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RIME USERS GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This manual deals with how you, as a user, can realize the most from the RIME network. It was written in response to your requests and will hopefully answer your questions on how to use the network to your best advantage.

RIME has been in existence since early 1988. It was started by Bob Shuck and was originally composed of a small group of 10 or so Washington D.C. boards. Dissatisfaction with the software that the then "UpLink" network was using, a casual conversation with Kip Compton and the addition of a board in New York gave birth to PCRelay Software and the RIME Network. In a quest for more excellence, we have just changed our network software to the next generation, Postlink.

As you read this manual please remember that if there is a subject you do not understand, the NewUsers conference is always available for all questions. If your sysop does not carry the NewUser conference, why not ask him/her to do so. Never be embarrassed to ask a question on this network. We were all new users once too. No question is ever considered too dumb-- and really, we are a friendly lot!

WHAT IS RIME?

RIME is a world wide network of electronic bulletin board systems (otherwise known as a BBS) that join hands to form an electronic mail system. Messages you enter on one BBS are sent (copied) to another BBS. That BBS in turn copies your message along with it's own messages to yet another BBS. This is known as echoing or relaying. When you leave a message or "mail" on a participating board, that message is copied to all other boards that participate in the network. The fact that your messages travel from bulletin board to bulletin board is the only thing that makes your message different from entering a message on a purely local bulletin board.

This network of bulletin boards has one common goal: To provide a environment for the friendly exchange of messages with others all over the world.

RIME is also a group of very committed professional sysops who have made the resources of an international BBS network available to you.

RIME provides user support for a wide variety of special interest groups and product support for a wide variety of products. In fact, if you want to find a wider variety of subjects you'd have to join a pay network like Prodigy or CompuServe.

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From all parts of the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, South America, Australia and the Far East you'll find members of RIME.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

RIME consists of one governing body: the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee consists of 5 members. They are the glue that holds the network together. They are ultimately responsible for all decisions of the network. The Steering Committee consists of:

Bonnie Anthony
Howard Belasco
Rex Hankins
JThomas Howell
Mike Glenn

These people have put a lot of effort into making sure that when you dial your local board, RIME is there. They are also in charge of the network Hub, affectionately called the NETHUB. If you have a question about policy, these are the right people to ask. If you need to send them a message, address one message to STEERCOM. An individual message to each member is unnecessary. You may leave your question in either the COMMON or NetUser conference (see below on how to send STEERCOM a private routed message.)

To help you understand some of this terminology:

NODE: A bulletin board system (BBS) that calls another bulletin board system (called a Hub) in order to transfer mail. A node does not receive mail directly from any other BBS. (that is, no one calls it to transfer mail.)

HUB: A bulletin board system (BBS) that calls another Hub to transfer mail, and is called by one or more nodes to transfer mail.

SITE: A site is the same as a NODE, a bulletin board system. Each site is designated by its own unique site number. The site number appears in the tagline area of every message that is exported from a board.

SUPER-REGIONAL HUB: One of several Hubs located in different geographic locations. These Hubs are appointed by the Steering Committee. Generally, Hubs call a Super-Regional Hub, which in turn, calls the NetHub.

NETHUB: The "home" of RIME, operated in Bethesda, Maryland by Bonnie Anthony. All Super-Regional Hubs call the NetHub for their mail

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packets.

ID CODE: A one to twelve character string which contains letters or numbers. Each node has a unique IDCODE which is used to identify that node in the network. The IDCODE appears at the bottom of every message that is "relayed" thruout the network.

SITE NUMBER: The number of each individual site. The site number is the most convenient way to route to a particular board in the network.

Then there are the conference hosts. A conference host is in charge of a particular conference (defined later), just as the Steering Committee is in charge of the network.

On our Network, coordinating the conferences is a big job, and is currently handled by several people. You should familiarize yourself with who does what:

James Wall (IDCODE=DREAM SITE 121) is the Conference Coordinator and responsible for adding new conferences, assigning hosts to old conferences and keeping track of conference numbers - in other words, he is the man to see if you want to start a new conference, or become a host on RIME.

Penny Plant (IDCODE=BOREALIS SITE 914) is the Conference Liason, the person that handles all intra-conference problems. If you are experiencing some problem in a conference, Penny is the one to get in touch with.

Rick Kingslan (IDCODE=OMAHANET) is our Marketing Coordinator,

Last but not least are the real, unsung heros of the network, the sysops! These are the people who go to great expense providing equipment and phone lines so you can converse with the world. The sysop is always the first line of defense in case a problem arises.

HOW DOES MY MAIL GET TO ME?

Each day your local bulletin board calls its Regional Hub, usually in the middle of the night. At that time, all new messages that users have entered on the BBS are uploaded to the Regional Hub. Then, that board downloads a packet which contains all the public and routed messages from every other BBS on the network.

The Regional Hub takes this packet and adds it to packets from other boards connected to it and creates larger, more complete packets. These packets contain messages, files and requests from each board that calls

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the Regional Hub. At least once a day, usually two or three times, the Regional Hub calls the Super-Regional Hub, which, in turn, calls the NetHub.

The NetHub takes the incoming packet of hub mail and returns to the Super-Regional Hub all the mail it received since that Hub last called. The NetHub then adds the new mail it received to the waiting mail for all other Hubs. This is all done automatically.

The Regional Hub takes all the mail it received from the Super-Regional Hub and adds it to the packet for your board (and all the other boards connected to it.) Then you call your local board and either download the mail to read using your off-line reader or read and reply to the new mail on the board.

FEATURES AVAILABLE TO USERS

RIME uses Postlink software written by Kip Compton. This is without question one of the most versatile network software written.

Some of the features, such as file sends and requests are not normally directly available to users. However, if a unique file is mentioned in a conference message, you might ask your sysop if he could obtain that file for you.

Please remember that most Hubs call long distance for their mail and files increase the time, and therefore, expense of file transfers. Do not request files that you could obtain from one of the local boards in your area.

The important feature, for you, of Postlink software is its ability to transfer messages within a conference area, between bulletin boards. A conference is a message area that is specific to one particular topic of interest. There are over 350 conferences currently defined on RIME. Your BBS may not all of the conferences as the disk space required for this may be high.

Your sysop may carry conferences that are both relayed and not relayed. If you have any questions about whether a particular conference is relayed, please ask your sysop.

When you enter your message in a relayed conference you may be asked if you wish to "ECHO" the message. If you say "Yes" your message will be sent out to all other participating bulletin board Systems. If you answer "No" the message remains on your local bulletin board and is not transferred within the network. When you relay your message, please remember that it is being copied to over 900 boards.

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Although there will be reference numbers on the message, it is considered polite to quote a few lines from the message you are responding to. That helps the recipient remember the "conversation" even if he reads the message days later.

Please be aware that every participating bulletin board system will have a different set of reference numbers for the same set of messages. This is due to the different times that each board started receiving the particular conference. Therefore you should not mention a reference number unless you are talking with someone on the same bulletin board.

TYPES OF MESSAGES

In reading the messages on the RIME network, you have probably come across some relay terms that you are unfamiliar with. Phrases such as "R/O", "Routed", etc. refer to the different ways of sending a message.

While no message placed on the network can legally be considered private, you can direct a message to a single individual by making it R/O, i.e. Receiver Only. The BBS software in use on the BBS that you access RIME through will determine how you mark a message as R/O. On PCBoard systems, it is actually termed Receiver Only. On other systems, it may be called "private". By marking the message as private or R/O on the BBS, you are making the message R/O in respect to RIME as well.

There is a consideration to be made before sending someone an R/O message. Plain, unrouted R/O mail is usually not exported from a BBS that is on a Postlink network. If you send an unrouted R/O message, and your board does not allow the export of this type of mail, you will receive a message from Postlink telling you that the message was not sent into the network and that you should send the message routed as well as private.

We strongly recommend that you do not leave UNROUTED private messages to other users in the network. Private, unrouted mail is delivered to every system in the network and is readable by any person with sufficient security to read private mail. We recommend that any message you wish to be sent private, be sent via ROUTED MAIL only.

Always remember, there is no mail in the network that cannot be read by the sending and receiving sysops, and while we do not guarantee real private mail, the software facility for sending routed messages, which limits the sending of messages to just the boards to which the message is routed, helps save each and every sysop money and disk space.

Routed messages

A routed message is a message meant to be delivered to only specific

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board(s) mentioned in the routing information of a message. It may be either public or private.

To send a routed message you must know either the SITE number or the IDCODE of the board you wish to reach. The IDCODE, which is a group of up to 12 letters including some numbers, appears immediately after the words POSTLINK version number in every tagline. The site number then immediately follows the IDCODE and is preceded by the # symbol. The # symbol is NOT part of the site number. You should ignore it, it is just a signal that the site number follows directly.

Here is a typical tagline:

```
* Collector's EDITION, Dallas, TX (214)351-9859/9871 14.4 <ASP>
* PostLink(tm) v1.04 EDITION (#79) : RelayNet(tm)
```

```
          / ^^^^^ ^ ^ \
         /   /         \
        /     \
This is the IDCODE      This is the Site Number
EDITION                  79
```

As you can see, the information you need in order to route appears after the word "Postlink(tm) vX.XX in the tagline area. The IDCODE immediately follows the Postlink version number and the SITE number is preceded by the # symbol. Do NOT use the # symbol in your routing information.

The symbol for routing is -> This is a hyphen immediately followed by a greater than symbol or arrow pointing to the right. This routing symbol must then be immediately followed by the site number or the IDCODE. You do not need both the IDCODE and the site number.

This routing symbol must be placed in the extreme upper left hand corner of the message, on the very first line. Do not start the text of your message immediately after your routing symbol. Skip a line or at least a few spaces before you start the body of your message. It would look like this if you were trying to reach me at RUNNINGA or site 2.

Either

->RUNNINGA

or

->2

If you want to know when the routed message arrived and thereby receive a "return receipt", place a backward routing symbol <- immediately after the site number or the IDCODE. It might look like this:

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->2<-

You may route a message to more than one site at the same time by stacking the site number or IDCODE on the routing line, each route separate by a space. This is called multicasting. You may mix site numbers and IDCODES and you may mix upper and lower cases for the IDCODES. The IDCODE does not need to be in upper case. You may also request a return receipts when multicasting, but realize you will receive a return receipt from every system you have on your routing line.

Here is an example of a multicasted message asking for a return receipt:

->RUNNINGA 547 modemzone 1121 687 3 1421 Earthzone<-

Multicasted messages all are addressed to the same person and are most useful when trying to reach sysops, a particular user that frequents more boards than one, or ALL the users of a few select boards. You may multicast either public or private messages.

Routed messages may of course be either public or R/O.

NOTE: The directional arrow is nothing more than a hyphen ("minus key") followed by a greater than key (>). It is not the right arrow key on your keyboard.

NOTE: There is no space between the arrow and the IDCODE or Site Number of the destination node.

NOTE: Postlink will read the occurrence of the symbol ->WORD if it is the first thing on the first line as an attempt on your part to route a message. Do not use -> as a quoting symbol in your reader unless you leave a space between the '->' and the first letter of the following word. BE CAREFUL!

NOTE: To successfully route, the routing symbol and site you are routing to must be the very first thing on the very first line in the extreme left hand corner of the message. Do NOT skip a line if you wish to have your routing symbol honored by the software.

By using the Routing function, you can help decrease the traffic of messages that clutter conferences and actually lower the operating cost of many nodes.

More on ROUTED MAIL:

When new mail is brought into a conference on a BBS, the routed messages

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may be placed in each conference first. Therefore if you leave a message telling a recipient that a routed message is to follow "this message", more than likely it is not true and he/she has already read the routed message.

When you use the Receiver/Only (R/O;private) of specialized message function on RelayNet(tm) you are agreeing:

- o To hold the net blameless for the release of the message as a public message.
- o To allow people who normally have sufficient security to read your message.
- o NEVER to use a private message to speak of or conduct any business that may be contrary to network policy or considered illegal in the outside world.
- o That the message you enter is not the same private message described in the recent ECPA rulings.

When transferring mail, Postlink software, by reading the routing symbols, automatically decides on which boards routed messages to another user should appear. This decision is made at the node level.

Remember, the sysop of the receiving system and of the sending system, as well as all other users on each system who are qualified to read private mail can read all routed messages. There is no such thing as a message that a SysOp cannot read and a user can read.

USING OFF-LINE READERS

Off-line readers are a method by which you may read messages from a BBS while off-line (i.e. not logged on.) You start by logging on to a bulletin board, briefly, to download your messages. Then, by using one of the off-line reader programs, you may spend all the time you need reading messages, entering replies and any new messages you may come up with. When you are finished, you log back on to the BBS, briefly, in order to upload your replies and any new messages you may have created.

The process of uploading and downloading messages may be done in one phone call. Log on to the BBS, upload your new replies, download the new messages that have been entered since the last time you were on, then log off the BBS. Those of you who call long distance may prefer this approach, as it helps to reduce long distance charges by doing the whole process in one phone call.

The use of an off-line reader may save you telephone charges by also

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shortening your daily total on-line time, and, at the same time, it allows more users per day to access your local BBS.

LANGUAGE:

English is the official language of RIME. However, because our membership draws from all parts of the world, we do try to offer language specific conference where messages can be exchanged in languages other than English. We discourage the use of strictly foreign language messages in general conferences. The occasional use of foreign expressions does not however fall into the category of being a message in a foreign language. If you use an expression that is not understood by someone in the conference, please explain what that expression means.

We also do not permit the use of profane language on this network, either by using a specific profane word, or by substitution of the letters with symbols. What is profane language? Perhaps the most general description would be language that is not used in churches, PTA meetings or prime time television. Use your judgement. If you would not use it with your grandmother, or in a group of young children, do not use it on this network. Find an acceptable alternative.

GENERAL CONFERENCE RULES:

1. Illegal activities, including promotion of illegal acts and promotion of software copyright infringement, will not be allowed on RIME. Uploading or transfer through the network of commercial software is absolutely prohibited. Transfer through the network of software specific to the running of the network, such as Postlink, is allowed, if the author's permission is obtained, and it is authorized by the SC.

2. The use of any word, group of words, expression, comment, suggestion, or proposal which is profane, obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, indecent, or is ethnically, sexually, or racially demeaning is strictly prohibited within RIME. Racial slurs or slang names for ethnic groups, sexual orientation, race or gender are considered offensive language.

3. Do not abuse RIME users in any conference(s) by sending foul or insulting messages. No abuse of other users is allowed on the basis of character, physical characteristics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, intelligence quotient, or ethnicity. Messages that are harassing or bullying are not allowed.

Gratuitous negative comments directed at other users are considered personal attacks. Personal attacks are not allowed even if they are disguised as being aimed at a group or a third party not being directly addressed.

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4. Messages must adhere to the topic of the conference. Since there are conferences for almost every subject, place your message in the conference where it best fits. If you can't find a good fit, consider using the UPLINK conference, which is Relaynet's chit-chat conference.

If you are asked by a Conference Host or Steering Committee member to cease a message thread, please comply as soon as you receive the message. Do not debate the issue in public. If you have questions about why you were asked to cease a particular message thread, you should first ask the CH for further information via a routed, r/o message. You may also bring that question to the USERS conference. We prefer that you first attempt to resolve any differences with the conference host directly, and if that resolution fails then feel free to bring the issue to the USERS conference.

5. Do not "over quote" messages. Quoting should be limited to only enough to remind the original user of what was said or to provide for an adequate response. Quoting should not exceed more than 20% of the total message. Do not quote whole messages and then add only one or two lines as your response. Never quote tagline areas unless you are discussing taglines in the tagline conference. (Discussions of taglines are permitted only in the tagline conference, or the conference where it appears if it expresses a thought relevant to the conference topic.)

Signatures are limited to two lines of message text and may not contain any ANSI escape sequences or ASCII characters that interfere with readers and BBS software (specifically, but not limited to FF, 1A, 1B) except in conferences where these characters are specifically allowed (such as, the Ansi Graphics conference.) Quoting overhead (boxes, quoted-message references etc) may not consume more than two lines of message text. Messages may not contain variables which result in text substitution on receiving BBS software (such as the PCBoard @ variable.)

6. BBS Ads are ONLY permitted in the BBS AD Conference and the ANSI graphics conference.

Messages containing ANSI codes are ONLY to be posted in the ANSI Conference and the BBS Ads conference. No ANSI graphics may be used in any conference on the network except the ANSI conference and the BBS ads conference.

7. No for-sale advertisements are permitted in any conference except the ForSale conference or where specifically allowed by the network. Ask the conference host of your particular conference if for-sale ads are allowed in the conference before you place a for-sale ad. Pyramid schemes are not allowed on the network as they are illegal.

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We here at Relaynet assume NO responsibility for any merchandise purchased through our network. There are no rules on this network that have anything to do with the payment or receiving of goods. That is a private matter between the buyer and the seller and RIME assumes absolutely no responsibility for any sales whatsoever. It is strictly a caveat emptor.

8. Copying messages to other conferences and/or other users. No one may copy, quote verbatim, extensively quote or paraphrase from a message in one discussion conference (as opposed to technical) to another discussion conference without permission of the originator of the message and notification of the Conference Host of the receiving conference.

In addition, retransmission of public/private messages, quoting verbatim or extensively quoting from a message or paraphrasing of parts or entire messages dealing with administrative matters to or by anyone other than the user(s), the user(s)'s Sysop, CH or SC member(s) involved is considered grounds for moderation. No matters that are discussed in administrative conferences such as ADMIN, HOSTS or USERS may be pursued in any conference other than those specific administrative conferences.

No copying messages to or from other networks without the specific permission of the author of the message and/or the originating network whichever is appropriate. Technical messages, where the author specifically requests wide-spread distribution, does not fall under this category.

9. Bombing the network, or the practice of a user posting multiple messages, not related to the conference topic, in one, or several conferences, either simultaneously, or closely related in time, is prohibited. Conference disruption, by bombing a conference, may lead to removal from the conference or the entire RIME network.

10. Messages that are specifically intended to mislead and deceive are considered to be disruptive to a conference and are grounds for suspension from that conference.

11. No aliases are permitted. You must use your real name in every RIME conference (except certain conferences such as RECOVERY where a reasonable alias is permitted.) If you are unsure, do not use an alias but ask the conference host if one is permissible. Sysops retain the right to allow a reasonable sounding alias to be used by a particular person on their own system, if they are sure of the identity of that user and there is a compelling local reason for such use.

12. Special conferences have special rules.

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Messages in the COMMON conference are limited to 10 lines including quoting and signatures, but excluding software generated taglines. The Common conference is considered a starting place on RIME, and is carried by every RIME BBS. It is a conference where you might greet each other, locate boards in various geographically areas, post messages as you would on a "live" bulletin board or make general announcements. Please do not "hang out" in the COMMON conference, (although you may use r/o, routed messages to carry on extended conversations on any topic, and those messages may be of any length.)

The SYSOPS conference is open to all sysops whether they are members of RIME or not. Also, at the discretion of a Sysop, any user may be granted access to this conference.

The Net administration conference is open only to Relaynet Sysops, Conference Hosts and equal, working Co-Sysops. Because the administration conference is a working conference the only Co-Sysops that are permitted into the administration conference are those co-sysops that hold equal responsibility, on a daily basis, with the sysop of the board. Co-sysops with only occasional or specific duties on a board are not permitted access to the ADMIN conference. The sysop of the board is defined as the owner of the software.

RIMENEWS is for network wide announcements. It is read only. That means that no one but the SC and the Conference Coordinators may place messages in this conference. Do not place any messages in the RIMENEWS conference or allow any messages to leave your board in this conference.

The FORSALE conference has the following rules: a - Dealers are encouraged to participate but they must identify themselves as dealers and not send the same ad more than once a week. They may send significantly different ads daily. b - personal ads are allowed every few days. c - all ads for software must include the words "includes all original disks and manuals" and that is all - they do not have to include original packaging if all disks and manuals are sold. d - no guns or ammunition may be offered for sale on this network, in any conference.

The USERS conference is open to all Users. While participation in the USERS conference is encouraged, all messages in the USERS conference must be addressed to either the conference host your are dialoging with or to STEERCOM if you are asking for an investigation. You may not involve yourself in discussions between a user and a conference host. Upon investigation and/or resolution of an issue, the topic will be closed. Dissatisfaction with a decision is not a valid reason to continue closed topics. All decisions of the administration are final and are not appealable.

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13. Differences of opinion over these rules are to be discussed in the NETADMIN (for sysops, conference hosts) or the RELAY USERS (for users) Conferences only. Any differences over these rules, should first be discussed with the Conference Host in the conference by R/O and/or Routed message only. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, then feel free to message with STEERCOM in the COMMON Conference by routed, R/O message only or openly with the conference host in the USERS conference.

To reach all members of the Steering Committee at once, enter your private, routed message with the TO: field addressed as STEERCOM and multicast the message to the following sites:

->2 3 5 6 7

If you have a difference of opinion with a Conference Host you may not discuss that difference in the conference of origin unless by routed, r/o message.

14. Solicitation of information and/or conduction of surveys are not allowed on the network without prior, specific Steering Committee approval.

15. Any user or sysop threatening to involve Relaynet in a law suit or legal battle, at the discretion of the CL or SC, may be permanently removed from the network.

16. Any and all of the rules that are part of the RIME Bylaws are hereby incorporated here.

Abbreviations in use: CH=Conference Host CL=Conference Liason
SC=Steering Committee R/O=receiver only, private

GENERAL DISCLAIMERS - LEGAL AND MEDICAL:

Neither medical nor legal advice may be officially given by any user, CH or Administrator on this network.

Because we cross state and national boundaries, pertinent legal advice varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. RIME could not guarantee that any advice tendered is correct for your jurisdiction nor that anyone claiming to be a lawyer, is in fact, a lawyer. We ask that you not use this network to obtain legal advice or that you imagine that anything said to you on this network constitutes valid legal direction. Proper legal advice can only be obtained from an attorney licensed to practice in your jurisdiction who is competent in the specialized area of the law that you have questions in, whom you consult and hire, and who then assumes the obligation to protect your rights and explain your

responsibilities.

Adequate medical diagnosis and treatment is dependant not only on history talking but on a physical examination and pertinent labortatory tests. RIME could not guarentee that any medical advice tendered would be correct for your situation nor that anyone claiming to be a physician, is in fact, a licensed practicing physician. We ask that you not use this network to obtain medical diagnosis or treatment or that you imagine that anything said to you on this network constitutes valid medical diagnosis or treatment. Proper medical care can only be obtained from a physician licensed to practice in your state or country, whom you consult in person, and who has the ability to perform the proper medical examinations related to your difficulties and then render proper medical treatment with correct followup care.

The USERS Conference:

The sole purpose of the USER conference is to allow users who have disputes with a Conference Host to work out those differences.

If you believe that a conference host has committed an error in interpreting the rules of the network, or that the conference host has not moderated you fairly, you may bring that discussion into the USERS conference, for dialog with the conference host directly. You may only bring your complaint there if you disagree or do not understand your moderation or suspension.

If you have been suspended and you think that suspension is unfair, you may request an official review of the suspension by STEERCOM. That request officially ends the thread. Any further posting on the same subject, by the user who has filed a complaint, will result in an immediate suspension from the conference. A member of the SC will review the suspension and where appropriate may reverse the suspension, thus wiping it off your "record", let the suspension stand, or increase the suspension. While the investigation is being conducted, no further public messages will be allowed on the complaint.

You may also use the USERS conference to lodge a formal complaint against a conference host. Address your specific complaint in a message to STEERCOM. Once you have brought your formal complaint, a member of the Steering Committe will investigate it, and after that investigation, will let you know the results. While the investigation is proceeding, no further messages on the complaint will be allowed. Issues of Host performance that might arise from a formal complaint are discussed with the host involved, in the Network Administration Conference.

Once an issue is resolved or an investigation is undertaken, the discussion on that topic is closed everywhere on the network except in

the network administration, if appropriate.

All messages in the USERS conference must be addressed to one of 3 people; the particular conference host, the Conference Liason or STEERCOM. You may not bypass the conference host you wish to dialog with and address messages to other conference participants. No cross conversation is permitted. If you have something of importance to contribute to a moderation issue, you must address the message to the conference host directly involved, the Conference Liason or to STEERCOM.

STEERCOM will only participate in discussions when they are specifically requested to review a moderation or suspension issue or the general conduct of a conference host.

USERS is hosted by the Conference Liason, Penny Plant. As such, she will make sure that all traffic is directed as it should be, that no extraneous side conversations develop and that issues when resolved or investigated are closed to further discussion.

CONFERENCE PROBLEM SOLVING

General Steps taken in Handling Problems in RIME Conference

If a problem arises, the Conference Host will approach you in his/her most courteous fashion and ask you to review the rules of the conference and/or network and to please abide by them. This initial message will usually be sent to you R/O, routed, return receipt requested. At times however, the Conference Host may elect to address the problem in a general public message in the conference. The decision of whether to send a public or a private message is made by the CH and is usually based on his/her experience with similiar problems in the past.

This would not be considered a formal warning but either a reminder or a "head's up" type message.

If the problem continues, the next step the CH will take is to issue a formal warning. Along with the formal warning sent to you, the CH will contact your SysOp and the Conference Liason or SC via a R/O and routed message. This is done to help bring the problem situation to closure if at all possible.

If none of this brings the situation to a close the final step would be a formal suspension from the conference. All suspensions are approved by the Conference Liason and the SC.

Steps in Moderation

- a. First offense. You will be warned informally or formally. All

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formal warnings are brought to the attention of the CL. A formal warning requires that the sysop of the board that you use also be notified.

b. Continued offense following a formal warning. You will be subject to removal from the conference(s) for a minimum of ten days. If the offense is considered serious enough, you may be removed from the conference for 30 days. A 30 day suspension is considered a grave event on this network. If you have been suspended for 30 days for a first offense you are considered to be on probation when you return to the conference (see below).

If you are suspended from a conference, for any period of time, and seek to circumvent that moderation by any means, such as, but not limited to, returning to that conference prematurely, using an alias, using a different board, etc. you will be immediately suspended for 3 months.

c. Second offense. You will be issued a warning that you are continuing to be in violation of the rules despite a previous suspension and that you will face an immediate 30 day suspension for the next rule violation. If you continue, at the discretion of the CH, you may be subjected to immediate removal from the conference. If this becomes necessary, and we sincerely hope it does not, the CH must then immediately notify the CL, one member of the SC and the sysop involved.

If you are suspended a second time, at the discretion of the SC, you may also be removed from the entire network, if appropriate, for a minimum of thirty days.

After a 30-day suspension, whether for a second offense or a severe first offense, has been served, you are on probation for 90 additional days. During those 90 days, any further messages which would result in a formal warning is sufficient cause for a six month suspension from that conference. A formal warning does not have to be issued prior to a six month suspension. This represents an extreme situation on this network.

Because of the serious nature of a six month suspension, a single minor infraction will simply be brought to your attention immediately and you will be reminded that you are on probation and facing a six month suspension if you do not alter your message style immediately. However, if you do not immediately respond in a positive direction, no other warnings will be issued and you will be suspended for 6 months immediately upon another rule infraction.

d. If you continue along this self-destructive pathway, you become subjected to possible removal from the conference(s), or the network, if appropriate, permanently or until the SC declares otherwise.

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e. Appeals can be made R/O, routed ONLY, to STEERCOM in the COMMON Conference, (see above) or either public or private in the USERS conference, but only directed to the conference host. Suspensions from the network cannot be appealed. Suspensions from the USERS conference cannot be appealed.

f. Remember that Sysops always have the discretion to remove any user at any time for whatever reason the sysop deems pertinent. The network has no say in the removal, by a sysop, of his/her own user.

g. A CH in a conference where there has been flagrant disregard of all rules of common sense to the point of conference disruption, may always suspend a participant in the conference immediately for a period of 10 days. If a CH issues such a suspension to you, you must immediately leave that conference. You may appeal any decision of a CH in USERS, except a suspension from USERS itself or a network wide suspension.

APPEALS:

Any user who has been moderated or suspended from a conference, who either does not agree with or understand that moderation or suspension, may discuss that with the specific conference host and the administrators of the network in Relay Users conference. If you have been moderated or suspended, and do not understand why, or do not feel you have been able to effectively dialog with the conference host via private routed messages in the conference the moderation occurred in, then you may continue that discussion with the conference host in USERS, via public messages.

It is possible that you and the conference host have discussed the situation and cannot arrive at a meeting of the minds. If you feel that the conference host was not correct in his official action, you may ask network administrators to review your situation. You should understand that the administration has already been involved, at least peripherally, in supporting most suspensions that occur on this network.

If asked, the administration will review the messages under questions, in addition they may review the actual thread or conference and/or discuss the situation with the conference host. When that review is undertaken the discussion is then completely closed.

In any dispute, there is no way to satisfy all parties. Keep in mind that the administration tries to exercise good judgement and fairness to all. At times a decision may seem like neither. If you feel an administrative decision was incorrect, try approaching that administrator in your most friendly manner, and ask for a clarification.

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Perhaps there are other details that you are not aware of, that the Administrator may be able to relate to you. But perhaps there is information that is not available to you and cannot be made available to you. One inquiry will usually be cheerfully answered. Do not however, harass Conference hosts, Conference Coordinators or the Administration in the hope that "bytes make right". In the end, be aware that due process is not guaranteed and that all decisions of the administration are final.

USER COURTESIES

Did you know that if you use all upper case letters, that other users think you are shouting at them? Remember to turn off your CAPS LOCK key when you go to enter a message.

Some users think that the way to get started is to answer every message they see. That sometimes works but often it serves to annoy the other users who are already engaged in some kind of dialog in the conference. When you enter a conference for the first time, feel free to say hello and introduce yourself. Then sit back and read a few days worth of mail. In that time, you will probably discover the trends of the conference and that you have something substantial to add to the discussion.

The conference host is a valuable asset in a conference. The hosts run the conference, introduce topics of general interest to the conference members to enlarge discussions, oversees that the messages stay on topic, provides information and act as a liason between users and the powers that be above him/her.

When a CH (conference host) asks you to end a thread, or move the discussion along, please be aware that they can enforce the conference rules in their conference. If you feel that you are being treated unfairly, there are recourses open to you. But these do not involve public discussion in the conference itself.

While quote boxes can be nice looking, some computers cannot handle them, special readers such as for the visually impaired often do not handle them well, and they can lead to problems in general readers as well as corrupt mail packets. We ask all users to reduce, if not eliminate, the quote boxes in the interest of fairness to all the other users of the network.

If someone sends you a R/O, routed message, it is considered polite to reply with a R/O, routed message. While we do not guarantee privacy of messages, we do ask that each user extend the courtesy of replying to R/O, routed mail, with R/O routed mail. We also ask that users, under normal circumstances, do not make R/O, routed mail public. It is

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considered rude to discuss R/O, routed mail in public.

Because R/O, routed mail cannot usually be seen by a majority of users, moderation on content, is very difficult. However, if a sysop notifies the network that a user is sending R/O, routed messages that are illegal, moderation and/or suspension will be considered for this very serious offense.

WHEN A PROBLEM ARISES

A problem arises? You need some sort of help? Here's how to get the answers that solve your problem.

If it is a system problem or a general question, ask your sysop first! Most times he/she will have the answer you need to solve your problem. Leave them a Comment. This is a private message to your sysop. If you leave such a message in a relayed conference it will usually not be transmitted across the network. Your sysop may not read every conference he relays, so leave him/her a comment on the Main Board. Most sysops read their own Main Board.

If it is a conference specific question leave a message to the conference host of that particular conference. If the conference appears to have no host or you are unsure exactly who the host is, leave a message to James Wall (IDCODE=DREAM, SITE 121) in the Common conference - our "network bulletin board" and ask him who the conference host is.

If you are experiencing a problem with a conference host, or feel that the problem you have needs resolution at a higher level, leave a message for either Penny Plant (IDCODE=BOREALIS, SITE 914) or Bonnie Anthony (IDCODE=RUNNINGA, SITE 2) and tell her what your problem is and see if she can help you out. Again, they both hang out in COMMON.

If you still have a question and it has not been resolved by the steps above, write a message to STEERCOM and leave it in the Common conference or if it is available on your BBS join the Relay Users conference. The Steering Committee can be found monitoring both conferences for any questions that users might have.

ALL DECISIONS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE ARE FINAL

THE RECENT ECPA RULINGS AND PRIVATE MAIL

There is always lively discussion surrounding the issue of private mail on a BBS network. Below is the RIME policy regarding private mail:

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TO ALL USERS OF RIME

Messages that are posted in any and all conferences on any BBS designated as a member of Postlink, RelayNet or RIME are relayed ("echoed") throughout the international network.

RIME maintains the capability and capacity to send and receive routed messages that are flagged as "Receiver-Only". However, messages so flagged are NOT to be considered by any user as actual "private" messages.

The purpose of the Receiver-Only flag for such messages is intended solely to provide for a means of limiting the possible number of BBS's that may have access to the messages for display purposes. The following is the official RIME policy regarding Receiver Only flagged messages.

PURSUANT TO THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS PRIVACY ACT OF 1986, 18 USC 2510 et. seq., NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL USERS OF THIS NETWORK THAT THERE ARE NO FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE RIME INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR SENDING OR RECEIVING PRIVATE OR CONFIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS. ALL MESSAGES POSTED IN RELAYED CONFERENCES SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE READILY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL NETWORK HUBS, NODES, SYSOPS AND USERS.

Do NOT use RIME conferences for any communication for which you intend only yourself and one or more specific recipients to read. Consider that all node sysops have the capability, capacity and potential to read all mail posted in this network, and, as a result, to post said messages as public messages on their boards. Sysops that do so are considered blameless as there is no guarantee of privacy on this network.

All participating Network Bulletin Board Systems shall deem all messages posted within the RIME conferences to be readily accessible to the general public at all times.

If you post a message within any RIME conference, your acceptance of this policy is heretofore implied. The RIME International Network and any participating bulletin board system assumes absolutely no accountability or liability whatsoever for any violations of this policy by any and all users of this network.

To reiterate: This network provides the capability and capacity to flag messages as R/O. However, messages so flagged will not and cannot be considered or defined as "private communications" between two or more people.

CONFERENCE HOSTING

The following are the general duties of a conference host. These may

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vary from conference to conference. If you wish to host a conference, and all conferences are hosted by volunteers like yourself, these would be the general responsibilities of being a conference host.

- o Defining the operating rules of the conference.
- o Dealing with those users experiencing difficulty conforming to the set rules.
- o Encouraging discussion by either responding to messages or initiating pertinent topics for discussion.
- o Replying to ALL messages that, either explicitly or implicitly, call for a reply from the host.
- o Convincing sysops not currently carrying your conference to do so.
- o Getting people who are leaving messages in other conferences appropriate to yours to join the discussions in your conference.
- o Coordinating with other conference hosts whose conference topics overlap with yours.

STARTING A NEW CONFERENCE

If you think that you have a good idea for a conference, or would like to host a conference, please send a R/O message to James Wall (IDCODE=DREAM, SITE 121) in the COMMON conference. In general, to start a conference you need to have the topic clearly defined, a conference host available that would be suitable for that conference, and the topic has to be approved by James.

RULES, PROCEDURES FOR PROPOSING A NEW CONFERENCE ON RIME

- 1) Send a message to the Conference Coordinator (James Wall Nodeid=DREAM, SITE 121) in Common or Network Administration, stating that you would like to start a conference. The following must be listed in this initial message. A) NAME OF CONFERENCE. B) WHAT THE CONFERENCE WILL ENCOMPASS. C) THE NAME AND SITE OF THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE HOST.
- 2) Upon receipt of the message the Conference Coordinator will discuss with the Steering Committee the feasibility of the conference and will inform you if the conference has been accepted for scouting.
- 3) If permission is granted the Conference Coordinator will inform you of how to scout for your conference and will provide you with a

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scouting number.

THE CONFERENCE COORDINATOR IS JAMES WALL HIS NODEID (IDCODE) IS
DREAM - SITE NUMBER 121

b.The SC reserves the right to establish specialized conferences, such as vendor support conferences, announced through the CC.

2. Removal of conferences. The CC will monitor on a monthly basis conference activity using reports generated by the NETHUB. Conferences that do not meet established activity criteria for that conference, will be subject to discontinuation by the CC.

3. Conference Hosts are designated by the CC. Conference Co-hosts can only be assigned with the advanced consent of the CC; Conference Hosts can only recommend and cannot appoint Co-hosts directly.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER BOARD IN THE RIME NETWORK

Some of you may decide you like this medium so well you would like to join the network with your own board. To do this the Network requires that:

- o You have legally Registered copies of the software involved in the setup of your board.
- o You download and familiarize yourself with the material contained in a file called RELAYNET.ZIP.
- o You allow no pirated or commercial software in your files sections.
- o You read and agree to the Network Bylaws.
- o You obtain and setup our required networking software, Postlink(tm)
- o You complete and return the RIME application form along with the initial membership fee which is currently \$25.00.

If you meet these conditions you may join the network on a temporary basis until a probationary period has elapsed. A decision on your status will be made at the end of that probationary period.

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