
2 Getting Started on SYS\$COMMAND

This section contains information for new users of the SYS\$COMMAND BBS. In this section, step-by-step information will be provided for some of the basic functions of the BBS.

The intended audience for this section is those who ordered this information by phone or by mail, and have not yet set up their own account on The SYS\$COMMAND BBS. It will also be useful to those who have already made their first call to SYS\$COMMAND, and have signed up through the on-line questionnaire(s), but are not totally familiar with the BBS or with the Wildcat! BBS software which provides the Bulletin Board Service.

2.1 Introduction to the Wildcat! PC BBS System

The SYS\$COMMAND BBS uses the Wildcat! PC BBS software from Mustang Software, Inc. Veteran PC-BBS users may already be familiar with it. If you are new to the world of PC BBS systems, the information following will help you get the most out of your on-line experience.

The SYS\$COMMAND BBS provides you the ability to set up your own account on the system, where upon you become a "new user". As a new user, your privileges are very restricted. You can only download certain files such as the list of files available, a mail-in membership form, and certain other files designated as free downloads by the "sysop".

"Sysop" is a term in BBS lingo used to refer to the "System Operator". Much like a VMS System Manager, the BBS Sysop is responsible for the daily operation of the system, including backups, reports and other tasks. It is also the Sysop's job to review the system and, from time to time as needed, respond to situations relating to the users, including, but not limited to, difficulty in accessing the system, messages to the Sysop, behavior among the users which may be considered inappropriate, and the other everyday needs of the BBS.

Getting back to you, the new user, even with your limited privileges, you can communicate with the Sysop should you have needs which require a response outside of the normal sign-up process. Just select the "C" option from the Main Menu to leave a comment for the Sysop.

Speaking of menus, the Wildcat! PC BBS software in use on The SYS\$COMMAND BBS has a very specific structure of menus. Everything you need from SYS\$COMMAND as an information service is available within those limits.

2.2 Making Your First Call to The SYS\$COMMAND BBS

If you haven't already called SYS\$COMMAND and set up your user account, let's go ahead and do that now.

At the time this manual is being written (Autumn 1995), the number for The SYS\$COMMAND BBS is 630-830-3180. An update to this manual will be issued should

You may enter your full name as "firstname lastname" (separated by a space) at the first name prompt; however, the system will only accept the first two "words" on the line. An entry such as "Ronald J. McDonald" will be interpreted as "Ronald J.", and the "McDonald" part will be ignored.

On your first call, the system will not find your name in its user file (at least, it shouldn't, anyway). It will announce this and ask if your name is spelled correctly. If it is, answer "Y" to this prompt; if the spelling of your name is not displayed the way you entered it, or if there is some error in the way you entered your name, you can go back and start over by answering "N" to this prompt.

Note: Like VMS, you only get three tries at getting your name right before the system will hang up on you!

Next the system will ask you for a password. Enter something you can easily remember, yet something difficult for others to guess. Like VMS, your password cannot be retrieved; unlike VMS, the Sysop cannot change your password to let you in. If you forget your password, all we can do is delete your account and let you start over as a new user. If you have subscribed to SYS\$OUTPUT, your original status will be re-instated with your original anniversary (expiration) date.

Like VMS, the system will ask you to re-enter your password to verify that you are reasonably sure of what you typed. If this second password entry matches the first, you will be allowed to continue.

2.4 The SYS\$COMMAND BBS New User Questionnaire

On your first call to the system, every new user must complete the new user questionnaire.

Answers to this poll are expected to be honest and verifiable. Certain information may even be requested during an on-line session to verify that you are who you said you are. User accounts on this system are not transferable. It is prohibited for any user of the SYS\$COMMAND BBS to divulge their user name and password to another person for the purpose of allowing someone else to use your account. To help enforce this rule, certain personal information is requested during the new user questionnaire so the system can later verify your identity.

After completing the New User Questionnaire, you will have achieved New User status. This allows you to review the bulletins, leave comments to the Sysop and to download certain files. Please review the bulletins while on-line to determine which files are available for free download.

2.5 Your Status as a New User of The SYS\$COMMAND BBS

As a New User of The SYS\$COMMAND BBS, your privileges are somewhat restricted as to what you can look at, what you can do, what you can download, who you can leave messages for, and how long you can be on the system everyday.

Please review the bulletins (new users DO have access) to find out what you can access, and how much time you are allowed everyday as a new user. You may also download the text of the current bulletins - it's a freebie! Look for BULLTINS.ZIP or BULLTINS.EXE in file area "A" or file area "1". BULLTINS.EXE is a self-extracting

archive. Or, you can download both BULLTINS.ZIP and PKZ204G.EXE. The latter is a self-extracting archive which contains the shareware version of the PKZIP and PKZUNZIP utilities. See the Chapter of this manual on File Transfers for an explanation of archives, PK(UN)ZIP and self-extracting archives.

Your New User status is also limited in that it has an expiration date. Check the bulletins for the current policy. At the time of this writing, New Users are deleted from the system after 60 days. We feel that two months is sufficient time to assess The SYS\$COMMAND BBS and see if it can be useful to you. If you wish to subscribe to The SYS\$COMMAND BBS, you should do so during this 60 day period.

2.6 What Happens Everytime You Call The SYS\$COMMAND BBS

Once you have become a new user, you will not be asked to complete the new user questionnaire again, except as noted in the earlier discussion of a lost or forgotten password.

Now, when you call up the BBS, the system first checks whether any of the bulletins have been updated since your last call. If so, it will tell you, by number, which ones may contain new or revised information. It then offers you the option of reviewing the bulletins by going directly to the bulletin menu - the default answer will be "Y" for "yes". You have the option to bypass this and proceed. If there are no new bulletins, you will still be offered that option; however, the default answer to this prompt will be "N" for "No".

Next the system will check to see if you have any new messages. If so, you will be asked if you want to read them. If not, the system will tell you that,also.

The System may then offer you quote for the day - a clever quip or a bit of wisdom (a "fortune cookie", so to speak) before proceeding to the Main Menu.

2.7 The SYS\$COMMAND BBS - Main Menu

The Main Menu is the starting point on your journey through the world of information. Depending on your access level, your options at this point may be limited. The menu as displayed will accurately represent those functions to which you have access.

Some Common Options:

- B Go to the Bulletins Menu
- C Leave a Comment for the Sysop
- F Go to the File Menu
- G Logoff ("Goodbye!")
- J Join a Conference
- M Go to the Messaging Menu

Remember the "G" option - it's used in other places as well to allow you to logoff of the BBS without the need for wending your way back through all of the menus to the main menu.

2.8 The SYS\$COMMAND BBS - Bulletin Menu

The bulletin menu shows you what bulletins are available on the board for your review.

Bulletins include information pertaining to the BBS and its policies, news submitted by BBS users, and other announcements of general interest.

As a service to the users, the Sysop(s) will also prepare an archive containing the text of the bulletins as a free download for all users. This will be provided as a compressed archive (a .ZIP file) and as a self-extracting archive. Look for BULLTINS.ZIP or BULLTINS.EXE in file area "A" or file area "1".

To review the bulletins on line, select the one you want to read by number from the bulletin menu. If you press ENTER alone with no selection, you will be returned to the Main BBS Menu.

Note that the Bulletin Menu does not have a "G" ("Goodbye") option.

2.9 The SYS\$COMMAND BBS - File Area Menu

The File Area Menu tells you what file options are available, including, but not limited to, Upload, Download and List.

The List option produces a sub-menu prompt which asks you to enter which file area you wish to see listed, or offers a List ("?") option which presents a display showing the current file areas, their names and their numbers or letters. You may enter the identifier of one or more file areas. All selected areas will be listed.

There is also an option to Read a text file, rather than download it. However, to save money on your phone bill, and as a courtesy to other BBS users who may want to dial in, you are encouraged to download any files you want to read, and then read them off-line.

2.9.1 Transferring Files To VMS

In general, there are only two types of files that you transfer to a VMS or OpenVMS System: a text or ASCII file, and a "binary" file.

ASCII or text files include DCL procedures, program source files, documentation in text only form, listings, reports, etc. These can usually be transferred simply as ASCII files, with few or no unwanted effects on the VMS side.

Binary files include VMS Library files such as text libraries (.TLB), object libraries (.OLB), macro libraries (.MLB) or help libraries (.HLB). Or, a binary file might be a VMS executable (.EXE). In all such cases, you must take care to ensure that these are received on VMS as files having 512 byte fixed length records. The VMS Librarian cannot handle other formats. The image activator may accept .EXE files in other formats, but this is not recommended since .EXE files in other formats may be corrupted or may contain viruses.

See the chapters in this manual on file transfers to VMS for more in-depth information.

2.9.2 Transferring Files To/from the BBS Using A PC.

Most PC terminal or communications programs provide a reasonably user-friendly interface to the file transfer function. Refer to your program's documentation for specific information. We'll only cover the basics here.

As mentioned in the previous section, in general, there are only two types of files that you transfer to or from a Bulletin Board System: a text or ASCII file, and a "binary" file. The distinction is made, even though MS-DOS, Windows, Windows/95, OS/2, etc. view files only as a continuous stream of data without regard to the content or structure. This is done because even though these systems make no distinction, OpenVMS does.

You can download files from The SYS\$COMMAND BBS to your PC, then transfer them to your OpenVMS system, as long as you pay attention to the types of files you're transferring.

2.9.2.1 Downloading Files From the BBS Using A PC.

Select the (D)ownload option from the File Menu of the BBS.

The BBS will ask you what protocol to use for the download unless you have specified a preferred protocol in your user profile.

Then, the BBS will ask you what file(s) you want to download. If your download protocol is YMODEM or ZMODEM, you may specify more than one file at a time, up to five files or so. To get the filenames, use the (L)ist option to view the files available.

After you have selected the file(s) to download, the BBS will indicate that it is ready and that you should start your download. If your communications program supports ZMODEM auto-download, we recommend the you enable this option. If you do, then you will not need to manually activate the ZMODEM download.

2.9.2.2 Transferring Downloaded Files From the PC to OpenVMS.

Once you have downloaded the files to your PC, you can transfer them to your VMS system.

You will probably need C-Kermit for OpenVMS. See Chapter 3 of this manual for more specific information on Kermit file transfers. Refer also to the Kermit documentation or the on-line help in Kermit.

Users of Reflection products from Walker, Richer and Quinn should refer to Chapter 4 of this manual for information specific to those products.

Pathworks Users take note:

The NFT command **WILL NOT** copy the files correctly for use with VMS. You MUST use C-Kermit or some other transfer method.

2.9.2.3 Uploading Files To the BBS Using A PC.

Select the (U)pload option from the File Menu of the BBS.

The BBS will ask you what protocol to use for the upload unless you have specified a preferred protocol in your user profile.

Then, the BBS will ask you to describe the file(s) you want to upload. You will be asked to supply the filename (including the extension) and a brief description of up to two lines of up to 32 characters each. If your upload protocol is YMODEM or ZMODEM, you may specify more than one file at a time, up to five files or so.

After you have described the file(s) to upload, the BBS will indicate that it is ready and that you should start your upload. Then, you will need to set up your upload and manually activate the communication program's upload function.

Refer to your communication program's documentation for information on how to do this BEFORE you attempt an upload!