

# MacSOUP 2.8



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# 1 Introduction

MacSOUP is an offline reader for news and mail. “Offline” means that you transfer all the unread news and mail in one batch (which only takes a couple of minutes), and then you hang up and read it without having to stay connected all the time. This can reduce your phone bills considerably.

MacSOUP can work with different kinds of net connections: either with a Unix shell account to which you login with a terminal program, or with a MacTCP or Open Transport connection (SLIP, PPP, Ethernet, or AppleTalk). The latter is what most people will use nowadays, and it’s more convenient, because MacSOUP does everything itself. With a Unix shell account you first have to run a program on the Unix side that collects your news and mail into a SOUP packet<sup>1</sup>, then you download this packet with your terminal program, and then you import it into MacSOUP. While this can be automated quite a bit it’s still less convenient than the TCP method, and requires more work to set up. On the other hand, downloading a compressed SOUP packet with ZModem is faster than fetching news over NNTP.

Using MacSOUP with a TCP connection has another advantage over SOUP packets: you can download only headers (subjects and authors) in a first pass, and then select the ones you actually want to download. This can further reduce your connect times if you usually read only a few articles. With SOUP packets you always have to fetch all articles.

A future version of MacSOUP might also support UUCP connections, but this isn’t implemented in the current version.

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<sup>1</sup>Simple Offline Usenet Protocol

## **2 Getting Started**

### **2.1 System Requirements**

MacSOUP has been tested on Mac OS 9 and Mac OS X, version 10.2. It should probably run well on Mac OS 8.5 and later, hopefully also on earlier versions of Mac OS X.

I can't guarantee that it will work with older systems than 8.5. It may or may not work. On system 7, you'll have to manually install the Appearance Manager. If you have problems with MacSOUP on these older systems, you may have to stick with the 2.4.6 version of MacSOUP, which works with System 7.1 and later (and 68K Macs), and will continue to be available.

### **2.2 Installation**

Installing MacSOUP is easy: just copy it to a convenient place on your hard disk, that's all. On Mac OS X the most suitable place is the "Applications" folder at the root of your main hard drive. It is up to you whether you copy only the MacSOUP application there, keeping the manual elsewhere, or put the entire MacSOUP folder with application and manual into the "Applications" folder.

### **2.3 Creating a Settings file**

When you start MacSOUP by double-clicking its icon, it opens no windows and has most of its menus disabled. The first thing you must do now is create a settings

file. Create a new folder in the Finder (let's call it "MacSOUP Database"), then go back to MacSOUP and choose **New Settings File...** Save the settings file in your newly created folder. MacSOUP will create some more folders in your "MacSOUP Database" folder; it uses them to store the news articles and email messages that you download, and other files such as the kill file, the address book, and the list of all the newsgroups your server carries. You will never need to deal with these files directly; just leave them alone.

From now on you can start MacSOUP by double-clicking your settings file. This allows you to create several separate databases, which might be useful if you get news from different servers and want to keep them separate (if you do this, it's important to have a separate folder for each of your settings files; if you put two settings files in the same folder, they will both use the same database files, which is probably not what you want).

Most people however will need only one database, and you may find it inconvenient to have to double-click a settings file rather than MacSOUP itself. In this case you can use MacSOUP's default settings file feature: make an alias of the settings file, name it "MacSOUP Default Settings" (without the quotation marks), and put it in the preferences folder (the one inside the System Folder on Classic Mac OS; "~/Library/Preferences" on Mac OS X, where "~" is your home directory). MacSOUP will then use this settings file by default (unless you double-click a different one).

## 2.4 Configuration

When you first create a settings file, MacSOUP will ask you to create one email account and one personality (you can later create more accounts and personalities in the Settings dialog). Even if you don't intend to use MacSOUP for email, you need to configure a default email account. However, MacSOUP won't fetch your mail unless you tell it to.

You need to open the Settings dialog to enter some more things, such as your news server address, and the SMTP server address. See the chapter "[The Settings Dialog](#)" on page 34 for details about other configurable options.

## 3 Basic Operation

### 3.1 Subscribing to Newsgroups

When you open a settings file, MacSOUP opens a window that shows a list of your subscribed newsgroups and a list of your mailboxes (see the chapter “[The Main Window](#)” on page 10 for what this window looks like). Initially this window shows no newsgroups; you have to tell MacSOUP which groups you want to read. This is called “subscribing” to a newsgroup.

If you use a Unix shell account, you subscribe to newsgroups by putting them in your `.newsrc` file in your Unix home directory. You can either edit this file directly with a text editor, or you can use a Unix newsreader to maintain this file. When you download SOUP packets and import them into MacSOUP, the newsgroups you’re subscribed to will be added to MacSOUP’s database and thus show up in your main window automatically.

With a TCP connection you have to tell MacSOUP which newsgroups you want to read. There are three ways to do this:

1. Choose **New Newsgroup...** from the Special menu and enter the newsgroup name manually.
2. Choose **Connect to Server...** from the Special menu, check the **Fetch list of all groups** option and uncheck everything else. Click the Start button to download the newsgroup list (this can take a couple of minutes if your server carries a lot of groups; fortunately, you have to do this only once). From the “All Groups” window that appears, drag the groups you want to read over to the main window.

3. Choose **Import Newsrsrc...** from the File menu and import an existing Unix `.newsrsrc` file or a NewsWatcher user group list file. See the description of this command in the “Menu Commands” chapter for more details.

## 3.2 Selecting and Reading Articles

After you have connected to the server to fetch news (and mail), the main window shows you in which newsgroups or mailboxes new messages have arrived: they are displayed in bold. Pressing space opens the first newsgroup or mailbox with new messages.

Technically this isn't quite correct: the bold newsgroups and mailboxes are those that contain any *unread* messages; these needn't necessarily have arrived with the most recent download. That's one reason why you should always mark everything as read after you're done with a group. This will be explained later.

When the subject window opens, it's probably best to have the “Show” popup menu (in the lower left corner of the window) set to “Unread”; that way only the newly arrived messages are displayed. You only need to set the “Show” menu to something other than “Unread” if you want to go back to older messages. Personally I prefer to sort the list by subject and turn the **Group threads** checkbox on, but that's up to you of course.

Now you can pick the messages (or threads) that you're interested in. You do this by selecting a message with the up or down arrow keys and pressing the return key; this will “tag” the message for reading. Tagged messages are marked with a black dot in the leftmost column. If the newsgroup is set to fetch only headers, you can tag headers for downloading in exactly the same way as you tag full articles for reading. Tagged headers are marked with a checkmark.

After you have tagged the messages that you want to read, press the space bar to open the first tagged message. Then keep pressing space to open the next tagged message (or to scroll through long messages) until all tagged messages have been displayed; when the last message is displayed, pressing space closes the message window and takes you back to the subject window.

When the “Show” popup menu is set to “Unread” (as recommended), you’ll see that the messages you have just read have been removed from the subject list, because they aren’t unread any more. So now you’re left with those messages that you didn’t choose to read.

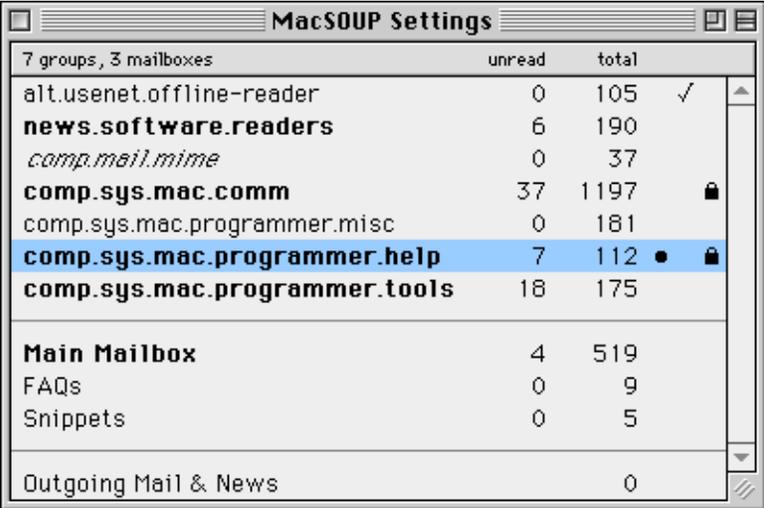
Of course, you needn’t first tag all messages that you’re interested in and then read them all; you can also tag a single thread, read it, go back to the subject list, tag the next thread you’re interested in, read it, etc. You can also open a message directly (without tagging it first) by double-clicking it or by selecting it and pressing the enter key (note that the enter key is not the same as the return key).

After you have read the messages that you wanted to read, you should press **⌘E**. This is an important step; it will mark the remaining articles as read and close the newsgroup. That way any new articles that arrive with the next download will stand out from the older ones.

You should even press **⌘E** if the newsgroup is set to fetch only headers and you have tagged some headers for downloading. It’s ok to mark these tagged headers as read even though you haven’t really read them yet. When you connect again to fetch the bodies of the tagged headers, they will automatically revert to “unread” and be tagged for reading, so that you can conveniently read them.

# 4 Windows

## 4.1 The Main Window



The screenshot shows a window titled "MacSOUP Settings" with a table of newsgroups and mailboxes. The table has columns for "unread" and "total" messages. The "unread" column is bolded for newsgroups with unread messages. The "total" column is bolded for mailboxes with total messages. A checkmark is in the right margin for "alt.usenet.offline-reader", and a bullet point is for "comp.sys.mac.programmer.help". A lock icon is next to "comp.sys.mac.comm" and "comp.sys.mac.programmer.help".

	unread	total	
7 groups, 3 mailboxes			
alt.usenet.offline-reader	0	105	✓
<b>news.software.readers</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>190</b>	
<i>comp.mail.mime</i>	0	37	
<b>comp.sys.mac.comm</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1197</b>	🔒
comp.sys.mac.programmer.misc	0	181	
<b>comp.sys.mac.programmer.help</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>112</b>	● 🔒
<b>comp.sys.mac.programmer.tools</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>175</b>	
<b>Main Mailbox</b>			
FAQs	0	9	
Snippets	0	5	
<b>Outgoing Mail &amp; News</b>			
		0	

Figure 4.1 The main window.

Figure 4.1 shows the window that comes up when you open a settings file. The top part shows the newsgroups you are subscribed to, below that are your mailboxes, and finally the “out basket.” Newsgroups and mailboxes that contain unread messages are displayed bold; newsgroups that are “inactive” (i.e. that don’t receive new articles) are displayed in italics.

A ● is displayed at the right margin of the window if the newsgroup (or mailbox) contains any messages that are tagged (i.e. marked for reading). Usually this

means that some articles have been automatically tagged by a kill file entry, or because they belong to an interesting thread that you have auto-tagged.

A ✓ is shown if a newsgroup contains some headers that are tagged (i.e. marked for downloading).

A lock icon is shown if a newsgroup contains any locked articles.

You can reorder the newsgroups and mailboxes by dragging them up or down. Double-click a newsgroup or mailbox to open it.

Pressing return or enter opens the selected newsgroup or mailbox (if more than one newsgroup or mailbox is selected, the first one is opened). Pressing space opens the next group or mailbox that has unread messages.

## 4.2 The Subject Window

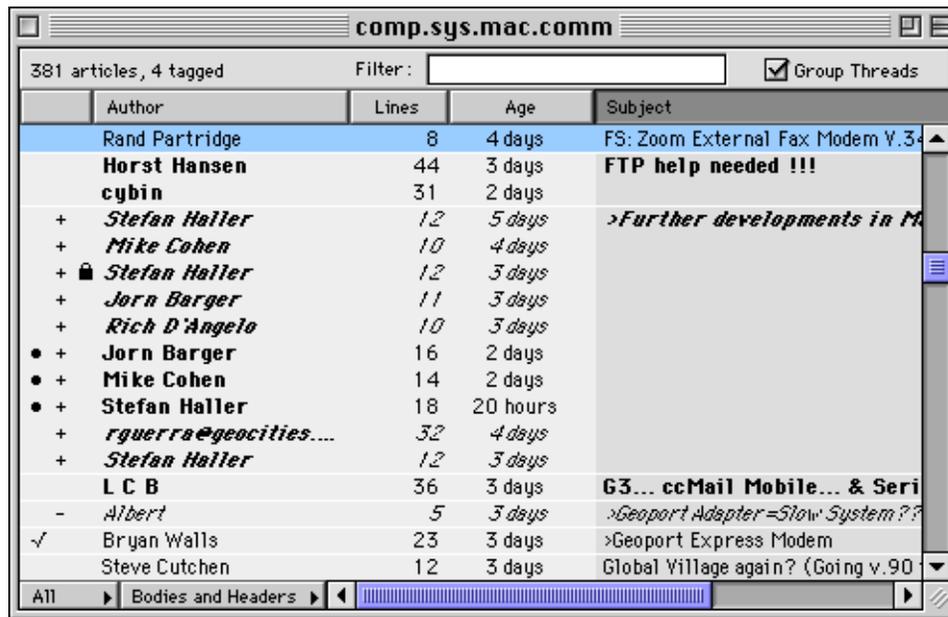


Figure 4.2 The subject window.

This is the window that comes up when you open a newsgroup. Let's look at it from top to bottom:

At the top of the window there's a title bar that shows how many articles are displayed in the list (this is not necessarily the same as the total number of articles in the group, depending on which articles are shown), and how many of these are tagged (both full articles that are tagged for reading, and headers that are tagged for downloading). The checkbox on the right side of the title bar controls whether the articles are grouped into discussion threads (as shown in the figure above), or displayed separately. This makes a big difference to the sort order, particularly if you sort by something other than "Subject."

In the middle of the title bar there's a filter field that allows you to narrow down the list of articles to only those that contain a certain string. Typing something here causes only those articles to be shown whose author or subject contains that

string. You can also specify whether you want the filter to apply to author or subject by using a semicolon as a divider; the part to the left of the semicolon is used as an author filter, to the right of it as a subject filter. For example, if you only want to see article written by Joe, you'd type "Joe;" into the filter field; if you only want to see articles about Macintosh, you'd type ";Macintosh". And if you only want to see articles by Joe about Macintosh, type "Joe;Macintosh". It is rarely necessary to be this specific though.

You can switch the keyboard focus from the article list to the filter field by typing the tab key.

The buttons below the title bar control the sort order of the list. You can turn off all buttons by clicking the leftmost button (the one without a title); in this case the articles are displayed in the order in which they were received by MacSOUP.

Keyboard shortcuts for the sort buttons are: ⌘⌘S for Subject, ⌘⌘A for Author, ⌘⌘D for Date, and ⌘⌘I for Incoming Order (all others off). The **Group threads** checkbox can be toggled on and off with ⌘⌘T.

Note that when you click one of the buttons, the previous setting is still remembered as a secondary sort order. For example, if the list is sorted by date and you click the "Subject" button, those articles that have the same subject are still sorted by date.

The sort order might not be immediately obvious if the **Group threads** checkbox is on and the sort order is something other than "Subject." In this case the threads are sorted by the first displayed article of each thread, except when the list is sorted by date, in which case the *newest* displayed article of each thread determines the sort order.

You can adjust the widths of the columns by dragging the right edges of the sort buttons with the mouse (the mouse pointer turns into a double arrow). This can be useful if you have a small screen and you want to make more room for the subjects. To set the width of a column back to its default width, option-click the right edge of the button. (The "Lines" and "Age" columns can also be turned off altogether; see below.)

Next there's the subject list itself. Full articles are displayed in bold typeface, headers are displayed normal (if you are using a Unix shell account everything will be bold, because it isn't possible to import only headers with SOUP packets). Messages that you have read (or marked as read) are displayed in italics.

MacSOUP doesn't display the "Re: " prefix of replies; it displays a ">" instead to save some space and to make the subject list more readable.

In the leftmost column of the window, a ● is displayed if a message is tagged for reading. A ✓ is displayed next to headers that are tagged for downloading. You can tag or untag messages by clicking in this leftmost column, or by selecting an article and pressing the return key. Normally this tags or untags the entire thread; if you want to tag only a single article in a thread, hold down any of the modifier keys (shift, command, or option). You can also tag or untag articles by using the respective commands in the Message menu; this can be useful for untagging many messages at once, for example after a Find command.

Sometimes you may want to apply a command to all tagged messages. For example, suppose you performed a Find command; the found messages are tagged, and now you want to save all these messages to a file, or move them to another mailbox, etc. In such a case you can choose **Select tagged** from the Edit menu to hilite all tagged messages, so that you can perform a command on them.

Also on the left side of the window, a + is displayed for auto-tagged articles, and a - for auto-killed articles. Auto-tag means that all future followups to this article will be automatically tagged when they arrive. This is useful if you come across an interesting thread and you want to make sure that you don't miss further contributions to it (your own postings are auto-tagged automatically, so that you don't miss any replies to them). Similarly, auto-kill means that all future followups to the article will be automatically marked as read, so that you won't be bothered with them. You can auto-tag and auto-kill entire threads or branches of a thread by using the commands in the Kill menu. However, I recommend that you do this from the article window rather than the subject window, because then you can see exactly which branch(es) of a thread will be tagged or killed. See the [next section](#) for more information about the article window.

Locked articles are marked with a small lock icon. You can lock or unlock an article by clicking in the column where the lock icons appear. Locked articles

aren't purged by MacSOUP; this is useful for interesting articles that you want to permanently keep, such as FAQs. However, you can still manually delete locked articles (with the **Delete Article** command from the Message menu).

In the lower left corner of the window there's a popup menu that controls which articles are displayed in the list. Available choices are "Unread", "Read", "All", "Tagged", "New", or "Locked". "Tagged" includes both messages that are tagged for reading (i.e. that are marked with a ●), and headers that are tagged for downloading (marked with a √). "New" means those messages and headers that were fetched during the last connection to the server.

⌘1 through ⌘6 are shortcuts for the menu items. You needn't even hold down the ⌘ key though: just press 1 to select "Unread" etc.

To the right of this menu there's another popup menu that lets you choose whether you want to see only full articles ("bodies"), only headers, or both. For mailboxes, you can choose whether you want to see only sent messages, only received messages, or both.

This popup menu has another item named "More Settings"; choosing this item brings up a dialog that lets you specify whether the columns "Lines" and "Date" are to be shown, and whether the Date column shows the Date or the Age of the messages.

Keyboard shortcuts:

- Return** Tag or untag a thread (to tag or untag a single article, hold down command, shift, or option)
- Space** Open the first tagged message
- Enter** Open the selected message, no matter if it's tagged or not
- + and -** Same as ⌘+ and ⌘- (auto-select and auto-kill)

## 4.3 The Message Window

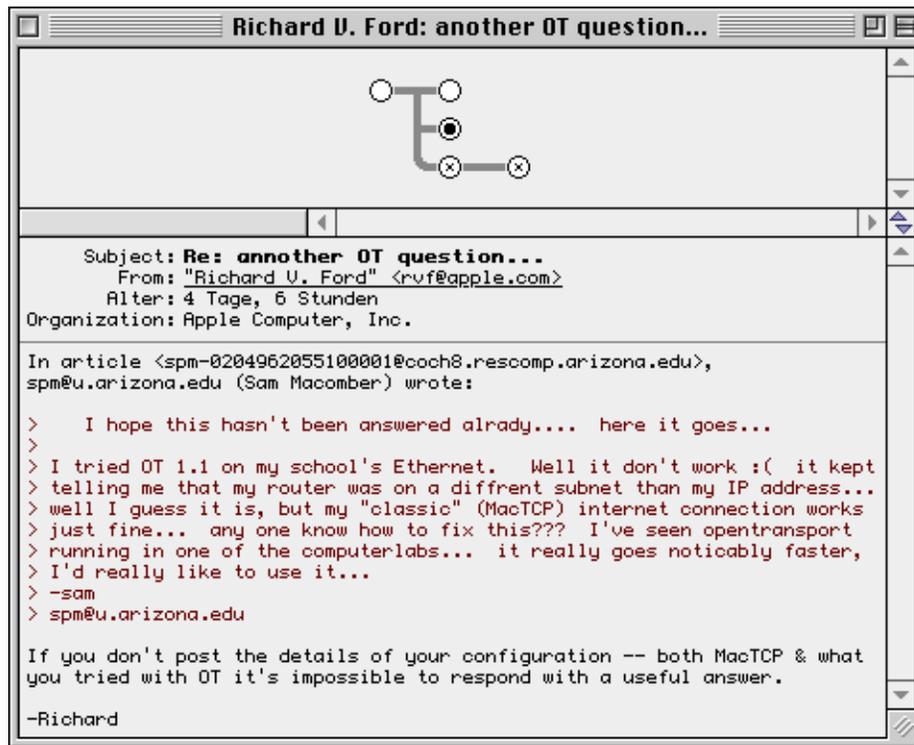
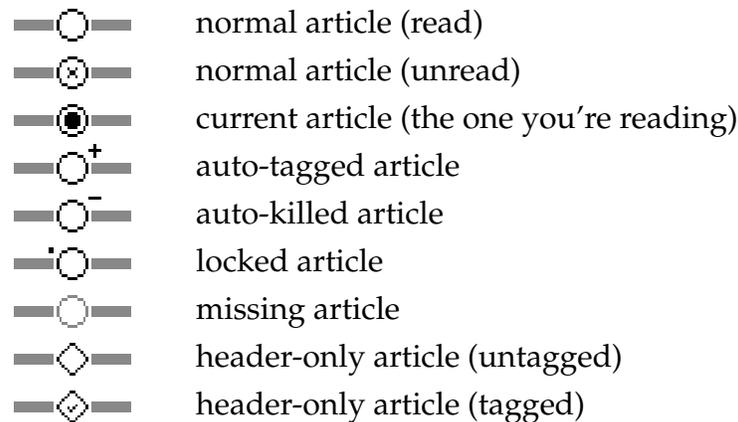


Figure 4.3 The message window.

There is only one message window, i.e. you can have only one message open at a time.

The message window consists of two parts. The upper half of the window shows a graphical representation of the thread tree, and the lower half shows the message headers and the message text. You can turn off the thread display for individual newsgroups or mailboxes; this may be useful for groups where only announcements are posted, but no discussion takes place; in this case the thread display would be unnecessary and just take up space. See the chapter [“The Newsgroup Settings Dialog”](#) on page 27 for how to do this.

Figure 4.4 shows what the various symbols in the thread display mean.



**Figure 4.4** Articles in the thread display.

You can click on other articles in the thread to open them. If you click on a header, it is tagged for downloading (or untagged if it was already tagged). Option-click an article to lock or unlock it. Missing articles are those that either haven't arrived yet (sometimes articles arrive out of order, so that a followup arrives before the one it's referring to), or ones that have already been purged. You can't do anything with missing articles, they are only displayed for the sake of completeness. If you click on them, nothing happens.

If you have a color monitor, your own articles are displayed in blue.

Keyboard navigation: You can type left-arrow to switch to the current article's "parent," if it has one, and right-arrow to switch to its first follow-up. And you can use the number keys on the keypad to move around in the thread; for example, pressing '2' goes to the article below the current one.

You can make the thread display area larger or smaller by dragging the small box between the three scroll bars up or down. Note that this sets the *maximum* size that you ever want to be used for the thread display; if the thread fits into a smaller area, MacSOUP will use as little space as it needs, to give as much room as possible to the message text.

To the left of the horizontal scroll bar there's an area which displays the authors of other articles in the thread as you move the mouse over them.

MacSOUP supports command-clicking URLs, a feature that is now common in many programs. For example, if you read a news article where someone writes

```
You can download the latest version of my program at  
<ftp://ftp.flunku.edu/pub/xyz/my-program.sit.hqx>
```

then you can hold down the  $\mathfrak{M}$  key and click anywhere within the two angle brackets; this will launch your favorite FTP client (as specified in Internet Config) and download that file. This works for all kinds of URLs, such as `http`, `mailto`, `news`, `gopher`, etc., provided you have specified helper programs for them in Internet Config.

MacSOUP itself can be used as a helper program for `mailto` and `news` URLs.

There's no automatic way to extract binaries (file attachments) yet. This is planned for a future version. For now, you can save the message to a file and drop that file onto StuffIt Expander to extract it. I think this is reasonably convenient (better than nothing, anyway).

StuffIt Expander can only decode binhexed and uuencoded files though. If you receive a Base64 file, you can drop it onto Mpack 1.5 or onto YA-Base64. In this case it's important to save the file in Unix mailbox format, because in this format all message headers are saved, which is important for the decoding of these kinds of files. All the above-mentioned tools are available from Info-Mac.

Keyboard navigation in the message window:

<b>Space</b>	Scroll down one page; if at the end of the message, go to the next tagged message
<b>Shift-Space</b>	Scroll back one page
<b>Return</b>	Scroll down one line; if at the end of the message, go to the next tagged message
<b>Enter</b> or <b>'n'</b>	Go to the next tagged message
<b>←←</b>	Go to this article's precursor
<b>→→</b>	Go to this article's first followup
<b>Numbers on keypad</b>	Move around in thread
<b>0 (zero)</b>	Go to first available article of the thread (i.e. the "root")
<b>&gt;</b> and <b>&lt;</b>	Move through the thread in tree order, i.e. in the same order as if you had tagged all articles and pressed space
<b>↑</b> and <b>↓</b>	Scroll up or down one line
<b>⌘↑</b> and <b>⌘↓</b>	Scroll up or down one page
<b>⌘↑</b> and <b>⌘↓</b>	Go to the very top/bottom of the text
<b>f</b>	Followup
<b>r</b>	Reply by mail
<b>b</b>	Back to previously displayed message
<b>h</b>	Show/hide full headers
<b>+</b> and <b>-</b>	Auto-select and auto-kill

## 4.4 The Editor Window

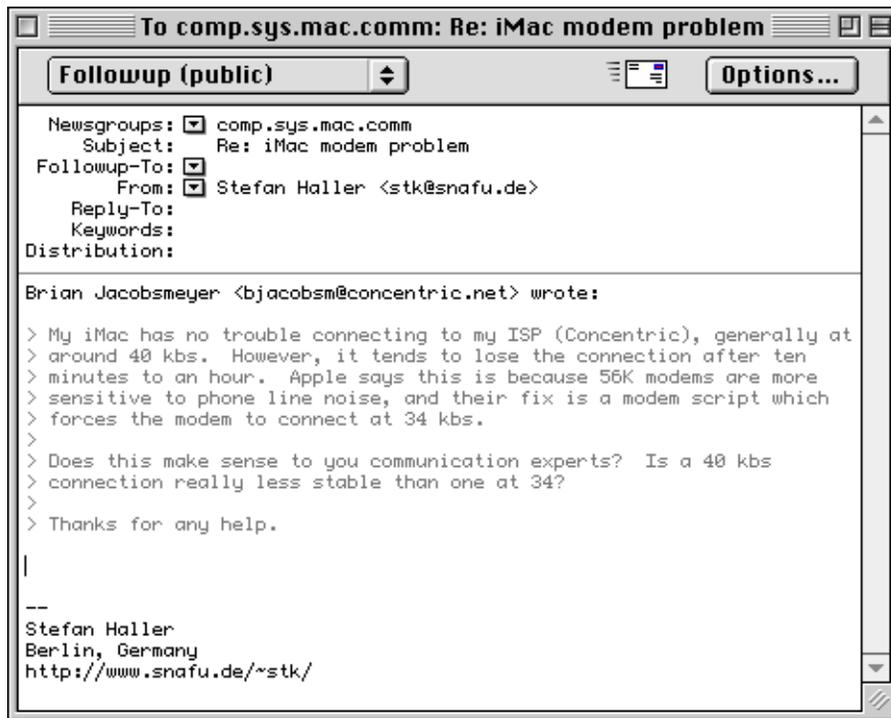


Figure 4.5 The editor window.

Figure 4.5 shows the window that comes up when you compose an outgoing message. If the message is a reply to a news article, there's a popup menu in the upper-left corner that lets you choose between posting a public followup to the newsgroup, sending a private email reply, or both. The initial setting of this popup menu depends on whether you started the message by choosing **Followup** or **Reply by Mail**.

The little envelope icon in the title bar shows whether the message is currently scheduled for sending ("queued") or not. Initially all messages are automatically queued. You can "suspend" a message by clicking on the envelope icon or by choosing **Suspend Message** from the Message menu (the envelope will then be crossed out). This means that the message will not be sent until you reschedule it

(either by clicking on the envelope icon again, or by choosing **Reschedule Message**). This is useful if there are several outgoing messages and you want to send most of them except for one that you want to spend more work on.

Clicking the Options button brings up a dialog that lets you specify the line width and tab setting, as well as additional message headers. You should always leave the line width at 72 unless you have some very good reason to change it. The tab setting is usually 8, but sometimes it is useful to change it to something else, for example if you are posting C code that is formatted with a tab setting of 4. Note that all tabs you enter are converted to the appropriate number of spaces when the message is sent.

The text area of the window is divided into two parts: the message headers and the message body. You can get from one header field to the next by pressing tab, or to the previous one by pressing shift-tab. To get from the message body back to the first header field, you must press command-tab, because a simple tab would be inserted into the message text.

There are small boxes with downward-pointing triangles next to the “Newsgroups:” and “Followup-To:” fields. If you click them you get a popup menu of your subscribed newsgroups; choose one to have it appended to the respective field. For mail messages there are similar popup menus next to the “To:”, “Cc:”, and “Bcc:” fields; they contain the entries in your address book. You can separate newsgroups or addresses in header fields by either comma or carriage return.

The “From:” field is shown so that you can see which personality is used for this message (if you have more than one personality). You can’t edit this field, you can only click the triangle next to it to switch to another personality. A faster way to switch personalities is to press  $\text{⌘} \text{⌘} \text{P}$ , which is a shortcut for the **Switch Personality** menu item. On Mac OS X this will pop up the personalities menu (as if you had clicked the triangle) so that you can navigate it with the keyboard ( $\text{↑}$ ,  $\text{↓}$ , return); on classic Mac OS it simply switches to the next personality.

The message text is automatically wrapped to 72 columns (or whatever other value you have entered in the Options dialog). Quoted text is not wrapped, however, because this would often result in something like this:

```
> Here's some quoted text that has lines longer than 72 characters.  
If it is  
> wrapped automatically, it will be pretty hard to read, as you can  
see.
```

For this reason, if your message contains lines of quoted text that are longer than 80 characters, MacSOUP requires you to rewrap them manually. You can use the **Rewrap Text** command in the Edit menu to do this. Select the text that you want to have wrapped; MacSOUP will first extend the selection so that it includes only entire lines. It will then divide the selection into paragraphs, and wrap each paragraph separately. This command does not only break long lines into shorter ones, but it also merges short lines that fit on one line (some text editors call this command "Paragraph Fill"). For each paragraph MacSOUP looks if there is a quote prefix (a string of characters that is present at the beginning of every line), and preserves it. Paragraphs can only be recognized when they are separated by blank lines (or by lines that contain nothing but the respective quote prefix). This is much easier to do than to explain; if you experiment a bit, you'll quickly see how it works.

If your message is a reply to another message (whether public or private), you can open the message that you're replying to by choosing **Back to Original Message** from the Message menu, or by pressing **⌘B**. This is especially useful if you have already closed the original message, or even went on to another newsgroup.

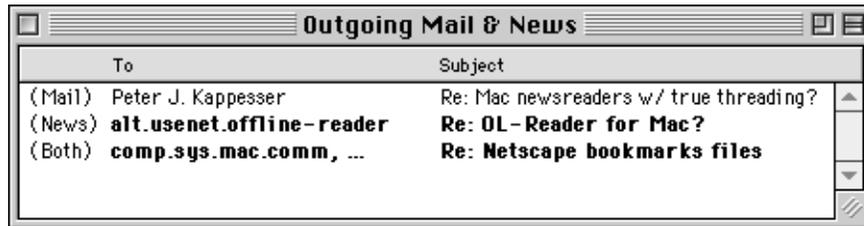
There's no command to attach files yet. This is planned for a future version. But you can include text files in a message by dragging them from the Finder into the message window. So, to attach a file you have to stuff and binhex it manually (Aladdin's DropStuff with Expander Enhancer can do this very conveniently in one step), and then drag the binhexed file into your message.

---

Keyboard navigation:

<b>⌘↑</b>	Go to the first line that is currently being displayed in the window; if you're already in the first line, scroll up one page
<b>⌘↓</b>	Go to the last line that is currently being displayed in the window; if you're already in the last line, scroll down one page
<b>⌘←</b> and <b>⌘→</b>	Go to the beginning/end of the line
<b>⌘↑</b> and <b>⌘↓</b>	Go to the very top/bottom of the text
<b>⌘←</b> and <b>⌘→</b>	Move by one word
<b>Tab</b>	Move to the next header field (hold down command to step out of the message body)
<b>Shift-Tab</b>	Move to the previous header field

## 4.5 The Outgoing Mail & News Window



**Figure 4.6** The “Outgoing Mail & News” window.

This window shows a summary of all your outbound messages. Scheduled (queued) messages are displayed in bold typeface, suspended messages are displayed normal. The leftmost column shows whether it’s a mail message, a news posting, or both. You can open a message by double-clicking it, or by pressing return or enter.

## 4.6 The Connect to Server Window

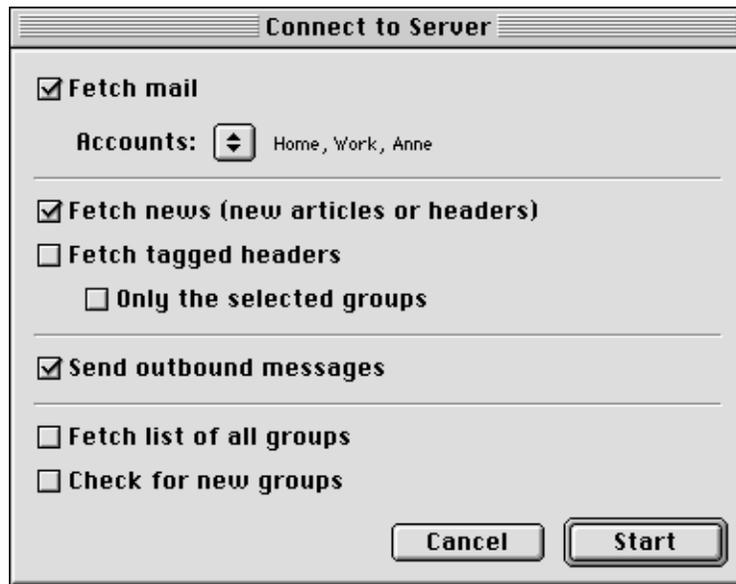


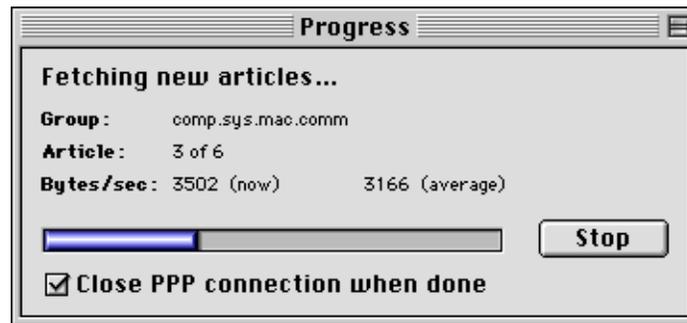
Figure 4.7 The “Connect to Server” window.

This is the window that comes up when you choose **Connect to Server...** from the Special menu. You only need this command if you have a TCP connection. I hope the options in this dialog are pretty much self-explanatory; when in doubt, turn on Balloon Help.

Below the **Fetch mail** checkbox there’s a popup menu that lets you choose for which of your email accounts you want to fetch mail. If you change this often, it is a good idea to memorize the keyboard shortcuts for this menu.

When you hold down the command key, keyboard shortcuts are displayed for every checkbox. You can toggle a checkbox by holding down the command key and typing the respective letter. Actually, in this case you needn’t even hold down the command key; just type M to toggle the **Fetch mail** checkbox, etc. The same applies to the shortcuts in the “Accounts” popup menu: instead of typing **⌘9** to turn on all accounts, you can simply press the ‘9’ key.

After you hit the Start button, a status window like the one shown in figure 4.8 comes up.



**Figure 4.8** The status window.

With the checkbox at the bottom of this window you can specify whether you want MacSOUP to hang up after the download is complete. The initial setting of the checkbox depends on the options on the “After Connecting” page of the Settings dialog, and (possibly) whether the connection was already open when the download began.

Please note that automatically closing the connection is only possible if you are using FreePPP 2.6 or newer, or Apple’s OT/PPP. It doesn’t work with other PPP or SLIP software, and it is not available at all under Mac OS X.

## 5 The Newsgroup Settings Dialog

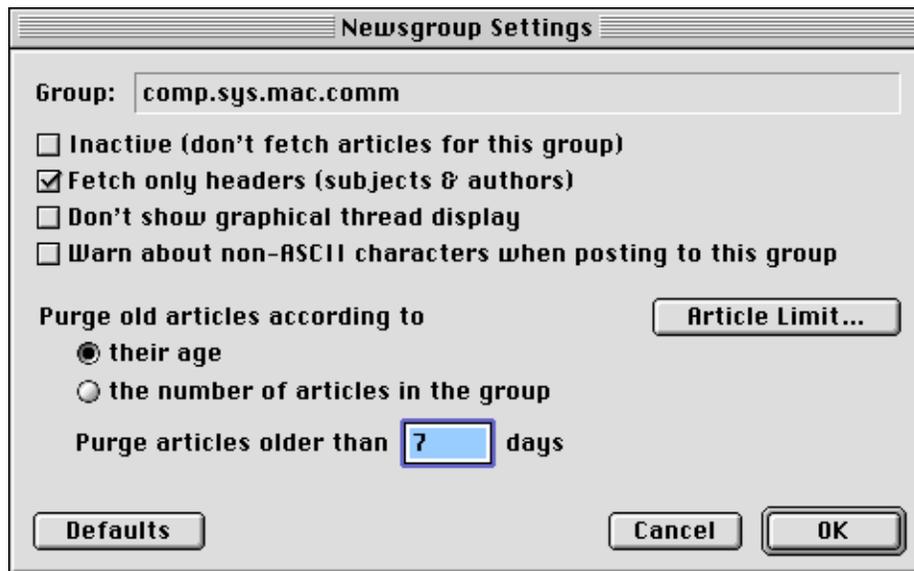


Figure 5.1 The Newsgroup Settings dialog.

This dialog comes up when you choose **Newsgroup Settings** from the Special menu.

### **Inactive (don't fetch articles for this group)**

If this option is on, MacSOUP won't fetch new articles or headers for this group. This allows you to temporarily turn off a group without having to remove it from the database.

### **Fetch only headers (subjects & authors)**

If this option is on, MacSOUP fetches only article headers, so that you can select which articles you want to download. If the option is off, MacSOUP fetches whole articles (header and body). This option is only relevant if you connect via TCP.

### **Don't show graphical thread display**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will not show a graphical display of the thread tree in this group. This can be useful for groups where only announcements are posted but no discussion takes place.

### **Warn about non-ASCII characters when posting to this group**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will warn you if you attempt to post certain national characters (such as é or Ä) to this group.

With the remaining options you specify how many articles you want to keep in the group. Old articles are purged automatically whenever the settings file is opened, or whenever you fetch news (you can specify or disable this in the Settings dialog), or when you manually choose the **Purge Old Articles** command.

The Defaults button applies the options that you specified in the Settings dialog.

You can select several Newsgroups at once in the main window and then choose **Newsgroup Settings**. In this case it might be possible that some of the groups have different settings. For example, suppose you select two groups, and one is set to fetch only headers, and the other isn't. When the dialog comes up, the **Fetch only headers** option will look like this:



**Figure 5.2** A “leave as is” checkbox.

Now this checkbox has three possible values: on (checked), off (blank), or leave as is (dash). This allows you to change only one particular option for all groups (for example the purge time), but leave all other options as they were for each group.

The purge time field will only show a number if it is the same for all selected groups; if not, the field will be empty. If you leave it empty, the setting is not changed; if you enter a number, all selected groups are set to this number.

When you click the Article Limit button, the following dialog appears:

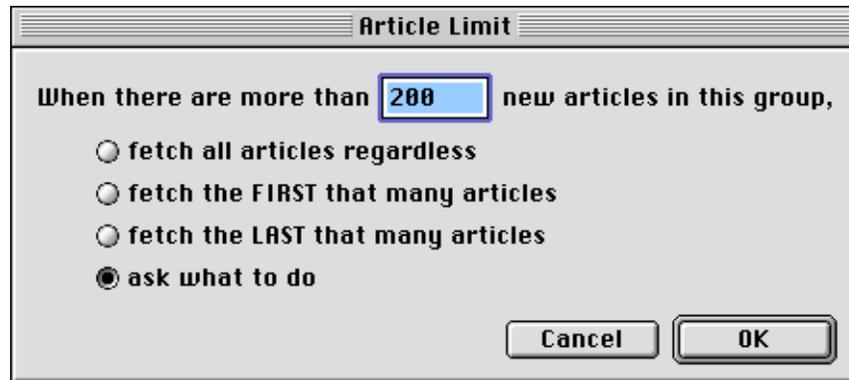


Figure 5.3 The article limit dialog.

### Fetch all articles regardless

MacSOUP will always fetch all articles in this group, no matter how many there are. You should be careful with this option, especially for newly subscribed groups.

### Fetch the FIRST that many articles

MacSOUP will fetch only the number of articles that you have specified above; these will be the first (oldest) articles that the server has. The remaining ones will be available for a later download.

### Fetch the LAST that many articles

MacSOUP will fetch only the number of articles that you have specified above; but this time these will be the last (newest) articles that the server has. The older ones before that will be skipped.

**Ask what to do**

When there are more than the specified number of articles, MacSOUP will put up a dialog and ask you how many you want to fetch, and whether it should fetch the first or last so many articles. Obviously this is not a good idea if you want to do unattended downloads, for example if you use an AppleScript to connect at certain times.

When you fetch news for the first time in a newly subscribed group, you should set this option to either **Ask what to do** or **Fetch the LAST that many articles**. This is because many servers will erroneously report many more available articles than they actually have when you fetch news for the first time.

## 6 The Kill File

A kill file is a way of automatically pre-selecting or filtering news based on certain criteria. For example, you may want to automatically tag all articles whose Subject header contains a certain word, or “kill” (i.e. mark as read) all articles posted by a certain person.

MacSOUP’s Kill File window looks like this:

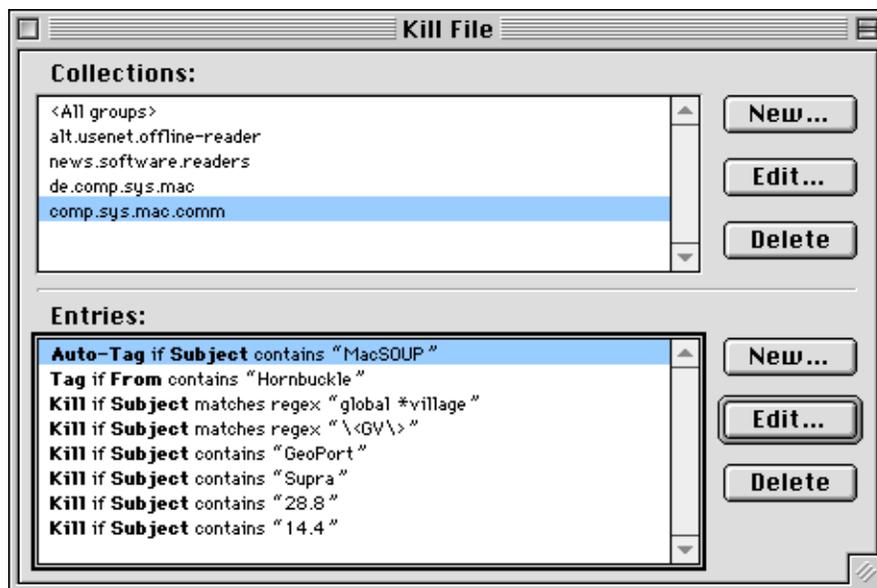


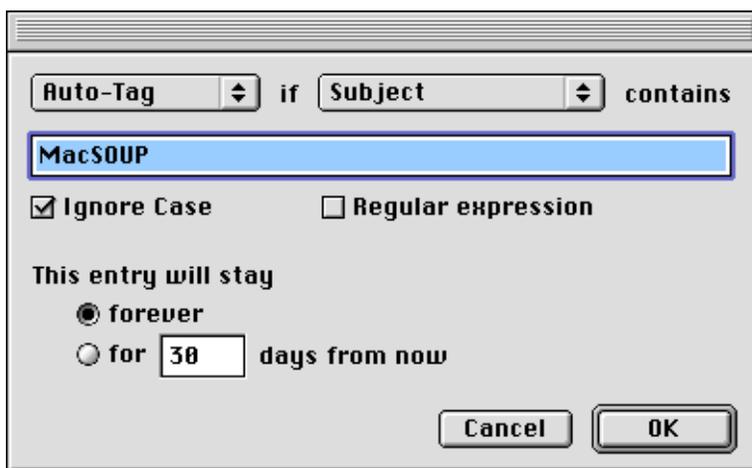
Figure 6.1 The Kill File window.

The kill file is organized in collections of kill file entries. The upper half of the window shows the collections, and the lower half shows the entries of whatever collection is currently highlighted in the upper half. Every collection applies to a certain

newsgroup, or to a branch of the news hierarchy (i.e. one group and all its subgroups), or to all groups. You can specify to which newsgroup(s) a collection applies by clicking the **Edit** button next to the “Collections” list.

Why create several collections? Why not just put all entries into a single collection that applies to all groups? Suppose you are subscribed to rec.music.opera and you want to read all articles about Wagner operas. So you create a kill file entry to tag all articles whose Subject header contains “Wagner”; it shouldn’t make much of a difference whether you put this entry in an <All groups> collection or in a collection that applies only to rec.music.opera, because in other newsgroups there won’t be many articles with Wagner in their Subjects. But I still recommend that you limit your entries to only those groups in which they are relevant, because then MacSOUP won’t have to scan all entries for every group, which would be an unnecessary waste of time (fetching articles for one group is significantly faster if there are no kill file entries that apply to that group).

When you create or edit a kill file entry, a dialog comes up that looks like this:



**Figure 6.2** A kill file entry.

The popup menu in the top-left corner lets you specify what you want to do with articles that match this entry. Choices are: Kill (i.e. mark as read), Tag (this will tag the article for reading if the group is set to fetch whole articles, or tag it for downloading if the group is set to fetch only headers), Auto-Kill, or Auto-Tag.

The difference between Kill and Auto-Kill (or Tag and Auto-Tag) is that Kill only affects this one article, whereas Auto-Kill affects this article and all its followups. For Subject entries this usually doesn't make much of a difference, but for From or others it does.

Note that Kill doesn't mean "Delete" – it doesn't prevent articles from being added to the database. All it does is mark an article as read so that you don't see it (normally). Of course this only works well if the "Show" popup menu is set to Unread, which is the recommended setting anyway (see also the section "[Selecting and Reading Articles](#)" on page 8). This gives you a chance to look at what articles have been killed by setting the "Show" popup menu to New.

The second popup menu lets you choose in which header you want to search for matches. With the two checkboxes you specify whether the matching is case sensitive, and whether the search string is to be treated as a regular expression (see the separate chapter "[Regular Expressions](#)" on page 66 for details).

In the lower half of the dialog you can specify whether the entry will automatically expire after a certain time period.

# 7 The Settings Dialog

The Settings dialog consists of several pages. You can switch pages by choosing from the popup menu at the top of the dialog, or by pressing command-up-arrow or command-down-arrow to switch to the next or previous page, respectively.

## 7.1 Accounts

In MacSOUP, accounts and personalities are separate things. Many other email applications treat them as the same thing, which I think is wrong.

An account describes a mailbox at your provider (i.e. a place from which you fetch mail with MacSOUP). A personality describes as who you send your mail. For example, you might have an email address at work, and a private address at home; you would create one personality for each address. In this case, you also have two accounts, so there's in fact a one-to-one correspondence between accounts and personalities. This need not be the case, however. You might have a domain of your own, where you have addresses such as <info@mydomain.com>, <support@mydomain.com>, <webmaster@mydomain.com> etc. You want to send mail with each of these addresses, depending on the circumstances; however, your mail server is configured so that mail to all these addresses arrives at the same mailbox, so you have only one account.

The Accounts page of the Settings dialog shows all your accounts and personalities. The default account and the default personality are marked with a black dot. Actually, which account is your default account has very little significance; the only time where this is important is when you have told MacSOUP to do "SMTP after POP", and you send messages without also fetching mail. In this

case, MacSOUP must make a dummy login to your default account so that the SMTP server will let you in.

The default personality is the one that is used for all new messages. When replying to a mail message, MacSOUP tries to figure out which personality you are most likely to want to use, based on what address the original message was sent to; if none of your personalities matches, again the default personality is used.

For every account you can specify a default mailbox; this is the mailbox where messages from this account are stored, unless they are routed elsewhere by another mailbox's filter criteria (see "[Mailbox Settings](#)" for details).

For every personality you can choose if you want to save copies of your outgoing messages at all, and if so, if you always want to save them to the specified mailbox, or only unless they are routed elsewhere by mailbox filter rules. For this routing of outgoing messages, MacSOUP reverses your filter rules. For example, suppose you have a mailbox with the filter rule "From contains <joe@xyz.com>", the messages that you send to <joe@xyz.com> will be saved to this mailbox too.

## 7.2 Incoming

### Get incoming news and mail via...

Lets you choose how you want to get your news and mail by default. Note that this is only the default; if you set it to **TCP/IP** you can still import SOUP packets by dragging them onto MacSOUP, and if you set it to **SOUP packets** you can still connect via TCP by choosing **Connect to Server...** The difference is that if you set it to **SOUP packets**, MacSOUP will automatically import your default incoming packet whenever you open the settings file.

UUCP support is not yet implemented.

### Skip mail messages bigger than

If this option is on and an email message arrives that is bigger than the value you entered, it is left on the server (MacSOUP will tell you about this, of

course). This might be useful for binary messages, because MacSOUP has no automatic binary decoding yet; you can then use a MIME-capable program such as Eudora to retrieve and decode the message.

Note that this has no effect on the download of news articles.

### **Log TCP commands**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will write all NNTP, POP3, and SMTP commands and responses to a log file called TCP Commands Log in the same folder as your settings file. This can be useful for debugging purposes.

### **No batched NNTP commands**

Normally when fetching new articles, MacSOUP sends several NNTP commands at a time to the server, which results in higher transfer rates. There may be some older news servers that can't cope with this; if you have problems fetching news, try turning this option on.

### **Default incoming SOUP packet**

Whenever you open the settings file, MacSOUP will look at this location if it finds a new packet, and import it if it is there. Note that you can only select a new location if you have just fetched a packet that you can select.

## **7.3 Outgoing**

### **Send outgoing messages via...**

Lets you choose how you want to send your outgoing messages by default. Note that this is only the default; if you set it to **TCP/IP** you can still create reply packets by choosing **Make Reply Packet** from the File menu, and if you set it to **SOUP packets** you can still connect via TCP by choosing **Connect to Server...** The difference is that if you set it to **SOUP packets**, MacSOUP will automatically create a reply packet whenever you close the settings file and there are outgoing messages.

UUCP support is not yet implemented.

### **Log TCP commands**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will write all NNTP, POP3, and SMTP commands and responses to a log file called TCP Commands Log in the same folder as your settings file. This can be useful for debugging purposes.

### **Fetch mail before sending**

Some Internet service providers require that you first fetch mail before they allow you to send outgoing messages (“SMTP after POP”). This is meant to be a protection against abuse of the SMTP server by spammers. To satisfy that requirement, turn on this option.

### **Default reply packet**

This is the name and location where MacSOUP will automatically create a reply packet whenever you close the settings file and there are outgoing messages.

## **7.4 Servers**

On this page you can enter your SMTP server (for outgoing mail), your NNTP server (also called “news server”), and your NNTP username and password if your news server requires authentication. If it doesn’t, leave these two fields empty. As always, you can (should) leave the password field empty anyway, and have MacSOUP store the password in the keychain instead.

## 7.5 After Connecting

This page lets you specify what you want MacSOUP to do after a **Connect to Server...** command has finished. This only applies to TCP/IP users; these actions are not performed after a SOUP packet is imported.

### **play a sound**

Use the popup menu to choose a sound to be played when MacSOUP is done downloading. You can only choose sounds that are currently installed in your System Folder.

### **only if running in background**

If this option is on, the sound will only be played if MacSOUP is not the active application at the time the connection is finished.

### **close PPP connection**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will automatically close the PPP connection (i.e. hang up the modem) when it is done downloading. Note that this only works if you are using FreePPP 2.6 or newer, or Apple's OT/PPP.

This option has no effect (and is disabled) on Mac OS X.

### **only if it was opened by MacSOUP**

If the PPP connection was already open when MacSOUP started the download, it will not close the connection when it is done. It is probably a good idea to turn this option on, because when you have, say, an ftp job running and then you start a MacSOUP download, you don't want to have the connection closed while the ftp download is still continuing.

Note that these options only determine the initial setting of the checkbox in the download status window (see section "[The Connect to Server Window](#)" on page 25). You can always turn that checkbox on or off while MacSOUP is running.

### run a script

This allows you to execute an AppleScript when MacSOUP is done. Write the script with the Script Editor application and save it as a compiled script. MacSOUP only recognizes compiled scripts, not script applications or scripts that have been saved as text.

## 7.6 News Headers

This page lets you specify what headers you want to have displayed when you read a news article, and in what order.

## 7.7 Mail Headers

This page lets you specify what headers you want to have displayed when you read a mail message, and in what order.

## 7.8 Font Settings

On this page you can specify the fonts for the newsgroup list (the main window), the subject list (which is also used for the Outgoing Mail & News window), and the message windows, as well as for printed messages.

The alternative font is a font to which you can quickly switch for a single message by choosing **Alternative Font** from the Message menu (or typing **⌘U**). It is useful to set a proportional font as the default message font, and a monospaced font as the alternative font. That way you can temporarily switch to monospaced when you come across a message that contains ASCII art or tables.

## 7.9 Colors

On the left side of this page you can specify the colors and text styles for the various kinds of messages in the subject list. The default is to display full articles in bold and read articles in italics; many people don't like bold or italic text in the subject list, so you may want to use plain text for everything and specify different colors instead.

On the right side of this page you can specify the colors for the message window and editor windows. The text field at the bottom deserves a special explanation: with this field you do *not* specify the quote prefix that is used to indicate included text in your replies; MacSOUP always uses "> " for this, you can't change this. Instead, you specify which lines MacSOUP assumes to be quoted in other people's messages, for the purpose of assigning colors.

## 7.10 Subject Window

On this page you can specify which of the configuration options of the subject window are saved separately for each newsgroup or mailbox, and which are global for all groups and mailboxes.

At the bottom of this page there's the option:

### **Toggle "Group threads" checkbox automatically**

If this option is on, the **Group threads** checkbox in the Subject window will automatically be turned on if you sort by Subject, and off if you sort by anything else. This is the behaviour of pre-2.4 versions of MacSOUP, except that you can still toggle the **Group threads** checkbox manually if you want.

## 7.11 New Group Defaults

On this page you specify the default settings for new groups. These settings are automatically applied when a new newsgroup is created in the database. Note that these settings only affect newly created groups; they have no effect on the existing groups in the database.

The options on this page are the same as those of the Newsgroup Settings dialog. See the chapter “[The Newsgroup Settings Dialog](#)” on page 27 for details.

## 7.12 Purging

On this page you specify at what times you want MacSOUP to automatically purge old articles, if at all.

### **Never**

If you select this option, MacSOUP will never purge old articles automatically. In this case you will have to choose the **Purge old articles** command from time to time so as to prevent your database from growing forever.

### **When the settings file is opened**

If you select this option, MacSOUP will purge old articles from all newsgroups each time you open the settings file (including automatic opening of a default settings file when MacSOUP starts). You can temporarily disable this by holding down the command key when you open the settings file.

### **Before importing a SOUP packet**

If you select this option, MacSOUP will purge old articles from all newsgroups right before importing a SOUP packet. Obviously this option only makes sense if you use a Unix shell account.

### **While importing news (only for groups with new articles)**

If you select this option, MacSOUP will purge old articles from a group right before importing new articles or headers into this group. If you use a TCP connection this means that purging is done while you're online.

### **Allow purging of unread articles**

Normally MacSOUP never purges unread articles. This has led to some confusion in the past ("Help, my old articles are not being purged!"), so now you can turn on this option to allow unread articles to be purged, for those who don't like pressing ⌘E.

### **Purge inactive groups**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will purge articles from groups that are marked inactive, i.e. for which no new articles are fetched.

## **7.13 Warnings**

On this page you can specify whether you want to be warned before performing certain operations; in particular:

### **deleting messages**

This applies to both incoming and outgoing messages.

### **purging old articles**

This only affects the **Purge Old Articles** and **Purge Selected Groups** menu commands, it has no effect on the automatic purging that is done when opening a settings file (see section [7.12](#) above).

### **sending a mail message with an empty “Subject:” field**

This only affects *mail* messages. News postings must always have a non-empty Subject field, regardless of this setting.

## **7.14 Miscellaneous**

### **Use standard signature delimiter (“-- ”)**

If this option is on, a line consisting of two dashes and a space will be inserted in front of your signature in outgoing messages. It is strongly recommended that you leave this option on, because it allows other mail and news software to automatically recognize your signature.

### **Slower scrolling at end of message**

If this option is on, MacSOUP will scroll slowly when you page through a message and there’s less than a windowful left to show. This is meant to allow your eyes to keep track of where you were reading. It is only useful on fast Macs (if at all).

### **For email replies, use...**

If you choose something other than **Built-in mailer**, MacSOUP will launch Eudora or Claris EMailer and tell it to open a new mail message whenever you write an email reply to a news article. This may be useful for people who want to use MacSOUP only for news, and do all their mail with Eudora or EMailer.

### **Default tab width for outgoing messages**

The tab width that is initially used when you open a new outgoing message. You can change the value for an individual message by clicking the **Options** button in the editor window.

### **Creator for text files:**

Here you can enter the creator code that is to be used for text files saved from MacSOUP. The creator code determines which application will open the file if you double-click it. Examples are "ttx" for SimpleText, or "R\*ch" for BBEdit. If you don't know the creator code for your preferred application, you can click the "Same as" button to locate an example file.

### **Divider lines in subject list**

Normally, the selected Appearance theme decides what the divider lines between threads in the subject window look like, just like in other list windows (and in Finder windows). In the Macintosh's default theme (Apple Platinum) they are white on a very light gray, which means that they may be hard to see on certain monitors, particularly TFT displays. For this reason you can optionally choose a different color for these divider lines that is better recognizable on your screen.

(This option should really be on the "Colors" page, but it didn't fit there...)

# 8 Menus

## 8.1 File Menu

### **New Settings File...**

Brings up a directory dialog box for saving files that lets you specify a name and location for a new settings file. This command is only available when no settings file is open.

### **Open Settings File...**

Brings up a directory dialog box for opening files that lets choose an existing settings file to open. This command is only available when no settings file is open. You will rarely need this command, because double-clicking a settings file in the Finder is usually easier.

### **Close**

Closes whatever window is currently in front.

### **Save Message...**

Brings up a directory dialog box for saving files that lets you save the current message or the selected messages to disk. The dialog has a **File format** option that lets you choose between **Normal text file**, **Unix mailbox**, and **rnews batch**. In normal text file format the messages are saved with only those headers that are displayed in the message window, and a dividing line is inserted between messages. If you choose **Unix mailbox** format, the messages are saved in a format that can be read by most Unix mail programs, such

as elm or nn, and by Eudora. **Rnews batch** is useful if you want to transfer news articles from one settings file to another. In this case it is important that you subscribe to the respective groups in the new settings file before importing the rnews batch file, because otherwise the articles that don't belong into any of the subscribed groups will be silently dropped.

### **Append Message...**

Brings up a directory dialog box for opening files that lets you choose an existing text file to append the selected messages to. There's no **File format** option in this case; MacSOUP will look at the file you choose and figure out itself whether it's in Unix mailbox format or not.

### **Pipe...**

This command allows you to pipe one or more messages through a Unix command or shell script. Because there's a lot to be explained about this, there's a separate section in the "[Advances topics](#)" chapter devoted to it.

Only available on Mac OS X.

### **Import newsrc...**

This command allows you to synchronize MacSOUP's database with a Unix newsreader or with NewsWatcher (or any other newsreader that uses a standard .newsrc file). All the groups in the .newsrc file are created in MacSOUP's database (if they don't exist yet), and then the highest-read-article counts are updated to match those of the .newsrc. There's one thing to be aware of: MacSOUP only keeps track of the highest article number it has fetched, whereas a .newsrc file can contain more detailed information as to which articles have been read. This information will be lost if you import the .newsrc into MacSOUP. For example, if the .newsrc contains a line such as

```
comp.sys.mac.comm: 1-2357,2528,2790-2877
```

then MacSOUP will simply assume that all articles up to 2877 have been read. To avoid this situation, you should "catch up" all groups in your Unix newsreader before importing the .newsrc.

**Export newsrc...**

Writes a standard Unix .newsrc file that contains information about which articles MacSOUP has fetched in each group. This file can be used by a Unix newsreader, by uqwk, or by NewsWatcher (in the latter case you will have to use a utility such as FileTyper or ResEdit to change the file's type and creator to NEWS and NNTP, respectively, so that NewsWatcher will recognize it).

**Import Mail or News...**

Brings up a directory dialog box for opening files that lets you choose a file to import. This can be

1. a zipped SOUP packet
2. the AREAS file of an unzipped SOUP packet
3. an rnews batch file
4. a Unix mailbox file
5. a Eudora mailbox

An easier way to import files is to drag them onto MacSOUP's icon in the Finder.

**Make Reply Packet...**

Brings up a directory dialog box for saving files that lets you create a SOUP reply packet containing your outbound messages.

**Settings...**

Brings up the Settings dialog for the current settings file. See the chapter "[The Settings Dialog](#)" on page 34 for details.

## 8.2 Edit Menu

Most of the commands in this menu work the same as in every other Macintosh application, so they are not explained here. Below are the descriptions of only those commands that are unique to MacSOUP.

### Paste as Quotation

The same as **Paste**, except that the standard quote prefix (“> ”) is inserted in front of each line.

### Find...

Brings up a dialog where you can enter a string to find. You can invoke this command either from the subject window or from the message window. In the latter case it searches only the text (the message body) of the current message. When invoked from the subject window it searches in all the messages that are currently shown in the subject list, and there’s an additional popup menu that lets you specify in which header field you want to search, or in the message body.

The **Find** command works for both full articles and headers. However, for headers it will only find anything if you search in the Subject, From, or Lines fields, and in the case of the From field it will only search in the real name portion, not the email address, because that’s all it has available.

The messages that contain the search string are tagged; this means that full articles are tagged for reading, and headers are tagged for downloading. If you are only interested in full articles, you may want to press ‘8’ first to switch the display to “only bodies” (remember that the **Find** command doesn’t search all messages in the group, but only those that are currently being displayed in the window). You can then press space to open the first found message, and then keep pressing space to open the remaining ones.

**Ignore Case** means that the search will be case insensitive; for example, if you search for the string “MacSOUP” it will also find “macsoup”. **Regular Expression** means that the search string is to be treated as a grep-style

pattern. See the separate chapter “[Regular Expressions](#)” on page 66 for a detailed explanation.

You can also use this command to search in the “All Groups” window.

### **Find Again**

Searches for the same string again. This is useful if you search in one group, and then open another group and want to search there too.

### **Rewrap Text**

Lets you reformat paragraphs of quoted text, preserving any quote prefixes. This is a very powerful command, but a bit hard to explain; experiment with it to see how it works.

### **Rot-13**

Used to scramble text to prevent it from being read unintentionally. Apply the same command again to unscramble the text. This is often used for “spoilers,” such as when you talk about the ending of a movie in a movie review.

If there is a text selection in the current message, only the selected text is scrambled/unscrambled; otherwise the command applies to the entire message body.

### **Insert Spoiler Character**

Inserts a special character into your message that will cause the text that comes after it to be hidden initially. The reader must press a key or take some other action to display the remaining text. (Send yourself an email message that contains a spoiler character to see how it works.) This can be useful if you write something that not everybody wants to read; for example, if you talk about last week’s Star Trek episode that not everyone may have watched yet.

### Select Whole Threads

You only see this command when you hold down the option key while you pull down the Edit menu.

When some articles of a thread are selected, this command extends the selection to encompass all articles of that thread. This can be useful if you want to delete a thread, but you don't want to use the mouse: use the up and down arrow keys to select one article of the thread, then press option-command-A to select the whole thread, and then command-D to delete it.

## 8.3 Message Menu

### New Mail Message

Opens an editor window where you can compose an email message.

Hidden feature: If you select an email address (or a full name/address combination such as "Stefan Haller <stefan@haller-berlin.de>") somewhere in a message window and then choose **New Mail Message**, MacSOUP puts this address into the "To:" header of the new message.

### New Mail Message to

This menu item has a submenu that contains all the addresses in your address book. Choosing one of the addresses opens an editor window with the "To:" header field already filled in.

### Post Article

Opens an editor window where you can compose a news article. If a newsgroup is currently open, or exactly one newsgroup is selected in the main window, that newsgroup is entered in the "Newsgroups:" header field for you; otherwise the field is left empty.

**Post Article to**

This menu item has a submenu that contains all your subscribed newsgroups. Choosing one of the groups opens an editor window with the “Newsgroups:” header field already filled in.

**Followup**

Opens an editor window where you can compose a followup (public reply) to the current article. As a keyboard shortcut, press the ‘f’ key.

**Reply by Mail**

Opens an editor window where you can compose an email reply to the current news article or mail message. As a keyboard shortcut, press the ‘r’ key.

Note that when you reply to a message that went to multiple recipients, MacSOUP always does a “reply to all”. In my experience this is almost always the desired behaviour; in the few cases where it isn’t, you’ll have to edit the “To:” header manually. (Most other mailers allow you to choose between “reply to author” and “reply to all”; I consider this unnecessary.)

**Forward**

Opens an editor window that lets you pass the current news article or mail message on to someone else. You can edit this message if you want to add your own comments.

**Cancel**

Deletes the currently displayed article from the server. Only available if the displayed article was written by yourself. See the section “[Cancelling Articles](#)” on page 59 for more details.

**Supersede**

Opens an editor window that allows you to replace an article that you posted with an updated version.

### **Back to Previous Message**

Goes to the last message that was displayed before the current one, if any. Choosing this command repeatedly toggles between the last two messages. As a keyboard shortcut, press the 'b' key.

If you choose this command while you're editing a reply, the original message (the one you're responding to) is opened.

### **Full Headers**

This menu item can be toggled on or off. If it is on, it has a checkmark next to it, and the full message header is shown at the top of the message window. As a keyboard shortcut, press the 'h' key.

### **Alternative Font**

Temporarily display the current message with the alternative font that can be configured in the Settings dialog. Many people like to set a proportional font as the default message font; but when you come across a message that contains ASCII art or tables, it is useful to be able to quickly switch to a monospaced font just for this one message.

### **Suspend Message**

Initially, all outgoing messages are automatically queued for sending. The **Suspend Message** command "unqueues" a message, which means that it won't be sent until you reschedule it. This is useful if there are several outgoing messages and you want to send most of them except for one that you want to spend more work on. As a shortcut, you can click on the small envelope icon in the message editor window.

### **Reschedule Message**

Puts a previously suspended message back in the queue again. As a shortcut, you can click on the small envelope icon in the message editor window.

**Switch Personality**

With this command you can choose another personality for the currently open outgoing message. On Mac OS X this will pop up the personalities menu (as if you had clicked the small downward-pointing triangle next to the "From:" field) so that you can navigate it with the keyboard (↑, ↓, return); on classic Mac OS it simply switches to the next personality.

**Move Message to  
Copy Article to**

Can be used to move mail messages from one mailbox to another, or to copy news articles to a mailbox. This can be useful if you want to build an archive of interesting news articles, such as FAQs.

**Delete Message**

Deletes the current message or the selected messages.

## 8.4 Attributes Menu

**Tag  
Untag**

Tags or untags the selected messages; full articles are marked with a black dot (for reading), and headers are marked with a checkmark (for downloading). You can also tag or untag messages by pressing return.

**Mark as Read  
Mark as Unread**

Marks the current message or the selected messages as read or unread.

### **Mark for Later**

This command marks the current message or the selected messages as read for now, but remembers them. When you later close the newsgroup or mailbox (either by **⌘W** or **⌘E**), these messages will revert to unread, so they are available again next time you open the group. This is useful if you come across an interesting but long article that you don't have time to read right now, and you want to make sure that you don't forget to read it later.

### **Lock Unlock**

Locks or unlocks the current article or the selected articles. Locked articles won't be purged, so this is useful for interesting articles that you want to permanently keep (such as FAQs). You can still manually delete locked articles though.

### **Mark All Messages as Read**

Marks all messages that are currently being displayed in the subject window as read, and closes the group.

If the article window is in front, the menu item changes to **Mark This Thread as Read**; in this case the command will mark all articles in the current thread as read (untagging any that might be tagged for reading), and go on to the next tagged article, if any. This can be useful to skip a thread that you inadvertently tagged for reading.

### **Auto-Kill Sub-Thread Auto-Kill Thread**

Marks the current article and all its followups (or all other articles in its thread) in such a way that future followups to this part of the thread are automatically marked as read when they arrive. Useful if you come across a boring discussion that you don't want to be bothered with again.

Auto-killed articles are marked with a small minus sign in the subject window and in the graphical thread display.

**Auto-Tag Sub-Thread**  
**Auto-Tag Thread**

Marks the current article and all its followups (or all other articles in its thread) in such a way that future followups to this part of the thread are automatically tagged (i.e. marked for reading, or marked for downloading if they are headers) when they arrive. Useful if you come across an interesting discussion and you want to make sure that you don't miss any future contributions to it.

Auto-tagged articles are marked with a small plus sign in the subject window and in the graphical thread display.

**De-Auto-Kill/Tag Sub-Thread**  
**De-Auto-Kill/Tag Thread**

Removes any auto-tag or auto-kill marks from the current article and all its followups (or all other articles in its thread).

## 8.5 Special Menu

**New Mailbox...**

Initially your database has only one mailbox, the "Main Mailbox." With this command you can create additional mailboxes. For example, if you are subscribed to a mailing list you may want to receive all messages from this list in their own mailbox rather than interspersed with your normal mail. You can also use mailboxes as an archive for news articles that you want to keep.

The dialog that comes up when you invoke this command is identical to the "Mailbox Settings" dialog. See the description of that command below for details.

### **New Newsgroup...**

Lets you subscribe to a newsgroup. If you have a Unix shell account, you never need to use this command, because your newsgroups are created automatically in the database when a SOUP packet is imported. If you have a TCP connection, you only need this command if you haven't fetched the list of all groups yet, because it's usually easier to subscribe to a group by dragging it from the "All Groups" window to the main window.

The dialog that comes up when you issue this command is almost identical to the "Newsgroup Settings" dialog. See the chapter "[The Newsgroup Settings Dialog](#)" on page 27 for details.

### **Mailbox Settings...**

Brings up a dialog where you can change the name of a mailbox and the filter rules for this mailbox (except for the Main Mailbox). You can create multiple mailboxes and define filter criteria to specify which incoming messages are to arrive in which mailbox. For example, if you are subscribed to a mailing list and the messages from the list have a Sender header with the list's address, you can create a mailbox for this mailing list and specify "Sender contains ..." as a filter criterion for this mailbox.

When a mail message arrives, the mailboxes are processed top to bottom as listed in the main window. Suppose you have two mailboxes and the first one has a filter rule for "Subject contains xyz" and the other has one for "From contains abc". When you now get a message from abc whose subject is xyz, the message will go to whichever mailbox comes first in the list. Those messages that don't match any of the filter rules of the other mailboxes will arrive in your Main Mailbox.

### **Newsgroup Settings...**

Brings up a dialog that lets you specify a number of options for a newsgroup, or for several newsgroups at once. See the chapter "[The Newsgroup Settings Dialog](#)" on page 27 for details.

**Delete Mailbox****Delete Newsgroup**

Deletes the selected mailboxes or newsgroups and all the messages in them from the database. If you use uqwk you should also remove the groups from your .newsrc file on the Unix host, otherwise the groups are likely to reappear the next time you fetch news.

**Address Book...**

Brings up the Address Book window.

**Kill File...**

Brings up the Kill File window. See the separate chapter [“The Kill File”](#) on page 31 for a detailed explanation.

**Show List of All Groups**

Opens the “All Groups” window that shows a list of all newsgroups your server carries. This command is only available if you use a TCP connection, and then only if you have already fetched the list of all groups.

**Purge Old Articles**

Looks through all your subscribed newsgroups for old articles that need to be purged, according to each newsgroup’s settings. Normally you only need this command if you have disabled automatic purging in the Settings dialog, because otherwise MacSOUP will purge old articles automatically whenever you open the settings file or connect to fetch news.

If you hold down the option key, the command changes to **Purge Selected Groups**. This lets you purge articles from only some of your groups.

**Connect to Server...**

Brings up a window that lets you fetch or send news and mail. See the separate chapter [“The Connect to Server Window”](#) on page 25 for details. You only need this command if you have a TCP connection.

If you hold down the option key, the command changes to **Connect to Server** (note that the “...” is missing). This will connect to the server using the same settings as last time, without putting up a dialog.

## 8.6 Window Menu

### Zoom Window

Same as clicking a window's Zoom box (the small box on the right side of the window's title bar).

### Exchange Front Windows

Exchanges the frontmost window with the one behind it. Especially useful if you are composing a reply and you want to switch between your message and the one you're replying to.

### Set Default Editor Window Size

If a message editor window is in front, you can drag it to a position and size that you find convenient, and then choose this command to remember that size and position; from then on it will be used whenever you start a new message.

# 9 Advanced Topics

## 9.1 Cancelling Articles

Occasionally you may find that you have posted an article that you later wish you hadn't. Suppose for example that you have posted an excerpt from someone else's text, and then you realize that doing this was an inadvertant copyright infringement. Or you may simply have changed your opinion since sending your article. In such cases you may want to "undo" sending the article, i.e. withdraw the article from the server. This is called "cancelling" an article.

Technically this is done by posting a special cancel message. Such a message is very similar to an ordinary article except that it has a special header line that causes it not to appear in the newsgroup, but to carry out the cancellation of the original article instead. In most other newsreaders (notably online readers) this cancel message is sent behind the scenes for you when you issue a cancel command. In MacSOUP however this cancel message is added to your "Outgoing Mail & News" window just like any other message you send, because you might not be connected at the time you cancel the article. It will not take effect until you actually send it. This gives you the opportunity to abort the cancellation if you change your mind: simply delete the cancel message from your "Outgoing Mail & News" window.

If you want to cancel an article you wrote, open it (you may open either the "real" article as it appears in the newsgroup after fetching news, or the saved copy in the mailbox in which you keep your outgoing news articles, if you have one), and then choose **Cancel Article** from the Message menu. A cancel message will be created and added to your "Outgoing Mail & News" window. If you open this cancel message, you will see that you can edit the body of the message, but not its header fields. This is because the header fields must have certain values so that

the cancel message works; in particular, the Newsgroups field must contain the same groups as the original article. The body can contain any text you want, and if you like you can edit it to include a brief explanation of why you cancelled your article. However, it's questionable if anybody will ever read it.

You can only cancel your own articles. If you try to cancel an article written by someone else, MacSOUP will tell you that this is not possible.

Note that there's no guarantee that the cancellation will actually work. Some news servers ignore all cancel requests; also, many users use offline readers and may already have downloaded your article before the cancel message arrived at their servers. (A cancel message only removes an article from the server, it doesn't delete it from a user's local news database.) So, if you want to effectively cancel an article, do it as soon as possible; preferably within an hour after sending the original article. If you wait longer than a couple of hours, the probability of the cancellation being effective is very low.

Sometimes you may want to replace an article that you posted with an updated version, for example if you notice that some of the information you posted is incorrect or incomplete. In such a situation you can use the **Supersede** command from the Message menu. This will bring up an editor window with the text of your original article. You can now make changes to the article; if you then send it, it will replace the older version on the server.

## 9.2 Adding Extra Headers

When you edit an outgoing message, MacSOUP lets you enter the most important header fields (such as "Subject:", "To:", "Newsgroups:", etc.) directly in the editor window. For most situations this should be all you need. Occasionally, however, you may want to add an extra header field. When you click the **Options** button in the editor window, a dialog box appears in which you can enter these additional headers for a particular message (as well as the tab width and line length, as described in the chapter "[The Editor Window](#)" on page 21).

You can also specify additional headers that are to be added to all your outgoing mail messages or news articles. These extra are entered with a personality (in the [Accounts](#) section of the Settings dialog). When you click the **Options** button of an outgoing message, you will see that the extra headers from the personality have already been added to your message, so you can still change or delete them on a per-message basis.

MacSOUP has certain restrictions on what custom headers you can add. You can't add headers for which MacSOUP has an edit field in the message editor window, or that MacSOUP adds itself, such as "References:" or "Path:". The headers you add must conform to the basic syntax requirements of header fields, as specified in RFC 822 and RFC 1036. It's easy to get things wrong, so please be sure you really know what you are doing. And finally, you can't use non-ASCII characters in your extra headers. If you want to do this, you must encode them manually into encoded words, as specified in RFC 2047. Be sure to get the encoding right; MacSOUP won't check this. If your extra headers don't meet any of these requirements, MacSOUP will refuse to add them to your message.

One useful example of an extra header that you may want to add is "Mail-Copies-To:". With this header you can indicate whether you do or do not appreciate "courtesy copies" of followups. When posting a public followup, it has become very common to send an email Cc to the author of the article (i.e. reply by both news and mail). However, many people don't like this (so you shouldn't do it unless requested by the author); with a "Mail-Copies-To:" header you can express your preference. If you like to get these email copies, put your email address in the "Mail-Copies-To:" header (or whatever address you want to have these email Cc's sent to). If not, set it to "never" (without the quotation marks).

Note that this header doesn't say whether you prefer public followups over email replies or vice versa. It only says whether you want people to send an email copy *if* they choose to followup. Also note that this header is relatively new and not many programs recognize it yet, so you can't expect it to work all the time.

## 9.3 Rebuilding Index Files

In some rare situations it may happen that one or more of your database files become corrupt. For example, this can happen if your Mac crashes while MacSOUP is downloading news; in this case MacSOUP won't have a chance to update the index files of the newsgroups that you have downloaded so far. In such a case, MacSOUP will recognize that the file is out of date and will recreate it automatically the next time you open your database. However, there are certain obscure cases of database corruption that MacSOUP doesn't recognize. In this case you may get "internal error" messages from MacSOUP. When this happens to you and you suspect a corrupt database, hold down the option key while you open your settings file. MacSOUP will then ask you whether you want to have your news and/or mail index files rebuilt.

Unlike earlier versions of MacSOUP, you won't lose any data when an index file is rebuilt.

## 9.4 Using Pipes

Pipes allow you to send a message (or several messages at once) through a Unix command or shell script. You can use this feature to do all kinds of useful things to your messages in a semi-automatic way. Pipes are only available on Mac OS X.

To send one or more messages through a pipe, choose **Pipe...** from the File menu. Any output of the command will appear in the Console. Try "cat" as a pipe command to see it.

You can decide if you want to use the raw message text (still with quoted-printable encoding, for example, and with full message headers), or the decoded text as shown by MacSOUP (without headers). Try "cat" with either setting to see the difference.

For multiple selected messages in the subject window, you can decide if you want to pipe them all concatenated through a single pipe, or if you want to open a separate pipe for every message. For example, "wc -l" counts lines; depending on

the settings in the Pipe dialog, it will either display a grand total of all selected messages, or print one line for each message.

Note that MacSOUP doesn't know anything about your `.profile` or `.cshrc` or wherever you put your custom environment. In particular, it doesn't know anything about additions to your `PATH`, e.g. those made by `fink` (<http://fink.sf.net/>). If you use a program from `fink`, you must use `/sw/bin/foo` instead of just `foo`.

And now for the most useful feature: you can prepare your own canned presets of commands you use often; they will appear in the Pipe dialog's "Presets" popup menu and can be quickly activated with keyboard shortcuts. To do this, use your favorite text editor to create the file "`~/Library/Preferences/MacSOUP Pipes`"; every line of that file must start with two characters, the first of which must be either `'r'` for "raw text" or `'d'` for "decoded text", the second must be either `'1'` for "one pipe for all messages" or `'s'` for "separate pipes". The rest of the line is the command. Lines starting with `'#'` and blank lines are ignored.

Here's an example:

```
# file ~/Library/Preferences/MacSOUP Pipes

# This command counts the number of lines in each message.
# Not a very useful command, just to illustrate the usage.
d1 wc -l

# This extracts attachments from messages, if you have
# munpack from fink. (fink install mpack)
rs mkdir ~/Desktop/Attachments && /sw/bin/munpack -C ~/Desktop/Attachments

# This is useful for HTML mail; it tells your favorite Internet browser
# to display it. (Only works for messages that are pure HTML, not for
# multipart/alternative that contain both a plain-text and a HTML part.)
ds cat >/tmp/mail.html && open /tmp/mail.html
```

# 10 Scripting MacSOUP

The two most important commands of MacSOUP can be controlled via AppleScript: **Purge Old Articles** and **Connect to Server...**. Here's an example script:

```
tell application "MacSOUP"
  activate
  with timeout of 30 * 60 seconds
    purge
    connect with fetching news, fetching tagged headers, ↵
            fetching mail and sending
  end timeout
quit
end tell
```

This script first brings MacSOUP to the foreground, then it tells it to purge old articles, and then to connect and fetch news and mail as well as send outbound messages. Then it tells MacSOUP to quit.

If you don't have a default settings file which MacSOUP automatically opens at startup, or if you are using more than one settings file, you'll first have to tell MacSOUP which settings file to open. In this case, insert the following line before or after the "activate" command:

```
open file "My Harddisk:My Database Folder:MacSOUP Settings"
```

It is important to wrap the purge and connect commands in a **with timeout** statement, because otherwise the script will probably report a timeout error. The default timeout value for AppleEvents is something like two minutes, and the purge and connect commands will usually not complete within this time. In the above example the two commands are given a total of half an hour to complete; you

can give it more or less depending on how many newsgroups you read. When in doubt, set it to a higher value; this probably never hurts.

You can combine the `purge` and `connect` commands into a single **with timeout** statement, or you can use a separate **with timeout** statement for each; this doesn't make much of a difference.

For the `connect` command you can specify exactly what it should do; examples are

```
connect with fetching mail
connect with fetching news and fetching tagged headers
```

You can also tell it to check for new groups with the following command:

```
connect with checking for new groups
```

However, this is only useful if your script leaves MacSOUP running after it is done, because when MacSOUP quits it closes the "New Groups" window and there's no way to get it back after it is closed.

# 11 Regular Expressions

Regular expression (regex) matching is a powerful way to search for strings that match a certain pattern, for example any word that consists of only uppercase letters, or all occurrences of two identical words separated by one or more spaces, or countless other patterns.

The simplest regular expression is just a string to search for. A regex such as

```
xyz
```

simply searches for the string "xyz". However, there are a couple of characters that have a special meaning in regular expressions. These characters are:

```
( ) [ ] ^ $ . * + ? { } | \
```

If you want to search for a literal occurrence of one of these characters, you must precede it with a backslash. For example, if you want to search for the string "xyz?" you must use the regular expression

```
xyz\?
```

To search for a backslash, use `\\`. An exception to this rule is when the special characters occur inside a range (i.e. between square brackets, see below), then they need not be preceded by a backslash.

Ok, so what do these special characters do? A period (.) is a wildcard that matches any character (exactly one). For example, the regular expression

```
d.g
```

will find the strings "dog", "dig", "d=g" etc. It will not find the string "dg" though.

The characters `*` and `+` are repetition operators, they search for multiple occurrences of the preceding pattern. `*` searches for zero or more occurrences, `+` for one or more. For example, the regular expression

```
a+
```

will find the strings `"a"`, `"aa"`, `"aaaaaa"` etc. Normally these operators apply only to the single character that precedes them. For example, the regex

```
ab*c
```

will find the strings `"ac"`, `"abc"`, `"abbbc"` etc., but not the string `"ababc"`. If you want these operators to apply to more than one preceding character, you must use brackets. For example,

```
a(xy)*b
```

will find the strings `"ab"`, `"axyb"`, `"axyxyb"` etc.

The question mark works similar to `*` and `+`, but it searches for zero or one occurrence of the preceding pattern. For example,

```
ab?c
```

will find the strings `"ac"` and `"abc"` and nothing else.

The vertical bar (`|`) is an OR operator. It searches for occurrences of either its left or right operand. For example, the expression

```
abc|xyz
```

will find the strings `"abc"` and `"xyz"` and nothing else. Unlike the `*`, `+`, and `?` operators, the `|` operator applies not just to the single characters around it, but to everything up to the beginning and end of the regular expression. If you want to constrain it to a sub-pattern in the middle of a regex, you must use brackets; for example,

```
d(i|ra)g
```

will find the strings `"dig"` and `"drag"`.

`^` and `$` constrain a search to the beginning and end of a line, respectively. For example,

```
^xyz
```

will find the string “xyz” only if it’s at the beginning of a line, and

```
xyz$
```

will find the string “xyz” only if it’s at the end of a line. The regular expression

```
^xyz$
```

will find any line that consists of nothing but the string “xyz”.

Square brackets can be used to specify a set of characters. For example,

```
[abcd]
```

will find the single characters “a”, “b”, “c”, or “d” (nothing else). You can use a hyphen to specify a range of characters, such as

```
[0-9]
```

to look for a single digit. You can combine ranges and simple enumerations of characters; for example,

```
[a-zA-Z0-9+=]
```

will find an uppercase or lowercase letter, a digit, or one of the characters + or =. If you want to include a hyphen in the set, it must be at the beginning or end (otherwise it will be treated as a range operator).

If the first character after the opening square bracket is a `^`, the regex will match any character that is not contained in the set.

`{ }` is another repetition operator, similar to `*` and `+` except that you can specify the minimum and maximum number of repetitions. The basic syntax is `p{m,n}` where `p` is the pattern to look for (either a single character or a sub-pattern in round brackets), `m` is the minimum and `n` the maximum number of repetitions. For example,

`(xy){2,4}`

will find the strings “xyxy”, “xyxyxy”, or “xyxyxyxy” (nothing else).

Special forms are `{n,}` to search for *n* or more repetitions, and `{n}` to search for exactly *n* repetitions. For example,

`x{5}`

will find the string “xxxxx” and nothing else.

The backslash is always used in combination with the character that follows it. We have already seen that it can be used to “escape” special characters if you want to search for literal occurrences of one of them (for example, `\?` searches for “?”). Other uses of backslash: `\t` searches for a tab character, and `\n` searches for a carriage return. `\<` constrains the search to the beginning of a word, and `\>` to the end of a word. For example,

`\<A[a-z]*`

will find any word that starts with an uppercase A, and

`\<Mac\>`

will only find the word “Mac”, but not “Macintosh” or “MacSOUP”.

Now let’s look at a couple useful examples:

1)

Suppose you want to set up a mailbox filter for someone who writes email from several different machines in his network, so that his From header can be “joe@machine1.host.domain” or “joe@some\_other\_machine.host.domain” etc. Of course you could create separate filters for all of his addresses if you know them all, but you can also simply use the regex

`joe@.\.host\.domain`

Remember that you must “escape” the literal periods with a backslash.

2)

Suppose you want to kill all articles longer than 1000 lines. You could set up a kill file entry for the Lines header and use a regex such as

```
[0-9]{4,}
```

This will find any number consisting of four or more digits. Killing articles with more than, say, 300 lines is a bit more complicated. You can't use the regex

```
[3-9][0-9]{2,}
```

because this will miss the numbers 1000 through 1299 and similar numbers. You could use

```
[3-9][0-9][0-9] | [0-9]{4,}
```

instead. The first half of this expression matches the numbers 300 through 999, and the second half matches 1000 and above.

A good way to verify regular expressions for the Lines header is to open a newsgroup, sort by Lines, turn **Group threads** off, and then try the regular expression with the **Find** command.

Be careful when putting such a kill file entry in your <All groups> collection! I did it once, and after a while I started wondering why nothing appears in comp.sys.mac.digest any more...

3)

Suppose you want to kill all articles that are cross-posted to 5 or more groups. Create a kill file entry for the Newsgroups header and use the regular expression

```
([^,]+,){4,}
```

The sub-expression in round brackets searches for a sequence of one or more characters other than a comma (i.e. a newsgroup name), followed by a comma. This sub-expression has to match four times or more, i.e. the Newsgroups header must contain four or more commas in order for the regex to match. If you followed closely, you will realize that this regex also matches Newsgroups headers that end with a comma but contain only four groups. Since such a header is invalid and can only be created by a broken newsreader, this regex usually does what we want.

Note: It's often possible to write several different regular expressions that do the same thing. For example, the above regex to search for cross-posted articles could also be written as

```
(.+,){4,}
```

However, if you try the two expressions in the **Find** dialog, you will see that the second one is much slower than the first one. In general you should always try out a regex in the **Find** dialog before you use it in a kill file entry, firstly to see if it really does what you want (it's so easy to make mistakes), and secondly to make sure that it doesn't take forever.

4)

Suppose you want to have the first article of each thread tagged for you, so that you can conveniently read the beginning of each thread and decide whether you want to tag the other articles in the thread. The obvious solution is to tag all articles whose subject does *not* begin with "Re:", but how do we do this with a regular expression? There's no operator for "does not contain", except for single characters. So we have to test one character at a time:

```
^([\^R]|R[\^e]|Re[\^:])
```

The first `^` constrains our regular expression to the beginning of the header. Within the parentheses there are three alternatives, separated by vertical bars. The first one matches everything that doesn't start with "R". The second one matches articles whose subject begins with "R", but whose second letter is not an "e". Finally the third one matches subjects that begin with "Re", but whose third letter is not a colon.

## 12 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. I share my Mac with my husband/coworker/whatever. Both of us want to use MacSOUP, but since MacSOUP takes most of its settings from Internet Config, there doesn't seem to be a way to create several databases with different personal information (email address, signature, etc.). What can we do?

For every MacSOUP settings file you can create a private Internet Config prefs file that is only used by this settings file. Simply put the IC prefs file in the same folder as the MacSOUP settings file (use Internet Config's **Save As...** command or make a copy of an existing IC prefs file and modify that). This way you can create several databases for different people, or you can create multiple databases for yourself if you want to access different news servers.

2. MacSOUP doesn't seem to purge old articles. I have set my newsgroups to purge articles after 7 days, but there are still articles in there that show an age of 10 days or more. What's up?

Normally MacSOUP doesn't purge unread or selected articles. If you don't want to mark everything as read after you're done with a group (which I recommend), you may want to turn on the **Allow purging of unread articles** option in the Settings dialog.

- 3. I changed the Quote String setting in Internet Config to “:”. Why doesn’t MacSOUP pay attention to it? It still uses “>”!**

MacSOUP deliberately ignores the Quote String setting, and always uses “> ” (I wish everyone would). Some newsreaders can do special things with quoted text, for example display it in a different color, or suppress it altogether (trn has such an option). This becomes very difficult if people use a variety of different quoting styles.

- 4. I press ⌘N to start a new message, and then I change my mind and want to get rid of it. But I can’t close it at this point. Why not?**

With regard to outgoing messages, MacSOUP is a bit different from other programs such as Eudora. In Eudora you have to explicitly press a “Queue” button; in MacSOUP however, all messages are automatically queued as soon as they are created (they immediately show up in the Outgoing Mail & News window). This means that you have to press ⌘D to get rid of them. If you just close the window, MacSOUP assumes that you still want to send the message.

- 5. I thought your name was Stefan Kurth?**

It used to be. I married in August 1997 and adopted the name of my wife, so now my name is Stefan Haller.

- 6. When I save messages, they are saved as SimpleText documents. I would like them to be saved as BBEdit/Alpha/my-favourite-text-editor documents; can this be done?**

Yes: you can set the creator code for saved text files in the Settings dialog. See “[Creator for text files](#)” on page 44 for details.

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