

NECC '94
Boston
Internet Room Session, June 15, 1994, 8:30 - 9:30
BBS's Etc. Hands-on Project
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Your First BBS

We will demonstrate the ease with which you can become a System Operator (Sysop) on your own BBS using Procomm Plus or Procomm for Windows software. The key to a simple, easy to use and access BBS is to set Procomm to the Host Mode.

In this mode, Procomm will allow remote users to dial up your computer, log on, upload and download files and send and receive messages, all the while permitting 3 levels of security, a customized log-on message, a history of system activity, on-line help and custom-built menus, new user files and file listing. It is the ideal way to find out if you are a born SYSOP.

- 1. Change your directory to PCPLUS (Type CD PCPLUS and press ENTER).**
- 2. Type PCPLUS and press ENTER, wait then press any key.**
- 3. Press ALT-S**
- 4. Choose HOST MODE OPTIONS from the menu and press ENTER.**
- 5. From the MENU, change the Welcome Message, by inserting your name (eg. Welcome to Dennis Leask's BBS).**
- 6. Press ESC to exit then Choose SAVE SETUP CHANGES, and press ESC again.**
- 7. Press ALT-Q to enter the HOST MODE.**
- 8. When you see host mode screen waiting for a caller, press F2.**
- 9. When you are asked if you want to log on as the SYSOP, answer by typing Y.**
- 10. Choose the HELP menu item and examine the contents. When you are done press ESC.**
- 11. When you are back at the main menu, type G to log off.**
- 12. Back at the Waiting for a call, press escape to exit from the Host mode. If you want to, you can type N at LOGON AS SYSOP, and log on as a user to see the difference. When you're done, log off as before.**
- 13. Press ALT-X and Y to exit to DOS.**
- 14. Congratulate yourself, you survived your first BBS encounter.**
- 15. Be sure to look at the more complex BBS models that are here. While the Procomm host mode is useful, it does have limitations that do not exist with the commercial BBS¹ software that is on display here, and as your aspirations grow, software that allows you to invoice users, provided detailed records, gather information, and provide information.**

¹ Examples of BBS commercial software are:

eSoft Inc.- tbbs, 15200 E. Girard Ave., Suite 3000, Aurora, CO 80004, Voice:(303)-699-6565.

Galacticomm - The Major BBS, 4101 SW 47th Ave., Suite 101, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314, Voice: (305)-583-5990

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In an educational environment, the BBS is a very affordable chunk of technology, that allows one to control one's own destiny and provides a window of access to teachers and notes on a 24 hour/day, 7 days/week, 52 weeks/year (less maintenance time of course). The e-mail facilities range from simple to complex, from stand-alone to linked. You can find BBS software that can run on PC's, 286's, 386's, 486's, Pentiums. In addition, there are a variety of BBS's for all type of Macintosh computer systems.

If you pursue your own BBS, you can let anyone who phones log onto your system (Open mode) or you can specify who can log onto your system (Closed mode). You can also make sure that individuals can only access files that you want them to and no others. These are not foolproof, but provide a good first defense against unauthorized use. Commercial systems raise security to much greater levels of confidence.

Procomm for Windows has a similar host mode that can be used in the same way as the DOS version. In general, if you can use Procomm to communicate with another computer, you may run your own simple BBS, and later aspire to expand to commercial systems.

BBS's may be used free of charge or as fee for services, keeping a record of users' activity. Coupled with 1-900 numbers, BBS's can generate revenue in appropriate situations. It is not surprising to find that BBS's are used by television networks, banks, government, high-tech companies, and many service industries.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE BBS - SAMPLE HELP FILE

PROCOMM PLUS FOR WINDOWS HOST MODE HELP

Every user is presented the following menu after successfully logging on and viewing the optional news file.

F)iles	U)pload	D)ownload
H)elp	T)ime	C)hat
R)ead mail	L)eave mail	G)oodbye

A Host command is invoked by pressing the first letter of the command name; no carriage return is needed. To download, for example, just press <D>.

Command	Description
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CHAT: Sounds the speaker on the Host PC (unless the beep sound has been turned off in Windows). If the Sysop presses OK, the Host PC enters Chat mode. Pressing ESCAPE will end the Chat session.

DOWNLOAD: The user is prompted for a protocol to use and then for the specification of the file(s) to download from the Host. If the user has Level 2 access, a path may be included in the specification; otherwise, only files in the Host download directory (or the current directory if there isn't a download directory defined) are allowed. When a valid file specification is entered, the message "Begin your ??????? transfer procedure" is issued and the Host waits for the user to download the file(s) using the specified protocol.

FILES: Prompts for a file specification (like DOS' DIR command) and displays a list of matching downloadable files. A user can cancel the file display by pressing N at the prompt. Level 2 users can view any directory by including a path in the file specification.

GOODBYE: Terminates the call. Host can then recycle to answer the next call, perform external processing or abort (depending on the value of the Goodbye Option Setup field).

HELP: Displays the ASCII text file HOST.HLP (if it exists). A user can cancel the help display by pressing N at the prompt.

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LEAVE MAIL: The user is prompted for the following:

To: (the intended recipient of the mail)
Subj: (the subject of the mail)

Private Mail(Y/N) (Y for private, N for public)

The user can then accept or re-enter the header information.

Once accepted, the user is placed in a line input mode (which continues until an empty line is entered). When an empty line is entered, the user is prompted with:

S)ave A)abort D)isplay C)ontinue ?

Save: Append the message to the mailbase and return to the Main Menu.

Abort: Erase the message and return to the Main Menu (after confirmation).

Display: Show text that's been entered and display this prompt again.

Continue: Return to input mode.

READ MAIL: The user is prompted to choose one of the following:

F)orward read
S)earch mail
I)ndividual read
Q)uit

Forward read: Sequential multiple read. Prompts for the beginning message number and displays all accessible messages starting with that number.

Search mail: Selective sequential multiple read. Asks for a field to search, a target string to search for and the beginning message number for the search. Host displays all accessible messages which match the search criteria.

Quit: Return to the Main Menu.

TIME: The time the user connected is displayed, followed by the current time and the elapsed time for this call.

UPLOAD: The user is prompted for a protocol to use for the transfer, the file specification and a short description of the file. Host then waits to receive the file (using the specified protocol) to upload. Files are placed in the Host mode upload directory (if one has been specified in the Setup facility); otherwise, they're saved in the current directory.