

M A S T E R - B

A Thunderstorm Software Release
Copyright (C) 1993, Scott Fell
THE Bulletin Menu Manager

CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
A	Who it's for	3
B	What it does	3
C	For whom it works	3
D	What you can't do	3
E	How it works	4
F	Why not to freak out	4
G	How to get it to go	4
H	How to deal with errors	9
I	What to do if you find a real bug	9
J	How to make suggestions	9
K	What to do if you have problems	10
L	How to register	10
M	What will happen when you register	10
N	How to utilize shareware	11
O	How to use ANSI	12
P	How about that info stuff?	12
Q	What to expect in future versions	12
R	Who I wish to thank	13
S	Where to get support	13
T	How to contact the author	13

A. Who it's for

This program will probably be the most useful to Bulletin Board SysOps.

B. What it does

Master-B will create two types of display files, ANSI and ASCII. These files can be used for menus (i.e., bulletin menus) on BBSs to let your users know the exact DATE the bulletin was last updated. This can save time on a system where users like to be kept up-to-date, but don't like to re-read old information. This utility will also help SysOps keep track of bulletins that are getting old and are in need of a little spruce-up.

C. For whom it works

Master-B has been successfully tested on SpitFire, PCBoard, and RemoteAccess. This is not to say that it won't run on other software. Master-B is native to the standard 1-99 numbering scheme, the A-Z numbering scheme and, if you enable the option, you can call your bulletins whatever you want to (like A1 or something BIZARRE like that 8-)).

D. What you can't do

You are given permission (in fact, encouraged) to use and distribute this product, so long as all instructions contained herein are followed.

1) You may not change any of the files. This includes reverse-engineering, editing, changing of documentation, adding BBS advertisements <ZIP-type comments are OK>, or any other sort of editing of the original distribution form of this program.

2) No charge may be made for copying of this program. You are allowed to distribute this program from commercial sites so long as no charge is specifically made for access to this product.

3) If you are a registered user, you do NOT have permission to tell/convey/make available the key-code to ANYONE. The key-code is

what you have been granted a licence to use. If you do, you are breaking FEDERAL law, and are open to investigation and prosecution.

4) Scott Fell and/or Thunderstorm Software, and/or anyone/anything else, for that matter, are not obligated to support this or any other product now or in the future.

And any other logical stuff you've seen on other Shareware packages, too <grin>. In other words, this program is a privilege to use. Do not misuse the trust I have placed in you.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS PROGRAM SHALL IN NO WAY BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYTHING! <Does that cover it? 8^> >

E. How it works

At the DOS prompt, type in the EXE filename (M-Bv3.Exe) with the single command-line directive to initiate the program. Note that you should have edited the configuration file to your needs prior to running the EXE file.

The command-line directive is the Drive+Path+Filename of your configuration file (as in M-Bv3.Exe):

E:\BBS\CONFIG\M-B.CFG).

If the first/only command-line directive is not given, the program will assume the use of MB.CFG in the current directory. If this file is not found, the program will choke and die.

F. Why not to freak out

When it's running, Master-B doesn't do any screen-writing. I figure that this will probably be run as a midnight event, and nobody will be around to see it anyway, so why bother? There are sparing screen writes, but if you see nothing, don't panic!

G. How to get it to go (ask a Pakled) ;-)

Use one directive on the command-line. This is the drive+path+name

of your configuration file (as in M-Bv3.Exe E:\BBS\CONFIG\M-B.CFG). The configuration file contains a great deal of information that Master-B will manipulate, so be sure to pay careful attention to what you're putting where.

{Note to PCBoard sysops}

The Blt.Lst file contains the information you use for your bulletins. Master-B, in this version, supports this file directly. Please review the {NOTE TO PCBOARD SYSOPS} notes that are scattered around. These will contain special instructions that ONLY PCB sysops need to heed.

Use your favorite text editor to edit Master-B's configuration file to fit your needs. The format of this file follows...

IMPORTANT NOTE!! NEVER SKIP LINES! The LINE <X> is representative of the placement in the config file of THAT SPECIFIC directive. Blank lines are okay, but make sure that everything else lines up correctly or Master-B will choke!!

LINE 1

Your BBS-type. This can be /#, /RA, /PCBoard, or /Other (CASE SENSITIVE!).

/# will get you a display with the 1-99 numbering system (standard).

/RA will get you the A-Z system (the first bulletin is referred to as A, the next, B, and so on).

/Other will allow you, the sysop, a great deal of flexibility. With this enabled, you can effectively call ANY bulletin almost ANYTHING (Further instructions on this format later).

{NOTE TO PCBOARD SYSOPS}

/PCBoard will get a 'standard' 1-99 numbering system, but, with an addition. With this system enabled, Master-B will attach directly to your BLT.LST file. From that file, it will be able to extract the proper filenames of your bulletins without you having to put it all in the config-file.

LINE 2

+REGISTERED FEATURE ONLY+

The type of header you wish Master-B to put at the top of the display file. The values are /1, /2, /3, /4, /5, /6, /7, and /8. Each one yields a different result. You can look these over in the included MBHDR<x>.ANS (ANSI files) where <x> is representative of the numbers available for line 2. Note that you must include the ENTIRE feature (as in /1) instead of only the number (as in 1). For example, on line number 2, the text "/1" (without quotes) would yield a proper result while leaving "1" (without quotes) would yield an error.

LINE 3

Your name, as you wish it to appear. Remember that this name is what is used to generate your own unique 'key' to unlock the registered features. Be sure to send me this EXACT NAME (CASE SENSITIVE!!!) when you send in to register Master-B.

When registered, your copy of Master-B will show whom it is registered to via this parameter.

LINE 4

BBS name, however you wish it to appear. This will appear at the end of the display after registration.

LINE 5

The ANSI color-codes corresponding to the color you wish your name and BBS name to appear in the end of the ANSI bulletin (an index of valid ANSI codes is included in one of the last sections of this document).

LINE 6

Your registration number. Be sure to type it in EXACTLY. If unregistered, you can leave this blank. Do NOT put non-numeric values in this line EVER.

LINE 7

Drive+Path+Name of the ASCII filename (Leave this blank if you don't want an ascii menu created). A proper use of this would be:

C:\MAX\MISC\BULLETIN.ASC

LINE 8

Drive+Path+Name of the ANSI filename (Leave this blank if you don't want an ansi menu created). A proper use of this would be:

C:\MAX\MISC\BULLETIN.ANS

LINE 9

Ansi "Before Display" codes. This can contain control-codes for your BBS pkg. For example, a clear-screen code could be put here (Up to 48 chars). This line will be inserted before the rest of the display is written to disk. ** An index of valid ansi codes is included later in this document.

LINE 10

Ansi "After Display". This can contain control-codes for your BBS pkg, or return the color to normal from the last color displayed. This will be appended to the very end of the ansi display file. ** An index of valid ansi codes is included later in this document.

LINE 11

Same as line 9, but for the ASCII file.

LINE 12

Same as line 10, but for the ASCII file.

LINE 13

{Valid for /RA, /#, and /Other}

Bulletin path. List the directory where your bulletin files are kept as in the following example (don't forget the trailing backslash!):

C:\BBS\Bulletin\

{NOTE TO PCB SYSOPS!}

When using /PCBoard, this option is the PATH to your BLT.LST file. So, if your BLT.LST resided in your F:\PCB\GEN\BLT directory, this line would read as follows (ALWAYS use the trailing backslash!):

F:\PCB\GEN\BLT\

LINES 14 - 113

These lines can contain several different options. I have broken down this section into the different BBS-types, so it will be easier to understand.

For PCBoard (/PCBoard):

|<-- This is the FAR left column

|

123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456780/123456789/

This is a description of bulletin #1

For numeric formats (/#):

|<-- This is the FAR left column

|

123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456780/123456789/ BULLET11.BBS Listing of local BBSs

For alphabetic formats (/RA):

|<-- This is the FAR left column

|

123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456780/123456789/ BULLET12.BBS Latest/greatest software on THIS BBS!

For alphanumeric sequences (/Other):

|<-- This is the FAR left column

|

123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456789/123456780/123456789/ AB BULLETAB.ASC Listing of files on Alpha & Omega BBS

1 BULLET1.ASC How to subscribe to this BBS

1N BULLET1N.TXT How to get coconuts delivered to your house FREE!

8 BLT25.SCR What you're missing by not watching STTNG

{NOTE TO USERS OF ALL FORMATS}

It does not matter whether the filename you state in the config is ascii, ansi, or something else. All Master-B does, is check the file for the date, and nothing else.

That's all there is to the config file. It would probably be easiest to glance over this reference, and just write over the config file provided in this archive. 99 bulletins are supported in this version.

[*] Important note: All the config-file lines should either contain information, or be blank. DO NOT SKIP LINES! Skipping lines will most likely lead to an excessive amount of aggravation. ;-) Master-B MUST find each of the options EXACTLY where they should be. Perhaps I'll make the program a bit less touchy in a future version if enough people have a big enough problem...

H. How to deal with Errors

If you're getting a runtime error of 102, then that means that one (or more) of the files you told Master-B were there, were NOT there, for one reason or another. The current version of this program is NOT error-aware, and will simply abort if it doesn't run perfectly. Just look over the bulletins you've listed in the CFG file, as compared to the file directory.

I. What to do if you find a Real Bug

If you find a real bug in the program, please let me know! If you find something before anyone else, you'll get 1) a registered copy of the FIXED program <grin>, and 2) your name in the DOCS for this program. This is a program I wrote, and it's got my name on it, so I want it to be as "clean" as possible.

J. How to make suggestions

I welcome your ideas for the program! If you have a BBS-type that won't work with Master-B, and you can tell me how to get it to work, you'll get the same rewards as those who find bugs. I want this

program to be as all-encompassing and bug-free as possible, so, if your BBS-type isn't supported, let me know, and I'll include it! Plus, you get a registered version for free!

K. If you have problems

Rule of thumb: Check ALL your resources before consulting with the author. When you've determined that your problem is not triggered because of an error in the config file, or anything else that's under your own control, feel free to contact the author. The address is at the end of the document.

L. How to Register

If you plan to keep using Master-B after the 30 day evaluation period, you must register Master-B with the author.

One-time registration is 5US\$ per copy. I consider this fairly cheap, but I've been wrong before <grin>.

NOTE: The 5US\$ includes registration for THIS version only. If you wish to be registered for all future versions, send 8US\$.

Send all registrations to:

Scott Fell
PO Box 855
Flagstaff, AZ 86002-0855

M. What will happen when you register

- 1) Unregistered notices will disappear.. (.. gee, what novel idea!);
- 2) Master-B will list your name, your BBS name/#, or whatever you want on the final line of the display (in whichever color you wish);
- 3) You'll get free upgrades to future versions of Master-B.

Master-B operates on the key-concept. Once you get your key, the Master-B program you already have will become registered, and the registered features will be unlocked.

Your key can be obtained by calling Quandra BBS, or via FidoNet FREQ.

You can expect your key to be available up to a week after I receive your registration fee. Remember.. DO NOT send cash through the mail; it has this mysterious tendency to disappear into thin air when you send it via the mail service, so only send a check or money order.

Also, if you wish to be sent your key through the mail, instead of by either of the above methods, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope inside your note, and I will send you the key to the program via snailmail.

If you want me to upload the registered key to YOUR BBS, include 2 MORE dollars (for a total of 10\$, folks)--(I can't afford all the long-distance otherwise!). If you aren't in the USA, registration CANNOT be dealt with by this method. If you're going to have me upload the key to your BBS, you will also need to provide me with a PRE-REGISTERED account on your own board. My login should be Scott Fell, password=MASTERB. IF this account does not exist when I call, I will leave you a private message on Quandra with your registration key. I will not call more than once.

N. How to utilize shareware

This program is being distributed by way of the "Shareware" concept, that is, on a "try before you buy" basis. If you continue using this program after the 30-day evaluation period, you MUST register it (if you don't, you're open to FEDERAL prosecution!)

You all know what shareware is.. so support it!

O. How to use ANSI

For the ansi-after display feature, these codes will produce different results. The ESC is the flat-ascii representation of the ASCII #27. To get this control-code, while holding down your alt-key, hit 27 on your keypad, and then release the alt key. You should have a small backwards arrow in that position on your screen. If you put the following codes in the after-ansi display, Master-B will change your cursor color to that shown beside each code.

ESC[0;30m BLACK	ESC[1;30m DK GRAY
ESC[0;31m DK RED	ESC[1;31m LT RED
ESC[0;32m DK GREEN	ESC[1;32m LT GREEN
ESC[0;33m BROWN	ESC[1;33m YELLOW
ESC[0;34m DK BLUE	ESC[1;34m LT BLUE
ESC[0;35m DK MAGENTA	ESC[1;35m LT MAGENTA
ESC[0;36m DK CYAN	ESC[1;36m LT CYAN
ESC[0;37m GRAY	ESC[1;37m WHITE

P. How about that info stuff?

Master-B was written in Turbo Pascal, v6.0
Documentation written with Word Perfect, Galaxy and QEdit
Master-B, first shareware release: 7/14/1992
Master-B, second shareware release: 1/18/1993
With many more to come!!
The example display files are from High-Mountain BBS
Master-B v3.00

Q. What to expect in future versions

These are a few things I'm planning on implementing:
More available headers
Comment-detection for the config-file
Level 1 error-detection
A more graphical approach
Available log-file

R. Who I wish to thank

MANY thanks go to Greg Smith, the sole beta-tester.. if anything is screwed up, it's his fault <grin>. Greg contributed some really good ideas for the program.. THANKS!!!!

S. Where to get support

Quandra BBS	The High Mountain BBS
Flagstaff, Az.	Flagstaff, Az.
Scott Fell	Greg Smith
(602)527-8895 v.32bis	(602)527-8404 HST/v.32

All ThunderStorm Software products on either BBS are always free downloads.

T. How to contact the author

Send all registrations, comments, etc. to:

Scott Fell
PO Box 855
Flagstaff, AZ 86002-0855

BBS #=(602)527-8895 (v.32bis/v.42bis)

FidoNet via node 1:304/7 (FREQ MB for the latest version)
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