . . . 10

# Chapter 1

# FLNET Users Manual - Version 7.1

## 1.1 FLNET Description

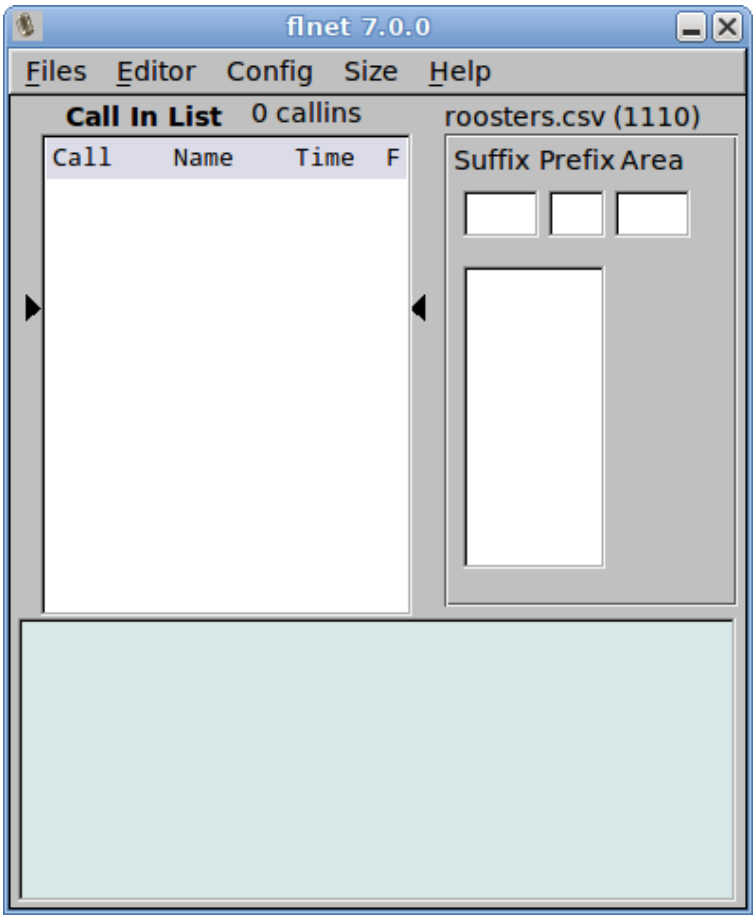
Net provides the Amateur Radio Net Control Station operator with a real time tool to assist him or her in managing the net activities. A single screen with multiple windows is used to allow rapid entry, search, pick and display of all stations calling in to the net. All operations on the main screen are accomplished with keyboard entries only. No mouse action is required to perform the net control functions. Experience has shown that most net control operators prefer this method of operation to improve the speed of entry and selection

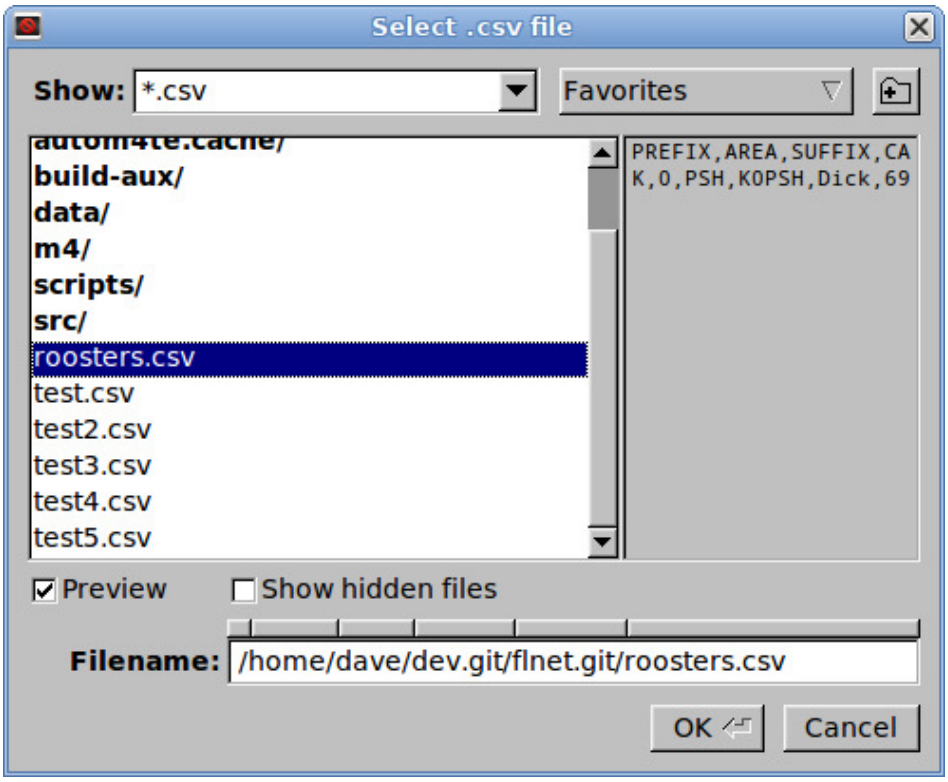
## 1.2 Main Control Dialog

### 1.2.1 Program Execution

#### 1.2.1.1 FLNET Window

Invoke flnet by clicking on the desktop program icon. The main dialog and a file selection dialog will open:




Either select an existing file or enter a new filename with the csv extension. All database files have the extension "csv" which may optionally be added to the filename.

#### 1.2.1.2 Main Window Layout

The main window is divided into three sections. The Call In List to the left contains all of the net members callsigns, nicknames and time of login, who have been entered for this session. The data in this window can be scrolled using the UP and DWN arrow keys. The callsign contained within the confines of the two dark arrows (WB1HKJ above) is the active call. That will be the person who is presently acknowledged by the control operator. It is significant for another reason. The function keys F1, F2, F3 and F4 when pressed with change the color of that entry to BLACK, BLUE, GREEN or RED respectively. The color coding can be used by the net control operator in any way that he or she chooses. One use might choose to designate.

| Action | Color |
|---|---|
| Logged in to the net | BLACK |
| Acknowledged #1 | BLUE |
| Acknowledged #2 | GREEN |
| Logged out | RED |

The colors are selected from the configuration dialog.

The right most column is a FLAG that specifies some special characteristic about that callsign. For example: this call might be from a mobile operator, or from a QRP station, or a DX station that requires special or early recognition by the net operator. Up to three special flags may be assigned (see configuration information).

Entering a callsign into the "Call In List" is quite simple. Key in the letters associated with the suffix of the call being entered. In the screen above the S has been entered (case independent). As each letter in entered the calls which match that sequence will be shown in the pick list just below the Suffix box.

While the various display elements may look like entry fields, scrolling browsers, etc. THEY ARE NOT! All of the things shown on the screen are simple labels that are being manipulated from the keyboard and under program control. Standard GUI controls would have the habit of wanting to control what happens when given keyboard or mouse focus. That would destroy the quick response mechanism associated with the net functionality. You can click your mouse on these controls all day long and nothing will happen. You don't need the mouse for the net control function.

If the desired call is singular in the list or at the top of the list as is NK2G in the example screen you can select it by pressing the ENTER key. The call will be transfered to the end of the Call In List along with the nick name of that member and the time of logging. If the call is in the list but not at the top, then press the DOWN (or UP) arrow key. Control now passes to the pick list below the Suffix box and the 2nd call in the list will be highlighted RED. You can move between entered using the UP and DOWN arrow keys until the desired call is highlighted. Press ENTER to select the highlighted call.

The newly transfered call may or may not be immediately shown in the Call In List box depending on whether the box is presently filled with calls. Do not be concerned. It is at the end of the list. To convince yourself of this, press the END key after making the selection. The last call entered in the Call In List will be moved to the current call position. Pressing HOME will put the first call entered in the current call position. (Function Key definitions).

To assist the NET control operator the call sign and nickname can be transfered to FLDIGI by hitting the ENTER/RETURN key. The call sign transfered will be the one located between the two arrows in the Call-In list.

#### 1.2.1.3 Aborting the selection process

The operator can abort the selection process at any time by simply pressing the ESC key.

#### 1.2.1.4 No calls appear in the pick list

This is because no callsign with that suffix is contained in the database. You may have a new log-in to your net. Press the TAB key to move to the Prefix box. Enter the prefix and then TAB again to move to the Area box. Enter the number for the area and then press ENTER to transfer that new call to the Call In List. You can abort this operation at any time by pressing the ESC key.

The fields displayed in the lower part of the window are the values associated with the Call In List current value. These will change as you move between log-in entries.

### 1.2.2 Closing down the program

You close the program by selecting the menu **File** / **Exit**. The program will update the database if appropriate and create a daily log if the Call In List contains values. The log is an appended file for each day of operation. The name of the log file is **databasename**YYYYMMDD.log. Where the YYYYMMDD is the current days value. If you open the net multiple times during the day, the data for each session is appended to the previous for the day. A blank line will appear between each session. The data in this file is identical to the Call In List values.

### 1.2.3 Opening a new database

You may close the current database and open a different (or create a new one) by selecting the menu button **Files** / **Open**. All of the current information will be saved as when the program is closed down above.

### 1.2.4 Files / Locations

After running flnet for the first time the program will always open the last used database. The name and location of the last used database is stored in the file

$HOME/flnet.files/flnet.cfg

where $HOME is

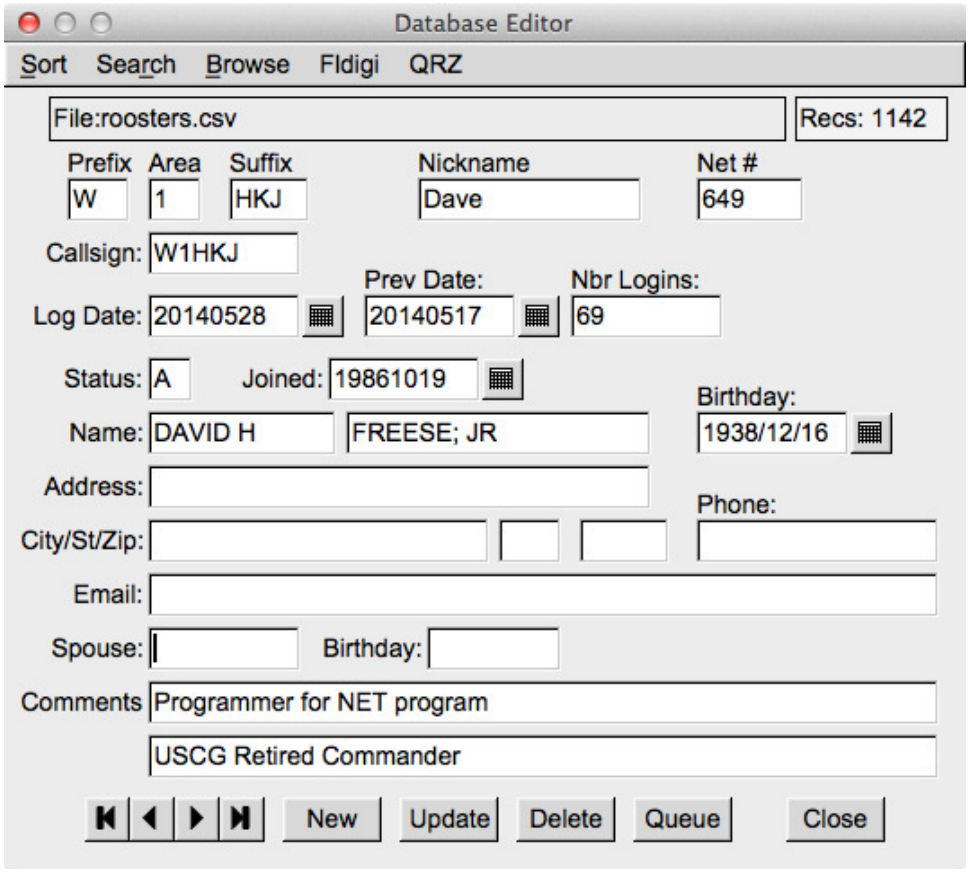
- on XP : C:\Documents and Settings\<username>\
- on Vista, Win7, Win8 : C:\Users\<username>\
- on Unix, Linux : /home/<username>/
- on OS X : /Users/<username>

The database files for flnet are simple comma separated value that can also be opened using a spreadsheet. You should avoid modifying the contents of the file using a spreadsheet program. These files may be stored anywhere on your computer system.

Top of Page

## 1.3 Editor Dialog

Net has a built-in editor for maintaining the its database. You open the editor by clicking on the menu button "Editor" or by pressing the function key F12 to edit the current active call in the call-in list. Of course this is one of those times that you may use the mouse. If you are starting a completely new net database, this is where to start. You probably already have most of the information that will be entered into the database. Once the net membership has been entered into the database the operation as net control operator will be very simple and quick.



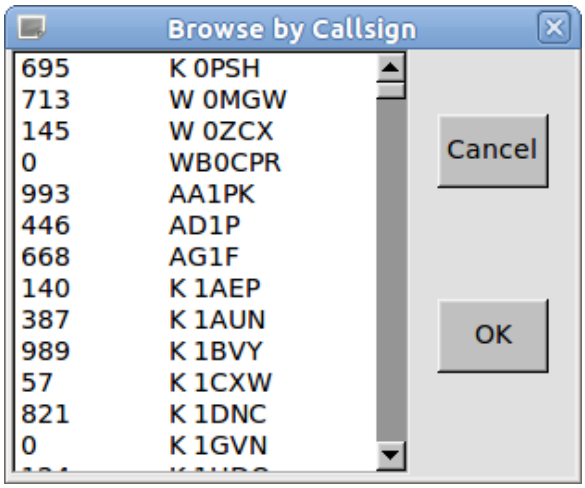

These are normal data entry fields. You move between them using the mouse, tabs, backspace, arrow keys etc. The buttons at the bottom of the window are primarily for moving between or acting upon an entry in the database. The arrow keys from left to right allow you to move to the FIRST, PREVIOUS, NEXT or LAST entry in the database. The ordering of the database is controlled by the sort selection of CALLSIGN sort or NET NBR sort. You may also go to a specific data entry using a browse window. The browse window will either be by callsign or by net nbr.

### 1.3.1 Transferring Data from FLDIGI to FLNET

Selecting "Fldigi" menu item will transfer Call Sign, Name, QTH, and State information from FLDIGI to FLNET. Use of the CALLBOOK feature of FLDIGI is recommended prior to the transfer. In the event the call sign is not located in FLNET's database a new entry will be added and subsequently selected as the active entry in the editor.

### 1.3.2 Transfer selected DB entry to Call-in List

The currently selected database entry can be transfer to the Call-in list by selecting the "Queue" button located at the bottom of the Editor Window.




This view shows the callsign browse window. Click on the desired callsign and press OK. Pressing Cancel just returns to the Editor window with no changes. You may also search for a callsign by Prefix, Area & Suffix; or by just Suffix alone. The search window looks like:

You do not need to be concered about upper/lower case letters.

### 1.3.3 Importing data from QRZ database

If you own a copy of the QRZ database CDROM you may opt to fill in all of the available entries from that source. Be sure to enter the Prefix, Area, and Suffix entries and then press the QRZ menu button. The program will search for the QRZ database (first on the hard drive(s)) and then on available CD drives. Place the QRZ CD in the drive before selecting this option. For really speedy searches against the QRZ database I suggest copying the entire "callbk" directory from the CD to your c: drive if you are using Windows.

Top of Page

## 1.4 Functions Keys

### Main Window

| Function Key | Action |
|---|---|
| F1 | Set Color to BLACK - new login |
| F2 | Set color to BLUE - recognized one time |
| F3 | Set color to GREEN - recognized second time |
| F4 | Set color to RED - logged out |

| | |
|---|---|
| F5 | Set priority to none - flag is blanked & call moves in list if autopriority is true |
| F6 | Set priority to FIRST - flag changed & call moves in list if autopriority is true |
| F7 | Set priority to SECOND - flag changed & call moves in list if autopriority is true |
| F8 | Set priority to THIRD - flag changed & call moves in list if autopriority is true |
| F9 | Move current call one up in the call-in list |
| F10 | Move current call one down in the call-in list |
| F11 | not assigned |
| F12 | Open editor dialog with current call as database selection |
| Shift F12 | Transfers data from FLDIGI, creates DB entry if needed, and adds the call to the call-in list |

Top of Page

## 1.5 Data File Format

flnet 7 data files are ASCII text files. The file format is comma separated value (csv) which is the text file format used by most modern spread sheet programs.

The first line in the file is a header line consisting of the following comma separated strings:

```
PREFIX
AREA
SUFFIX
CALLSIGN
NAME
NETNBR
LOGDATE
NBRLOGINS
STATUS
JOINED
FNAME
LNAME
ADDR
CITY
STATE
ZIP
PHONE
BIRTHDATE
SPOUSE
SP_BIRTH
COMMENT1
COMMENT2
EMAIL
PREVDATE
```

Three fields must be present for flnet to consider the file to contain valid data: PREFIX, AREA and SUFFIX.

The fields can be in any order and flnet will correctly parse the data. Record fields must of course be aligned with the respective header name. For example a file containing records consisting of

ZIP, NAME, SUFFIX, PREFIX, AREA

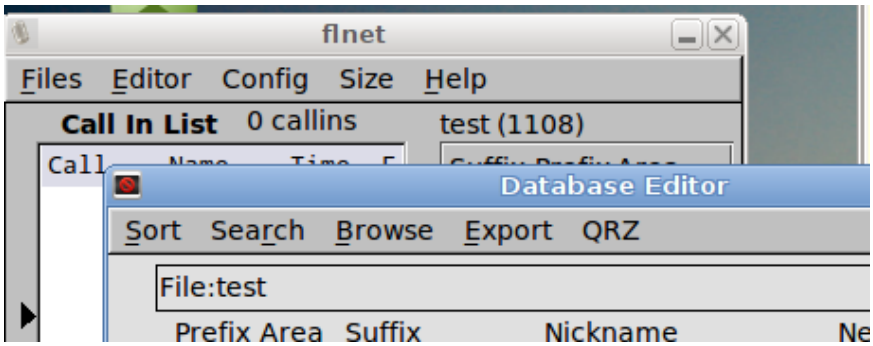
will be properly parsed. When the data is saved by flnet the missing fields will be added (empty if not edited by the user), and the fields realigned in the default order.

You can open an flnet csv file using Excel, Open Office, Gnumeric, etc. If you modify the file just be sure to save it again in the csv format.

## 1.6 Importing data from pre flnet 7.x

The database file format used in earlier versions of flnet were based on Xbase, which is similar to dbase. These files must be converted to the csv flat file format before using the exported file in flnet 7.x.

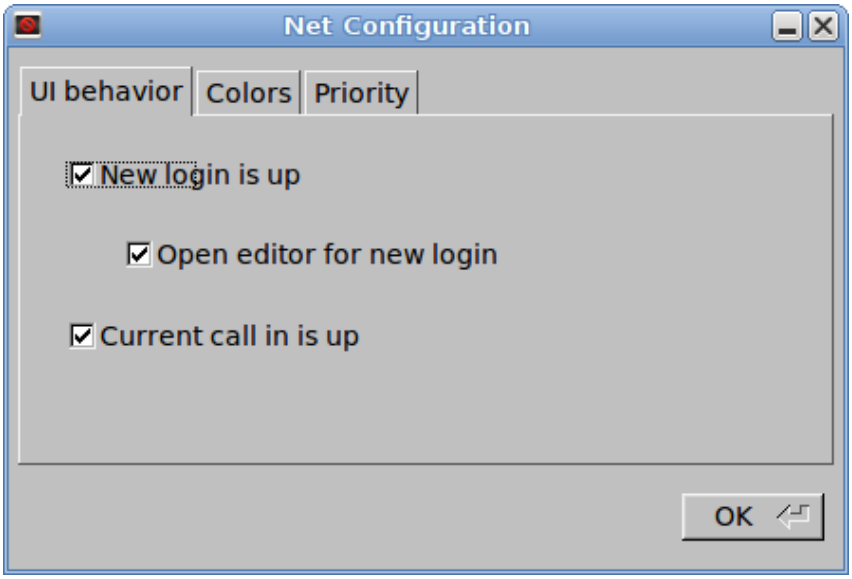
Execute the earlier version of flnet. Open the desired dbf file and then open the Editor dialog and press the "Export" menu button:




The file will be saved in the same location as the original dbf file, using the same filename but with the extension csv. flnet 7.x will be able to open and use this file.

Top of Page

## 1.7 Configuring flnet

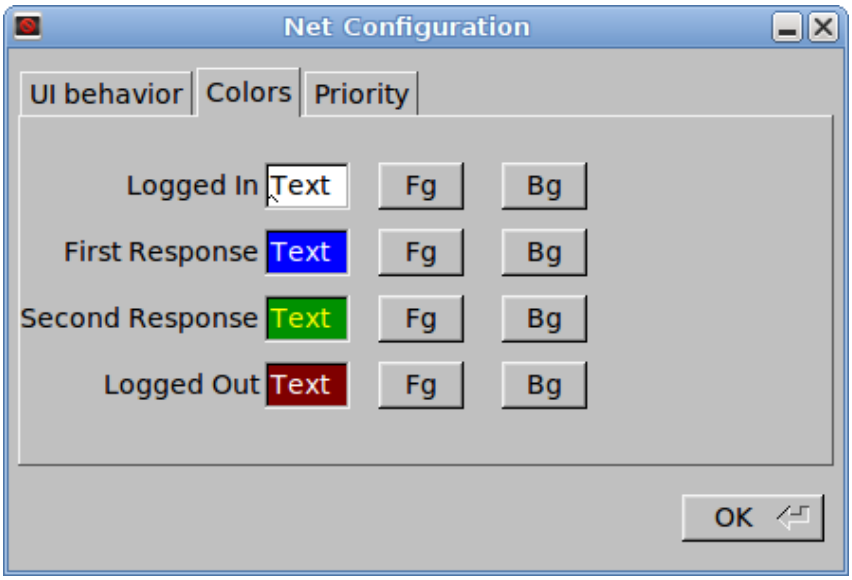



The behavior when logging a new call-in to the net can be changed to suit the way that your net control operates.

New login is up - Every logged in call sign that is not in the database will become the "up" position in the Call In List

Open editor for new login - "New login is up" must also be checked. If both are checked then in addition to being placed in the up position, the editor will open so that details can immediately be added to the database.

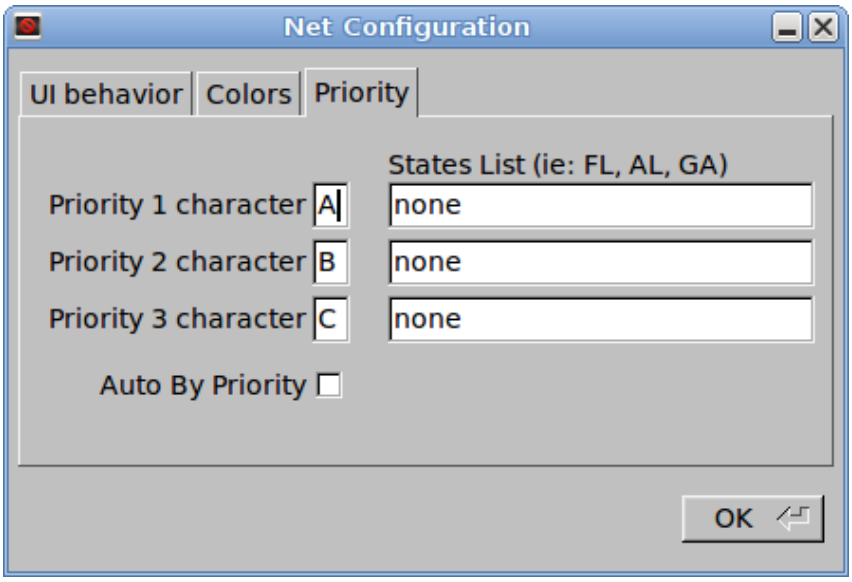
Current call in is up - Every new log in will move that entry to the "up" position in the Call In List.




The function keys F1, F2, F3 and F4 when pressed with change the color of the main dialog current callsign foreground and background colors. The color coding can be used by the net control operator in any way that he or she chooses. One use might choose to designate

| Action | Color |
|---|---|
| Logged in to the net | BLACK |
| Acknowledged #1 | BLUE |
| Acknowledged #2 | GREEN |
| Logged out | RED |

These are the default colors. You can modify them to suit your operation.

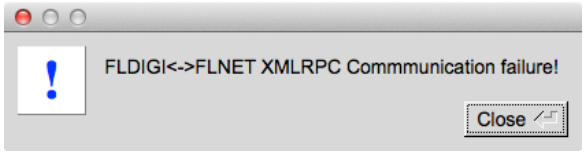



The priority characters can be changed to suit the way that your net operates. You can also specify certain states to have priority during the callin process. This is quite useful for a net with members over a wide geographic region. It might be better to allow certain states / regions early responses to a check in process to accommodate band conditions.

You can check the Auto By Priority box if you want prioritization to be automatic.

Top of Page

## 1.8 FLNET to/from FLDIGI Communication Error




The Warning Box indicates FLNET is unable to transfer data to/from FLDIGI.

The primary reasons for this failure are:

- FLDIGI is not running.
- IP address and/or port numbers are not set correctly. They must be the same for both programs. See Command Line Parameters

## 1.9 Command Line Parameters

```
--help this help text
--version
database.csv
open 'named' database file.
--xmlrpc-server-address <ip_addess> default:127.0.0.1
--xmlrpc-server-port <port> default:7362
```

Top of Page