A.N.A.L.O.G.
COMPUTING

Telecommunications System (TCS) Guide

ANALOG COMPUTING
Telecommunications System (TCS)

by Tom Hudson

The **ANALOG Computing Telecommunications System** (**TCS**) is a subscriber-only electronic bulletin board for users of Atari personal computers. Before signing onto the system, read this guide to be sure you understand the various functions of the **TCS**.

General notes.

The **ANALOG Computing TCS** runs on either 300 or 1200 baud, full duplex. Baud rate is automatically determined at connect time, and you do not need to take any special action. Just be sure that your modem is set up properly.

Pressing CTRL-S (CTRL and S keys simultaneously) at any time will pause the display. CTRL-Q (CTRL and Q keys simultaneously) will resume transmission.

The **TCS** will accept input in upper or lower case characters at all times.

At many points, the **TCS** will ask questions that require a Y (YES) or N (NO) response. These prompts will only accept Y or N as a response, and no carriage return is needed.

The > character is used to indicate that the **TCS** is waiting for a command or other input. Simply type the command or text and press RETURN to terminate the line.

At any time during input to the **TCS**, pressing the CTRL and V keys simultaneously will redisplay text that the **TCS** has received, allowing you to backspace if needed to correct the line.

Using the TCS.

After you receive your personal user ID and password card in the mail, you're ready to enter the fascinating world of computer telecommunications.

To use the **ANALOG Computing TCS**, dial 1-617-892-1446, using either 300 or 1200 baud (the **TCS** adjusts automatically).

When you're connected, the **TCS** system will ask:

Do you require linefeeds (Y/N)?

Press Y if your computer requires linefeeds, and N if it does not. If you're not sure whether your terminal program requires linefeeds or not, press Y.

The **TCS** will display a title message, then ask:

User ID or INFO
>

To subscribe on-line with your MasterCard or VISA, type INFO and press RETURN. Follow the instructions to start your subscription. You may also pay by check or money order, using the card in the back of **ANALOG Computing** (allow two weeks for processing).

If you are already a subscriber, type in your user ID number and press RETURN. This is the four-digit number on the card sent to you.

After you enter your ID number, the **TCS** will ask:

Password
>

Type in the password shown on your **TCS** card and press RETURN. When typing in your password, the **TCS** *will not* echo the characters back to you. This is a security measure so that others who might be in the room cannot see your password on the screen.

If you make an error typing your password, the **TCS** will allow you to try again.

After you've signed on, the **TCS** will scan for messages that are waiting to be read and print the message headings for you. To read these messages (if any), use the message center (function M).

At this point, you will be at the **TCS** command level, and will see:

On for 01 minutes
COMMAND>

This is the central command prompt for the **TCS**. All **TCS** functions are reached by typing one-letter commands, which are described below. If you're not sure what the commands are, press RETURN. The **TCS** will display:

Valid commands:
A,B,C,D,F,H,L,M,N,P,Q,T,U or ?x
The **TCS** will explain any of these one-letter

functions when you type a question mark, followed by the letter of the function you would like explained. For example, ?A RETURN will get you an explanation of function A.

Now let's take a brief look at the available commands.

Atari news.

Want to find out what's happening in the world of Atari computers? Function A lets you do just that. After entering function A, you'll see something like this:

*** Atari news ***
News items numbered from 0001 to 0035
News functions: <S>can <R>ead <E>xit
>

<S>can

To scan through the news items, type S and press RETURN. You can scan a single news item (such as 14), a range of items (like 14-24) or all of the items, by typing A. Terminate all entries with RETURN.

You also have the option to look for certain key words in the news item subject. For example, if you want to print all news items with ST in the subject, type ST and press RETURN. The **TCS** might list the following items:

0007 03/14/85 ATARI **ST** FEATURES
0012 03/16/85 A NEW **ST**ART
0023 03/22/85 130**ST** PRICING

The first field shown in these news items is the item number. Use this to refer to the item you want to read. The second field is the news item date, and the last field is the item description.

<R>ead

To read an item or group of items, type R and press RETURN. As with the SCAN option, you may enter a single item number, a range, or A for all.

The **TCS** will display each message, pausing after each one to ask:

<E>xit or RETURN to continue

To stop reading and return to the beginning of the news section, type E and press RETURN. Otherwise, simply press RETURN, and the next news item will be displayed.

<E>xit

The last option in the news section, EXIT, will return you to the main **TCS** command prompt. Just press E followed by RETURN.

Other bulletin boards.

If you'd like to find out about other BBS systems, use the B command. You can search for bulletin boards by state, if desired. For example, if you want to search for all BBS systems in New York, type NY and press RETURN. Typing N* will list those BBS systems in states starting with the letter N.

Pressing RETURN at this prompt will list all BBS systems on file.

This list is updated regularly. If you know of an operational BBS that is not on our list, drop us a note with the information, via function F (FEEDBACK)!

Chat with the Sysop.

From time to time, when one of the **TCS** Sysops are available, the CHAT function (C) will be enabled. With this function, you can "talk" directly to the **ANALOG Computing** staff via your keyboard. Simply type in a C and press RETURN at the main command prompt.

If the Sysop is busy, you'll be informed. Otherwise, you will see:

SYSOP notified, one moment please...

The **TCS** system will "buzz" the Sysop for thirty seconds. If the Sysop can't talk at the moment, the chat request will be aborted.

If the Sysop *can* chat, you'll enter CHAT mode and can begin typing to the Sysop. When you're done chatting, simply press the CTRL and C keys simultaneously, and you will return to the main command prompt.

If you've got an important subject to discuss with the Sysop and can't reach him with the CHAT function, leave a message in the message center or via FEEDBACK (function F).

Downloading programs.

To download a file using XMODEM protocol, use the D function. You will see:

*** Download file ***
Current unit: 01 (General)
Download options: D,E,R,S,U or ?x

For help with any option, type a question mark followed by the letter of the option and press RETURN.

<D>ownload

The D option allows you to download a file from the current download unit to your computer, using XMODEM protocol (to change the download unit, see U option).

After selecting this option, you will be asked for a filename. Type the filename of the file you'd like to download, such as RETRO.OBJ, and press RETURN. Use the S (SCAN) option to scan available files. To abort the download, just press RETURN when asked for a filename.

After you type the filename, the computer will begin the download. Place your terminal program in XMODEM download mode at this time. When the download is finished, the **TCS** will return to the download options prompt.

<E>xit

The E option is used to return you to the

TCS main command prompt.

<R>ead

The R option allows you to read a file from the current download unit (to change download units, see the U option). Enter the filename of the file you want to read. To abort the read option, press RETURN. Don't try to read .OBJ files, as these aren't in a readable format. The **TCS** will ignore any such files.

After typing the filename, the **TCS** will proceed to print the file to your screen. If you don't have a terminal program with XMODEM, you may be able to use a capture buffer with the READ command in order to download a program.

Usually, you'll use the READ option to check the documentation (.DOC) files. It's a good idea to download or capture the .DOC files when you download a program, so you'll have the program information handy.

<S>can

The S option allows you to scan through the files on the current download unit. When asked for a filename, enter the filename you would like to search for, such as RETRO.BAS. You can use the *, ? and all other valid Atari filename characters. Typing *.* will list all files, and *.BAS will list all BASIC files. The files are listed in this format:

```
RETRO   BAS  045
RETRO   OBJ  012
RETRO   DOC  005
```

The number to the right of the filename is the file length in double-density sectors. Remember to allow twice this length if you're using a single-density drive.

<U>nit change

The U option allows you to select the file unit to use for downloading. These units are categorized as follows:

```
01 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .General
02 . . . . . . . . .Telecommunications
03 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Utilities
04 . . . . . . . . .Sound and graphics
05 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Education
06 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Home uses
07 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Science
08 . . . . . . . . . . .Entertainment #1
09 . . . . . . . . . . .Entertainment #2
10 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .Forum
```

When you enter the U option, you will see:

File unit 1-10 >

Type the number of the unit you would like to use, followed by RETURN. Pressing only RETURN will leave the file unit unchanged. Typing an invalid unit number will cause the prompt to be repeated.

Feedback to the Sysop.

If you would like to ask the **TCS** system operators questions, inform them of problems, or leave a short note, you can use the F function, FEEDBACK. When you enter the F function, you'll be routed to the MINI-EDITOR to compose your message. See the MINI-EDITOR section for details on its use.

After composing your message and exiting the MINI-EDITOR, the **TCS** will automatically store your message to the Sysop and return you to the main command prompt.

Help!

The H command will list each letter function, with a brief description of each. You can use this as a quick reminder. Also, as new **TCS** commands are added, you can use this list to help you learn the new commands.

Listing other users.

The L command will allow you to list all the **TCS** users and their ID numbers, for use in the message center. You can search by last name, city and/or state, using the * character for a wild card, if you like. There are three prompts:

Last name to search for or [RETURN]
>
City to search for or [RETURN]
>
State to search for or [RETURN]
>

For example, to list all people in New York state, you would press RETURN, RETURN, and then type NY and press RETURN. Selected users are listed with their ID number, like this:

```
4982   FRED          FRUEGLE
       NEW YORK      NY
5788   DAVID         GOLIATH
       BROOKLYN      NY
```

Typing RETURN in response to a prompt will turn off the search for that field. Typing RETURN in response to all prompts will list all users.

Sending messages.

The MESSAGE CENTER (command M) is a place to leave messages for other **TCS** users. If you need help with a programming problem, or have found a new way to derive a square root, let the other **TCS** members know it! When you enter the message center, you'll see something like:

*** Message center ***

Messages numbered from 0190 to 0240
Message functions: C,E,P,R,S or ?x
Typing a question mark followed by the letter of the function you'd like to see and pressing RETURN will explain that function.

<C>ompose message

Upon entering the COMPOSE function, you will be routed to the **TCS** MINI-EDITOR.

See the MINI-EDITOR section for details on its use.

After you exit the editor, you will be asked:
Send to ID# (0000 = SYSOP, 9999 = ALL)
>

Type the four-digit user ID of the person you want to receive the message, or 0000 to route the message to the Sysop, or 9999 to send the message to everyone on the **TCS**.

Subject (20 chars max)
>

Type the subject of the message and press RETURN.

If your message is sent to the Sysop or a particular user, you have the option of storing the message privately, so that only that user may read it.

After entering this information, your message will be stored.

<E>xit

The E function will exit the message center and return you to the main command prompt.

<P>ersonal messages

The P function will print only those messages addressed to you. You have the option of reading only new messages or all messages addressed to you that are still on file. After reading your messages, you may delete them, if desired.

<R>ead messages

The R function allows you to read a message or group of messages, with an option to search for specific key words in the message subject. After reading each message, you may continue reading by pressing RETURN, or return to the beginning of the message center by typing E and pressing RETURN. If the message was addressed to you, you may delete it by typing D and pressing RETURN.

<S>can messages

The S function allows you to scan a single message or group of messages, searching for key words in the subject field. Matching messages will have their headings printed like this:

#:0250 03/17/85 12:04
Fm:4862
To:3665 * [PRIVATE]
Sb:DOWNLOAD HELP

The * character in the "To:" line indicates that the message has been read by the recipient, and the [PRIVATE] notation indicates that only user 3665 can read it.

After printing each message heading, you have the option of reading the message, continuing the scan or exiting the scan function.

ANALOG Computing news.

Function N is a specialized news center which gives up-to-date news about **ANALOG Computing** and the **ANALOG Computing TCS**. See function A (Atari news) for details.

Changing your password.

When you join the **ANALOG Computing TCS**, you are issued an eight-digit password. Since this is difficult to remember, you may want to change it. Function P allows you to do this. When prompted, enter your new password (twenty characters or less) and respond to the final change prompt. After the change, be sure to note the new password in a safe place.

Logging off.

The Q command allows you to log off the **ANALOG Computing TCS**. In case you made a mistake, the computer will ask you to confirm that you want to quit.

Printing the time.

The T command shows the current time, date, your time on the system for this session, and the time left on your **TCS** subscription.

Uploading files.

You may upload files to the **ANALOG Computing TCS** using the U function and the XMODEM protocol. Specify the filename to upload in standard Atari format, such as MY-PROG.BAS. If the file already exists, try another name.

Use the UPLOAD function to send us news items, programs, demos, etc. If your program is chosen for use in our download library, your account time will be extended, based on the size of the upload. If you choose to upload a program, be sure to upload a documentation (.DOC) file, so that other users can understand it!

Mini-Editor.

The MINI-EDITOR used by the **ANALOG Computing TCS** is functionally very similar to that used by the Atari SIG (Special Interest Group) on CompuServe.

When you enter the editor, you are prompted to enter your text. Text lines may not exceed eighty characters. A period (.) in the first character of a text line will print that line's text on a new line. Pressing RETURN by itself on a line will exit the text entry. A typical message is shown below:

01:
>Bill,
02:
>.
03:
>.Thanks for the information on
04:
>uploading with XMODEM. It has
05:

> really helped me out!
06:
> .
07:
> .-Dave
08:
>

This message is made up of seven lines of text and, when printed in a 40-column format, would look like this:

Bill,

Thanks for the information on
uploading with XMODEM. It has really
helped me out!

-Dave

Note how the period (.) characters in the first column of a text line cause that text to be printed on a new line.

After exiting the text entry section, you have several options, explained below.

<A>bort

This option allows you to exit the MINI-EDITOR without saving your text. All text previously entered will be erased, and you will exit the editor.

<D>elete

This option will allow you to delete any line in your text. Use the L (LIST) option to see the text lines numbered.

<E>dit

This option allows you to replace a text string in a line with another text string. You will be prompted for the search string and replacement string. For example, to change Line 5 in the example above from "really helped me out!" to "really helped a lot!" you would ask to edit Line 5, specifying a *search string* of ME OUT and a *replacement string* of A LOT. The computer will perform the substitution and show you the new line, like so:

Line reads:
really helped a lot!
Ok (Y/N)?

Typing Y will change the line; typing N will leave the line unchanged.

The editor will not allow edits that enlarge a text line to greater than eighty characters.

<I>nsert

This option will allow you to insert text lines at any point. You will be asked to enter the line number to insert after. To insert at the start of your text, enter 0. Once in INSERT mode, you may continue entering as many lines as you want. Terminate the INSERT function by entering a blank line.

<L>ist

This option lists your text with line numbers shown. You may list specific line numbers (2), a range (2-6), or all lines (A).

<P>rint

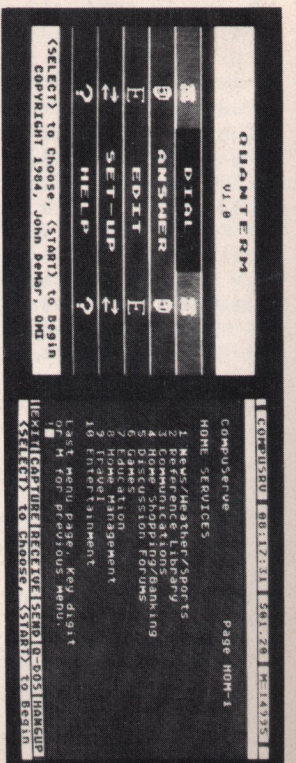This option prints your text as it will be seen by the recipient, formatted to fit a 40-column screen.

<S>ave

This option will save your text for you. The editor is exited, and you will be prompted by the appropriate function, such as the message center.

Explore!

The **ANALOG Computing TCS** has been set up for you to use and benefit from. Use it often to find out about the latest information on your Atari computer. And, if you have any suggestions for additional features or other improvements, drop us a note via FEEDBACK.

The **TCS** is waiting for your call!