

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Winlink 2000

(Revised August 11, 2013)

Material from various Winlink 2000 User Groups, and others

Please send new and revised material to K7BFL@ARRL.NET

[use the “Find” feature of Adobe Acrobat to locate needed information]

Q How is this FAQ group organized?

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General Questions about Winlink 2000

Q102 **All these new words: AirMail, Winlink, Paclink, Telpac, Telnet, RMS, etc. get me confused. Is there a “Winlink for Dummies” book?**

A102 Not yet! But there is a short “Winlink made Simple” publication available at:
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/tfctools.html>

Bud Thompson, (N0IA) has written an online course “WL2K For the Digitally Challenged” for those who have not yet installed the various client (end-user) programs for using the Winlink 2000 system. See: <http://www.winlink.org/node/23>

This Group is specifically designed for those who have not yet installed the various client (end-user) programs for using the Winlink 2000 system. There is no TNC, data terminal, or radio required for this on-line course. When there is sufficient interest, this group may expand to details of wiring computer-TNC-radio for using the Winlink 2000 client software components over the air.

The first thing to do is go to the "FILES" section of this group, and look for E-Mail Assignments. Start working on the assignments at your own pace, and use the facilities of this Yahoo Reflector group to obtain assistance.

Q104 **What is a “PMBO”?**

A104 This is an amateur radio station which functions as a port to the rest of the Winlink 2000 infrastructure. It is a “bridge” between radio stations and the e-mail part of the internet. A PMBO performed the same function as a RMS Pactor station. Use of the PMBO software was discontinued early in 2008. See Q107.

Q107 **What is a “RMS”?**

A107 “RMS” is a Radio Message Server. It is a direct radio port or gateway to a CMS site.

Early in 2008 software relating to PMBO and Telpac was replaced by software relating to RMS. PMBO software was replaced by RMS Pactor software. Telpac software was replaced by RMS Packet software.

A benefit to WL2K users of these changes is a reduction in the “latency” of messages, as they move between the user and the Common Message Server (CMS). See Q4010.

A “RMS Pactor” station is a gateway station to the WL2K system for pactor users. A previous name for this function was “PMBO”. A “RMS WINMOR” station is a gateway station to the WL2K system for WINMOR users. “RMS HF” refers to the entire group of RMS Pactor and RMS WINMOR stations. For information regarding WINMOR, see Q930 and Q940.

The connecting procedure for users does not change, even though the names have changed.

Q110 How do you suggest that I learn about Winlink 2000; and solve setup and operating problems that arise?

A110 1. Use the most recent version of software to access the Winlink 2000 system (AirMail, Paclink, RMS Express).

2. Read the Installation and Operation instructions for the software program used.

3. Read the installation and operation instructions for your radio and modem equipment.

4. Read the Help files with the software.

5. Review the information in the Winlink 2000 web page:
<http://www.winlink.org>

6. Read the remainder of this list of FAQ's.

7. Search the messages in the Winlink 2000 user discussion groups. See Q520.

8. Use an internet search engine to find relevant information on the web.

9. Ask your local RMS Packet station operator for assistance. See
<http://www.winlink.org/RMSPacketStatus>

10. Ask a RMS Pactor station operator for assistance. View the AirMail "Frequency List" (text version] for contact information.

11. Ask a member of the Winlink 2000 Development Team for assistance.

12. Contact the Winlink 2000 System Administrator:
Steve Waterman, k4cjsx@comcast.net
Home: 615-665-0952, Cell: 615-300-5296

Q115 Is Winlink 2000 designed to replace the e-mail part of the internet, in case the internet fails?

A115 No. Its original purpose (started in 1999) was to provide a very long range radio path for radio amateurs who did not have access to "land-line" communications needed to send and receive e-mail messages. Subsequent uses have been oriented toward providing partial backup of e-mail services for ARES/RACES "served agencies" during a local commercial communications outage or communications overload. Transfer speeds and available bandwidth do not allow for complete replacement of services. This may change with increased use of D-Star and RMS Packet satellite paths to the internet infrastructure.

Q120 How do I register as a Winlink 2000 User?

A120 "Registration" is automatically done when you connect to the Winlink 2000 system via radio or via a telnet session. Accessing the WebMail part of the WL2K web page does **not** automatically register a new user. Your User information will remain in the database for 400 days after your last interaction with the Common Message Server. User radio privileges are not checked by Winlink 2000 system staff. Use of WebMail does not "update" the 400 day limit; this must be done by using a RMS station, or connecting directly to the CMS.

Q123 My e-mail account appears to be deleted after a period of non-use. Why?

A123 Yes, your account was deleted automatically by the system after 400 days of non-use by radio or telnet. This has been a function of the Winlink system for many years now, and helps validate our charter as a special radio e-mail service and separate WL2K from general-purpose internet e-mail services.

WebMail is a convenience available to radio e-mail account holders as long as their account is active. You cannot reset the 400-day countdown clock by using WebMail. Only using telnet or access via radio keeps a WL2K e-mail account active.

As explained on the web site registration pages, an account for web site access does not link in any way to or create a radio e-mail account.

Establishing a new e-mail account is very easy. All it takes is connecting with an RMS station via RF or a CMS using telnet (no modem or radio required) and sending a message using a legitimate call sign. Your account is created automatically when you do this. Details and some additional ideas for getting started again are at <http://www.winlink.org/GetStarted>.

Q125 How many Winlink 2000 users are there?

A125 Early in December 2007 there were about 13,000 registered users.
In February 2008 there were exactly 19,503 registered stations with unique callsigns.

Q140 I just connected to a RMS, expecting an important message. WL2K says I have no mail.....why?

A140 The RMS may be seeing you as Usercallsign-15, caused by your going through a Node (if using packet, with either AirMail or a terminal (keyboarding) program). See Q145. If that is the case, and you are using AirMail, you might try connecting to the Node as Usercallsign-15. See Q3510 if you are using AirMail or Q8550 if you are using a Terminal (Keyboarding) program.

Another possibility is that you may have opted to have your WL2K mail Forwarded to another email address.

Q145 I would like to use my callsign with a SSID as my WL2K address. Is that possible?

A145 Yes, in fact you can have multiple WL2K addresses, such as K3ABC@winlink.org and K3ABC-3@winlink.org. The system should treat those two call signs as separate users. There are some areas of confusion that need to be discussed.

- 1) In WL2K if you connect as a –ssid callsign and there is THAT –ssid registered in the system as a separate user it will treat you as a separate user. There are some specific reasons for this having to do with RMS's etc.
- 2) If you connect with a –ssid and THAT –ssid is NOT registered in the system it treats you as the BASE call sign ...no ssid
- 3) If you connect through a packet network or some switches (Nodes) that ALTER your –ssid then this can pose a problem. Paclink has an extended feature added (signified by the N in the SID) that tells the target RMS what your real –ssid is even if the packet network altered it in the connecting process. See Q3510 and Q8550.

If you want your Paclink to really operate as K3ABC and not as K3ABC-3, then simply change the call sign in the site properties. You will also have to change any accounts on Outlook Express, Outlook etc to match the new base call sign. See Q3560

Q150 Are there any guarantees that the message I send via WL2K will get through to the intended person?

A150 No guarantees, but if one of your intended recipients is NOT a WL2K user, you will get a service message from the CMS, telling you of that problem. Assuming that you have addressed the message correctly, there are still a multitude of reasons why the intended person might not get the message; or got it and has not read it. The WL2K system is good, but not infallible; ditto for the rest of the internet infrastructure.

Some e-mail servers' Spam Filters are very aggressive. Some may reject e-mail originating or from a server located in specific countries. It is the responsibility of the message originator to verify that the message path is working – **all the way** to the recipient of the message. See Q750.

"Receipt Confirmation" is discussed in a web page by K7BFL:
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/ReceiptConfirm.html>

Q160 What happens if the Common Message Server (CMS) fails?

A160 The CMS consists of five different computer systems in five different locations: San Diego, Brentwood (near Nashville, Tennessee), Halifax, Perth, and Wien (Vienna). They are backing each other up on a continuous basis. If a failure occurs at one location, all users using that location will be re-directed to one of the other locations.

Q170 **Are there any guidelines concerning the size of messages that WL2K will accept and process?**

A170 120000 bytes is the largest “compressed” message size that will be accepted for Winlink. Due to the much slower transfer speeds of radio paths (compared to dial-up, etc) it is better if messages are kept as small as practical, while still accomplishing the communications objectives of both users. Following are approximate air times needed to transfer a 4K message (after compression) for several modes of operation, *under ideal conditions*:

Packet (1200) direct	2 minutes
Packet (1200) 1 Node	2.5 minutes
Packet (9600) direct	1 minute
Pactor 1	15 minutes
Pactor 2	4 minutes
Pactor 3	30 seconds
Pactor 4	15 seconds
WINMOR	3-10 minutes, depending on the Bandwidth used
Telnet (Internet Access)	seconds

Messages containing “emotions” and “backgrounds” contain embedded image files; which should be avoided, if possible. These images can be stripped from your incoming messages by setting your Attachments Limit to 0. However all other “useful” Attachments will be stripped also!

WL2K (except when using Keyboard or Web Message Access) will process Attachments of many file types. Some file types comes with significant “overhead”. This overhead can be reduced by changing the file to a txt, rtf, or csv file, if appropriate.

Image files should be as small as practical!

Q180 **After I download a message from a RMS how is it deleted from the WL2K system?**

A180 The message is immediately deleted from the CMS to which you are connected. Within several seconds that CMS sends a “delete” command to the other CMS locations to update their database.

Q190 **I have been using AirMail successfully for several days. Yesterday I installed a new version, and reset the "starting" message number [Tools...Options....Settings....Current Message Number] to the same number as was used for my first message. The RMS to which I connected would not accept my next message. Why?**

A190 Each message "alive" within the Common Message Server must have a unique message number, referred to as a "MID". You should not "reset" the starting message number when re-installing or updating the AirMail software.

However, if you are using multiple computers (like your laptop and your desktop) with the same callsign, keep the message numbers significantly different from each other in the two computers. To do otherwise your “new” message to another WL2K user might not be downloaded at its intended destination. If he is using AirMail, he might get a “Message

Already Received”, from your “other” computer, since AirMail keys on the message number of the Sender.

Q200 What are some of the design principles of the WL2K system and associated software?

A200 Principles include:

1. A message system compatible with SMTP e-mail.
2. Enable messages to be transferred to the destination party in a VERY accurate manner, within a short time duration (several minutes).
3. Enable use of the available internet infrastructure, if available.
4. Encourage use of VHF/UHF radio spectrum, if a “non-radio” path is not available.
5. Enable EFFICIENT use of HF radio spectrum, if VHF/UHF is not available. Use a small as possible “RF Footprint”.
See http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/RF_Footprints.pdf
6. Enable e-mail type messages to be sent between two radio stations, without using any portion of the “internet”. This is called “peer-to-peer”.

Q220 Does WL2K support Linux or Macintosh operating systems?

A220 Yes, but since Windows operating systems are used by the majority of actual and potential users, we feel our limited man-power resources should be used to improve the present Windows based software.

There is a version of the RMS Packet software that runs under Linux and several have used this to add packet gateways to WL2K...again this is more of a server function than user access. See Q9100.

A Linux version of Paclink is being developed by N2QZ and KA1WPM. Contact them if you would like to help. Nick, N2QZ, has created a yahoo group for people interested in the paclink-unix project.

Here's the URL:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/paclink-unix/>

The Macintosh can now run AirMail just as well as any computer out there, especially, the new Intel based Macs. These new Macs can run Windows naturally through “Boot Camp”, which comes with the operating system. You can also run Windows via VM Ware or Parallels. These programs basically run Windows just like a regular Windows machine except in many cases faster. One other advantage to these programs is you can also run multiple operating systems, such as Linux, Mac OS X, Windows, etc.

AirMail will also run on older Mac's using the Windows emulation, such as Soft Windows. This may be a bit sluggish, depending on the speed of your computer, but will work.

AirMail also runs fine on older Mac's under Virtual-PC. The only wrinkle has to do with

USB/serial adaptors not AirMail, either map the serial port from the Mac side OR enable VPC's USB support and install the Windows USB drivers. But don't do both, that ties the serial ports into knots.

You can also run AirMail under WINE on Linux.

If you mean as a WL2K RMS Pactor station, the answer is no; those are only Windows .NET programs running on Win 2000 or Win XP. Perhaps someday there will be a .NET runtime for the Mac which would make things a lot more transferable.

As a last resort you can access WL2K via any dumb terminal program on packet in keyboard mode. This is not recommended...it is error prone, does not allow attachments etc; but it will work in an emergency. HF access via keyboard is very restricted due to its inherent inefficiency.

The WL2K Development Team is open to integrating other operating system software into User programs. If you are or know a good Mac programmer we will encourage him and help him if he would like to write a Native Mac client. It really isn't that hard. We will give the VB.NET source if they wish.

If you have such programming expertise and want to donate your time, please contact the System Administrator, K4CJX.

Q240 Why doesn't WL2K use the TCP protocol?

A240 Tests done early in the development process indicated that the B2F format we use resulted in higher throughput than using the TCP protocol, which has much unnecessary overhead for radio use.

Q260 While monitoring transmissions from WL2K stations, I notice that the content appears as "gibberish". Isn't this illegal?

A260 The content looks that way because it is a compressed binary format called "B2F." This format is available to anyone, so the compressed data is not considered encryption or illegal for radio amateurs. Additional information about B2F is at:
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/B2F.htm>

Data transferred through Winlink 2000 is not considered to be Secure.

Data transferred through Winlink 2000 using the Keyboard method is not compressed; therefore it is readable by other listeners.

Q280 What document(s) explain the components of a packet exchange in Paclink or AirMail? A question has been raised specifically regarding the "FF, FC, FS, FQ, EM, & YY" that shows up during a session. What do each of those mean?

A280 What you're seeing is a BBS forwarding exchange where the two connected systems propose transmission of messages they have available for the other user, and list which messages they wish to receive of those proposed.

For documentation of the basic F6FBB BBS proposal exchange, see:
<http://www.f6fbb.org/protocole.html>

WL2K uses the standard FBB type protocol with a B2 extension. B2 is simply a specific mechanism for encapsulating a message which allows adding attachments, addressing multiple recipients, and mixing radio and e-mail (internet) recipients. Otherwise it is virtually identical to the FBB B1 protocol and it uses the exact same LZW compression algorithm as FBB B1.

The B2 protocol was developed in 1999 by the WL2K Development Team to be an efficient mechanism to move text and binary attachments using the FBB forwarding protocol. The FBB protocol and B2 is more efficient than the standard internet SMTP protocol in RF applications such as Packet or Pactor.

Q290 Why is the BCC email feature not available for Winlink users?

A290 For anyone interested in why Winlink 2000 does not utilize BCC on the Ham bands, please refer to Section 605 of the Communications Act, Citation 47.

Obviously, this only applies to Amateur Radio (b. Exceptions), and perhaps only in the United States, but that is not the issue. Winlink is capable of Encryption, and could also obscure the recipient list of a message via the IETF RFC for SMTP mail if there was a purpose. However, keep in mind, so can Microsoft, Apple, and other software providers. What is important is NOT what Winlink 2000 can do or cannot do, but what the FCC allows the US Amateur Radio Control operator to do, and Blind Copying recipients of messages is not allowed.

Q300 I am active in MARS and the National Traffic System, handling messages using the “Winlink 2.9” software. Can I use this software with Winlink 2000?

A300 No, it is not compatible. The Winlink 2000 system is an off-spring of Winlink 2.9. Winlink 2.9, Winlink 3.1, and Winlink Classic are all similar. Winlink 2.9 is a user program. Winlink 2000 is a “system”. AirMail is similar to Winlink 2.9, but has MANY differences. A major difference is the message routing process. AirMail and Winlink 2000 do not support “H-routing”. Winlink 2000 is centered on the SMTP e-mail standard.

Winlink 2.9 was written by Victor D. Poor, W5SMM, who has continued to write software for Winlink 2000. You can read more about the history of Winlink at:
<http://www.winlink.org/node/1>

AirMail can be used to send and receive NTS radiograms via the NTSD system, by accessing the NTSD “Area Hub” pactor stations. See the instructions by AE5V at:
http://home.earthlink.net/~bscottmd/airmail_ntsd.htm

Q320 How can I send a Radiogram via Winlink 2000?

A320 It either be embedded in the Body of the message, or Attached to the message.

AirMail can be used to send and receive NTS radiograms via the NTSD system, by accessing the NTSD "Area Hub" pactor stations. See the instructions by AE5V at: http://home.earthlink.net/~bscottmd/airmail_ntsd.htm Also see Q6100.

Q340 How can I find the location of a WL2K user?

A340 If you have access to the web, go to the WL2K web page....Maps....User Positions...
<http://www.winlink.org/userPositions>

Click on the dot of the approximate position of the station you are looking for. Click again on "View Position Reports" to see all of the recent reports from that station.

If you do not have access to the web, and are using AirMail, send a "Position Request" message via Message Index....Window....Winlink-2000....Position Request.

Q360 What are some of the Limits associated with WL2K?

A360 Message size maximum, including Attachments: 120000 bytes (compressed)

[If a message exceeds the absolute compressed size limit, a service message will be sent to the sender advising that the message has not been accepted. There are no limits on the number of messages for each user or the overall byte size]

Attachment name size maximum: 50 characters (including extension). This is not a problem when Sending from a Winlink address, but does occur when Receiving at a Winlink address [the Attachment is not downloaded, with no "error note"].

Life of an Unread message: 21 days

Registration period for a WL2K user: 400 days since last access via radio or Telnet (Internet Access)

Life of a Tactical E-mail Address: 400 days since last use

Life of an e-mail address in your Whitelist: 400 days since you last sent a message to that address.

Tactical address name length: Current Tactical addresses are limited to 12 characters total (including any "-") preceding the "@winlink.org". See Q7030.

User daily time limit for HF users is defaulted to 30 minutes. The RMS operator may change that default, or customize it for different modes (pactor 1, pactor 2, pactor 3) and different users. If you have specific larger needs, e-mail your request to the RMS operator (RMScallsign@winlink.org).

There are no User daily time limits associated with a RMS Packet station or Telnet (Internet Access).

- Q370** **Is there somewhere I can see how many messages the WL2K system has handled last month?**
- A370 Yes. From the WL2K web page go to ...ReportsCMS Status
 <http://www.winlink.org/CMSStatus>
- Q380** **I just got a “message not delivered” service message from the WL2K Common Message Server. Why?**
- A380 The WL2K outbound E-mail (SMTP) client will try and send your outbound mail directly (no relays) to the end recipient 10 times over a period of 5 hours. If it still fails (in this case because it appears the ISP is not accepting or blocking the connection) it gives up and sends a failure notice to the originator.
- Most of the times these failures are due to:
- (a) Improperly listed public MX record for the destination domain
 - (b) Some form of spam or other filtering mechanism used by the ISP
 - (c) The server is off line or otherwise down. If multiple servers for a domain are available (as listed in the MX records) all are tried.
- Q400** **What kinds of Attachments will the WL2K system accept?**
- A400 All except .exe and .zip. Attachments are not useable when accessing via the Winlink web page or when using the Keyboard Method.
- Q410** **I can't seem to send an attachment. When I attempt to send, I get the message "(Attachment deleted, could not be sent in this mode.)" Tried in P2 same thing; tried different RMS's; same thing.**
- A410 Go to Tools....Options....Settings. Make sure that “B2F” is selected for the BBS Forwarding Protocol.

Q430 Please review for me the rules associated with “secure radio access” to my WL2K e-mail account.

A430 *WARNING: Enabling secure login carries the risk that you will be unable to connect, because of errors on your part, on the part of system operators, or possibly software errors. DO NOT REQUEST SECURE LOGON unless you have an alternate email path (from WebMail) available to correct errors with your password, or you may be locked out of your account with no e-mail access.*

1. Secure Login helps prevent the possibility of someone else "spoofing" your callsign and connecting to your mailbox. This has not been a significant problem in the past, but if desired a password-protected login can be requested. This optional feature has two parts: turning the feature On or Off, and defining/using a password for your WL2K account.

2. The “switch” to turn this feature On or Off (default is Off) is accessed via the www.winlink.org web page....WebMail (don't forget to Save your settings). The “switch” (residing at the CMS) cannot be accessed by using programs such as AirMail or RMS Express.

3. AND if the “switch” is turned On, then the associated switch (and your password) must be defined in the Tools..Options...Settings (AirMail), Site Properties (Paclink), or RMS Express Setup (RMS Express) screens.

4. WebMail (via www.winlink.org) is the ONLY place where you can change your Secure Login password.

5. Don't confuse your WL2K e-mail secure password with the password you may use to access the web site. They are not linked to each other.

6. Also, be aware that “Keyboard” access to your e-mail is NOT possible if Secure Login is turned “On”. See Q8510.

Q460 Is there any priority associated with the downloading of messages to a user?

A460 Yes, smaller messages are downloaded before larger messages, in groups of five.

Q480

What are the rules regarding WL2K and “Third Party Traffic”?

A480

from: <http://www.winlink.org/node/3>

Third-party traffic is any traffic transmitted over the Amateur bands that is either from or to a non-amateur. In the Western Hemisphere (with a few exceptions) there is no restriction on third-party traffic being passed over amateur radio. Many countries outside of the Western Hemisphere also now permit third-party traffic over amateur radio. Messages between amateurs even if they originate or are delivered over Internet are not considered third-party traffic. Third-party traffic only deals with that portion which is transmitted over the radio spectrum.

Since there is no limitation on third-party traffic over Internet itself, messages passed between WL2K participating stations, or a participating station and the Internet are *not* restricted. Only when the message involves a non-amateur and is passed over a radio link is the issue a concern. For example: if a message originates in the U.K. on Internet but is delivered to a U.S. amateur over the radio from a U.S.-based station no third-party rule is broken even though the U.K. does not allow third-party traffic over amateur channels. Likewise, a message originating over the radio from a U.S. amateur and passed to a U.S. station is legal even if it is addressed to the Internet address of a non-amateur in the U.K.

Users must make themselves familiar with these third-party rules for the country in which they are operating as well as linking with if they are exchanging messages with non-amateurs. See the country list for countries known to permit third-party traffic for U.S. stations and their reciprocals.

RMS SysOps have software available [SysOp Message Manager] to monitor the content of messages going In and Out of their station.

Q500 How do some features compare between Outpost, AirMail, Paclink, and RMS Express?

A500

	Generic Terminal	Outpost	AirMail	Paclink	RMS Express
Author		Jim Oberhofer KN6PE	Jim Corenman KE6RK	Winlink Development Team	Winlink Development Team
Useable for Telnet (Internet Access)?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Useable for Packet?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Useable for Pactor?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Useable for WINMOR?	No	No	Yes, with BPQ	No	Yes
Uses compression of data, before transmission	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can handle "Attachments"?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can be used with a Sound Card?	Yes	Yes	Yes, with AGW and AMPE	Yes	Yes
Can be used with most any TNC on packet?	Yes	Yes	Yes, with AGW and AMPE	Yes, with AGW	Yes, with AGW and AGW Express Interface
Can handle simultaneous radio Sessions with different modes (like packet & pactor)?		No	Yes	No	No
Useable for "peer-to-peer" message transfers?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Able to do a "Keyboard" Connect?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Can be used with older computers?	Yes	Yes	Windows 95+	Windows XP+	Windows XP+; needs "fast" CPU for WINMOR
Recommended for routine use?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Built-in Message Administration?	No	Yes	Yes	Uses any e-mail client	Yes
Address Book?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scripting for packet Connects?	No	No	Yes - Limited	Unlimited	Unlimited
"Catalog" of Help and Weather bulletins?	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Protocol which drove initial development of the software		packet	pactor	packet	WINMOR
Cost of software	\$0+	\$0-49	\$0-49	\$0-49	\$0-49

Q580 Does WL2K comply with Part 97 of the FCC Rules?

A580 RMS stations and WL2K users are governed by the rules and regulations of their own country.

Winlink 2000 complies with §97.221 for an Automatically controlled digital station:

- For Wider than 500 Hz: 97.221 (b) (b) A station may be automatically controlled while transmitting a RTTY or data emission on the 6 m or shorter wavelength bands, and on the 28.120–28.189 MHz, 24.925–24.930 MHz, 21.090–21.100 MHz, 18.105–18.110 MHz, 14.0950–14.0995 MHz, 14.1005–14.112 MHz, 10.140–10.150 MHz, 7.100–7.105 MHz, or 3.585–3.600 MHz segments.

[Editor Note: "data" includes emission type J2D, which includes pactor 3 (3 kHz or less).]

- For 500 Hz: 97.221 (c) A station may be automatically controlled while transmitting a RTTY or data emission on any other frequency authorized for such emission types provided that: (1) The station is responding to interrogation by a station under local or remote control; and (2) No transmission from the automatically controlled station occupies a bandwidth of more than 500 Hz.

Winlink 2000 complies with §97.109 Station control, for 3rd Party traffic rules:

- (e) No station may be automatically controlled while transmitting third party communications, **except** a station transmitting a RTTY or data emission. All messages that are retransmitted must originate at a station that is being locally or remotely controlled.

Winlink 2000 complies with Section §97.219(c) for 3rd Party traffic Content Rules:

- §97.219(c) provides protection for licensees operating as part of a message forwarding system. "...the control operators of forwarding stations that retransmit inadvertently communications that violate the rules in this Part are not accountable for the violative communications. They are, however, responsible for discontinuing such communications once they become aware of their presence.

Winlink 2000 complies with §97.309 for data emission codes:

- (4) An amateur station transmitting a RTTY or data emission using a digital code specified in this paragraph may use any technique whose technical characteristics have been documented publicly, such as CLOVER, G-TOR, or Pactor, for the purpose of facilitating communications.

Winlink 2000 complies with Sub-Part E when so designated (i.e.: §97.403 Safety of life and protection of property):

- No provision of these rules prevents the use by an amateur station of any means of radio communication at its disposal to provide essential communication needs in connection with the immediate safety of human life and immediate protection of property when normal communication systems are not available.

Q590 Let's assume that there is a total internet crash; none of the RMS stations have a path to the Common Message Servers. Is WL2K of any use to me?

A590 There seems to be confusion as to how WL2K deals with the loss of Internet. Let me address this question and see if I can bring a little clarity to it.

As presently designed and deployed, the assumption is made that Internet may fail regionally but not globally. A disaster may take out the Internet infrastructure over an area of as much as several states or a single country but not the entire world.

If Internet fails in a given region those RMS sites that implement RMS Relay in the region will be able to continue to exchange traffic locally on VHF and globally on HF. RMS Relay will provide the ability to reach WL2K stations on HF that are in areas where Internet is still functional and can still reach a CMS site. CMS sites are purposely geographically dispersed (Australia, Canada, Europe, USA) to provide a high level of redundancy.

Individual HF client stations using Paclink, RMS Express, or AirMail will continue to be able to exchange traffic with out-of-region HF stations that can still reach any one of the CMS sites.

The whole idea is to keep users and the network entirely connected even when even large areas become isolated due to loss of Internet. The WL2K addressing would remain functional and anyone that can reach any functional HF or VHF port can exchange messages with anyone else anywhere in the system without thought about how it is routed.

It is argued by some that we should build a system to support total global failure of Internet. Army MARS has in fact plans to implement just such a system using HF accessible and interconnected CMS sites. I do not know the timetable for this implementation, but meanwhile the system outlined in the Winlink 2000 Roadmap document is currently being implemented, and will support any disaster scenario experienced to date.

An all-HF system, no matter how implemented, will have bandwidth and latency limitations that constrain its value. Served agencies need (and expect) a communications service will be able to handle a reasonable volume of complex traffic with good speed. To that end we need to provide a service that will make use of the best and fastest means available at any given time.

The WL2K mission is to provide, through a volunteer network, effective last resort communications in civil emergencies and personal communications in non-emergency conditions

By Vic Poor, W5SMM, AAA9WL
February 13, 2008

Q600 The SCS TNC's that do Pactor 3 seem to be "expensive". Is there any "discount" program?

A600 The TNC's made by SCS contain a LOT of technology. Discounts are available from Farallon Electronics for qualified users. See:
<http://home.earthlink.net/%7Ek7bfl/SCSDiscount.pdf>

Q610 How do I change my Attachments limit?

A610 As of February 2008 the "Attachment Limit" concept has been replaced by a "compressed message limit". This can be changed via the WL2K web page....WebMail....User Settings. The limit is in bytes. The default value for new users is 120000 bytes (compressed). The limit can also be changed by sending an "Options" message to the Common Message Servers with the AirMail program.

Go to: Message Index....Window...Winlink-2000....Options Message.

[Note: the reference to "Attachment Limit" in the Options message is actually the "Compressed Message Limit".]

Q620 I will not be accessing the WL2K system for several months. Is there a way to have all of my incoming WL2K e-mails diverted to another e-mail account?

A620 Yes, using the AirMail software, go to Window....Winlink-2000....Options Message. Change the "Alternate Address". Send the message, either via radio or Internet Access (Telnet).

To return to receiving email at your Winlink address; send another Options Message from AirMail, with the "Alternate Address" blank.

Q630 How does the WL2K system deal with Spam?

A630 Messages incoming to WL2K users are filtered, using high level methods, by the Central Message Server (CMS). Winlink 2000 uses the information from SPAMCOP. It also requires a reverse DNS lookup. Each server IP address must return a PTR-record that matches the HELO or ELHO command received from that server and it must have an A-record that matches the host name shown in the HELO or ELHO command. If such a record exists, then it has entry to the Whitelist system.

In addition, each individual WL2K user uses a "Whitelist". About 90% of the messages into the CMS from the internet are Spam! In order to combat this problem it was decided by the Winlink Development Team that use of the Whitelist should be required of all users.

After August 1, 2008, the Whitelist is turned "On" for all users, and cannot be turned "Off". As of September 2007 WL2K is no longer using a Spam Filter with a "Threshold". Ignore references to a Spam Threshold in the AirMail software.

Q650 How does the “Whitelist” function?

A650 The “Whitelist” option allows messages to be downloaded to you only if the message was sent from an internet e-mail address on **your** Whitelist; **or** if the message was sent to you from other WL2K user **or** if the sender put a “//WL2K” in the Subject line [see Q670, Q680, Q690]. If a message is rejected, the CMS will automatically send a “Rejection Notice” to the sender of the message.

The data for your Whitelist is stored on the CMS computers. Decisions regarding rejecting messages to you are made by the CMS, independent of which user software you are using (AirMail, RMS Express, Paclink, etc).

Data for your Whitelist is composed of two unique pieces:

- a) A list of allowed e-mail addresses or e-mail domains.
- b) A list of disallowed e-mail addresses or e-mail domains (the “Blacklist”)

Since you have been using the Winlink 2000 system, the CMS has been accumulating e-mail addresses in YOUR “Whitelist”, adding to the list each new address to which **you** send a message.

Addresses in your Whitelist remain there for 400 days after you last sent an e-mail to that address.

Q670 Tell me more about the Whitelist details.

A670 In order for a message to get through the WL2K spam filter, ANY MESSAGE TO A WINLINK USER FROM THE INTERNET must be from a sender's address or domain name that is in the recipient's whitelist, OR AS AN OPTION, the sender must include the character sequence //WL2K R/ in the subject line of the message. If //WL2K R/ is found in the subject line, the message will be accepted and forwarded to all of the recipients of the message, including Winlink addresses.

Example:

Subject://WL2K R/ (then any other normal subject content to follow).

If the sender is not in the recipient's whitelist and no //WL2K R/ is found in the subject line the message will be rejected with a reference to the Winlink WEB page where instructions for sending WL2K messages will be found.

There will be certain exceptions. Messages from Saildocs.com, Sailmail.com and other specific domains will be accepted unconditionally except where a recipient specifically blocks the domain name in their whitelist.

Under these conditions, unless the Subject line contains //WL2K R/, you will **ONLY** receive E-MAIL messages from those (non-WL2K) addresses that you have recorded in your own Whitelist.

Q675 How do I view or change the address or domain entries in my Whitelist or my Blacklist?

A675 New e-mail addresses are automatically added to your Whitelist when the CMS receives the message **from** you, independent of which user program you are using. The list can also be changed by:

A) If you are connected to the Winlink 2000 web page:

- 1) WebMail...User Settings
- 2) Add or Delete specific addresses and/or domains to either the Whitelist or the Blacklist.
- 3) Hit the Save button

B) Create a new message [the following is an example] to the CMS with the following format (not case sensitive):

To: System
Subject: Whitelist

LIST will return a list of all Whitelist and Blacklist entries for the user.

ACCEPT: jblow@somewhere.com will allow messages from jblow@somewhere.com to be accepted. You may send multiple lines, each containing one e-mail address.

Reject: jblow@somewhere.com will reject any messages from jblow@somewhere.com. You may send multiple lines, each containing one e-mail address.

Delete: jblow@somewhere.com will remove jblow@somewhere.com from the user's Whitelist. You may send multiple lines, each containing one e-mail address.

ACCEPT: arrl.net will allow all messages from xxxxxx@arrl.net to be accepted

REJECT: Verizon.com will reject all messages from xxxxxx@verizon.com

IMPORTANT NOTE: Domain Entries without the "@" will be treated as "domain names" only. For example if "Accept: sailmail.com" were entered, then ANY message from that "domain name" (sailmail.com) would be accepted.

Send the message

An example of a message to control your Whitelist:

TO: SYSTEM
Subject: Whitelist

Accept: joe@somewhere.com
Accept: bill@someplace.net
Accept: ARRL.NET
Reject: nogood.com
Delete: joan@overthere.com

Q680 I notice that messages sent from Paclink have modified my Subject, prefaced by //WL2K R/. Why? Do I need to always include the //WL2K R/ in the subject line of all my messages going through the Winlink 2000 system?

A680 The reason Paclink automatically puts //WL2K R/ on the subject line is to implement one of our "good use tips", that is, to also use it on your outgoing messages, so that persons who click their 'reply' buttons and have an email setup that replies from a different email address than they receive on will have a good chance of having //WL2K R/ in the subject line of their reply. Persons in these situations would otherwise have the reply mail rejected. This also goes for folks with ISPs who use some nonstandard message headers. You would be surprised how often this occurs.

No--you don't need //WL2K R/ on outgoing messages. New addresses not already on your Whitelist are automatically added to it. But if you have internet recipients in the above categories, you sure will want it. See Q670.

Q690 Tell me about the "Message Precedence" logic that is used in WL2K.

A690 A process for MESSAGE PRECEDENCE handling for *Internet* traffic on the WL2K system has been implemented. All messaging passing between users of the Winlink 2000 system and Internet e-mail now require message precedence headers in the subject line UNLESS the Internet e-mail address of the originator/recipient is in the user's Whitelist. In other words, the Message Precedence System bypasses the Whitelist.

Considering that emergency e-mail to and from areas that would not otherwise have access to Internet e-mail can become targets for an exceptional amount of traffic within short timeframes: and considering the slow nature of a HF radio link, having the ability to prioritize messages of importance that exceed a routine priority is paramount to the success of such communications. In addition, with the message precedence system in place, SPAM should be totally eliminated. This is critical when considering the size and number of unwanted e-mail now invading the Internet e-mail system and the slower speeds of radio e-mail.

The optional precedence indicator is included in a Winlink message by adding one of the following to ***the beginning*** of the Subject Line in a message, whether originated from Internet email or within the Winlink system.

//WL2K Z/ - Flash (for urgent message use only)

//WL2K O/ - Immediate (for urgent message use only)

//WL2K P/ - Priority

//WL2K R/ - Routine (**Default**) This is what the CMS assumes, if nothing else is there.

Here are some examples of acceptable subject lines using the precedence indicators:

//WL2K Z/ EOC Flooding

//WL2K O/ Shelter Status – Full

//WL2K P/ Food and bedding inventory request

//WL2K R/ Supplies received

Re://WL2K R/ Generator manual needed

FW://WL2K R/ Please bring gasoline

Unless there are special circumstance, routing precedence //WL2K R/ should be used.

Q700 Even though recipients are on your Whitelist, some internet addresses get rejected by the CMS. Why?

A700 Verify that the "From" address of the Sender is the same as the address you have in your Whitelist. This situation is common with folks who use services such as "ARRL.NET".

There is a standard in e-mail delivery designed to prevent spam sent from domain names that do not match the IP address. (This is a common way spam originates). It's called reverse-DNS lookup. WL2K central servers check with the DNS of every incoming internet sender to be sure the 'From' address matches the IP address from which the message comes. If not, it is rejected as incoming spam. This is our firm policy.

Some may point out that RFC 2821 states that SMTP servers (ISPs) may verify the match, but should not reject the message if verification fails. Our policy is tough for a reason; WL2K is a radio-based service for the benefit of our radio users. Each licensed radio user is bound to obey legal rules that govern them or they risk their license. In virtually every country these regulations strictly prohibit indecent or commercial content from being transmitted on the airwaves. Besides the normal spam problem for anyone with a mail server on the internet (less than 1% of messages hitting our system are valid), we MUST be bound by regulations more strict than RFC 2821. Also, the Winlink 2000 system is NOT an ISP. We are a private concern and are not legally bound to RFC 2821, or to accept any messages that are not of our choosing. We do not charge our users for the services we provide. We strictly obey the rules that govern amateur radio in every country our network stations and users operate.

What can you do?

If your recipient's internet mail provider has not updated their DNS records to include reverse-DNS (PTR) records, the WL2K check fails, and incoming legitimate mail can be branded as spam and rejected. Advise your internet correspondents to tell their ISP to upgrade their service to current anti-spam standards by adding a PTR record (the reverse-DNS record) to their DNS servers. If they won't, your recipients can get a free email account with Yahoo or gmail (Google) that properly conform.

The good news is that most ISPs are diligent and have the same concerns about spam. For the few that don't, well, we wish they did. Sorry for the trouble, but internet spammers have made life complicated for us all!

Q720 I just sent a message from my Blackberry to a W2K User. It was rejected by the CMS...."not on the Whitelist". The User has my correct email address in his Whitelist. What happened?

A720 The CMS may be seeing the message coming not from your email address, but from "----blackberry.com". You need to Setup your real email account on the Blackberry and delete the blackberry.com account.

Go to www.blackberry.com and search for your email support from your provider. You can also delete a signature line there.

You can also delete a signature line there.

Q740 It seems that a friend of mine is just unable to get an important message to me through the WL2K Spam Filter? Any suggestions?

- A740
- a. Have them preface the Subject: with “//WL2K /R”.
 - b. You send a message to them first.
 - c. You send a message to the email address that your friend uses as a “From” address.
 - d. Have your friend show their email Network Administrator the contents of FAQ700.
 - e. Have another friend (who is able to send emails to you) relay the email to you.

Q750 Is there a good way to “Road Test” my WL2K equipment and software?

A750 Yes; it takes some time, but is well worth the effort, especially if you do not use the Winlink system several times each week WITH THE EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE YOU EXPECT TO USE during the situation for which you are planning to use WL2K.

It is NOT good enough to “ping” your local RMS gateway station. Messages need to be sent and received. You are using a digital system; which is only “one electrical connection” OR “one character of software code” away from Failure.

You need to test the entire “system”, which includes:

- 1) your equipment and software
- 2) the Winlink 2000 system
- 3) the equipment and software on the “other end”; the person with which you need to exchange messages.

Be as realistic as possible. If you (User1) expect to exchange messages with User2 during an “emergency event” by using your laptop with packet going through a Node, don’t make the Test with your desktop computer, using Telnet. If User2 expects to exchange messages during the “emergency event” using their Blackberry, the Test should not be done with their desktop computer.

The testing process:

- 1) User1 sends a message to User2
- 2) User2 confirms receipt of the message, by doing a “Reply”.
- 3) User2 sends a message to User1.
- 4) User1 confirms receipt of the message, by doing a “Reply”.

A successful test is the receiving of all four messages.

Don’t forget to print one of the four messages! Your printer ink supply may have dried up!

The configurations of the systems you are testing are dynamic, living systems. Firewalls and Spam Filters are continually being changed. Test on a regular basis!

See Q150, 380, 610-740, 3510, 8550.

Q900 Who pays the expenses of creating and operating the Winlink 2000 system?

A900 Winlink 2000 (WL2K) is (and always has been) all volunteer. No one is compensated for their contributions of time which now [2007] totals well over 20 man-years. We try to offset at least some of the costs of running servers, registering internet addresses and domains, licensing software etc with donations.

In 2006 we set up a not-for-profit public service corporation to handle the finances and contributions from the distributions of CDs and also as a vehicle to accept donations of equipment and services (e.g. retired commercial servers etc). This corporation is called the Amateur Radio Safety Foundation Inc. (ARSFI) see <http://www.arsfi.org/> The directors of the ARSFI are primarily the founders and developers of WL2K and no director receives any compensation. We are in the process of obtaining Public Charity status 501(c)3 for this corporation but that is a time consuming process and it is not guaranteed we will be granted this status.

The ARSFI is the mechanism we use to pay for the expenses of WL2K and to purchase what licenses, hardware and new development tools and software are required. It is also a mechanism to provide training for Emcomm groups and distribute information about WL2K and Amateur Radio Emergency services in general.

Interested parties or those wishing to contribute to the operation of WL2K can do so in one of a few ways. These mechanisms can all be reached via the ARSFI web site above.

- 1) Join the ARSFI (\$10/year). Your membership gives you a vote into how the organization is run and what it does. The contribution goes to the ARSFI and some of that is used to support Winlink 2000.
- 2) Make a cash donation through the ARSFI. Both Pay Pal and Secure Credit Card mechanism are available on the ARSFI.org web site. We request that personal donations be limited to \$100.
- 3) Purchase one of the CDs which we make available throughout the year to various boater, RV, and EmComm groups. These have convenient up-to-date software and other useful information. A nominal \$15 donation is suggested to cover duplicating and mailing costs. If you would like a CD configured to target a particular group or service please contact one of the directors and provide us information on what your target audience is.
- 4) Make a donation of equipment or services to the ARSFI. This can be in the form of retired but otherwise useable servers, radio equipment, software, facilities or services (e.g. legal, accounting, engineering, programming or documentation help) To make a donation of equipment or services please contact one of the directors of ARSFI.

Donations of cash or check are also appreciated and should be sent to:

ARSF Inc.
c/o Rick Muething, KN6KB
6143 Anchor Lane
Rockledge, Florida USA 32955

Make checks payable to ARSF Inc. or Amateur Radio Safety Foundation Inc.

Your support of WL2K and the ARSFI is much appreciated.

Rick Muething, KN6KB

Director, Treasurer Amateur Radio Safety Foundation

Winlink 2000 Development Team

Q920 What Discussion groups are concerned with WL2K?

A920 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wl2kemcomm/>
Purpose of the group is to share ideas, uses, methods and procedures of utilizing Winlink 2000 for Disaster Recovery/Emergency Preparedness; and to include any other organization/agency that deploys or is considering deploying Winlink 2000 for emergency communications.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Airmail_2000/

A general purpose list for things like: Beginner questions on setting up, tips on using and connecting to the Winlink 2000 system, frequency updates, Winlink 2000 station status and new station additions are all welcome on this list.

http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Winlink_Programs_Group/

This Reflector is specifically set up for the purpose of obtaining Winlink 2000 user applications, and to support and discuss their installation, configuration and use.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WINMOR/>

WINMOR is an HF digital protocol designed for use with the Winlink 2000 network. WINMOR provides an alternative to external Pactor hardware.

WINMOR is protocol that works with a PC sound card to provide a virtual TNC enabling throughput performance approaching h/w based Pactor 2 and, hopefully, Pactor 3.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/paclink-unix/>

Discussion group about the Paclink-Unix project:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BPQ32/>

A user group established by John Wiseman G8BPQ/GM8BPQ and Ron Stordahl AE5E (ex N5IN) for BPQ32 - AX.25 NET/ROM compatible node software for Windows.

BPQ for DOS and BPQ32 for Windows were written by John Wiseman G8BPQ/GM8BPQ and have a considerable following of appreciative users.

BPQ32 includes BPQMailChat, a modern BBS and Chat system, and BPQAPRS, an APRS Mapping and Messaging application.

BPQ32 offers three program interfaces. The DLL interface is the fundamental and most capable interface and is recommended for new applications. An AGW-like front end interface is offered permitting BPQ32 to be used with any program currently supporting AGWPE. The third, now deprecated, interface method is ActiveX.

An AGW back end interface has been added to allow BPQ32 to use sound card modems.

Many useful BPQ32 utilities and configuration examples are included.

Q930 What is the future of the Winlink 2000 System? Are there any new things on the horizon?

A930 WL2K Development Team member Vic Poor has written a comprehensive paper regarding the architecture of the Winlink 2000 System. See it at:
<http://www.winlink.org/node/356>

Q940 Now that WINMOR is implemented, will I still be able to use my Pactor equipment?

A940 Yes It is expected that the RMS Pactor stations will continue to service Pactor users for many years to come.

Q950 Are there other general sources of Help for WL2K users?

A950 Harris County (Texas) ARES/RACES – WL2K Resource Page
<http://harriscountyares.org/winlink/>

AE5V – WL2K Implementation
http://home.earthlink.net/~bscottmd/wl2k_implement.htm

N0IA – Tuning Packet Parameters for Best Performance
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/TuningVHFPacket.pdf>

SV2AGW – A discussion about packet TNC's built into radios
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/TascoModem.pdf>

Icom – D Star Specifications
<http://www.icomcanada.com/dstar/dstar7.htm>

ARRL Lab (KC1SX) – Comparative Performance of Packet Radios at 9600 baud
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/RadioCompare.pdf>

The "Pactor Primer" and "RF Interference"; two excellent articles written by Jim Corenman, KE6RK; author of the AirMail software:
<http://www.airmail2000.com/docs.htm>

AirMail Installation and Setup Instructions – W5IFQ and KC5QHH
<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/AirmailInstallW5IFQKC5QHH.pdf>

Florida Amateur Digital Communication Association
<http://www.fadca.org/>

K0BG has an excellent web site regarding tips for installing a mobile station that works well:
<http://www.k0bg.com/> Good information about RF noise, static, grounding.

Q951 How can five servers handle hundreds of connections made to them without a way to prioritize or throttle demand?

A951 The first thing you have to remember about server loading is the bandwidth of a radio channel (packet or pactor or WINMOR) is VERY slow compared to internet bandwidth. Each of the CMSs have at least one T1 connection (1.5 megabits/sec). Most have multiple. Each T1 line would handle roughly 200 simultaneous 9600 baud packet channels running at max throughput. Or something like 1000 Pactor channels. In practice these servers are set up to allow 1000 simultaneous connections but we have rarely seen them go above 20 or so. There are currently five CMSs with distributed DNS servers world wide. All RMS sites now cache actual dotted CMS IP addresses so they don't require any DNS service. All RMSs automatically rotate through all available CMSs if a connection can't be made to the initial CMS. If a CMS ever becomes saturated it simply will reject new connections and slow down the throughput to those connected to it. However based on the typical speeds of radio links most users would never even see this throttling.

Each CMS has a firewall and a mechanism for capturing connect attempts and these along with some additional mechanisms can be used to block most Denial of service types of attacks. It might be worth noting that we have had a Central server mechanism used in WL2K for over 9 years and have never had a successful Denial of service attack. Since going to redundant CMSs about 4 years ago we have had virtually 100% availability of the system...even during major disasters such as Katrina, The Tsunami, etc., and hardware/internet failures at a CMS.

AirMail – Setup - General

Q1000 What kind of computer operating system do I need to run AirMail?

A1000 Windows 95 is the “minimum” operating system, although a more modern Windows operating system is always encouraged.

Q1005 I see that there are several “modules” in addition to the “HF Terminal”. What are their differences?

A1005 The “Telnet Client” module is used to communicate via the Telnet protocol, using an internet connection. The “setup” for this is via the Tools...Options...Modules...Telnet Client...Setup window. This module is the easiest to get setup, and is suggested as an initial means to get AirMail working. See Q4000.

The “Terminal” or “HF Terminal” module is used to communicate via HF, using pactor 1, 2, or 3. The “setup” for this is via the Tools...Options...Settings window. See Q2000.

The “VHF Packet Client” module is used to communicate via packet radio. The “setup” for this is via the Tools...Options...Modules...VHF Packet Client...Setup window. See Q3000.

Q1010 I having trouble getting AirMail to talk to my computer com port. Any suggestions? I am using a serial to USB converter between my computer and the TNC.

A1010 Some serial/usb converters work ok; some don't. Good results have been reported for those brands of Radio Shack, Manhattan, Keyspan, Edgeport, IBM and Startech. Many folks are having difficulties with those sold by Belkin, but that may have changed.

The Keyspan and IBM devices have been tested and listed on the Microsoft Hardware Compatibility List (HCL). Since only “listed” hardware has been tested and found to be substantially compliant, buying unlisted equipment is a gamble at best.

You can find which converters are on the HCL by checking at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/whdc/hcl/default.msp>

Things like COM ports floating (or, being able to be assigned and reserved unchanged by the driver) are symptoms of software that can't get on the approval list because someone wrote cheap drivers.

Q1020 I want to install a new version of AirMail. Do I need to uninstall the old version first?

A1020 No; just copy the new file into your main AirMail Folder. Double click on the new file. Installation will begin. All of your previous settings and frequency lists will be preserved.

Q1040 I can't seem to get the "Earthmate LT-20" GPS receiver to work with AirMail. Any suggestions?

A1040 The original Earthmate was connected via a serial port, used a Rockwell chipset and a non-standard interface at 9600 baud. AirMail can communicate with that device if you check the "Earthmate" box.

The 2003-vintage USB Travelmate was different, and worked in NMEA mode if you told the DeLorme installer that you wanted to use the GPS with other applications also. If you made that selection when DeLorme was installed, then special drivers were installed that created a virtual com-port that would speak standard NMEA. In this mode the "Earthmate" box should NOT be checked, it is behaving as a standard NMEA GPS.

Apparently the same is true of the LT-20, except that the special NMEA-drivers are not part of the DeLorme installer. You can download the "DeLorme Serial Emulation Driver for USB Earthmate® GPS and Earthmate® GPS LT-20 Receiver" from <http://www.delorme.com/support/search.aspx>

After the new driver is installed, start AirMail and configure the proper COM port for the LT-20 in the Message Index....Window....Position Report...Data Input....Setup window. Check the "GPS/NMEA Port Enabled" box, and select the proper COM port. Do NOT check the "Earthmate" box. Also, be sure the "Data Input...Enabled" box is checked.

Q1060 Is it possible to get AirMail software to use on a Windows mobile PDA?

A1060 No, sorry. Windows CE (for mobile devices) is completely different from the Windows 95/98/ME or Windows NT/2000/XP families.

Q1080 I have been reading and now using the next generation of USB flash drives: the U3 smart drive. Has anyone setup the AirMail program to run under the U3 smart drive?

A1080 [from WA9OTP] A handy way to transport the AirMail program between computers is in a small USB flash drive. These drives are very inexpensive now, compact, and durable. When AirMail 'installs' it copies programs to your computer, it does not add complex links (DLLs).

According to Jim Corenman, KE6RK, who wrote AirMail:

"The only caveat is that if AirMail has never been installed on the machine, then a library file might be missing- vcl50.bpl which normally lives in the Windows/System32 folder. The fix is to copy that file into the AirMail folder on the USB-drive. 73, Jim"

I have tried this, and included the vcl50.bpl file as Jim suggests, and found that AirMail will boot and run from the flash USB drive on any other machine.

Of course, you may have to adjust the com ports for your new situation.

Q1090 Are there any special things I need to know to get AirMail to work with the new Windows Vista operating system?

A1090 First, a comment on upgrading to Windows Vista: If your new computer came with Windows Vista then that's great. If you are contemplating upgrading your computer to Windows Vista then make sure that is what you want to do. Windows-XP is robust and reliable; if yours is not then something has been compromised. And upgrading a compromised system results in a compromised system with fancy new drapes. But if you have a fast processor and at least a gigabyte of memory, then go for it.

The next question is an upgrade-installation or a clean install. Generally we prefer a clean install, but only if the computer manufacturer supports Win-Vista for your computer, and provides driver updates. For example, upgrading our three-year-old IBM Thinkpad was a piece of cake-- do a clean install for Win-Vista, go to the Lenovo website support/downloads page and install the system-update file for Windows Vista. We were impressed, but your mileage will vary.

There are a couple of issues when running AirMail under Windows Vista, mostly related to new Vista security features. The short answer is that AirMail works fine under Win-Vista when run as an administrator. A new security feature of Windows Vista is "User Account Control" (UAC). Remember, if you can do anything useful with your computer, it is not sufficiently secure. "User Account Control" is a watchdog service that does two things: warns you if you are trying to do something useful, e.g. run a program. And, if a program attempts to write into protected areas (e.g. the "program files" folder), a virtual copy of the file or folder is created instead for that user. The result, for AirMail, is severe schizophrenia, and release-notes that just keep reappearing. Here's how to fix it:

First, install AirMail as usual: Download the file from the website and save it in a "downloads" folder, then open that folder and open the downloaded file. AirMail will go through the install steps, and Windows may show a "not installed properly" warning when finished-- click "Yes this installed normally" and continue.

Once installed, before running AirMail, right-click the AirMail desktop icon and select "properties", click the "Compatibility" tab, and check "Run as administrator". This allows AirMail to write into its own folders (otherwise prohibited). For AirMail versions prior to 3.3.090 also check "Run this program in compatibility mode" and select Windows-XP SP2 (this will enable com-port descriptions).

You will continue to get warnings from UAC about an "unknown program" each time you start AirMail, and you may want to disable UAC. You can disable UAC in Control panel: open "User Accounts" and turn "User Account Control" off.

Help file: Vista does not include the program to display the traditional help files, "Winhlp32.exe". This may be available for download, alternately it can be copied from Windows-XP C:\Windows folder. To do this you will first need to set the permissions for the C:\Windows folder to allow Administrators full access, and to do this you will need to first take ownership (right-click the Windows folder, select properties, then Security tab, Advanced button, Owner tab, Edit button). Then copy the complete (277KB) Winhlp32.exe from Win-XP over the 9KB "stub" Winhlp32.exe on Win-Vista.

The propagation program installs OK and runs properly under AirMail. It will not likely run correctly under its own desktop icon without some fiddling similar to the above.

Upcoming versions of AirMail will move the user-folders into Win-Vista's user-space, while

maintaining the basic hardware settings in a common file. This will avoid issues with UAC as well as permitting separate "personalities" if desired. The Help file will also be converted to HTML format. The goal is for AirMail to run smoothly under Vista's highest security settings but this will take some effort.

[from Jim Corenman, author of AirMail; February 1, 2007]

Q1150 I am having trouble getting AirMail to install. I followed the instructions on the web site, but after I start the install it never seems to complete unzipping the files it grays out and an AirMail button appears in the tray, but it doesn't do anything. No AirMail folder is created in the Programs file. I've left it running for over a half hour and still nothing and if I hit cancel a popup tells me that "install.exe is still running". Help please!

A1150 [from KF6PNA] Some versions of InstallShield have a problem working with screens that have resolutions above 1024x768.

I have a desktop computer with 2 monitors connected. The primary is a 19" with resolution 1280x1024. The secondary is a 22" widescreen with resolution 1680x1050. With nothing left to lose, and since I'd tried everything else I could find, I changed the resolution on the 19" to 1024x768, reran the installation and lo and behold, the setup dialog boxes appeared on my monitor and I was able to complete the install.

I changed the resolution back and tried to do another install and noticed that I could just barely see the dialog box along the right side of the screen. I was able to grab the setup dialog window and drag it back onto the screen and was able to complete the installation. Then I figured one more test was in order. I changed the configuration of the video card to only use the 19" monitor and ran another install, with the resolution set to 1280x1024, and everything worked perfectly as it had in the past.

The bottom line... The setup dialog boxes were displaying "off the screen" giving the appearance that the install was hanging, when it was actually just waiting for a response. Problem solved! I'm using an NVIDIA GeForce 8400GS video card with the latest drivers.

Q1170 Is there a way that I can use Bluetooth with AirMail? I am using WINE.

A1170 From a discussion forum by Owen Morgan LA7QZ about Airmail bluetooth operation under WINE.

<http://navigatrix.net/viewtopic.php?t=83&f=6#p228>

AirMail – Use - General

Q1500 There seems to be a very large message trying to download to me. My message pipeline is plugged! It will take too much time to download. How can I delete the message before it downloads?

A1500 Sometimes a very large message (with or without Attachments) gets sent to a WL2K user and the attempted downloading of it results in very long air time and the inability to download other messages. There are several methods available to fix this problem:

Method 1

If you have RMS Express installed on your computer, see FAQ 11680.

Method 2

Have someone who has access to your WebMail account read and off-load the message; then Delete the message

Method 3 (See Q8510, Q8515) **[Radio Secure Log-in must be turned OFF]**

a. Set your program to the "Keyboard" mode. (AirMail is normally in the "Handshake" mode.

b. After connecting to a RMS station, type LM. This will give you a listing of the messages waiting for you, complete with Message ID, size, and origination.

c. Find the number of the offending message. Copy and Paste its Message number into a line to be sent back to the CMS as:

K xxxxxxxxxxxx [xxxxxxxxxxxx is the Message ID]

d. The message will then be Killed (Deleted). You will get a confirmation of that back from the CMS.

e. Repeat (b) to confirm that the message is no longer in the queue for you.

f. Disconnect (Disconnect Button or type BYE)

g. Connect again, in the normal Handshake mode. The Pipe will be unplugged!

h. Send a note back to the offending Sender.....

Note:

The KM command will work also, but ALL of your messages will be deleted.

Method 4

Download the message via Telnet (Internet Access) or the WL2K web page, if an internet connection is available.

Method 5: Request the System Administrator to delete the message.

Q1540 I want to use AirMail with “Internet Access”, Packet, and Pactor. Do I need three different computers, or three “instances” of AirMail on one computer?

A1540 No, a single installation of AirMail on a single computer will handle your needs. The three communications access methods each have their own unique communications “Module” within the main AirMail software. If you expect to have the Packet Module and the HF Terminal (Pactor Module) open at the same time, they each need to have different port numbers.

Q1580 What is the “Catalog” part of AirMail?

A1580 AirMail's "Catalog" window can be used to request weather bulletins and other documents from the Winlink 2000 system for hams, and also from the Saildocs server operated by the Sailmail association but also accessible via e-mail by WL2K users. The AirMail catalog is found under the Window menu, Catalog selection. The catalog window is divided into two panels- on the left is a "tree" showing various folders, similar to AirMail's message-index tree or Windows Explorer. These folders represent categories of documents which can be requested.

The catalog entries are organized first into sections for "WL2K" and "Saildocs". Clicking the little "+" will expand a selection, clicking a "-" will collapse it (just like Windows Explorer). The right and left-arrow keys can also be used to expand and collapse folders.

Under "WL2K" are a folder for "global" bulletins, plus a folder for each station which has been seen, containing that stations local bulletins as well as the "update" listings. Under the "global" folder are folders for each bulletin category, click on these (or use the arrow keys) to open that folder and show the contents in the list on the right side. Bulletins or documents are requested by checking the corresponding check-box, see Winlink 2000 Bulletins for more information.

Of particular interest and use for WL2K users are the WL2K_Help and WL2K_Users folders. These folders contain messages that can request specific Help files and specific “current” information regarding WL2K users.

Under "Saildocs" is a series of category-folders. The "Grib files" category is a special folder which brings up a grib-request window with a world map for requesting grib weather-data files. See "Grib Weather Files" for more information on requesting grib data. Saildocs also includes a large number of text weather-bulletin documents which can be requested. These are organized into folders under "Saildocs" for the different ocean regions. Some areas have sub-folders to further divide the selection for easy browsing. Also, many bulletins are listed under more than one heading, for example Atlantic hurricane bulletins are listed under both "Atlantic" and "Tropical". See "Saildocs Catalog" for more information on requesting documents from Saildocs.

Q1600 How do I update the list of messages in the Catalog?

A1600 Every time there is a small change, deletion or addition to the WL2K Catalog displayed in the AirMail menu "Window>Catalogs," the list should be updated periodically to take advantage of the changes and additions. This is done by sending a "Request" message to the WL2K CMS; then waiting for the updated Catalog to come back from the CMS

The Update is relatively short, while obtaining a new List is a bit longer. Either way, once the change is received, AirMail automatically updates your existing Catalog list. The method for obtaining a revised list is as follows:

1. Go to the AirMail menu item "Window>Catalogs." Do either 2a, 2b, or 2c; depending on what you have in your present Catalog.

2a. Under Catalog, expand "WL2K" further to show some of the RMS or CMS call signs. Pick a RMS or CMS that you wish to use and Click on that callsign. On the right-hand side you will see both "LIST" and "UPDATE." Go to Step 3.

2b. On the left, expand the directory tree to Catalogs...WL2K...Global.
In the "Code" column you should find "LIST" and "UPDATE". Go to Step 3.

2c. Create a new message, using the following format:

To: INQUIRY
Subject: REQUEST

In the body of the message include either one of the following lines:

LIST *[if you want an entire new Catalog file]*
UPDATE_CAT *[if you want a simple update to your present Catalog file]*

Go to Step 4

3. Check either "UPDATE" or "LIST." If you choose "UPDATE," all changes & additions will be shown, BUT the deletions will NOT be taken away. However, if you choose "List," then you will have a fresh new shorter list. Unless otherwise instructed, an update will be adequate.

4. Post the message to WL2K and Send your request.

5. Wait a minute; check back into any RMS or CMS and retrieve the information you requested. Once the update or new list has been received, it will automatically update your AirMail Catalog List. If it does not, restart AirMail. If that does not update your Catalog, select (do not Open) the update message you just received; then go to Tools....Update Catalog.

Q1610 What is GRIB weather data?

A1610 GRIB is a file format and stands for Grid In Binary. It is used for the storage, transport and manipulation of gridded meteorological data, such as Numerical Weather Prediction model output. It is designed to be self-describing, compact and portable across computer architectures. The GRIB standard was designed and is maintained by the World Meteorological Organization.

GFS is a mathematical model developed from USA weather offices. GFS stands for Global Forecast System and is a global numerical weather prediction model run by NOAA/NWS. This model runs four times a day. It is "pointed" to USA. It means that every mile AWAY from the "center" has less probability of a correct prediction. In USA and Atlantic the probability is more than 75% that is really good. In Mediterranean it is around 50%. It means that if the grib says "South" it has the same probability than "North"; and it is not good! The local bulletins in the WX_ area is the best solution for Mediterranean sailors

Grib files are extracted from a computer forecast model (GFS). While such computer data can provide useful guidance for general wind flow, there are limitations which must be understood. The file is a weather prediction generated by a computer run by NOAA/NCEP (GFS, WW3 models) or the US Navy (comaps, nogaps) and downloaded and processed by Saildocs (a service of Sailmail). The network is complex, and any computer network is subject to hardware and software failures or human error which can effect accuracy or availability of data. In particular, if servers were not able to download a current data file then the grib-file may be based on old data.

Also remember that grib data is not reviewed by forecasters before being made available. You are getting a small part of the raw model data that the forecasters themselves use when writing a forecast, and it is your responsibility to make sure that the data is consistent with your local conditions and with the professionally-generated forecasts (e.g. text bulletins and weather-fax charts).

Grib data also has limitations along shore, where local effects often dominate and may not be adequately modeled. In addition these models cannot provide adequate prediction for tropical systems, frontal activity or convergence zones. For example, while global models can provide useful data on the likely track of hurricanes, they grossly underestimate the strength of hurricanes because of their small size compared to the model grid. For hurricane/cyclone forecasts, carefully monitor the appropriate warning messages and do not rely on grib data from any source.

That all said, grib data can provide useful guidance not available elsewhere. Understand the limitations and use the data carefully. Grib data should be considered supplemental to other forecasts, and not be relied upon in lieu of professionally-generated charts or forecasts.

AirMail does not understand the Euro coamps lat-lon limits, you will need to format the request manually. You can create a "GFS" request and then change the code from "GFS" to "coamps", and change the grid if desired.

See www.saildocs.com/gribinfo or send a (blank) email to: gribinfo@saildocs.com for more info on formatting grib requests.

Additional info regarding grib files can be obtained from the AirMail Help file or from <http://www.saildocs.com/gribinfo> or from <http://www.grib.us/>

Q1630 Is there a maximum number of addresses that can appear in the AirMail "To" line?

A1630 No; however keep in mind that most folks use some sort of spam-filter on the receiving end, and most spam-filters are sensitive to messages with a bazillion "to" or "cc" addresses- lots of cc's is something often used by spam. So keeping the number of recipients down to a reasonable number per message will increase the chances of getting it through.

Q1660 How s it possible to view all addresses in the “To” line as I add them to it?

A1660 Save the message, then select View menu, Message-header, and re-open the message. You will see the complete headers with word-wrap, easy to check or copy.

Q1700 How can I select multiple addresses in the address book?

A1700 Create an address-book entry called "Group" or whatever, enter one to-address and as many cc-addresses as you want, one per line. To copy/paste; use the right-click menu (or the usual windows shortcut ctrl-V to paste).

Q1720 How can I print out a message, if I don't have a printer connected to my computer?

A1720 If you have a “thumb drive” and another computer (with printer) is available in your vicinity, try this:

Select the message (do not Open).

Select File.....Import/Export.....Export email format. This will enable you to Save the message as a text file on your thumb drive.

If the message has Attachments, “Save As” them on your thumb drive, by right-clicking with the mouse.

Move your thumb drive to the other computer. Open the files and Print.

Q1750 AirMail version 3.4.062 does not seem to Forward Attachments. Why?

A1750 There appears to be a bug in that version. Version 3.3.081 does not have that problem. A “work around”:

1. Use the REPLY Icon (Format a Reply Message)
2. Left click in the empty body.
3. Right click, and then choose Append Original Message
4. Click YES button to include original Attachments
5. Change address for the recipient from the originator to the receiver. Add your extra text.

AirMail – Setup (HF Pactor)

Q2000 I have connected to a RMS Pactor station, with a Posted message to go out, but it won't go. Why?

A2000 You may not have your BBS Forwarding Protocol set to "B2F". See Tools...Options...Settings...System Settings

Q2050 I have heard talk about my PK232MBX not working on Pactor. What is this all about?

A2050 The early PK232mbx models with firmware rev. of 7.0 have code in them that effects how binary files are transferred. The WL2K folks found that the B2F protocol is the most effective way to transfer files. However with older code in the firmware, the PK232 cannot use this protocol so it switches to the FBB protocol, which is slower.

The whole point is that you get a slower throughput with the older firmware. In revision 7.1 the code has been changed to accommodate B2F, but do not expect to see a major increase in throughput because it is still only Pactor 1. To see a major increase in throughput you need to go to Pactor 2 or 3 (with a SCS tnc).

The PK232mbx will not support use of the GetFAX function.

AirMail – Use (HF Pactor)

Q2500 How do I choose which RMS Pactor Station to use?

A2500 Use the data from the AirMail propagation module (View...Propagation) to give you guidance on which stations and frequencies are better than others, at the time of day you want to connect.

Do NOT try to connect on a frequency that is in use!

Use RMS Pactor stations which should have a very strong signal with you, according to data from the propagation module.

Use lower frequencies (80 and 40 meters) if possible.

30 meters is a very useable “forgotten” band.

Use Pactor 3 or Pactor 2 if you have them. It saves everyone time, and makes more RMS time available for other users.

Use one of the stations that are not quite so “busy” as others. You can get a feel for this by going to the WL2K web page....Reports.....RMS HF Station Status; <http://www.winlink.org/RMSHFStatus>
Click on the station symbol callsign....

Q2510 I am not getting solid Connects with any RMS Pactor Station. What could be wrong?

A2510 Several items could affect the performance:

See the AirMail Help files. See Q950.

Does the LSB/USB configuration of your radio match that of your TNC?

Are you on the correct EXACT center (not dial) frequency? The main frequency chart is listed as center frequency. In the lower right hand corner of the Terminal screen on the AirMail Terminal form, you will find the actual dial frequency. The dial frequency varies with modem type and other factors, while the center frequency is always the same, regardless of mode of operation or sideband used.

The TNC to computer baud rate should be set as high as possible, given the specs of your computer and TNC.

Over modulation of the transmit audio? You should barely see any ALC with full output to your transceiver. This can be set up in AirMail. Read the AirMail help files. Reduce the transmit audio gain level. Less is Better.

Turn off all processors, compressors and filters on both the receiver and transmitter.

Is your receive bandwidth filter wide enough for the mode used? Pactor 3 needs 2.4 KHz.; Pactor 2 needs 0.7 KHz; Pactor 1 needs 0.6 KHz.

Some radios do not perform well with both the microphone and the TNC connected simultaneously to the radio. Disconnect the microphone.

Maybe you have an “RF or Audio” problem due to RF feedback into your system. A symptom on this problem would be a “better” signal, when using a very low power output. Use ferrite chokes and/or less power output. This feedback can also be reduced by Increasing the audio level from the TNC and decreasing the transmit audio gain at the transmitter.

If you are using a battery for power, is the battery voltage too low? In this case maybe a lower power output setting may work better.

Listen to your transmitted signal with another receiver. Does it sound like that of a public RMS Pactor station? See above.

Maybe you need a better antenna?

Install a better earth ground connection or counterpoise.

Q2520 I am not getting solid Connects with one particular RMS Pactor Station. What could be wrong?

A2520 Several items might improve the performance:

See the AirMail Help files. See Q950

Change to a difference frequency band for that RMS Pactor Station

Try a connection at a different time of day.

Use another RMS Pactor Station. It does not matter. They are all transparent to the system.

If the audio from the RMS Pactor Station sounds distorted or “different”, that station may have a problem. Notify the Sys Op by sending an email to: RMSCallsign@winlink.org

Q2525 I am using pactor 1 with my MFJ-1278 to Connect just fine to a RMS Pactor station. However I can't seem to upload or download any messages. What could be wrong?

A2525 That particular TNC does not support the “B2F” compression protocol, required by WL2K. However you should be able to exchange messages with other pactor stations, using the peer-to-peer approach. See Q5000.

Q2530 I have connected to a RMS Pactor Station and messages are flowing, but VERY SLOWLY. Any suggestions?

A2530 If you are “almost done” with the transfers, hang in there and wait for the finish.

If you will have a significant estimated time left to finish the transfer, do a Hard Disconnect (hit the Button twice). Pick another RMS Pactor Station, another frequency for the same RMS Pactor Station, modify your equipment for a better signal, or wait until propagation conditions improve. There are many RMS Pactor Station's and frequency bands available; something usually works better...now. The Magic of WL2K!

When you make the next connection, AirMail tells the RMS Pactor Station how much of the message(s) have already been transferred, and the process will continue from where it left off on the previous connection.

See Q2680.

Q2533 I have heard that there may be problem, using my Icom 706MkIIIG with Pactor 2 and Pactor 3?

A2533 The very early (you would have to check with Icom to get the serial number range) versions of the 706 MkIIIG have issues with a slow transmit rise time which adversely affects Pactor 2 and Pactor 3 performance. Apparently it occurred during the first month of production. There is a mod required which will correct the problem. An article describing a fix for this problem is in the Yahoo WL2K Emcomm User Group. See Message numbers 9735 and 9736 at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wl2kemcomm/>

As of January 2009, Icom will modify these radios at no charge as long as that model is still in production. A 706 MkIIIG with serial number 01718 had this problem and it was remedied with this modification, done by Icom.

Q2535 When using the HF Terminal window I constantly have to use the scroll bar to keep up with the information showing in the window. How can I keep that from happening?

A2535 To fix the scrolling problem:

1. Maximize the Terminal window.
2. "Restore Down" the Terminal window (the box next to the Close Box)
3. Scroll down to the bottom of the Terminal window.

The Terminal window should then scroll up automatically, with new information

Q2540 After a message for me arrives at the CMS, how does a RMS Station initiate a connect with me?

A2540 It doesn't. RMS Pactor and RMS WINMOR Stations are "listeners" only, scanning several frequencies on several bands. They do not send out any beacon messages. They just sit and scan and scan and scan, waiting for someone to call them. You need to call the RMS Station to initiate a Connect,

You must also initiate the Connect with interacting with a RMS Packet station.

Q2545 Are RMS Pactor Stations considered to be "automatic robot" stations?

A2545 That depends on your definition of "robot" and "automatic". RMS Pactor Stations have their transceivers and TNC's controlled by the station computer. They are usually "unattended" by their Control Operator. Transmissions will begin ONLY after the receiver detects being called by another station AND in the moments before the call the frequency was deemed to be "not occupied" by the RMS Pactor Station (this is a new feature). Loss of a satisfactory receive signal will time out the transmitter and Disconnect with the user station. Possible modes and frequencies are enabled by software, abiding to government regulations. The list of scanned frequencies may change, depending on time-of-day. Get the RMS Pactor Station Frequency List from ZS5S or the WL2K website for the latest information (see Q2560).

Q2550 How do I find what frequencies the RMS Pactor Stations are scanning?

A2550 AirMail has a built-in frequency list of all public RMS Pactor Stations. The scanned frequencies of a particular RMS Pactor Station show up in the HF Terminal Window, when the RMS Pactor Station is selected. Be sure to set your radio dial to the "Dial Frequency" shown at the bottom of the Terminal Window. The frequency shown above is (depending on setup) the Center Frequency.

Q2560 How can I keep the Frequency List up-to-date?

A2560 Download the list of Public RMS Pactor Stations List from this site at <http://www.winlink.org/RMSChannels>

EmComm operators can receive a special EmComm RMS Pactor list from their local RMS sysop. These lists are compiled by the WL2K server from actual on-air stations reporting in within the last 48 hours of the time you download them. You can also download those special Emcomm lists from www.winlink.org, if you have the correct "Service Code", available from your local Emcomm leadership.

A Public RMS frequency list for Pactor, Packet, Robust Packet, or WINMOR stations can also be downloaded from the Catalog part of AirMail:

Window...Catalogs...WL2K...Global...WL2K_RMS

Q2570 How do I download a new Frequency List, using AirMail?

A2570 To download a new Frequency List for inclusion in AirMail, follow the instructions below:

1. Go to Menu items: Windows...Catalogs...WL2K...Global...WL2K_RMS
2. Check the Box labeled "PUB_PACTOR". Post to WL2K.
3. Check into a RMS Station (or the CMS) to send the request.
4. Check for new mail in a few minutes. A new message should be there for you, with the latest frequency information.

Go to Q2580 for installation instructions.

Q2580 After I have downloaded the new Frequency List, how do I install it in AirMail?

- A2580
1. Open AirMail. A message with the new list (embedded in the message) should be in your In Box. Select it [do not Open]
 2. Go to "Tools....Make Frequency List".
 3. Scroll through the list; verify that it is the "new" list.
 4. If your list is a "Public" list, and you have additional Emcomm RMS Pactor stations to add, Copy and Paste the info for any Emcomm RMS Pactor stations you want to include. See Q2590.
 5. Click the "Update" button, the program will go into a frenzy of formatting.
 6. Click "Save" the frequency list.
 7. Go to "View....Frequency List"
 8. Check the stations what you would like to include in your HF Terminal window list.
 9. Update....Save....Ok
 10. Close AirMail....Open AirMail

Q2590 Where can I find a list of RMS Pactor stations which are primarily supporting "emergency communications"?

- A2590 See the list of active public and EmComm RMS Pactor stations at:
<http://www.winlink.org/RMSHFStatus>
Send an email to one of the Emcomm stations in your local area, requesting the list and your intended use of the list.

Merge the Emcomm list with the Public list, in the same text file. Install in AirMail in the "HAM" System. See Q2580

Q2595 I have been trying to send a message via an Emcomm RMS Pactor Station (N7YRT). It will not go. It is Posted to WL2K. Why won't the message be sent?

- A2595 You probably have your Emcomm RMS Pactor stations in a unique AirMail "System", other than "HAM". The message will be sent if you either Post it to N7YRT, or Post it to WL2K and include the station data for N7YRT in the "HAM" System.

Q2600 Are there some “maintenance” things I should be doing to keep AirMail and my part of WL2K running smoothly?

A2600 Yes, like most hardware and software, revisions occur.

a) Frequency List. See Q2560 and Q2570. This should be done every 1-2 months, only if you are using the HF part of WL2K

b) AirMail Catalog. You should probably update this 2-3 times each year. See Q1580 and Q1600.

c) If you are using a TNC, update the Firmware. If you have a SCS TNC, it is updated about every year. Check the SCS web page for news about a new release. The latest is version 3.9. Your version number will show on the Terminal Window when you start up. The updating process is a shore chore, using the internet

download from the SCS web page

start AirMail

Tools....Update PTC Firmware

d) AirMail software. The latest non-beta version is 3.4.034. Available from the WL2K web page at: <http://www.winlink.org/ClientSoftware>

e) Winlink 2000 FAQ file. This is a pdf user "help", revised several times each year. Download from www.spokares.org or the WL2K website. Please send new material to K7BFL@winlink.org as you learn things that other folks might not know. You are now using that file!

Q2650 It seems like there are not many RMS Pactor stations that will accept a Connect from my pactor 1 equipment. Why?

A2650 The throughput of pactor 2 is about 3x the throughput of pactor 1. The throughput of pactor 3 is about 30x the throughput of pactor 1. See Q170. If a particular RMS Pactor operator can keep his station relatively “busy”, accepting only pactor 2 or 3 connects, he will probably choose to go the “no pactor 1” route. By doing that, his station is providing the “most data transfer” for the “most users”. Each RMS Pactor station owner/operator independently makes a decision regarding the use of pactor 1. RMS Pactor stations have given special considerations to pactor 1 users during unique events. E-mail a RMS Pactor Station with your special requests. They have the software ability to accept pactor 1 Connects on specific bands, and/or during specific times during the day.

The overall goal is to maximize the throughput on any given available band segment. The addition of Emcomm RMS Pactor stations will provide additional support for pactor 1 users.

Q2680 Is pactor 3 the best mode to use, all the time?

A2680 Not always. Sometimes pactor 2 has a better throughput than pactor 3; usually when using a narrow (0.5 kHz) receive filter to improve the signal/noise ratio of the received signal. This may occur during “noisy” band conditions or when the band is particularly crowded.

AirMail – Setup (VHF/UHF Packet)

Q3000 I have one of the new Kenwood radios (D700) with a built-in “Tasco” TNC. Will it work with AirMail (Packet Client module)?

A3000 Yes, but proceed very cautiously. The first versions of the D700, TH-D7, etc. have a very small buffer.

Other radios which have this same packet performance are the Kenwood TS-2000, TH-D7, and Alinco DR-135. The radios will work fine if used with an external TNC supported by AirMail. See <http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/TascoModem.pdf>

The built-in TNC will can also access WL2K via the “Keyboard” method (see Q8000).

It can also access WL2K in a limited manner by using the special APRSLINK method described at: <http://www.winlink.org/aprslink>

A process for using the Alinco DR-135 (with internal “Tasco” TNC) with AirMail is described in Q3005.

Both Paclink and RMS Express now have KISS drivers available for use with all radios with the “built in” TNC. See Q7016 (Paclink) or Q11220 (RMS Express).

The newer model radios (D710A, etc) have a larger buffer and work better if they are used in the KISS mode.

From K6ACJ -----

The TH-D7, D700 and D710 all work on Packet using the KISS mode and actually the same KISS configuration; I use the TAPR2 TNC in AGWPE.

The difference in buffers between each will cause problems but the D710 has been tested extensively and seems to work fine. The TH-D7 will work on very short messages but sometimes lock up. When the TH-D7 locks up a FULL RESET must be performed and all the settings and memory are returned to Factory default. So, if you want to experiment with the D7, use the Free Kenwood Memory configuration program to READ and SAVE the D7 settings making it very easy to restore after the inevitable crash.

The D700 didn't lock up but if I recall I keep maxframe to 1 and paclen to 64, same as I used for the D7.

The D710 worked fine on packet and Winlink 2000, I was able to extend maxframe and paclen settings out for longer messages, so in my opinion the D710 is Ok for packet and Winlink 2000.

Q3005 How do I configure my AGWPE software to enable AirMail to be used with the Alinco DR-135, using its internal TNC?

A3005 K7CPO has had good results with the following setup procedure, using AirMail 3.3.081. AGWPE or AGW Packet Engine Pro is also needed with AirMail (with the addition of AMPE or AMPEstreams22 (see Q3015). It has been successfully tested with several RMS Pactor stations, both directly and via Nodes.

If your computer is "old and slow" it may not have enough cpu speed to handle all of the needed software. It works fine with a Pentium 4, 3.2 GHz.

Edit the AirMail ini file; set Packet Length=126. Save the file.

Use a DB-9 male/female cable between the DR-135 and the serial port (or serial/usb adapter) on your computer.

The Port setup for AGWPE or AGWPE Pro is:

9600 baud radio to computer

TARP TNC2 [blank]
KISS ON
RESTART

Kiss Simple

ExitKISS on Exit

Single Port

Persist=200
SlotTime=15
MaxFrame=1
Retries=10
TxDelay=55
TxTail=4

Frack=4
RespTime=2
Check Every 120

1. Use the VFO to determine the packet frequency
2. Turn on the radio; get into the Data mode by pushing the Function key, then the Squelch key.
3. Start AGWPE
4. Start AMPE (or AMPEstreams22) and the Airmail Packet Client.
5. Operate the AirMail Packet Client as "normal".
6. It is VERY helpful to use the "monitor" part of AGWPE to monitor the health of the software, hardware, and packet frequency activity.

The radio/software will "lockup" if any of the following (there may be others) are done:

- a) Changing power level
- b) Changing from Data to Voice to Data

To recover: restart the radio; restart the software.

Q3010 I am using AirMail 3.3.048. I would like to use the Packet Client module with my Sound Card, using the AGW-PE “TNC” selection. It doesn’t seem to work at all. What am I doing wrong?

A3010 Nothing. The reference to “AGW-PE” was mistakenly left in the code by the AirMail author, who is in the process of writing code to enable FUTURE versions of AirMail (Packet Client module) to work with Sound Cards and TNC’s using KISS, with the addition of the AGW-PE software. However KG9OG has come up with additional software to enable the AirMail Packet Client to work through the AGW software to your Sound Card. See Q3015

Q3015 So, is there a way that the AirMail Packet Client can be used with Sound Cards and TNC's that are not on the pull-down setup list?

A3015 Yes! KG9OG has come up with additional software to enable the AirMail Packet Client to work through the AGW software to your Sound Card device or any TNC that can be placed in the KISS mode. **An additional benefit of using this method with any TNC is that you will be able to monitor all packet traffic on the frequency, using the Monitor function of the AGW software.** N7XOO has written the following instructions to use for AirMail 3.3.081 or 3.4.034 Beta and Windows XP, 2000, or Vista.

Configuring AirMail Packet Client to work with AGWPE or AGW Packet Engine Pro

For Windows XP, 2000 and Vista 32-bit (Vista 64-bit is untested):

The purpose of this process is to enable the AirMail software "Packet Client" module to work with most any sound card device or TNC that can be placed in the KISS mode, and with enough buffer memory to handle the demands of AirMail, and your computer CPU is quick enough for AGW.

This configuration requires the addition of one or two additional pieces of software, each approximately 3M in size. Both are free-ware. The following assumes that you already have AGW working well on your computer.

1. Download, unzip, and install the "AirMail to Packet Engine" program (AMPE), AMPE162.zip (AMPEstreams22 may be substituted for AMPE as required, see web page listed below for download and configuration instructions)

The link to the AMPE program (written by Brian Smith KG9OG) is;

<http://www.gsl.net/mararc/ampe.htm>

After installing, read the excellent Help File and look for the Startup Command string. You now need a way to start AMPE; do either (a) or (b)

(a) AMPE Shortcut

If a shortcut for AMPE is not on your desktop, create a shortcut on your desktop to AMPE16.EXE. Then edit that shortcut, by right clicking, selecting "Properties" and then on the "Shortcut" tab in the "Target" box add the information as below; substituting the call you are using in AirMail for MYCALL, click Apply and then Ok. *(NOTE: Be sure to add a space after AMPE16.EXE before entering the first letter of MYCALL)*

"C:\ampe\AMPE16.EXE" MYCALL,1,TRUE,8000,8100 where MYCALL is the call you are using for AirMail, and "1" is the AGW Port you are using

(b) AGW Packet Engine "Other Software Autostart"

AGW Packet Engine or AGW Packet Engine Pro may also be used to define the Command String. Within AGW, select Setup...Auto Start other programs....ampe16.exe

the Startup Command String would be "MYCALL,1,TRUE,8000,8100"

[you need to scroll to the right to see the column for the Command String information]

2 If you are using AirMail 3.4.034 Beta, go to Step 3. If you are using AirMail 3.3.081, continue:

Start AGWPE, then AMPE, then AirMail;

In AirMail click Tools...Options...Modules....VHF Packet Client Setup

Enter KAM+ for the TNC type and T8100 (T8200 for AMPstreams) for the Com Port

Click OK and then Apply and Ok to close the AirMail Options window. You may not really be using a KAM+ but that's what is recommended for a choice. [The actual interface with your TNC is determined by the port settings in AGW, except for Packet Length].

Start the AirMail Packet Client Module. The Packet Client window should say "Packet initialized OK"

Go to Step 10. [the port redirector software is not needed if you are using AirMail 3.3.081]

3. Download and install the Lantronix CPR (Com Port Redirector) version 3.1.0.4

The link to the Lantronix file is;

http://ltxfag.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/ltxfag.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faaid=928

Be sure to use the 3 version; the 4 version doesn't seem to work for this application. The purpose of this software is to enable you to create a "Virtual Com Port" on your computer (with a number than is not already being used), and to "re-direct" that Virtual Com Port to the actual Port number (1, 2, 3, etc) that you have previously configured as part of the AGW software.

IGNORE all the install and setup error messages when installing on Vista 32-bit. The program will still install. Unblock ports in any Windows Firewall messages.

4. Reboot the computer.

5. Open the Lantronix Com Port Selector Program and click the "Com Setup" button. Select a com port number that is not used by your computer.

Click the Port settings box and check "Raw", click the "Add IP" button and enter 127.0.0.1 for Host and 8100 for Port. Click "OK" and then click "Save".

IGNORE any setup error messages when installing on Vista 32-bit.

6. Reboot Again. The Lantronix software will now be running in the background. Verify the existence of your new "Virtual Port" by looking at Control Panel....System...Hardware...Device Manager....Ports.

NOTE: For Vista 32bit, Device Manager will not show the Virtual Com Port, but it IS operational.

7. Configure AirMail Packet Client to use the virtual com port you set up in the Lantronix CPR and choose KAM+ for the TNC. You may not really be using a KAM+ but that's what's recommended for a choice. [The actual interface with your TNC is determined by the port settings in AGW, except for Packet Length]

8. Close AirMail and edit the Airmail.ini file

Backup your airmail.ini file; then do the following editing.

Within the [Packet Client] section “comment out” lines by inserting a semi-colon at the beginning of these lines. See the Example below. Note that in this example COM12 is your “Virtual Port”; not the com port of the device you will actually use.

All other settings remain the same, just add semi-colons starting with Tx Delay and ending with Packet Length 2.

```
[Packet Client]
DecoderType=KAM+
Port Settings=COM12:9600,N,8,1
Show Link Messages=1
Packet Length=126
;Tx Delay=600
;Persistence=64
;Slot Time=300
;Max Frames=2
;Frack Time=6000
;Max Tries=10
;Response Delay=2000
;Check Time=30000
;Radio Baud=1200
;Tx Level=500
;Tx Delay 2=600
;Persistence 2=64
;Slot Time 2=300
;Max Frames 2=2
;Frack Time 2=6000
;Max Tries 2=10
;Response Delay 2=2000
;Check Time 2=30000
;Radio Baud 2=1200
;Tx Level 2=500
;Packet Length 2=120
```

Save and Close the airmail.ini file

9. Start AGWPE, then AMPE, then AirMail; then start the AirMail Packet Client Module.

You should see a pop-up message from the Lantronix Com Port Redirector, and then in the Packet Client window it should say “Packet initialized OK”.

10. You should now be up and running with the Packet Client window. When you click “Connect”; AirMail will be using the port and device you have configured in AGWPE (or AGW Packet Engine Pro).

*[written by Gary Harrison, N7XOO; January 9, 2008, revised February 17, 2009]
[edited by Don Felgenhauer, K7BFL, April 26, 2009, March 12, 2012]*

Q3017 I have gotten AMPEstreams 2.2 to work with my USB Signalink and AirMail. It works great. I ran into trouble when I created another TNC in Packet Engine Pro, the Alinco DR-135 radio. The Alinco was on port 2 and would not talk to AMPEstreams 2.2. I am not sure how AMPEstreams uses two ports?

A3017 The last version of AMPE was 1.6 and AMPE was a one port application. So switch to AMPEstreams 2.2 if you haven't already. The instructions for using AMPEstreams with more than one Packet Engine port are in the AMPEstreams Help file. Best to use the Rev1 Help file available here:

http://www.gsl.net/mararc/ampe_help_rev1.txt

Basically when you start AMPEstreams you can set the default Packet engine radio port to use by specifying the proper command line arguments. See the AMPEstreams Help file. Using the Packet engine program start menu option makes command prompt inclusion easy.

Then if you want to initiate an outgoing connect from your AirMail through a different Packet Engine radio port add space # Packet Engine radio port number after the callsign string in your AirMail connect to text box.

ie: AirMail packet module connect to text box> W1AW #2

More details are in the AMPEstreams Help file.

[from KG9OG]

Q3020 I have the Packet Client module configured, but I can't seem to be able to connect to any RMS Packet stations. Help!

A3020 You may have some basic packet setup deficiencies. With the same equipment, can you connect to ANY other packet stations? Are you on the correct frequency? Is your transmit audio level set properly?

Some radios do not perform well with both the microphone and the TNC connected simultaneously to the radio. Disconnect the microphone.

There are a couple of books available which describe some of the basics of setting up and operating a packet station. They are: "Your Gateway To Packet Radio" and "Practical Packet Radio", both written by Stan Horzepa, WA1LOU. Both books are out of print, but can be obtained at reasonable prices from your local used book store or on-line book sellers.

N8UR has excellent basic packet audio level setup information available at:
<http://www.febo.com/packet/layer-one/transmit.html>

VK1OD has an excellent web page on "Amateur Radio application of Frequency Modulation" at:
<http://www.vk1od.net/FM/FM.htm>

KC2RLM has a great web page regarding "Sound Card Packet" at:
<http://www.soundcardpacket.org/>

Larry Kenney (WB9LOZ) has an excellent "Introduction to Packet Radio", available from:
<http://www.choisser.com/packet/>

Q3023 Is there an "optimum" Packet Length, when using the AirMail Packet Client?

A3023 Yes, 126 is the magic number. Numbers larger than 126 bytes will result in alternate "large" and "small" packets being sent; with the average being 126.

Q3025 I get a major amount of RF noise generated somehow from my laptop. This often interferes with the ability of the PTC IIe modem from linking with the incoming WL2K station. Some of the noise is reduced when I simply get out of AirMail. This leads me to think it might come down the USB/serial ports for controlling the rig and/or the USB/serial port for the SCS PTC modem.

I switched to a newer laptop and found the noise level significantly less. However the laptop still seems to bump up the RF noise level.

I have several RF choke coils around the power leads, the serial computer control cable, and the PTC modem serial cable. Any solutions?

A3025 Laptops DO generate an incredible amount of noise. If you are using an HT the best solution is to use an external antenna. This puts some distance between the laptop and the transceiver's antenna. A 20 foot distance may help.

Other possible remedies:

- 1) Switching power supplies for Laptops. Use an Aircraft grade supply.
- 2) Put ferrite chokes (snap-ons) on all the cables coming from the computer serial, mouse, power etc.
- 3) Use a RF filtered DC source for the Transceiver....make sure it has 20+ ampere capability.
- 4) Bypass other sources (Refrigerators, bilge pumps, chargers, alternator etc) at the source with good quality RF bypass capacitors.

Get a good book on RF Interference. Read the AirMail Help files.

There is usually no one silver bullet...normally several things each reduce the noise a smaller amount.

See the web site of K0BG (see Q950); good information about grounding, noise, static.

Useful information about RF ground systems is available at:
<http://www.radioworks.com/nbgnd.html>

Q3030 I am using a KPC3+ with AirMail Packet Client, telling AirMail that it is a "KPC3". The TNC uses software (XMITLVL) to set the audio transmit level. I set the value to 130 with another program, before starting the packet client module. Everything works fine, until the next time I start the packet client module; the value has been reset to 100 (default). How can I get AirMail to not change the XMITLVL value?

A3030 Tell AirMail that you have a KAM+.

Here is another solution to the problem (from VA3RSA):

REASON FOR THE PROBLEM:

When setting up the "VHF Packet Client", the KPC-3+ user will usually select the KPC-3 type TNC (nearest to KPC-3+). The TX Audio Level selection box is "greyed out" (can't be changed) with a fixed value of 500 (millivolts).

The results are saved to the AirMail.ini file under the [Packet Client] section with TX Level 500. When the "Packet Client" is started, AirMail will initialize the TNC. The value that has been set for XMITLVL will be 280 (a result of the KPC-3+ converting 500 into digital setting 280). This can be verified by closing the "Packet Client" and opening the "Dumb Terminal". At the command prompt cmd: type 'xmitlvl' and it reports 280.

SIMPLE FIX (WORKAROUND):

On my own KPC-3+ (ver. 9.1 ROM) I use XMITLVL 48 in combination with the radio's digital drive level setting (other users may have completely different settings). I observed that the "TX Audio Level" box can be "ungreyed" (i.e. made active/changeable) by selecting the TNC type as any one of the PTC-II types. Non-PTC-II TNC's leave the box "greyed out" (unchangeable). I selected the PTC-IIe (one-port type) and set the drive level to desired value (may require experiment etc.). In my case entering 24 millivolts sets my XMITLVL to 48 which is what I want. Go back and select the "KPC-3" TNC and save all settings.

CONFIRMING THE CHANGES: Checking AirMail.ini will confirm the setting TX level 24 (which will get converted to xmitlvl=48). Next, start up the "Packet Client" and let the TNC initialize. Then close down the "Packet Client" and start the "Dumb Terminal". You should find that XMITLVL is 48.

NOTE: The user must determine by experiment the correct setting of XMITLVL for their KPC-3+/radio combination resulting in the correct TX deviation level (for my radio it happened to be 48). Then adjust AirMail's "TX audio level (millivolts)" setting to give the required XMITLVL number (for my case it was 24 millivolts).

Q3040 I am using a KPC3 TNC. Is there a good way to set the transmit audio deviation at the proper level?

A3040 Yes, here is how Airmail deals with TX Audio levels with the KPC series.

In the Airmail Tools/Options/Modules in the VHF Packet Client under SETUP second from the bottom is TX Audio Level this is grayed out. This level is sent to the TNC when you start the Packet Client and when you get the initialized OK prompt.

To set the correct level using a Deviation meter or Service Monitor, do the following:

In the Dumb Terminal at the CMD: type CAL this will bring up the calibration menu by selecting "T" that will cause the PTT to engage and both tones will be generated. with the + and - keys you can

increase and decrease the audio levels till you get the correct deviation level. Now exit the calibration menu, this will stop the PTT and tones. At the CMD: type XMITL and it will read back the XMIT level. Note this number as it is the level you will need to set.

Note: the XMITL is from 0-502 Airmail defaults to 500 which will be at the 5 KHz+. The deviation level that works the best our area is between 2.5 - 3.0 KHz dev. Each step in the XMITL is approx. 15 mV by the owner's manual

Note: The TX Audio Level will be grayed out with the KPC3 you will need to change to any of the PTC modem series to be able to change it. You will need to change back to KPC before you exit and you will need to run the Packet Client to write the info to the TNC.

Now go to the Dumb Terminal and at the CMD: type XMITL and see how close you are to the XMITL number you originally came up with for the correct deviation. To get this right on you may need to go back and forth changing the TX Audio level in the Packet Client SETUP screen and remember to run the Packet Client to write the info to the TNC.

Note: you must close the Packet Client window to be able to go to the Dumb Terminal screen. TX Audio level and XMITL will not be the same number.

If you are using a KPC3+, continue on to the advice in Q3030

Q3050 I am having trouble with AirMail talking to my PK232MBX. My terminal program works ok. What is the problem?

A3050 Most likely the problem is that your serial port was configured using your Terminal Program and those settings do not match those required by AirMail. There are a few different approaches to fixing this problem. Here is one.

In you Terminal Programs, such as WinPack, go to the cmd mode and type RESET. This will reset you TNC.

Change the setting in your program to the following: Baud rate=9600, Start bit=8 parity=none, Stop bit=1 and Handshake=Hardware. Save the changes.

Now send the Autobaud "*" cmd to the TNC and you should get the sign on message.

Close your Terminal Program and open AirMail. Make sure you have AirMail set up to the correct serial port and the right baud rate. You can check this by going to "Tools-Options" and going to the "connection tab" and check the settings. Also go to the "module tab" then to VHF Packet Client and then to the "setup" box and check the settings there. Make changes if needed and save the setting. Now AirMail should work for you.

NOTE: Make sure you make the changes before you send the Autobaud command or you will be right back to where you started from.

Q3060 I have been trying for some time now to get my PK232mbx to send and receive Pactor. I have upgraded the PK232 to the latest firmware and DSP and USB port. It works fine in the "Dumb Terminal" mode. Help?

A3060 There is a passage in the manual 4.3 #5 that states that the DCD must be off unless packets are received. It must be on when receiving packets.

*When the channel is quiet, the DCD LED must be OFF.
If the DCD LED stays on when the packet channel is quiet, your
PK-232 will never send packets to other stations.*

The original DCD pot is prone to seize up and self-destruct. It is a 1000 ohm pot and can be easily replaced. If it is grinding or hard to turn it time to replace it. Otherwise you won't be able to receive signals sent back to you. Timewave will send you a replacement that has three wires soldered to a panel mounted potentiometer and a new knob. They need five bucks and a padded envelope.

Sounds like you may have a reversed DCD problem. Funny enough the fix for that is to NOT use the SQL line between the TNC and the radio. Then the TNC will behave normally.

Q3080 When I close AirMail and open my Terminal Program not all the functions work right. What may be wrong?

A3080 AirMail turns off several functions that it does not need, such as Monitor. To restore those functions you need to reset the TNC. Here is how:

1. Close the Packet Client window
2. Go to Tools....Dumb Terminal and wait for the cmd prompt to come up.
3. Type RESET and hit the Enter key. You will see many boxes with zeros and eight's in them.
4. Now send the auto baud command and you will see the TNC sign on message. Now close the dumb terminal and close AirMail.
5. Open your terminal program. You may need to enter you call and the date/time again. Your terminal program should be ready to go.

Q3100 I cannot get the Packet Client window to connect to a local VHF ham station, in fact the Icom 706 MkII G doesn't transmit. (The window shows that AirMail's Packet Client is connected to the SCS IIe modem). AirMail works great for me on HF, with the same equipment. What am I doing wrong?

A3100 The 13 pin DIN on the back of the Icom 706 and IC-7000 normally has one PTT pin for HF control, and another pin for VHF/UHF control. You can solve your problem three ways:

1. Obtain another cable that uses the VHF transmit control pin.
2. Obtain another cable that connects to the microphone jack on the 706; that cable will work for both HF and VHF control.
3. Use the software menu on the radio to enable the HF control pin and the VHF/UHF control pin to be the same pin [from Gary Wood (K6AUD) of Farallon Electronics]

706MKIIG

Set menu item 30 (see page 54 in the ICOM manual) to the OFF position. This activates H-Send (PTT) on pin 3 for all bands. The 13 pin input on the 706MKIIG will work for both Pactor and packet operation with the SCS PTC-IIe, PTC-IIEX, and the PTC-IIUSB modems.

If you're using a PTC-II or a PTC-IIPRO containing a plug-in DSP packet module, then you will need to use our #8120 cable for 1200 Baud, or our #8050 cable for 9600 Baud, which will connect from the Packet port on the modem to the 6 pin mini-DIN packet connector on the rig. [NOTE: this menu option is not available on the 706MKI or 706MII.]

IC-7000

Set menu item 20 (see page 131 of the Icom manual) to the OFF position. This activates H-Send (PTT) on pin 3 for all bands. The 13 pin input on the 706MKIIG will work for both Pactor and packet operation with the SCS PTC-IIe, PTC-IIEX, and the PTC-IIUSB modems.

If you're using a PTC-II or a PTC-IIPRO containing a plug-in DSP packet module, then you will need to use our #8120 cable for 1200 Baud, or our #8050 cable for 9600 Baud, which will connect from the Packet port on the modem to the 6 pin mini-DIN packet connector on the rig.

AirMail – Use (VHF/UHF Packet)

Q3500 How do I find a working RMS Packet Station in my local area?

A3500 Where are two pages on the WL2K web site that will give you the information. The first one is a map of RMS Packets that have reported to the Common Message Server within the past 24 hours. It is a link off of the “Maps” tab. The link is:
<http://www.winlink.org/RMSPacketPositions>

Select the station symbol on the map or select the station call in the list to obtain detailed information about the station's location, frequency, etc.

A “RMS Packet Station Status” tells you the time since a station last checked with the Common Message Server. It is from the “Reports” tab:
<http://www.winlink.org/RMSPacketStatus>

Another option is you can request of list of nearby RMS Packet stations from the AirMail “Catalog”.

- 1) To use this you must have a recent update of the WL2K catalog. You can do a list update or a full list in AirMail. Once the list is updated you will find a new bulletin called WL2K_PACKET under the category WL2K_USERS.
- 2) To use the new WL2K_PACKET function you will need to have posted a position report. This can be done with AirMail using the position report menu. If you have posted a report recently (within 30 days) and have not moved substantially that will be sufficient.
- 3) Now request bulletin WL2K_PACKET using AirMail's catalog feature. This will put the request out and it should be available for pickup in a few minutes. The request will have all active RMS Packet stations and all RMS Packet servers within 100 miles (statute miles) of your posted position. The call sign, Grid Square, distance and bearing, Frequency and Baud rate will be in the list (example follows this message). Only those or RMS Packet stations that have reported in the last 30 days will be considered in the list....normally stations report about once per hour or so.

Q3510 I have heard that there are special “Posting Rules” needed when I use AirMail with a Node. What is that all about?

A3510 Depending on the software used by the Node, you may need to do the following, when using AirMail:

You need to use two Connect sessions; one to Receive messages, and another to Send messages. This “problem” is associated with the packet Node modifying Yourcallsign when talking to the RMS Packet station.

When receiving messages, “Connect As:” Yourcallsign-15. This will cause the CMS to download messages to Yourcallsign@winlink.org.

When sending messages, “Connect As:” Yourcallsign. This will cause your messages to be sent out as coming from Yourcallsign@winlink.org.

The Paclink software is not affected by this modification; messages can be sent and received in a single session.

Note: When using AirMail with a Node, try this "one step" Connect process; it may download messages fine, without the above process:

Connect To: RMSPacketCallsign NodeCallsign *[no v or via used]*

Q3520 I just connected to a RMS Packet Station (K7BFL-10) through a node (WR7VHF-4). I had Posted three messages via K7BFL-10. None of my messages got sent. Why?

A3520 The messages also may need to be Posted to the FIRST station (WR7VHF-4) you connected to in the connection process. It is best if you Post to WL2K.

Q3530 I am attempting to connect to a RMS Packet Station through a node called SEATAC. I cannot connect to the node because I get an error message "AirMail not licensed to this call sign". Does AirMail need a license?

A3530 No, AirMail does not need any special licenses for amateur radio use. You got that error message because you tried to connect to a node "alias" name, instead of the node's call sign.

Q3540 Will AirMail work with more than one Node?

A3540 AirMail will work with more than 1 node. The procedure:

1. Select the Keyboard mode.
2. Enter the Call [NOT the Alias name] of the first node in the "Connect To:" box
3. After connecting to the first node, type in the lower split screen
c node2callsign
4. After getting a connection confirmation..
5. repeat steps 3 and 4 until you are connected to the RMS Packet Station
6. Select the Handshake mode

Messages will now flow automatically (but SLOW....). Use MAXFRAME=1

Q3550 Will AirMail work with a Digipeater?

A3550 Yes, AirMail will work when going through another packet station acting as a digipeater. The procedure:

1. Select the Handshake mode.
2. Enter into the "Connect To:" box...gatewaycall via digicall

Messages will now flow automatically (but SLOW....). Use MAXFRAME=1

Q3555 What is the difference between a packet “Node” and a packet “Digipeater”?

A3555 **Node** - any terminal on a network, more specifically for Amateur Radio packet, this is a higher function than a digipeater because a packet node acknowledges to the sending station and makes connects to the next station. Most commonly used node software/firmware includes G8BPQ (also known as BPQ node), KaNode (Kantronics controllers), and others (TheNet).

Digipeater - the lowest level of networking in packet radio. Not used much since the introduction of the node function, except for APRS, which nearly requires it. Generally, using a packet node (see above) does not add functionality to a packet network EXCEPT when it is used to link different frequencies. Experience has shown an approximately 50 percent data transmission speed reduction when using the node function, versus a simple digipeater, when all transmissions are done on the same frequency. *[from KK5CA][and the following from VE1YZ]*

A "digi" is a short name for "digipeater", or digital repeater. This name came into being in the very early days of Packet radio before the evolution of the network node. Digipeating was built into the firmware (and still is) of all TNCs

The basic digi had no networking smarts in it. It was simple Packet store and forward system. You don't connect to a digi, but rather connect to your destination station "via" the digi callsign. You had to manually build your route to destination by daisy chaining digipeaters. A digi is very inefficient.

Then came the network node... First came the Netrom, and later it's clones, TheNet, X1J, etc. There were software nodes, most notably BPQ that ran in a computer.

All of these network nodes share one thing in common. You connect to them, then connect to the destination node, or destination node, then connect to the desired station. Network nodes contain elaborate automatically updated routing tables. Most support TCP/IP.

More importantly, a network node on a LAN (VHF) controls all the traffic on the LAN, since it is usually in a commanding position. For this reason, it is always better to connect to the LAN node, rather than connect directly to another station on the LAN.

Then there are simple nodes such as the KANode and the AEA one built into some manufacturers TNC firmware. You also connect to them but they have no automatic network routing. They work very well, and are much better than a simple digipeater.

To confuse the issue, all nodes usually support digipeating, but its use is generally frowned upon for connection purposes. It is there mostly for beaconing.

So, if someone talks about a "digi", in this day and age, you have to ask them to be more specific.

There are other networking systems such as Rose, plus many more. I'm not familiar with them.

Q3560 I am using AirMail to send an e-mail to K6SSS-4. He doesn't get it, but he does get it when we use Paclink. Is there a problem?

A3560 AirMail versions prior to 3.3.048 will not support dash-number calls (as a WL2K user). 3.3.048 will support dash-number calls as independent user callsigns (not to be confused with packet dash-number SSID's). Note that for Pactor use, 6-char callsigns can only use a single-digit suffix (i.e. 6 letters plus a dash plus 2 digits won't work for Pactor, but will work for packet).

All recent versions of AirMail will support the use of packet SSID numbers for packet connection purposes only.

See Q140.

Q3580 How do I set up a Tactical e-mail account for AirMail?

A3580 Tactical e-mail accounts are not useable with the AirMail program. However you can use AirMail to exchange messages with a station using a Tactical e-mail account.

Q3600 In the Packet Client window; how do I delete some of the entries in the "Connect To" list?

A3600

1. Stop AirMail
2. Navigate to C:\Program Files\Airmail
3. Open airmail.ini with Notepad [you may need to change your "View Folder" options to view "hidden files"]
4. Scroll down until you see a bunch of CONNECT TO entries, such as:
Connect To 1=AL1Q-10 WR7VHF-3 AL1Q-7
Connect To 2=K7BFL-10 WR7VHF-3
Connect To 3=K7PKT-10
Connect To 4=K7PKT-10 KC7AAD-2
5. Delete (very carefully!) lines which you no longer need.
6. Renumber the list, in sequence.
7. Save and Close the file

Q3640 Is there a maximum number of addressees that can appear in the AirMail "To" line?

A3640 See A1630

Q3660 Is it possible to view all addresses in the "To" line as I add them to it?

A3660 See A1660

Q3680 How can I select multiple addresses in the address book?

A3680 See A1700

Q3700 I am using a PK232mbx TNC, with the latest firmware (7.2). It is working fine with WL2K packet for normal messages. However when I try to send a message with a 15K Attachment, the process hangs up. Why?

A3700 That particular problem has been experienced by many others; the cause is unknown. Downloads TO you are ok; uploads FROM you hang up if the compressed attachment is greater than about 5K.

You can permanently solve the problem by configuring the PK232mbx in the KISS mode. See Q3015.

AirMail – Setup (Telnet via internet connection)

Q4000 What is a “telnet” connection?

A4000 Telnet is an Internet protocol that allows the user to connect to a remote computer. AirMail has a communications module called the “Telnet Client”, or in later versions “Internet Access”. This module enables the AirMail user to send and receive messages directly with the Common Message Server, using an internet “non-radio” path. This results in a much faster throughput speed.

Q4010 How do I setup AirMail to use a Telnet (Internet Access) connection?

A4010 (Similar information may also be found in the Global Catalog under WL2K_Help).

AirMail Telnet Client setup. Go to AirMail menu item: "Tools>Options>Modules" and check the Telnet Option. If you wish you can also set the module to initialize when bringing up AirMail by also checking "autostart." However, if you wish to start the module manually, then go to menu item: Module>Telnet client."

The setup for accessing the CMS (as routed by CMS logic to one of the 4 locations) is:

WL2K	(Remote Call Sign; <i>not case sensitive</i>)
server.winlink.org	(Remote Host; <i>not case sensitive</i>)
8772	(TCP Port Outbound)
30	(Timeout in seconds)
CMSTelnet	(Password; <i>not case sensitive</i>)

Remote Call Sign and Remote Host information (*case insensitive*) for the specific CMS Sites are:

WL2KS	SanDiego.winlink.org	(San Diego)
WL2KH	Halifax.winlink.org	(Halifax)
WL2KP	Perth.winlink.org	(Perth)
WL2KV	Wien.winlink.org	(Wien [Vienna])
WL2KB	Brentwood.winlink.org	(Brentwood, Tennessee)

[the Password for all sites is CMSTelnet (*not case sensitive*)]

All of the active Common Message Servers are continually updating each other with new information.

Q4370 I have an Iridium SatPhone. How can I use it with Telnet?

A4370 Winlink 2000 Telnet (Internet Access) Set-up Instructions with AirMail for Iridium SatPhone Users
(Please see the source information at <http://saildocs.com/iridiumppp>, courtesy of Jim Corenman and Sailmail)

WL2K Access via Iridium SatPhone/Telnet

This document describes how to set up an Iridium PPP connection for use with the WL2K Telnet servers, and is a modified version of a non-copyrighted Iridium document entitled *PPP DATA Installation/Configuration*.

Prior to using your Iridium phone as a modem for PPP Data, you need to do the following two things:

1. Install a Standard 19200 bps modem driver on your computer (instructions below).
2. Set up and configure a dial-up networking connection for the PPP service (below).

The modem driver must be configured with the following Extra Initialization String: AT+CBST=71,0,1. In the dial-up networking connection, TCP/IP should be the only enabled network protocol. You must have an available serial port on your computer (e.g., COM1). You must have Administrator privileges if using Windows NT, 2000 or XP Professional. Horizontal rule. Windows XP Setup (others similar).

Step 1: Install the Modem Driver

- close all applications
- choose Start > Control Panel
- double-click on Phone and Modem Options
- select the Modems tab and click Add...
- check Don't Detect My Modem; I will Select It from a List; then click Next
- click Standard 19200 bps Modem; then click Next
- click the Selected Ports button and click on an available COM Port (e.g., COM1)--this is the port to which you will connect your Iridium phone; click Next, then Finish.
- click the Standard 19200 bps Modem to highlight it and then click Properties
- select the Advanced tab
- In the Extra Initialization Commands box, enter: AT+CBST=71,0,1
- Then click OK, then OK again to close.

Step 2: Configure Dial-Up Networking

choose Start > All Programs > Accessories > Communications > Network Connections

click Create a New Connection, and click Next

select Connect to the Internet and click Next

select Set Up My Connection Manually and click Next

select Connect Using a Dial-up Modem and click Next
if a Select a Device window appears, check the box next to Standard 19200 bps Modem, and
uncheck all other devices; then click Next

enter a connection name (e.g., Iridium PPP) and click Next
in the Phone Number box, enter 008816000025 and click Next a username and password are not
necessary, but will keep Windows from asking each time you dial.

click Next, then Finish

click Properties for the new dial-up connection, then the Networking tab
make sure Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) is checked; uncheck all other components

click OK, then close the connection box.

For use with AirMail's Telnet window, the simplest way to make the connection is to check the Dial
First box in the Telnet window, then select the Iridium PPP connection. Don't forget to check the
Hang up box.

First go to AirMail's Tools/Options menu, Modules tab, and check the box to the left of Telnet
Client. Click OK. Then go to the Modules menu and select Telnet Client. This opens the Telnet
window, very much like the Terminal window except it operates over an Internet connection. Click
NEW and enter the following parameters:

(As example)

Remote callsign: WL2KS

Remote host: sandiego.winlink.org

Port: 8772

Local callsign: Set to your ham callsign

Password: CMSTELNET

Click OK to save settings.

For use with AirMail's Telnet window, the simplest way to make the connection is to check the Dial
First box in the Telnet window, then select the Iridium PPP connection. Don't forget to check the
Hang up box.

To check mail, go to AirMail's Modules/Telnet menu, make sure WL2KS is selected in the call sign
box, and click the green Connect button. AirMail will dial the phone, contact the server, exchange
mail and hang up.

Note: To make use of the Dial First feature, you need AirMail version 3.1.948 or later. Point your
browser to: <http://siriuscyber.net/> and download amup948.exe to a Downloads folder. Make sure
AirMail is closed, then open that file and install it into the same C:\Program Files\AirMail folder.

If you want to place a PPP Data call manually, you must open the Dial-Up Networking window and
select the dial-up connection you created for your Iridium phone. Make sure the phone is set up,
then open the Iridium PPP dial-up connection and click Dial. Don't forget to disconnect when you
are finished!

AirMail – Use (Telnet via internet connection)

Q4500 When I hit the “Connect” button nothing happens? Why?

A4500 The CMS location you are trying to connect to may be having trouble. Try connecting to another Common Message Server location.

You may have lost your connection to the internet.

AirMail – Peer-to-Peer - Setup

Q5000 What is “Peer-to-Peer”?

A5000 Peer-to-Peer is a process by which two radio stations, using AirMail, connect to each other without using any of the WL2K infrastructures. The two stations can exchange messages “automatically” using (or not using) the B2F forwarding protocol (Handshake) or exchange information in a conversational mode (Keyboard).

Q5020 How do I set up AirMail to do Peer-to-Peer, using the Packet Client module?

A5020 Go to Tools.....Options.....Autoanswer. Make sure that “Accept Incoming Connects” is checked. Just connect to the other station, using the callsign of that station. If you want to exchange information conversationally, select the Keyboard mode.

Q5040 How do I set up AirMail to do Peer-to-Peer, using the HF Terminal module?

A5040 It is recommended that you to create a new “System”. Use any name other than “Ham”.

1. Go to View....Station List (Systems will be selected)
2. Select “New”
3. Enter a new system name of your choice.....then Ok
4. Select the NEWSYSTEMNAME.....Settings
5. Enter your Callsign.....then Ok
6. Close AirMail, then Open AirMail
7. Go to Tools...Options....Settings. Select the tab for your new system. Make sure that the B2F box is checked.

You also need to add the Peer-to-Peer HF stations to which you will be connecting to the NEWSYSTEMNAME system.

1. Go to View....Station List....NEWSYSTEMNAME
2. Select “New”
3. Enter the callsign of the first Peer-to-Peer station.....then OK
4. The NEWCALLSIGN will then be Selecting in the Station List
5. Select “Settings”
6. Enter information about this new callsign.....then Ok.
7. Repeat for additional new stations.
8. Close HF Terminal
9. Open HF Terminal

The passive station “being connected to needs to have “Accept Incoming Connects” checked. See Q5020.

Packet stations to which you will be Connecting peer-to-peer should not to be defined in the new system.

Note: It is possible to add peer-to-peer stations to your Ham system and exchange messages with them via HF, peer-to-peer. The advantage of placing ptp stations in a separate system is to enable easy updating of the RMS Frequency List, which is in the Ham system.

AirMail – Peer-to-Peer - Use

Q5500 I am using Packet Client. How do I connect to a Peer-to-Peer station?

A5500 Select either the Handshake mode or the Keyboard mode. If it will be a direct connection, just enter the station's callsign in the "Connect To" box.

If the connection will be through one or more digipeaters, Nodes, K-Nodes, etc.; See Q3540

Q5520 I connected to another station, using Peer-to-Peer. He sent me 4 messages, but I don't see them in my In Box. Why?

A5520 They were probably addressed to someone other than YourCall. Check the Transit Box, if you think the messages were actually sent to your station. If the messages were not sent, then they were not "Posted" to you. See Q6300.

Q5530 How do I send a message to the station to which I am Connected; Peer-to-Peer?

A5530 You create the message as normal. The word on the "To:" line on the message preparation screen can be anything, even though AirMail gives a Warning Message for non-callsigns. (Post). Send the message to the station to which you will Connect, or (if you expect the Connect to be on HF) to the name of the AirMail HF "System" which you are using. **Note: if you use this later option the message will flow to the FIRST station who Connects to you, not necessarily the station you want to receive the message.** If you are using packet and are using a Node or Digipeater you may need to Post the message to either the first Node, or the ultimate Callsign-15.

Q5550 I am using pactor (HF Terminal window). How do I connect to a Peer-to-Peer station?

A5550 In the Terminal window, select the correct "system" and the callsign of the station you would like to connect. See Q5040. Do either (a) or (b) below:

a. Select the "Keyboard" mode of interaction with the other station. Hit the green "Connect" button. After the station answers, the contact should proceed; you will be the initial "sending" station. Send a CTL O to transfer control to the other station. Messages will not flow between stations; information is "keyboarded", one word or one line at a time.

b. Select the "Handshake" mode of interaction with the other station. Hit the green "Connect" button. After the station answers, the contact should proceed as if you were connecting to a RMS station. Messages will "automatically" flow In and Out of your station; then you will automatically Disconnect.

If you both are in the "Handshake" mode, messages in the Out Box and the Transit Box will automatically flow to the other station, IF they have been Posted to the other station, and have not been previously sent to that station.

[Wildcard Posting: messages which are Posted to the Airmail System name you are using (HAM or PTP or MBO or MARS or xxx) will also flow to the station to which you are Connected].

Q5580 **Are there any operating advantages from using the “Keyboard” operating method, when connected to another station Peer-to-Peer?**

A5580 Not really. The “Keyboard” method is very slow, compared to using the “Handshake” method. Handshake results in a MUCH higher efficient use of a frequency channel, and results in a complete “saved” documentation of the information shared between the two stations. If possible, use a voice channel for Chatting, especially on HF.

Q6000 **I have a message Posted for another station. The message will not “Send” automatically. Any suggestions?**

A6000 a. The other station should make sure that its “Tools...Options....AutoAnswer” box is checked for “Accept Incoming Connects”.

b. Both stations should be using the Handshake mode.

c. The message should be Posted to the Receiving station; or, if using Nodes, the first Node you used in the Connection process.

Q6100 **How do I send an ARRL Radiogram to a NTSD Station?**

A6100 NTSD (National Traffic System – Digital) stations are NOT the same as WL2K RMS Pactor stations. They scan different frequencies, and do NOT “automatically” forward messages to other NTSD stations. NTSD generally does not make use of the internet....radio only. See the web pages by AE5V: http://home.earthlink.net/~bscottmd/airmail_address.htm

Also see Q320.

Q6200 **I am using AirMail with pactor, peer-to-peer. Data compression does not seem to be happening. Why?**

A6200 Be sure that the “B2F” box is checked in Tools....Options....Settings...YourPTPsystem

Q6300 **Is there a way that I can set up my AirMail software to act as a “relay” between two other stations?**

A6300 Yes, through making using of the “Tools....Options....Routing” screen. Make a new line entry for each “relay”. See the Help files in AirMail 3.3.080 (or later). The messages coming In to your station will be stored in the Transit Box. They will flow out of the Transit Box when the downstream station connects to your station.

Q6310 I would like to act as a HF pactor “BBS” station, using AirMail. What do I put in the Routing Table?

A6310 Make a new Routing Table entry for each station you want to Relay.

- (1) In the “Received Via” column, put “HF”
- (2) In the “Addressed To” column, put “StationCallsignA”
- (3) In the “Post To” column, put “StationCallsignA”

Note: do not make any entry for your BBS StationCallsign

Messages Received will be Posted and placed in your Transit Folder, for later Pickup

Q6315 I would like to act as a packet “BBS” station, using AirMail. What do I put in the Routing Table?

A6315 See A6310, except use “PKT” instead of “HF”.

Q6320 I would like to send a message to another station, for relay through a pactor or packet “BBS” station. How do I compose the message?

A6320 Make a new message (or Forward another message).

- (1) In the “To” line of the message, put “OtherStationCallsign”. If it is ok for either of several stations to pick up the message from the BBS [first one there gets it], put all of those OtherStationCallsigns in the line (separated by a comma, with no spaces, no quotes).
- (2) In the body of the message, note that the message is coming from you. This is needed because when OtherStationCallsign picks up the message from BBSStationCallsign, the message will show as coming from BBSStationCallsign.
- (3) Post the message to “BBSStationCallsign”. Send. [The first station to access the BBS Transit Box will get the message; other stations will not get the message.]

Note: The BBS Station must have appropriate Routing Table entries. See Q6310.

Q6330 **I would like to send the same message (like a cc) to several another stations, for relay through a HF (pactor) or VHF (packet) “BBS” station. How do I compose the (single) message?**

A6330 Make a new message (or Forward another message).

- (1) In the “To” line of the message, put
“<OtherStationCallsign1>,<OtherStationCallsign2>,<OtherStationCallsignN>” Note:
no quotes, no spaces
- (2) In the body of the message, note that the message is coming from you. This is needed because when OtherStationCallsign picks up the message from BBSStationCallsign, the message will show as coming from BBSStationCallsign.
- (3) Post the message to “BBSStationCallsign”. Send. [All stations on your list will get the message when they access the BBS Transit Box.]

Note: The BBS Station must have appropriate Routing Table entries. See Q6310.

Q6340 **Can I make an entry in my Address Book to handle cc messages described as in Q6330?**

A6340 Yes, Open the Address Book and make a “New” entry.

- (1) In the “Address” line, put something to describe the group of stations, such as “ARES Incident Stations”.
- (2) In the “To” line of the message, put
“<OtherStationCallsign1>,<OtherStationCallsign2>,<OtherStationCallsignN>” Note:
no quotes, no spaces
- (3) In the “Post Via” box, put BBSStationCallsign
- (4) In the “Subject” box, enter an appropriate Subject
- (5) In “Message Text” box, enter appropriate text; also noting that the message is coming from you. This is needed because when OtherStationCallsign picks up the message from BBSStationCallsign, the message will show as coming from BBSStationCallsign.
- (6) Select “OK” to Save the Properties of this Address entry.
- (7) Send the message..

Note: The BBS Station must have appropriate Routing Table entries. See Q6310.

Paclink – Setup - General

Q7000 What is Paclink?

A7000 Paclink is a third generation version of Paclink AGW, and Paclink MP. It has the ability to send and receive messages using packet and pactor 1, 2, or 3, when using an appropriate TNC. Another significant addition is the ability to use many TNC's directly, without the need for the AGW software.

NET 2.0 also needs to be installed (available free from Microsoft).

See <http://www.winlink.org/ClientSoftware> for free download information.

Paclink has replaced Paclink MP and Paclink AGW; the earlier software is not supported.

Q7005 I have one of the new Kenwood radios (D700) with a built-in TNC. Will it work with Paclink?

A7005 Yes, see Q7016.

Q7010 What kind of computer operating system do I need to run Paclink?

A7010 Windows 2000 is the "minimum" operating system. See Q500

Q7013 Is there are version of Paclink that I can use with Linux?.

A7013 See the Yahoo User group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/paclink-unix/>

Q7015 I would like to use my SCS TNC for Paclink. Can I?

A7015 Yes. Paclink directly supports all the late-model SCS modems.

Q7016 How do I configure the Paclink software to be used with the Kenwood or Alinco radios , using a built-in “Tasco” TNC?

A7016 The easiest way is to select one of the new KISS drivers (within the revised Paclink software), especially written for the “Tasco” built-in TNC radios.

K7CPO has also had good results with the following setup procedure, applied to Paclink. AGWPE or AGW Packet Engine Pro is needed. It has been successfully tested with several RMS Pactor stations, both directly and via Nodes.

If your computer is “old and slow” it may not have enough cpu speed to handle all of the needed software. It works fine with a Pentium 4, 3.2 GHz.

Edit the appropriate Paclink AGW Channel Configurations. Set Packet Length =126;
Maxframes=1. Save the file.

Use a DB-9 male/female cable between the DR-135 and the serial port (or serial/usb adapter) on your computer.

The Port setup for AGWPE or AGWPE Pro is:

9600 baud radio to computer
TARP TNC2 [blank]
KISS ON
RESTART

Kiss Simple

ExitKISS on Exit

Single Port

Persist=200
Slottime=15
MaxFrame=1
Retries=10
TxDelay=55
TxTail=4

Frack=4
RespTime=2
Check Every 120

1. Use the VFO to determine the packet frequency
2. Turn on the radio; get into the Data mode by pushing the Function key, then the Squelch key.
3. Start AGWPE
4. Start Paclink
5. Operate Paclink as “normal”.
6. It is VERY helpful to use the “monitor” part of AGWPE to monitor the health of the software, hardware, and packet frequency activity.

The radio/software will “lockup” if any of the following (there may be others) are done:

Changing power level

Changing from Data to Voice to Data

To recover: restart the radio; restart the software.

Q7018 I am having trouble with Paclink working with my TNC and AGWPE. Do you have any troubleshooting suggestions?

A7018 Forget about AGWPE and Paclink until you can confirm that your TNC/AGWPE works on AGW Terminal; and you can make a connection to a packet station using AGW Terminal.

Some simple rules to get AGW to work:

- 1) ALWAYS start AGW with the TNC in normal Terminal mod(command prompt) and at a fixed baud rate.
- 2) Check the manual for your TNC to make sure AGW is sending the correct commands. The default command AGW puts in are often (but NOT always) correct. Check your TNC Manual and use the commands necessary to put the TNC in KISS mode. (e.g. I found my older KPC3 required a different command sequence than what AGWPE defaulted.
- 3) Set up the TNC and radio correctly for either open squelch or normal squelch before starting AGWPE.
- 4) Always have AGW set to "exit KISS on exit" ...this returns the TNC to terminal mode.

Finally if you can't make AGW work with AGW Term you are setting up something wrong. Try AGW Pro (easier to set up) at least the 30 day demo. IMHO it is worth the \$50 for the simplicity and better supportbut AGWPE (free) will work.

Q7020 What is a "telnet" connection?

A7020 Telnet is an Internet protocol that allows the user to connect to a remote computer. Paclink has a communications module called the "Telnet Client". This module enables the Paclink user to send and receive messages with a Common Message Server, using an internet "non-radio" path. This results in a much faster throughput speed.

Q7030 What is a Tactical E-mail Address? How do I get one?

A7030 A Tactical Address is something like "REDCROSS-22@winlink.org". A tactical address may consist of alpha characters only, or alpha characters, followed by a dash, followed by alphanumeric characters. An address name may not exceed 12 characters (including the -). Valid tactical address examples: MLBShelter, RedCross-123, Police-99A.

More information about Tactical E-mail Addresses and how to get one are included in the Paclink Installation Instructions.

or from a file by K4CJX <http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/TacticalAddresses.pdf>

Q7040 Is a Tactical Address good forever?

A7040 No. It lasts for 400 days after its last use. See Q360.

Q7050 I having trouble getting AGWPE to talk to my computer com port. Any suggestions? I am using a serial to USB converter between my computer and the TNC.

A7050 See Q1010

Q7060 I have the Paclink configured, but I can't seem to be able to connect to ANY RMS Packet stations. Help!!!

A7060 See A3020

Q7080 Is the Icom D-Star equipment compatible with Winlink 2000?

A7080 Yes, it can be used with the Paclink software and AirMail using setups for connections with CMS and RMS Packet. Another way is to use Paclink as a POP/SMTP server in a high-speed D-Star LAN. D-Star users with DD mode can connect directly to the Paclink server using their e-mail client software with tactical e-mail addresses. With good design of the local high-speed network, extremely efficient and fast radio e-mail service can be expected.

Q7100 I am trying to use my KPC3+ with Paclink and AGWPE. How can I get it into the KISS mode?

A7100 Using the AGWPE software, on the TNC Setup page under Properties (for the com port being used):
"Tnc Sub Type": XKISS (Checksum)
Under "Tnc Control Commands":
"IniKiss1": XKCH ON
"IniKiss2": INTERFACE XKISS
"IniKiss3": RESET
"ExitKiss On Exit": box is Checked
[from KF4BXT]

Q7140 Can I use Paclink with my CompuServe account? If so, how?

A7140 The only interaction possible between the Winlink 2000 system (including the use of Paclink) and CompuServe would be to exchange emails between your WL2K address and CompuServe email addresses.

Q7160 I have heard that there may be problem, using my Icom 706MkIIIG with Pactor 2?

A7160 See Q2533

Paclink – Use (VHF/UHF Packet)

Q7500 How do I find a working RMS Packet Station in my local area?

A7500 See A3500

Q7515 My “Connect Script” times out, with a resulting Dirty Disconnect. How can I fix it?

A7515 Try shortening your Script lines, such as:

```
C NODEONE  
CONNECTED  
C NODETWO  
CONNECTED  
C N1XYZ-10  
CONNECTED
```

Q7530 Can I do “Peer-to-Peer” communications with Paclink?

A7530 No, Paclink is only used to exchange messages with a RMS Packet station, a RMS Pactor station, or directly with the CMS. Peer-to-peer is being considered as an addition to a later version.

Q7540 Can I use Paclink on HF pactor?

A7540 Yes, Paclink is useable on pactor, with the appropriate TNC.

Q7560 Using Paclink, how can I send a “Position Report” message, similar to what can be done with AirMail?

A7560 Create and send a message, according to the follow template:

To: QTH@winlink.org
Subject: Position Report

Time: 2009/11/19 01:23
Latitude: 47-42.00N
Longitude: 117-16.39W
Comment: Home in Spokane

Note: There seems to be a problem when using this process with the Thunderbird email client. A "workaround" is:

Compose a position report message and address it to your regular Winlink email address. Before connecting Paclink to CMS or RMS, go to the "Paclink" folder, open the "TO WINLINK" folder, and bring up the associated .mime file with Notepad. Edit the "TO:" address to be "QTH@winlink.org".

Save the .mime file and exit Notepad. Then, connect to the CMS; the message will be send and acknowledged by the Winlink CMS.

Q7565 It has been a while since I accessed my Winlink account with Paclink. Outlook Express seems to be hanging up. Why?

A7565 If you use Outlook Express with Paclink make sure you never leave more than 200 e-mail messages under the Paclink account folder Outlook Express will hang when trying to get new messages and never transfer all the messages to the In Box.

Q7580 How can I get a "Catalog" of Help Files and Worldwide Weather bulletins, which is available with the AirMail software?

A7580 From Paclink and using Outlook, Outlook Express, or whatever you are using with Paclink as a user interface, send a message as follows:

To: INQUIRY@winlink.org

SUBJECT: REQUEST

In the message body on a new line, type the word, LIST, and nothing else.

Send that message. Wait about 1 to 3 minutes. It WON'T work to send a request over the Internet using normal e-mail; just through a RMS station (or using telnet to a CMS) using the WL2K system pathways.

Either wait until your automatic polling takes place, OR manually connect with Paclink. You will get a large (about 70K) text file with all the catalog items. The first column will be the "category" and the second column will be what you request.

Q7650 How can I change the value of my Message Size Limit, and other Options?

A7650 Send the following message, from your Paclink software [or Keyboarding] (just include in the body of the message the information you want to change):

:

To: Options@winlink.org

Subject: Options

ALTERNATE: SMTP: *[alternate email address]*

MAX SIZE: *[compressed maximum message size in bytes]*

PREFIX: *[use this out-of-country prefix with my callsign]*

SUFFIX: *[use this out-of-country suffix with my callsign]*

Paclink – Use (Telnet via internet connection)

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Keyboard Access – Setup

Q8000 What is the “Keyboard Access” method all about?

A8000 It enables a user to send and receive messages (without Attachments), using very basic packet or Pactor software. It is VERY SLOW, compared to the normal AirMail and Paclink software “Handshake” protocol. It should only be used on HF Pactor for special situations, such as deleting a very large message before it is downloaded. See Q2540. The method is acceptable for normal use on VHF/UHF packet. Users are STRONGLY encouraged to receive increased communications benefits by upgrading to either AirMail or Paclink.

Data is not compressed, so a casual listener will be able to easily see all of the data being transferred.

If possible, please use Paclink, RMS Express, or AirMail (Handshake mode). They are faster, give more features, don't make syntax errors and use up fewer system resources. 99% of all the WL2K system problems are due to keyboard entry and keyboard users make up less than 1 percent of WL2K users.

Q8020 What kind of computer operating system do I need to use Keyboard Access?

A8020 Most any computer and operating system will work (with packet). Some folks have used Palm devices.

Q8100 When I try telnetting to the server.winlink.org telnet server, I get an error message saying that 'transparent mode' is required. This occurs with the default telnet that ships with my Mac's OS X operating system. I've tried some other telnet applications off of the internet, but get the same message.

I tripped over a note on the Outpost webpage that indicated that placing a '.' in front of my callsign can work around a 'transparent mode' problem. And indeed, when I did this, I was able to log in to server.winlink.org.

I only see this documented in the Outpost release documentation.

While I don't intend to use the telnet interface for long, it'd be nice to know if this is a solution advocated by winlink.org, or whether I need to find another telnet client on OS X that doesn't have the 'transparent mode' problem.

A8100 The telnet RFC requires that the user name be preceded with a "." if the connection is to be in transparent (8-bit binary) mode rather than 7-bit alpha mode. Since the CMS Telnet server requires an 8-bit binary mode to handle the B2F protocol the initial login requires the "." in front of the users callsign when logging in.

Client programs such as AirMail, RMS Express, and Paclink take care of adding the "." automatically. If you are using a simple telnet client terminal program you need to add the "." yourself.

Keyboard Access – Use

Q8500 How do I find a working RMS Packet Station in my local area?

A8500 See A3500

Q8510 How do I access the WL2K system, using Keyboard Access?

A8510 Connect to a RMS Packet Station (Radio Secure Log-in must be turned OFF):

LM List all messages for me.
RM Read all messages for me.
KM Kill (delete) all messages for me.
R xx Read content of message number xx.
K xx Kill message number xx. (don't forget any underscore which may be in the number!)
SP Send a message (see A8520)
H Help File (very condensed)
Bye Disconnect

Q8515 Are there any special Keyboard restrictions when using pactor?

A8515 Yes, it is not possible to Read or Send a message when using keyboard pactor. This is because of the VERY low throughput speed of pactor, when using Keyboard. The Keyboard feature is included with HF pactor primarily to enable a User to Delete a message that is "clogging" his mailbox. See Q1500. The commands which are available are:

H (yields a special pactor help file)
LM List mine
K xx Kill message number xx (don't forget any underscore which may be in the number!)
B Disconnect

Q8520 How do I send a message, using Keyboard Access?

A8520 SP or SENDPERSONAL <Destination(s)> Send a personal text message to the destination(s) indicated. Destinations may be a Radio callsign (without H-route) known to the WL2K system or "SMTP:<e-mail_address>"

Multiple destinations should be separated by ";" or ","
e.g. SP W4ABC;SMTP:Johndoe@aol.com

Be careful to enter addresses correctly and include the required prefix "SMTP:" in front of any e-mail address.

You will be prompted for a subject of the new message: And then prompted for the message body:

For the message body enter any text. use Cr for multi-line. End with /EX on a separate line. No attachments. Acceptance of the message will be confirmed.

Attachments are not supported by Keyboard Access.

- Q8530** **I have connected to a RMS Packet Station, using Keyboard Access. Nothing is happening on the screen. Why?**
- A8530 The software does not have many “prompts” to let you know what to do next. You need to take the lead. It will not tell you if there is mail for you unless you type LM.
- Q8540** **I made a typing error. Apparently the program does not coach me about my errors?**
- A8540 Your assumption is correct. If you type something and you do not get a response within a minute, assume you made a typing error. Correct the error and try it again. If that does not help, then Disconnect and start over.
- The “Keyboard Access” program was meant to be a VERY SIMPLE, intro type program. It is not intended to be a heavy duty message transfer program, like AirMail or Paclink. Programming enhancements to this software should not be expected. However if you programming skills and have time to donate for such a project, contact K4CJX.
- If possible, please use Paclink, RMS Express, or AirMail. They are faster, give more features, don't make syntax errors and use up fewer system resources. 99% of all the WL2K system problems are due to keyboard entry and keyboard users make up less than 1 percent of WL2K users.
- Q8550** **In my terminal program MyCall has been defined as W6ABC. When I originate and send a message via WL2K, using Keyboard Access, it arrives at the other end as coming from W6ABC-15@winlink.org. Why?**
- A8550 You are probably using a packet Node to get to a RMS Packet station. The Node is changing your callsign to W6ABC-15, which is what the RMS Packet station sees. The WL2K system sees W6ABC@winlink.org and W6ABC-15@winlink.org as two unique e-mail addresses.
- The “workaround” procedure which will enable you to send messages from MyCall@winlink.org, and to download messages for MyCall@winlink.org is:
- prior to starting your terminal program, change MyCall to MyCall-15. This will enable you to Send messages from MyCall@winlink.org and Receive messages for MyCall@winlink.org.

RMS Packet Station – Setup

Q9000 Just what is a “RMS Packet” Station?

A9000 It is an amateur radio station which provides a communications path between a VHF or UHF packet “WL2K user” and the Winlink Common Message Server (CMS). The RMS Packet station normally does not store any information. It is not a BBS. It is not a Node.

You do not need to install RMS Packet on your computer in order to send and receive messages via the WL2K system.

The RMS Packet software replaces the Telpac software. Effective March 1, 2009 support for the Telpac software will cease by the Winlink Development Team. Also, at that time, the CMS will no longer accept Connects from Telpac software.

Q9020 Just what is “RMS Relay”?

A9000 “RMS Relay” is optional software which may be used in conjunction with RMS Packet. Its primary purpose is to enable many of the features of RMS Packet to continue if the internet connection to the CMS is lost. See Q10020.

Q9020 What kind of computer operating system do I need to run the RMS Packet software?

A9050 Windows XP is the “minimum” operating system.

Q9100 Is there a version of RMS Packet available for Linux operating systems?

A9100 Yes. DL5DI and W3SG have a working Linux RMS Gateway using the Linux operating system. More information is available from:

<http://www.winlink.org/SysopSoftware>

Q9120 I am a casual user of the WL2K system. Do I need to install the RMS Packet software on my computer?

A9120 No. You only need to install RMS Express, AirMail, or Paclink to send and receive messages. RMS Packet is for advanced WL2K users, who want to provide something back to the WL2K System; that being a VHF/UHF Gateway for access from local WL2K users.

Q9140 If I decide to install the RMS Packet software, do I have any obligations to the WL2K system?

A9140 No. You can choose to operate it as many hours a day as you want. 24/7, As Needed, etc.

Q9160 What call letters should I use for my RMS Packet station?

A9160 If possible, use a quasi standard of yourcall-10.

Q9180 Are there any frequencies that I should avoid for my RMS Packet?

A9180 The WL2K Development Team recommends that you avoid 144.39 MHz, which is a common frequency for APRS use. If possible, coordinate your frequency choice with other local packet users.

RMS Express, AirMail, and Paclink, if in use, require a very intense use of a channel. They both work best if they are not competing for channel use from other users.

RMS Express, AirMail, and Paclink will both work with a digipeater and a node. In order to maximize throughput for all users, all WL2K users of the digipeater should refrain from connecting when another WL2K user (using AirMail or Paclink) is connected.

If possible, stay off of frequencies which have heavy use of DX Clusters.

An ideal community arrangement would be to have multiple RMS Packet Stations on different frequencies, using different internet service providers, located in diverse parts of the local geographical area.

Q9200 Can I run more than one RMS Packet station on a single computer?

A9200 Yes, if you are using AGW Packet Engine with your RMS Packet software, you can operate multiple RMS Packet stations, on different frequencies, **all with the same callsign**. The RMS Packet "AGW Packet Engine Configuration" screen enables you to define multiple AGWPE ports, all using the same callsign, such as K7ABC-10.

Several "instances" of the RMS Packet software can be running simultaneously if there is sufficient memory and horsepower in your computer, and you would like to use different callsigns for each RMS Packet station. There is a protection mechanism to keep from running multiple copies of the same instance number. For each separate instance you will have a completely independent setup (call sign, TNC parameters, log file, etc). Each instance must of course refer to a different Com Port and TNC/radio when you are using direct modem control. Also each instance must have its own .aps file and own sign-on banner file. For example the filenames for a KAM TNC aps file for instance 2 would be KAM_2.aps. The sign-on banner for instance 2 would be the file banner_2.txt.

Setting up a second "instance" is described in detail in the Help section of the RMS Packet software.

Q9220 It is possible to install the RMS Packet software on a laptop and use it to run a "portable station".

A9220 Yes, that is an excellent application. With the addition of a WiFi card and external antenna, these stations can be deployed to any hotspot (or, heck to any neighborhood or commercial area where connections may be found easily these days) to set up an instant gateway for other Paclink or AirMail stations.

Having your free hotspots pre-surveyed and several operators capable of deploying portable RMS Packet stations is a very viable strategy that can bring depth and flexibility to organizations that can afford little permanent infrastructure.

If your cell phone is capable of "Broadband" and you can connect your cell phone to your laptop, then your portable RMS Packet station is ready for action!

Q9260 I need to change some of the station description information about my RMS Packet, which was given when I originally registered the station. How do I change the information?

A9260 Update the "Site Properties" page in your copy of RMS Packet.

A new Linux client gateway version is needed that matches the status and registration methods implemented in RMS Packet. Please correspond with Lee (K0QED) (lee.inman@gmail.com) to work on facilitating these changes.

Q9320 My RMS Packet software is running 24/7 and seems to "go to sleep", with an associated shutdown of the software. Any suggestions on a solution?

A9320 It may be caused by the "Power Management" switch on your serial or usb connection going into a sleep mode (independent of the "Power Options via the Control Panel).

The serial and usb Power Management switches can be turned off via Control Panel....System....Hardware....Device Manager....Universal Serial Bus Controllers....USB Root Hub....Properties....Power Management.

Q9350 I am using a KPC3+ as my TNC, with the "direct" RMS Packet software option. Our local node operator says that my RMS Packet is sending out a beacon with a call alias of DISABL, which messes up the Node Table on the Node. How do I get that turned off?

[info from KB5WBH and KG4VUB]

The beacon comes from the setting for NETCALL. NETCALL is associated with the K-Net feature of the TNC (firmware newer than 8.3). This feature enables the TNC to become part of a network of Nodes.

The default factory value is lowercase "disabled" >> NETCALL disabled <<

When RMS Packet initializes and reads the original TNC settings, it saves that setting in the registry as "disabled". If you select "restore TNC settings on exit" in the RMS Packet settings, then RMS Packet will issue the cmd "NETCALL DISABLED" when you close the program (along with restoring all the other saved settings.)

The TNC sees the value "DISABLED" for the NETCALL cmd and sets that value, thinking it's a node alias. This turns on the K-Net feature in the TNC and results in the automatic beacon DISABL . I guess it only holds 6 chars for the alias.

According to a phone call with Kantronics, the only way to turn it off is with a hard reset.
cmd: restore -d

In RMS Packet just make sure "restore TNC settings on exit" is unchecked.

Another sure way to solve the problem (from KE6AFE) is to modify the aps file, including the following:

IDINT 0 ; this disables the Node ID timer

NETCALL % ; this clears both the nodes and routes tables

Finally, another way to solve the problem is to run RMS Packet with AGW. This also lets you use AGW Term for keyboarding on the same radio/tnc as the RMS Packet. The Monitor function of AGW is also available to monitor all activity on the frequency

Q9360 I am using a KPC3+ as my TNC, with the “direct” RMS Packet software option. When I start RMS Packet, it hangs up, just after the first item of the aps file, "8bitcon ON". There is no response from the TNC, it just freezes. RMS Packet has to be shut-down by CTL-ALT-Delete. I have tried a different KPC3+, a different aps file, and reinstalled RMS Packet. How can this be corrected?

A9360 This problem has been solved by installing “Port Monitor” software on your computer.

Q9400 The “autoupdate” feature of RMS Packet is giving me fits! How can I get updates without having my computer shut down?

A9400 Every Tuesday night is known among geeks who deal with Microsoft systems as "Update Tuesday." In the wee hours, all Microsoft systems will contact their update servers and download the latest OS updates, patches and security updates if "autoupdate" is turned on. In most cases when the OS is patched your system will reboot itself. Unless you configure your system to automatically log in a privileged user and start all the applications, it will appear just as was reported.

There are numerous ways to configure your system to come up online and operating after a reboot. This is a good thing to do, not only to support automatic updates (you can turn it off, but that leaves your system vulnerable to security issues--NOT recommended), but also to facilitate remote administration and remote rebooting.

I suggest you start by downloading a little applet from the WL2K site (downloads > Software--Utilities > AUTOLOG.exe and save it on your system. Run it and it will configure your registry to automatically log in after a reboot, making it ready to run programs without any intervention.

Next, Windows should be set to use an NTP server to set the real-time clock in the computer. Search Windows help for "NTP" and choose an item named "Synchronizing the time clock" or something similar, where you will find directions on how to do this in windows. There are also third party applications that will do this. We like to use one of the Naval Observatory servers on the internet to synchronize with.

Afterwards, move shortcuts for all applications (RMS Packet, RMS Relay, etc.) you want to run to the "startup" folder. Make sure all shortcuts work properly first.

Last, add the Remote Desktop server to the system so that you can administer the system from a distance over the internet connection. The server software component is on the Windows distribution disk for XP Pro and needs to be installed separately. This item is optional and may work differently on different versions of Windows. See the Windows Help documentation on "Remote Desktop" or "Remote terminal" or "terminal services" for information.

There are many other ways to accomplish the same result, but these are the painless ways and the ones most available users with average Windows skills.

RMS Packet Station – Use

Q9520 **I have been getting intermittent “hang-ups” from RMS Packet, with multiple users. I have reviewed all of the literature, but can’t solve the problem. What should I do next?**

A9520 Save the RMS Packet Log of events prior and during the incidents. Send the Log to KN6KB.

Q9540 **I have a RMS Packet Station up and running. I can’t seem to figure out how to "monitor" or audit the content of the messages, due to the compression of each message; in order to comply with FCC Rules. Or has that duty been delegated to someone else in the WL2K organization that is able to see the actual words?**

A9540 No. - §97.219(c) provides protection for licensees operating as part of a message forwarding system. "...the control operators of forwarding stations that retransmit inadvertently communications that violate the rules in this Part are **not accountable** for the violative communications. They are, however, responsible for discontinuing such communications once they become aware of their presence.

[RMS Packet stations in non-USA countries are bound by the rules and regulations of their country]

Q9550 **A User of my RMS Packet Station timed out during a session. He was downloading a large message. Why did that happen?**

A9550 It probably happened because the “Connection Timeout” number in your RMS Packet Setup refers to the time between interactions of your RMS Packet station and the Common Message Server that you are using. In this case the entire message was moved from the CMS to your RMS Packet very quickly. Then the process of moving the message to your User began. During that process your RMS Packet had no interaction with the CMS; hence the timeout.

Your User can obtain the entire message after you increase the Connection Timeout value.

Q9570 **I noticed the WL2K map position of my RMS Packet station is incorrect. How do I change it to show my correct position?**

A9570 Positions of RMS Packet stations are calculated by the CMS servers and plotted at random positions within the 6-character grid square configured in the RMS station's packet channel. This is done so that stations each other do not overlap on large scale displays, and to make them quickly distinguishable.

The real-time RMS maps are intended as tools for users to find on-air stations to contact, not as an exact location marker for sysops and their stations.

If your map position is outside your grid square, then correct the grid square information in the Packet Channel dialog of your RMS software. All reported information about your RMS station is controlled by editing the Packet Channel and Site Properties dialogs in the RMS software. The web-accessible database of station information for Telpac software is no longer available or supported.

Q9580 **I am using the Telpac software for my Winlink Packet Gateway station. How long will that software be supported?**

A9580 Effective March 1, 2009 support for the Telpac software will cease by the Winlink Development Team. Also, at that time, the CMS will no longer accept Connects from Telpac software. The RMS Packet software replaces the Telpac software.

RMS Relay – Setup

Q10020 What is “RMS Relay”?

A10020 It is software installed on the computer of a ham who wants to act as a local gateway to the internet for local users who want to do radio email. It is installed as a “not required” enhancement for RMS Packet or RMS HF.

RMS Relay is a special program that provides local store and forward message handling in emergency situations when no Internet access is available to connect to the WL2K email server.

It is normally used in conjunction with one or more instances of RMS Packet located on the same computer or local area network.

RMS Relay has three modes of operation (one of which is selected by the Sys Op):

* Normal -- If an Internet connection is available, RMS Relay acts as a conduit from the RMS Packet or RMS HF program to the Internet and a CMS. If the Internet connection is down, RMS Relay refuses connections from the RMS program, so the program rejects connections with the message "No CMS available".

* Radio-only, local message hub -- When this mode is selected, RMS Relay does not forward messages through the Internet even if it is available. All messages are stored in a local database. The primary use of this option is to provide a store-and-forward Radio Message Server that can serve as a message hub for a set of stations. If station A leaves a message for station B or C, the message can be retrieved by stations B and C if they connect to the hub. Since messages are not sent to a CMS, messages can be exchanged only between stations connecting to this hub.

* Hold for Internet access -- If an Internet connection is available, RMS Relay passes the message through the Internet to a CMS. If the Internet connection goes down, the RMS Relay stores messages in a local database until the Internet connection is restored at which time it sends them to a CMS. *Caution: since connecting stations do not know when the Internet connection is restored, any messages they send through that RMS Packet or RMS HF station will be held and delayed until the Internet connection is reestablished. This may cause unexpected delays that might be unacceptable for emergency messages.*

When in either the “radio-only” mode or the “hold” mode, RMS Relay acts to exchange messages locally between users that can access that particular RMS gateway station.

Note: if messages are stored locally at the RMS station, AND the RMS operator manually decides to access another RMS Pactor station which DOES have internet access, those messages will be Moved to the CMS level and messages (at the CMS) for recent local users will be Copied from the CMS to the local RMS station.

The minimum operating system is Windows XP. RMS Relay software is free.

Q10040 **What callsign should I use for “RMS Relay”?**

A10040 In the “RMS Relay Site Properties” screen, use the callsign associated with your RMS Packet callsign, something like “MyCallsign-10”.

RMS Relay – Use

Q10500 How does RMS Relay operate if the “Normal” mode is used by the Sys Op?

A10500 If an Internet connection is available, RMS Relay acts as a conduit from the RMS Packet program to the Internet and a CMS.

If the Internet connection is down, *depending on how long the Internet has been lost*:

RMS Relay refuses connections from the RMS Packet program, so the program rejects connections with the message "No CMS available...connection refused"

or

RMS Relay will tell you "*** Unable to connect to RMS Relay at Localhost"

or

"No CMS connection is currently available. Messages will be held until the Internet connection is available and then forwarded".

Q10520 How does RMS Relay operate if the “Radio-only, local message hub” mode is used by the Sys Op?

A10520 RMS Relay does not forward messages through the Internet even if it is available. All messages (*including messages to non-winlink addresses*) are stored in a local database. After Connecting, you will get the following banner message:

"This is a radio-only hub. Messages will not be sent through Internet. Using the local XXXX-X database"

The primary use of this option is to provide a local store-and-forward Radio Message Server that can serve as a message hub for a set of stations. If station A leaves a message for station B or C, the message can be retrieved by stations B and C if they connect to the hub. Since messages are not sent to a CMS, messages can be exchanged only between stations connecting to this hub.

Note: If the Sys Op should ever change the mode to either of the other two modes, AND an internet connection is available, then all remaining locally stored messages will be immediately forwarded to the CMS.

Q10530 **How does RMS Relay operate if the “Hold for Internet access” mode is used by the Sys Op?**

A10530 If an Internet connection is available RMS Relay passes the message through the Internet to a CMS.

If the Internet connection goes down, RMS Relay stores messages in a local database until the Internet connection is restored at which time it sends them to a CMS. You will get the following banner message:

“No CMS connection is currently available. Messages will be held until the Internet connection is available and then forwarded”

RMS Relay acts to exchange messages locally between users that can access that RMS gateway.

Caution: since connecting stations do not know when the Internet connection is restored, any messages they send through that RMS Packet or RMS HF station will be held and delayed until the Internet connection is reestablished. This may cause unexpected delays that might be unacceptable for emergency messages.

Q10550 **When the internet is down, how can RMS Relay get messages to and from the CMS?**

A10550 If the “Radio-only, local message hub” mode or the ““Hold for Internet access” mode is used, AND there is not Internet connection, the Sys Op of the RMS gateway may manually intervene:

- a) The operator initiates a pactor 3 Connect to any RMS Pactor station (which has a working internet connection).
- b) Messages residing locally (as received FROM Users) will be sent TO the CMS, via the RMS Pactor station; then removed from local storage.
- c) Messages residing on the CMS for Users which have Connected to the RMS station in the past 21 days will be downloaded from the CMS to RMS Relay local storage. These messages are NOT deleted from the CMS.

Q10580 **How is the RMS Relay software started?**

A10580 The RMS Relay and RMS Packet software are unique and separate packages. Each needs to be Started.

RMS Express and WINMOR – Setup

Q11000 Why do I need the RMS Express software?

A11000 Generally, it is the only software available if you intend to use the “WINMOR” protocol. It is also designed to provide most all features available from the AirMail and Paclink software packages. Therefore RMS Express can be used for direct Internet Access, Packet, WINMOR, and Pactor. See Q500.

Q11020 What are the System Requirements for using RMS Express?

A11020 32 or 64 bit Windows OS (Win XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 or Windows 2003 Server), or under Windows on the Mac using a VM engine or dual boot arrangement. Windows XP systems require Microsoft .NET v3.5 runtime installed.

There are minimal CPU demands with the exception of WINMOR operation. The heavy DSP demands of WINMOR require a computer of at least 700 MHz Pentium/Celeron class and at least 512 Meg of memory. If multiple applications are running concurrently a faster computer and more RAM may be required.

Q11030 How do I get the RMS Express software?

A11030 Go the “Software” part of www.winlink.org

Q11050 What is WINMOR?

A11050 WINMOR stands for WINlink Message Over Radio and is a new HF radio transmission protocol by Rick Muething, KN6KB, of the Winlink Development Team. WINMOR was introduced at the 2008 ARRL / TAPR Digital Communications Conference in Chicago on September 26-28, 2008. Unlike Pactor, only a simple computer soundcard-to-radio interface is required, and it runs as a "virtual TNC" (the WINMOR TNC application) together with host software. The protocol (not the software) is fully documented as an API and is without restrictions or license issues preventing anyone from implementing the protocol in other software.

Users may employ either WINMOR or Pactor to transfer mail in the WL2K system, depending on their equipment. While WINMOR may not equal P2 and P3 in total performance, it provides a cost-effective means of using the system, and is more robust and faster than P1. WINMOR is attractive to EmComm users who have trouble justifying the high cost and low utilization of a P2 and P3 modem. See Q170.

See the User Software page to download the RMS Express client software, which includes the virtual WINMOR TNC software, and additionally supports Pactor 1-3, AX.25 packet and Telnet protocols using a wide variety of TNCs and multimode controllers.

Q11070 What is a “WINMOR TNC”?

A11070 WINMOR TNC is a Windows "helper application" that creates a virtual WINMOR HF MODEM (TNC) using a standard PC sound card. It is intended to be used by developers who create complete end user Client or Server host applications. Examples of such programs are RMS Express (Radio client) and RMS WINMOR (Radio Server).

The WINMOR TNC software license is provided in the help files of the downloaded program, and is not in the public domain. Please see these files for details.

All the latest versions of the files for the WINMOR TNC helper application are available for free download from the Winlink FTP site.

Q11090 Do I also need to install “RMS WINMOR”?

A11090 No. “Users” of the WL2K system do not need the RMS WINMOR software. This software is used by those dedicated Operators and Stations which provide a Gateway between WINMOR Users and the WL2K Common Message Server (CMS).

However, if you would like to serve other WL2K WINMOR users, contact K4CJX regarding becoming a RMS WINMOR station.

See Q11550.

Q11210 Can I use WINMOR with the AirMail software?

A11210 Yes. Rob Fisher (WA7RF), with an October 29, 2010 update by John Wiseman (G8BPQ), has written instructions regarding how to accomplish this task:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~k7bfl/AirmailWINMOR.pdf>

or

<http://www.cantab.net/users/john.wiseman/Documents/AirmailtoWINMOR.htm>

Q11220 How do I configure RMS Express to be used for packet with a Kenwood or Alinco radio using a built-in “Tasco” TNC?

A11220 Select one of the new KISS drivers (within the revised RMS Express software), especially written for the radios with a “built-in” TNC.

Q11250 Is there any way I can monitor the frequency while I am using RMS Express with packet?

A11250 Yes. W2YG has written a new piece of software to be used between RMS Express and AGW Packet Engine. It is called "AGW Express Interface". It is functionally equivalent to AMPE, which is used between AirMail and AGW Packet Engine. So you can use the Monitoring function of AGWPE or AGW Packet Engine Pro to see what is happening on the frequency, without using a second TNC or sound card device.

The use of AGWPE or AGW Packet Engine Pro will also enable you to use most any TNC or sound card device with RMS Express.

The free software is available from: <http://w2ygsoftware.com/>

Q11300 Any tips about setup of WINMOR with the Elecraft KX-3?

A11300 Yes....*(by Bud Thompson (N0IA), August 8, 2013)*

Firmware Revisions:

MCU 1.54 (beta)

DSP 1.21

Initial Settings

Signalink RX and TX controls at mid-point; DLY full CCW.

KX3 Settings

AF/RF volume 10/1 - about right for mid-point on Signalink RX control

NB Off

AGC -S

PRE On

PBT BW 2.4 KHz FL 1

PWR (Push- temp hold Keyer/Mic knob to get menu) set for 7 watts maximum

Elecraft KX3 and RMS Express WINMOR Session

Adjust Signalink RX control as needed for about mid Green level on Winmor TNC Rec Level with no signal present.

Adjust Signalink TX control for 7w during TX level test. This will indicate one, but not more than two bars on ALC meter and no compression. (Signal looks good on my Trimode WINMOR TNC.)

Here are some preliminary observations:

I suggest using filter FL1 and keeping PBT Bandwidth at 2.4KHz. BW much narrower than 1.4 KHz results in Channel Busy ON all the time. (WINMOR TNC likes to look at the whole picture!)

When RMS Express WINMOR Radio Set up is configured for "USB Digital" the radio is put into USB DATA mode so far as I can tell. A tap on DATA then changes to USB DATA A mode.

The TX/RX changeover Latency is not consistent (at least the measurement reports indicate that.) When calling a station that does not respond most of the measurements result in "Timeout in TR > RX Latency Measurement" presented in orange window. When a measurement is presented it is usually quite good- less than 100, sometimes under 50 which, if consistent, would be great. Few actual measurements are presented, indicating that overall latency is not good for WINMOR. This does not change when using "USB" or "USB DATA" or "USB DATA A" mode with RMS Express.

However, links can be made - files transferred, and of course with a 10 watt radio peaking at 5-6 watts, who knows how good the link really is; but it would be best for Latency to actually be under the maximum most of the time. I can't find any likely menu options that would affect this on SSB; certainly the QSK CW TX/RX change-over is excellent.

Comments welcomed - especially those that can improve the application.

[Note: when running 10 watts or less -- it is ALL ABOUT antenna!]

Q11400 How can I get help with installing RMS Express?

A11400 Use the extensive "Help" files available with RMS Express.

Use the many primers and help articles available at www.winlink.org

Here is a recent primer by W4PHS:

http://www.dtreg.com/Getting_Started_with_Winlink_and_WINMOR.pdf

Join the WINMOR Yahoo User Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WINMOR/>

RMS Express and WINMOR – Use

Q11500 How can I get Help with using RMS Express?

A11500 See Q11400.

Q11550 What is a “RMS WINMOR” station?

A11550 It is a gateway radio station between a WL2K user, using the WINMOR protocol, and the Common Message Server (CMS). It provides an identical function to that of a RMS Packet station and a RMS Pactor station.

A WINMOR user Connects to one of these stations to send and receive messages, using the WL2K system.

Q11570 How can I get a list of the callsigns and frequencies used by RMS WINMOR stations?

A11570 RMS Express maintains a up-to-date listing of stations available (with frequencies) for WINMOR, pactor, and packet Connects. The list can be updated via Telnet (Internet Access) or via radio, using the RMS Express software.

Automatic updates only occur at the beginning of each new month, or when a user uses RMS Express for the first time that month.

It is advised to update your channels list regularly or before a (sailing) trip; every now and then a new RMS pops up.

The real-time status of these WINMOR stations is available from:

<http://www.winlink.org/RMSHFStatus>

- Q11575 Using RMS Express, how do I create and send a new message to an email address?**
- A11575 Select Message....New Message. If needed, select an appropriate Template. Add Attachments.
- Do either of the following:
- (a) Type in the email addresses and/or callsigns (if WL2K addresses).
 - (b) Select the "To:" or "CC:" box. This will bring up the "Select Destinations" window; select and add individual addresses or Groups. When finished, select "Complete".
- "Post to Outbox" or "Save in Drafts Folder"
- Double click on the message. Verify that the "Group" (if used) expanded to include the addresses in the Group.
- All messages in the "Outbox" folder (and only that folder) will be sent during your next communications "Session". After a message is Sent it is moved to the "Sent Items" folder.
- Q11580 I saved a message in the Draft Folder. Now I can Open it, but can't edit the message. Why?**
- A11580 Select the message, but don't Open it. Go to Messages.....Edit.
- Q11590 How do I print a message, using RMS Express?**
- A11590 Select the message. Double click to Open the message. Select "Print" from the menu containing "Close Print View Attachments Reply Reply All Acknowledge Forward Delete"
- Q11610 Using RMS Express, how can I send a "Position Report" message, similar to what can be done with AirMail?**
- A11610 Go to Files....GPS / Position Report
- Fill out the form, Post, and Send
- Q11630 Using RMS Express, how can I get a "Catalog" of Help Files and Worldwide Weather bulletins, which is available with the AirMail software?**
- A11630 RMS Express now comes installed with the Catalog. To get updates, you need an internet connection:
- Go to Files.....Winlink Catalog Requests.....Request Catalog Update
- RMS Express will interact with the CMS to update your Catalog

Q11650 Using RMS Express, how can I change the value of my Message Size Limit, and other Options?

A11650 Go to Files....Update User Options. Fill out the form, Post and Send.

If that does not work, send the following message, from your RMS Express software (just include in the body of the message the information you want to change):

To: Options@winlink.org

Subject: Options

ALTERNATE: SMTP: *[alternate email address]*

MAX SIZE: *[compressed maximum message size in bytes]*

PREFIX: *[use this out-of-country prefix with my callsign]*

SUFFIX: *[use this out-of-country suffix with my callsign]*

Q11660 Using RMS Express, how can I send a message to a “list” or group of email addresses?

A11660 The easiest way is to create a “Group”. This is a list of multiple email addresses or callsigns (if the address is xxxx@winlink.org).

Make sure all Session windows are closed.

a) Go to Files....Group Addresses. Type in a “Group ID” name. A group address name may be any character combination that follows the same format rules as a radio or tactical address. Just be careful that you don't choose a name that is the same as a call sign or tactical address that you might need to send a message to.

b) You can either type the list of callsigns (if WL2K addresses) and email addresses in the box to the right of “Group ID”, or Copy and Paste the list from an external file (such as an Excel or Word file).

c) Select the “Update” button at the bottom.

d) When you compose a new message, just select the name of the Group from the Contacts list and put it in the “To:” box (or the “CC:” box).

[You may need to restart RMS Express before the new Group name will appear in the Contacts list.] See Q11575.

Q11665 What is the difference between Abort, Stop, End Link, and Disconnect?

A11665 By definition there is a difference between an ABORT and a STOP, END LINK or DISCONNECT.

Abort normally requires no response from the remote end. It will end the local link with a disorderly shut down but ALWAYS works immediately.

A STOP, END LINK or DISCONNECT initiates a disconnect request/sequence that is a more controlled ending and affects both sides of the link. Pactor and packet have similar mechanisms.

You need to have both types but good operating practice is to not use an Abort unless absolutely necessary because by definition it leaves the other side in an unknown state requiring the remote end to use a timeout mechanism to reset things.

Q11680 There seems to be a very large message trying to download to me. My message pipeline is plugged! It will take too much time to download. How can I delete the message before it downloads?

A11680 Start RMS Express. See Files...Review Message List before Downloading. Check this option.

Connect to a RMS with RMS Express. During your Session, a screen will appear for you to make a choice about the "problem" message: "Delete before downloading" or "Hold for Later Downloading". Make your choice and proceed. This is a nice feature of RMS Express.

For other options, see Q1500.

Q11690 I understand that RMS Express has a “database backup” feature. How does it work?

A11690 One of the new features in RMS Express version 1.2.8.0 is automatic daily backups of databases. If something happens that causes your message or contacts database to get deleted or corrupted, you can restore an earlier version.

The backup is done automatically once a day when RMS Express is closed. The backed up databases are stored in the Data\Backup folder under the folder with your call sign. If you have multiple call signs, there will be a separate backup folder for each call sign.

To restore databases or do a manual backup, click Files on the main menu bar followed by Backup and Restore Databases. On the Backup/Restore control screen you can set the backup interval, force a manual backup or restore databases from an earlier date.

Since the backup is done within the RMS Express folder, this does not provide any protection against deletion of that folder or a catastrophic disk failure. So if you use a backup system like Carbonite, it is recommended that you use it to back up your RMS Express folders.

Q11700 How does the “message template” feature of RMS Express work?

A11700 One of the new features in RMS Express version 1.2.8.0 is a Message Template Manager and built-in editor for creating or modifying templates.

A message template can be used to provide information for a message by clicking "Select Template" on the screen where you enter the text for a message you're composing. Templates can fill information such as the destination address, CC address, subject, WL2K/peer-to-peer, current time, call sign, GPS position and many other items. This is described in the RMS Express help file.

To manage templates, click "Message" on the main menu bar followed by "Templates...". This will open the Template Manager screen. If you have created any templates, they will be listed. On this screen you can add new templates, edit existing templates or remove templates. The screen where you add or edit a template has a Help button that will provide quick help about items that can go into a template.

WINMOR TNC

Emergency Communications Networks – Design and Use

Q20200 **Is there a “good” way to utilize several local RMS Packet stations during a “high loading emergency event”?**

A20200 If you have local internet access, use the WL2K System, instead of doing peer-to-peer message transfers.

Encourage Users to use the commercial internet (Telnet) if available.

If possible, access RMS Packet stations directly, instead of through a Node.

If you have more than one RMS Packet station, put them on different frequencies.

Encourage Users to listen to RMS Packet activity. Things go quicker if a RMS Packet station is servicing one User at a time, even though they may be programmed to handle many simultaneous Connects. The activity level of Paclink, AirMail, and RMS Packet is very quick and intense, compared to keyboarding BBS type activity.

If local RMS Packet stations are “overloaded” and if some Users have Pactor or WINMOR capability, encourage them to use Pactor or WINMOR, instead of a local RMS Packet station.

Pactor Users should be encouraged to use multiple RMS Pactor stations.

Pactor 1 Users should be encouraged to use packet or WINMOR, if possible.

Use the cc ability of AirMail, RMS Express, and Paclink to send copies of a message to multiple recipients.

Use Reply, Forward, “Copy and Paste” to minimize typo errors.

Q20300 **During a recent Emergency Drill several of us were simultaneously trying to access a local RMS Packet station through our local Node. We each experienced lots of Retries. What can be done to solve this problem?**

A20300

Consider these items:

- a. WL2K users with Telnet capability should not be using radio channels for WL2K.
- b. Digital use should be prioritized and coordinated by a voice Command Net.
- c. Temporarily change the frequency of a RMS Packet station to a non-Node frequency.
- d. Use Nodes, 1 user at a time. AGWPE enables the AirMail and Paclink users to monitor the channel.
- e. Users should access the RMS Packet station directly, if possible.
- f. Decrease the MAXFRAME value to 1 for all users of the Node, including the RMS Packet Station. All users should reduce their Persist value.
- g. As always, those users with more options might migrate to open pactor or WINMOR channels on HF.