

Winlink made Simple

Winlink can get kind of complicated. Mostly because of the similar names for the software. Reviewing the names and uses:

Winlink 2000

This the name of an internet network, with associated amateur radio stations. The radio stations and network enable radio amateurs to send and receive emails via radio, using standard email addresses.

For example:

Ruth, W1MOM in Pullman would have a Winlink email address of w1mom@winlink.org

Bill, WB7UCI in Loon Lake would have a Winlink email address of wb7uci@winlink.org

If they each were operating “portable” and connected via packet to their local VHF/UHF **Winlink Gateway** station, and both of those gateway stations had communications to the internet, Ruth and Bill could exchange emails with each other. In fact they could exchange emails with someone in any country in the world which allowed Third Party Traffic, and had an email address. This would include, of course, the Washington State Emergency Management EOC at Camp Murray.

ARRL Radiograms, ICS Forms, etc. can be imbedded in the email directly, or as Attachments.

If internet connections are lost, Bill and Ruth can still exchange “emails” with each other if they connect to a common **Winlink PMBO Station**.

Generic Packet Software

Hams who want to do radio email can use their regular packet software, probably already on their computer. This is done by Connecting to a Winlink Gateway. The Winlink Gateway will prompt the user with a Greeting and then ask for a Command. Attachments are not supported. *This is the simplest and easiest method to try out the Winlink 2000 radio email system.*

H will give the Help files

I will give information about the Winlink 2000 PMBO station which links the Winlink Gateway station to the internet.

LM will list message numbers for the user.

RM will Read all messages for the user.

R xxxx will read the message with the number of xxxx.

K xxxx will kill (delete) the message with the number of xxxx

KM will kill (delete) all messages for the user

SP SMTP: address@xyz.com will initiate a process to create and send a email to : address@xyz.com . Multiple addresses are separated by commas or semi-colons.

BYE Disconnects

Airmail

This is a User program, used to enable radio email, either on HF, or on VHF/UHF. On VHF /UHF it would access a Winlink Gateway which would have Telpac installed and running, or one of the **Winlink “PMBO” Stations**. PMBO Stations are also gateways to the Winlink 2000 system on HF frequencies

The hardware required for use with Airmail on VHF/UHF is a packet TNC, selected models made by Kantronics, Timewave, HAL, and SCS.

Airmail will work on HF very nicely, using short messages, with a Timewave PK232-MBX TNC, using Pactor 1. Airmail will work on HF certain Kantronics, Timewave, and MFJ TNC’s. Best performance is obtained by using Pactor 2 or 3 with a TNC made by SCS.

Airmail can be used to exchange messages with another ham station, which is also using Airmail, without using the internet. Airmail handles Attachments.

Airmail can also be configured to access the Winlink 2000 system directly, without using a radio, by using a “telnet” connection.

Airmail uses a “handshaking” protocol, which results in a very fast and automatic transfer of emails to be Sent and Received, after being composed offline.

The minimum operating system is Windows 95. Airmail software is free.

Paclink AGW

This is a User program, used to do radio email on VHF/UHF. It would access either a Winlink Gateway station or a Winlink PMBO station.

The hardware required for use with Paclink AGW is most any TNC or Sound Card. Your regular email software (i.e., Outlook) is the user program which would be the Message Window, from which you would compose emails and do SENDS and RECEIVES, with Attachments.

Four other pieces of software are necessary: .NET Framework, AGWPE, Paclink Postoffice, and a normal Windows email program, such as Outlook, Outlook Express, or Eudora.. .NET Framework is a Microsoft product (free). AGEPE is a “middle-ware” program which functions between Outlook and the TNC device you have selected. There is a free version and a \$49 paid version. Paclink Postoffice provide links between the other software. Paclink Postoffice is a free download from the Winlink.org website.

Paclink AGW will function using either a radio or telnet connection. It also uses a fast and efficient “handshaking” protocol.

The minimum operating system needed is Windows 2000. Paclink AGW is free.

Telpac

Software which is used by a VHF/UHF “Winlink Gateway” station, to enable VHF/UHF packet users to access the email part of the internet. It is NOT installed on the computer of the VHF/UHF packet user. It is installed on the computer of a ham who wants to act as a local gateway to the internet for local users who want to do radio email.

Either a dial-up or continuous internet connection will work. The “Winlink Gateway” does not have to be a 24/7 operation. It will work best if the station is located on a high local spot, and users can connect directly, however it will work fine, but slower, if accessed through a digipeater. It is recommended that the installation of a Winlink Gateway station (or stations) be your #1 priority for ARES/RACES implementation in your area. Multiple Winlink Gateway stations, operating on different frequencies, will provide additional through-put capability and redundancy.

The easiest option, of two, to create a Winlink Gateway, is to use the Telpac software directly with a Kantronics or MFJ TNC.

It will also work with most any brand of TNC or Sound Card, if used with the AGWPE “middle-ware” software.

The minimum operating system is Windows 98. Telpac software is free.

All of the software mentioned can be downloaded or linked from www.winlink.org
Much additional information about Winlink 2000 is also available from that website.

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