

Subject: Newsgroups via NNTP

From: Mervyn Bick <invalid@invalid.invalid>

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Newsgroups: dbase.getting-started

One of dBASE's better kept secrets seems to be the fact that the newsgroups are available in NNTP format from news.dbase.com.

Looking back through messages in the newsgroups I'm surprised at how many people, including some longtime users, are still accessing the news groups via Web_News

Access to the newsgroups is essential for any dBASE user as this is the main source of support. The link on the dBASE web-site to the newsgroups via Web_News is, therefore, ideal for introducing new users to the newsgroups. This introduction should, however, be as far as it goes.

Although Web_News provides quick and easy initial access to the newsgroups it can be extremely frustrating to use. One needs to access Web-News manually using a browser each time one needs to access the newsgroups. Once Web-News is open one needs to "trawl" all the newsgroups of interest one by one. New messages are not marked as such so one needs to remember what one has read previously. It is not possible to save a partially completed message so that one can come back to it later. All in all it soon becomes a real PITA to use.

Some, but unfortunately not all, email clients support News accounts. For example Windows Live Mail did, Windows Mail doesn't.

If your current email client supports News accounts simply open a new News account with news.dbase.com as the server. If the email client want both upload and download servers use news.dbase.com for both. No username nor password required. Set the various options to suit your preferences or accept the defaults which can, of course, be changed later. You will be presented with a list of all the newsgroups on the server from which you can select those you're interested in. That's all it takes.

Depending on the settings you have selected, the email client should check for new messages when it opens and then at regular intervals thereafter. Any new messages will be clearly indicated. No more "trawling" which will, in turn, give time for better things.

If your current email client doesn't support News accounts it will only take a few minutes to download and install a suitable program. There are many options available on the Internet but my preference is Thunderbird. I use Thunderbird for both email and the newsgroups but whether you retain your current email client and only use Thunderbird for the newsgroups or whether you also move your email to Thunderbird (or whatever client you've decided on) is up to you.

One quirk to remember if you opt for Thunderbird. The "Reply" button is for email messages. To reply to a newsgroup message use the "Follow Up" button.

If, after you've accessed the newsgroups using the NNTP feed, you still prefer Web-News I'll buy you as much beer as you can drink the next time you're in Johannesburg. 😊

Mervyn.

