

Jerry Reimer, KK5CA wrote:

You have recently read about Winlink in QST (Public Service column in August & September 2004 QST, "Winlink 2000 in the Jungle" in the November 2004 QST). You have read all sorts of negative comments about it on QRZ and eHam. Quit reading about it and try it for yourself! Reading the menu is never as satisfying as eating the meal.

Jerry
KK5CA

Since it's beginning, the development and deployment of the Winlink system has been by individuals and small groups who recognize the value this system has, and they have made a personal commitment to implement it. Not everyone with an Amateur Radio license has such vision, or is willing to make such a commitment. Some do, and will; others do not, and they will not. Some among us are leading the present surge of Winlink deployment. Some are leaders, and some are followers. The leaders do not need advice from me, because you are making it happen.

For those who are less leader and more follower, be patient a little while longer. A committee of ARRL leaders is working on a detailed plan of how to roll out Winlink to the interested sections. One concept is to form teams of Winlink knowledgeable people to work with the ARRL leadership in each interested section. These teams will do presentations and hands-on workshops at conventions, hamfests, and so forth, as well as provide technical and operational guidance to SM, SEC, STM, and other ARRL and ARES officials.

For the 10 percent of hams using Linux, a German ham just started beta testing a Linux version of the Winlink Telpac module; be patient a little longer. Some Mac OS users report success running the Winlink client applications with Windows emulation applications.

For the over 80 percent of hams using Windows 95 or newer Windows OS (ARRL survey), the Winlink world is at your doorstep. Answer that knock of opportunity and open the door.

For those who are too impatient to wait for the ARRL, here is one step-by-step plan. Start simple and build knowledge and experience. Do not progress to the next step or phase until you are successful at the current step or phase. Please carefully observe that there is not any mention of HF until the last step, step 18. Those who have gone through steps 1-16, in order, have found great success. Many who try to start at step 17 or 18 struggle, and are not always successful. You can go through steps 1 through 16 without purchasing a SCS PTC TNC, or any other HF Pactor TNC.

Phase 1

1. Get your own Airmail program working on packet (Win95, Win98, NT, Win2K, XP) with a hardware TNC
2. Help someone else to run Airmail on packet with a hardware TNC
3. Send packet messages back and forth on VHF or UHF FM simplex
4. Send some attachments

Phase 2

5. Send messages back and forth through a packet digipeater
6. Send messages back and forth through a packet node or switch
7. Coach others how to install, configure and use Airmail

Phase 3

8. Get a VHF/UHF Telpac gateway station going (Win98, Win2K, XP)
9. Send messages through the Telpac gateway station
10. Send messages with attachments through the Telpac gateway station
11. Send messages through a packet digipeater or node or switch to the Telpac gateway station
12. Send messages to your emergency management office from a field location

Phase 4

13. Go to your emergency management office
 - Park your car outside, with a KaNode in it (KPC3 into a mobile rig)
 - Carry in your laptop, KPC3 and hand-held radio
 - Compose a message for one of them, using their e-mail address
 - Connect to your mobile node
 - Connect to the Telpac gateway
 - Send your message
 - Tell the EMA person to go and read his e-mail

Phase 5

14. Learn how to install and use Paclink or Paclink AGW (Win2K, XP, compatible hardware TNC or AGWPE Pro)
15. Coach others how to install, configure and use Paclink AGW
16. Provide a demonstration of the seamless way Paclink and Paclink AGW can allow emergency management access to the packet system when they lose local Internet

Phase 6

17. Install a VHF and/or UHF Winlink 2000 PMBO at the Emergency Management Office (contact K4CJX)

Phase 7

18. Consider adding portable HF capabilities where appropriate

All of the software is free and immediately available for download.
www.winlink.org/client.htm
www.airmail2000.com