

TALK

TALK is a background program for the IBM PC which allows multiple stations to engage in a simultaneous conversation. Messages can be sent to the entire TALK community, to a named group of individuals, or to a single individual. Information is displayed in a pop-up screen window which does not affect an application program in progress.

OPERATION

Once installed, TALK is always active in the background. A window can be caused to appear on the screen which contains four areas:

- (a) A typing buffer used to compose outgoing messages
- (b) A display area for the script of messages sent and received
- (c) A list of known station names, with the ones you are sending to marked
- (d) A list of known groups, with the one are sending to marked

See an example of the TALK screen at the end of this document.

To make the window appear on the screen, the TALK trigger character may be typed at any time. The default trigger character is <ctrl>-T, but it can be changed to another character at the time TALK is installed. To close the window you can repeat the trigger character, or type Q <return>. You can also arrange for the TALK window to pop up automatically when a message is received.

To send a message to the current destination, simply type a sentence and press RETURN. Many of the usual DOS editing keys are available, including <backspace>, <ESC>, <F1>, and <F3>. If the message is successfully sent to at least one of the destination stations, it

will appear in the large script window along with messages you receive from other stations.

The cursor arrow keys are used to change the destination stations. To change from a group to an individual destination or back, use the up and down arrow keys. To change the particular group or individual destination, use the left and right arrow keys.

The top two windows show the current destination by highlighting the groups or individuals selected. Initially the destination is the group ALL, to which all individuals belong, so the "Group:" header is highlighted as well as the groupname "ALL" and all individuals in the user list. The right and left arrow keys can be used to select a different group, and the group name as well as the individuals in that group will be highlighted. The downarrow key will highlight the "User:" header and allow an individual to be selected by using the right and left arrow keys until the individual's name is highlighted.

In addition to the displayed script page, two additional pages are saved and may be viewed by using the PgUp and PgDn keys. New script lines are always added at the bottom of the last page, even if it is not currently visible, and all screens will scroll up.

Various beeps, tweedles, and whoops are generated by TALK to give audible feedback of events. They are difficult to describe in words, but you may be able to recognize a unique sound for each of the following:

1. A message has been received while the window is closed.
2. A message has been received and the window is popping up automatically.
3. A message has been received while the window is open.
4. A new individual has been added to the TALK community.
5. A message could not be sent to a particular individual and he will be removed from your "Users:" list.
6. TALK cannot obey your request.

INSTALLATION

To install TALK, simply issue the command "TALK". All options will default to standard values.

When TALK has been successfully installed, it will display the message "TALK version x.xx installed". Only one copy of TALK may be installed, and a second installation attempt will result in an error message.

To define your symbolic name and the groups to which you belong, use the DOS "SET" command before TALK is installed as in the following

examples:

```
set user=ljs
set group=rnd,staff
```

You may have only one "user" name, and if none is supplied your name will be the station address. You may also indicate membership in one or more groups whose names are separated by commas as shown above. A group is defined by the first individual to join it. There is always one predefined group called "ALL" to which all individuals belong.

The SET commands must be in effect before TALK has been installed. Typically the autoexec.bat file on your booted drive will contain "set user" and "set group" statements immediately preceding the "talk" installation command.

COMMAND LINE OPTIONS

Any or all of the following optional parameters may appear on the command line at the time TALK is installed. Options should be separated from each other by one or more spaces. Letter case is not significant.

```
KEY nn
or KEY 0 mm
or KEY Fn
```

This option changes the trigger character from the default of <ctrl>-T to the ascii character whose code is "nn", or the extended keycode character whose code is "mm", or the function key number "n". Numbers may be in decimal, or in hexadecimal if preceded by a dollar sign. Example: "talk key 0 104" will install talk with the trigger key of <alt><f1>. See the IBM Technical Reference manual for the ascii and extended keycode values.

POPUP

This option will cause the TALK window to automatically open ("pop up") when a message is received. Without this option, you will hear a sound to indicate that a message was received, but the window will not be opened until you type the trigger character.

```
POPDOWN
or POPDOWN nn
```

If you have specified POPUP and also specify POPDOWN, then the window will close ("pop down") automatically if it opened automatically and no characters were typed for nn seconds. If you omit nn, the time defaults to 15 seconds. This is useful if you like the POPUP mode but wish the window to close and your computer to resume whatever operation was in progress without your having to type anything.

TIMESTAMP

This option causes each message displayed in the script window to be preceded with the time (hour:minute) that it was received.

USERWINDOW n

This option changes the size of the window used to display the names of other users running TALK. The default is 3 lines, but you can make it from 1 to 10 lines. If it's too big you simply have less space in the script window for saved messages. If it's too small for the number of users running TALK, some of the names will scroll out of the user window and you won't see them.

CHANNEL n

This changes the logical communications channel that TALK uses to send and receive messages. All users running TALK on the same channel will be able to communicate with each other, but not with users running TALK on other channels. This serves to divide TALK users into separate communities, which is useful for very large organizations.

The default channel is 0. If a channel other than zero is chosen, the channel number will be shown in the upper right corner of the window.

COLOR \$nn

This can be used to change colors used for the characters if you have a color display. Since TALK uses at least four different kinds of character attributes, the effect of this parameter is complicated. Some nice values to choose for the standard color screen are \$11, \$21, \$2f, \$31, \$71, and \$4f.

For those interested in the details, the COLOR parameter is used as follows: whatever value you specify (in hex after the dollar sign) is exclusive-ORed with the character attribute that TALK would otherwise

have used. Those attributes, and the effects and use on a monochrome display, are:

| attribute | effect | use |
|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| \$07 | normal characters | normal text |
| \$0f | bold characters | selected group/user |
| \$01 | underlined characters | user being probed |
| \$09 | bold underlined characters | user being sent a message |

The byte which results after the exclusive-OR operation with the COLOR value is used as the character attribute byte, whose bits are interpreted by the color adapter hardware as follows:

F BBB FFFF

where F=1 creates blinking characters, BBB represents the background color, and FFFF represents the foreground (character) color.

You should avoid flashing characters, and any combination of foreground character on the same color background. Eliminating those combinations leaves the following acceptable COLOR values:

| Back ground | Acceptable COLOR values | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| black | \$00 | | \$02 | \$03 | \$04 | \$05 | \$06 | | \$08 | | \$0a | \$0b | \$0c | \$0d | \$0e | |
| blue | | \$11 | \$12 | \$13 | \$14 | \$15 | | \$17 | | \$19 | \$1a | \$1b | \$1c | \$1d | | \$1f |
| green | \$20 | \$21 | \$22 | | \$24 | | \$26 | \$27 | \$28 | \$29 | \$2a | | \$2c | | \$2e | \$2f |
| cyan | \$30 | \$31 | | \$33 | | \$35 | \$36 | \$37 | \$38 | \$39 | | \$3b | | \$3d | \$3e | \$3f |
| red | \$40 | \$41 | \$42 | | \$44 | | \$46 | \$47 | \$48 | \$49 | \$4a | | \$4c | | \$4e | \$4f |
| magenta | \$50 | \$51 | | \$53 | | \$55 | \$56 | \$57 | \$58 | \$59 | | \$5b | | \$5d | \$5e | \$5f |
| brown | \$60 | | \$62 | \$63 | \$64 | \$65 | \$66 | | \$68 | | \$6a | \$6b | \$6c | \$6d | \$6e | |
| grey | | \$71 | \$72 | \$73 | \$74 | \$75 | | \$77 | | \$79 | \$7a | \$7b | \$7c | \$7d | | \$7f |

Not all of these are aesthetically pleasing, naturally, but every value shown will allow all the characters to be visible.

OTHER NOTES

1. TALK does not currently support any of the graphic screen modes. If you try to open the TALK window while the screen is in a graphic mode, it will generate an error sound and ignore the request. Messages will continue to be received and can be displayed when the screen is back in a text mode.

2. TALK inserts itself in the processing chain for the following interrupts: keyboard buffer (int 16h), timer (int 08h), and the

Level 4 exit. Operation in the presence of other interceptors of those interrupts who are not transparent is not guaranteed.

3. TALK takes about 22K bytes of resident space after installation.

Example of a TALK window

```
screen win TALK 0.47
progress.  Groups: ALL RMD OPS PUBS TECH

There is, Users: ljs esp Terry doug kcy geb sampc nick njr $4E zuzu HarryS
exists, th nick guy_eds clive gary
useful.

OPERATION cmb>ALL:show station
Terry>ALL:huh?
Terry>ALL: Anyone for lunch?
kcy>ALL:this is a test
kcy>ALL:what are these lines at the top
ljs>ALL:what lines?
HarryS>ljs:hi there!! Louis there???
ljs>ALL:No.
ljs>HarryS:I mean, no.
ljs>HarryS:See me re Diane McCabe at Morrison Foerster when you get
station na a chance.
Terry>ALL:?
To make th ljs>ALL:Well, ? to you too
may be typ Terry>ALL:When do we eat?
but it can :Well, ? to you too
installed.

Written OK B1 1 23/141
```

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