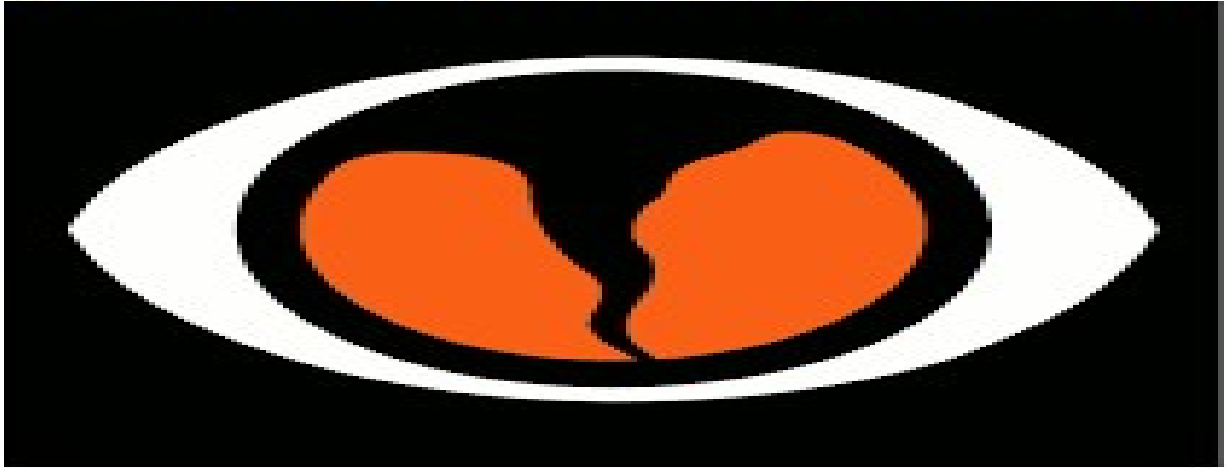


SKYWARN



ARKANSAS

Software Applications

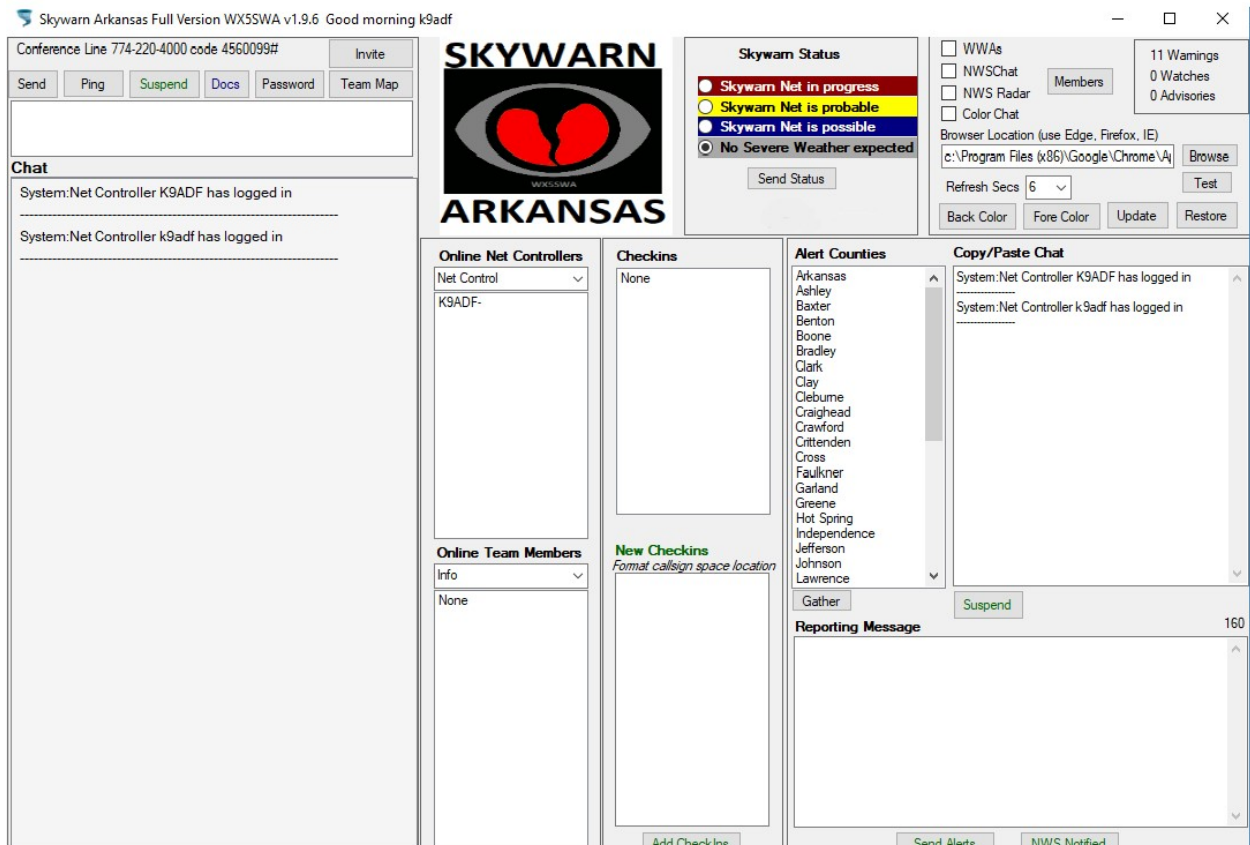
During a Skywarn Net we will use a software application to aid us in keeping track of who is on the net, what they are doing and performing our tasks. These can be done via one of three different applications – the online app, the full desktop version and the team version.

We will use the Full desktop application in this manual and detail the minor differences between it and the other two.

Note that a computer will be needed for all three apps, and a tablet will run the online version as well. The online version will not run on a cell phone due to its inner workings.

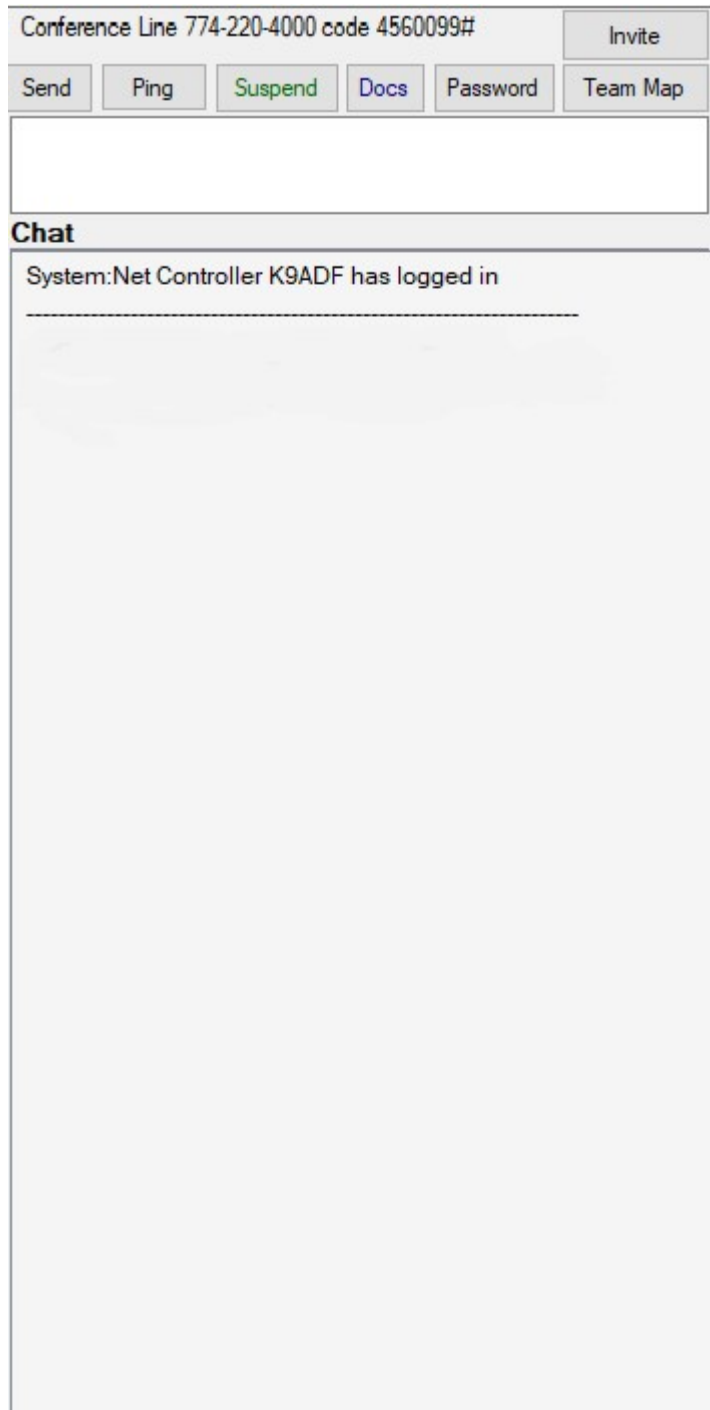
We will examine each section and document what they do and how to use them.

Here is what the full version looks like:



Remember that this application is designed for more than one person. You will find that for the most part, you will tend to spend your time in only one area of the application, unless you are forced to perform multiple roles on the Skywarn Net.

We'll start at the left and move right. First we have the Chat area and command buttons. The chat area provides both system related messages in addition to our messages. You have the option of single color or different colors in the chat area depending on the source such as blue for system, green for Net controllers, etc.



Send – Sends the data contained in the text box below the command buttons to the Chat.

Ping – Causes a notification sound on the Net Controllers machine to get their attention.

Suspend/Resume – Stops or resumes the refresh of the app if it interferes with what you are doing.

Docs – Takes you the webpage for our documentation and training.

Password – Allows you to change your login password.

Team Map – Brings up a Goggle map with locations marked for all members.

Invite – Sends a text message to all members currently not logged into the application (Full Desktop version only).

Both the Online Net Controllers and Online Team Members show who is currently online and a dropdown contains the duties that can be assigned to them above them. Those who have net control designation have the complete duties available while team members only have Info and Message available.

Important: You must select the duty before you select who will be assigned to it.

The options available are:



Drop – Removes them from the application.

Duty Maint – Multiple duties can be assigned. This will bring up a list of which you can delete when they no longer will fill that role.

Info – Shows information of the member and any certifications they currently have.

Message – Brings up a screen for sending a private message that can start a conversation. More on that in Appendix A.

Messages – Same as Message but allows multiple members to be selected. This is not available on the Online version.

Monitoring – All to Springfield refer to monitoring the NWSChat. Radar and Radio are separate duties.

None – Returns the member to startup status of no duties assigned to them.

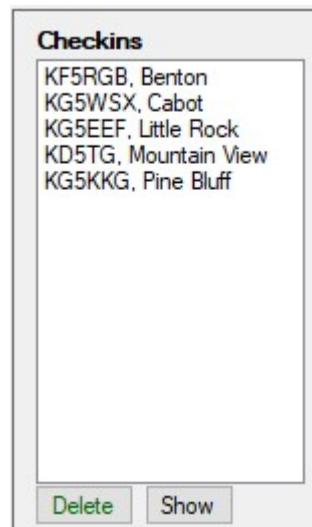
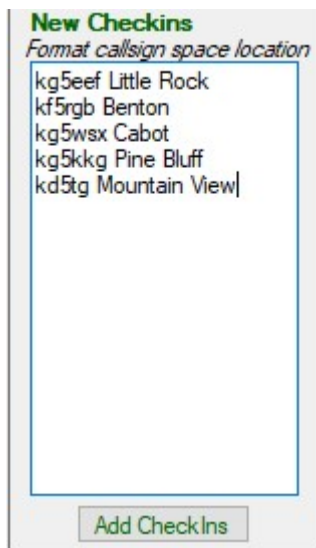
Online Chk – Full Desktop version only and only with Net Controllers. Opens a separate stand alone application to verify who is still online or not. Members no longer online are deleted from the Net Control of Team Member list areas.

Reporting – Either or both Alert reporting or NWS reporting. More on those below.

Spotting – In case a field spotter logs in so we will know that’s what they are doing.

CheckIns

During a Skywarn Net amateur radio operators who can hit the repeaters will check into the Net mainly to provide local reports in their area. Our net controllers will routinely give the opportunity for these radio operators to check in to the Net.



The two images show the process of adding them to the Net. First the New Checkins are populated by their callsign followed by a space followed by their city. When all have received by net control and verified to be correct, you click on the Add CheckIns button and they will be added to the Checkins as the image on the

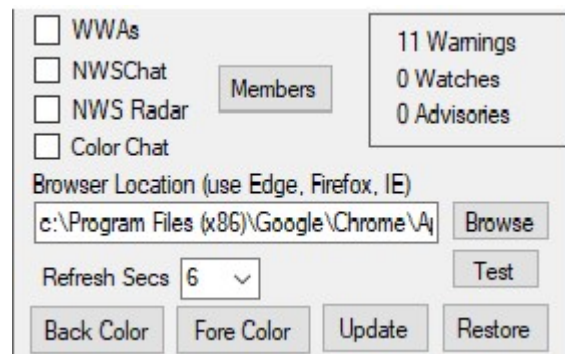
right shows. Notice they are sorted by their city and made uppercase for easier reading.

The Delete button will remove the selected operator and the Show button will show a Google map of their location. Being closing the Net, be sure to delete all those who have checked in.

The upper right hand portion of the screen



The Status area. This is not included in the Team version. In only the full version a number is displayed indicating the number of refreshes that have occurred so you can tell whether the application has frozen up or not.



The Options area. In the Team version an additional button for Messaging is present in which you select who to send a message to. The Online version only has WWAs, NWSSChat, NWS Radar and Members as buttons.

Skywarn Status

Only net controllers can alter the Skywarn status. You need only to select the appropriate color status and then click Send Status so the membership will be notified when they need to get involved.

Options

The WWAs (Warnings, Watches, Advisories) when checked will load up a webpage with the current conditions and if you hover your mouse over one it will display the contents of the condition. NWSSChat when checked will open the NWSSChat website. NWSRadar when checked will bring up the animated regional radars from the NWS. Color Chat when checked will use different colors for

different areas in the Chat area such as blue for system messages, green for net controllers, etc.

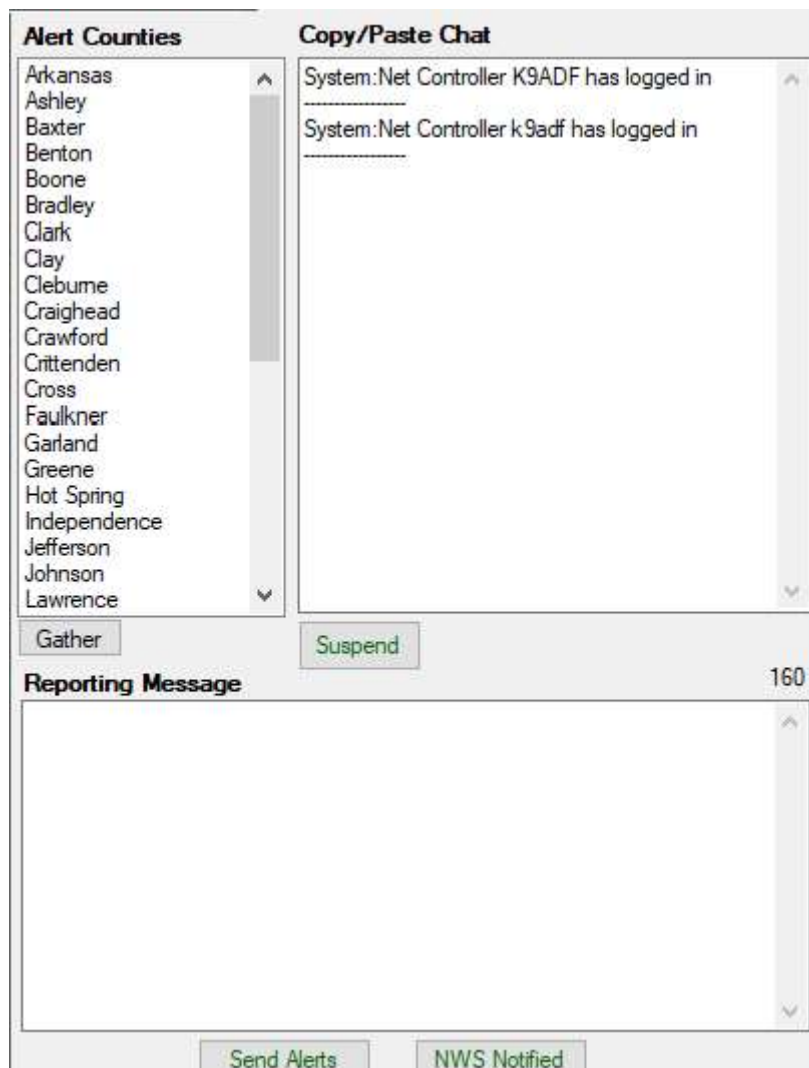
The Members button will open a webpage showing the entire member list of Skywarn Arkansas.

The Browser location can be a little complicated for some. The app was installed expecting Chrome as the browser to use. If you don't have or want to use Chrome then if you have Edge, IE or Firefox just type that in the location textbox. If you want to use another one you will need to find where on your computer that browser resides and click on the Browse button to locate the .exe (Application) file. Click on the Test button to assure that the browser will work before updating.

Clicking on the Update button will save the current configuration and will become your default settings. Should you make any changes and want to return to your original settings, click on the Restore button.

You can change the color scheme of the application by using the Backcolor and Forecolor buttons.

Reporting

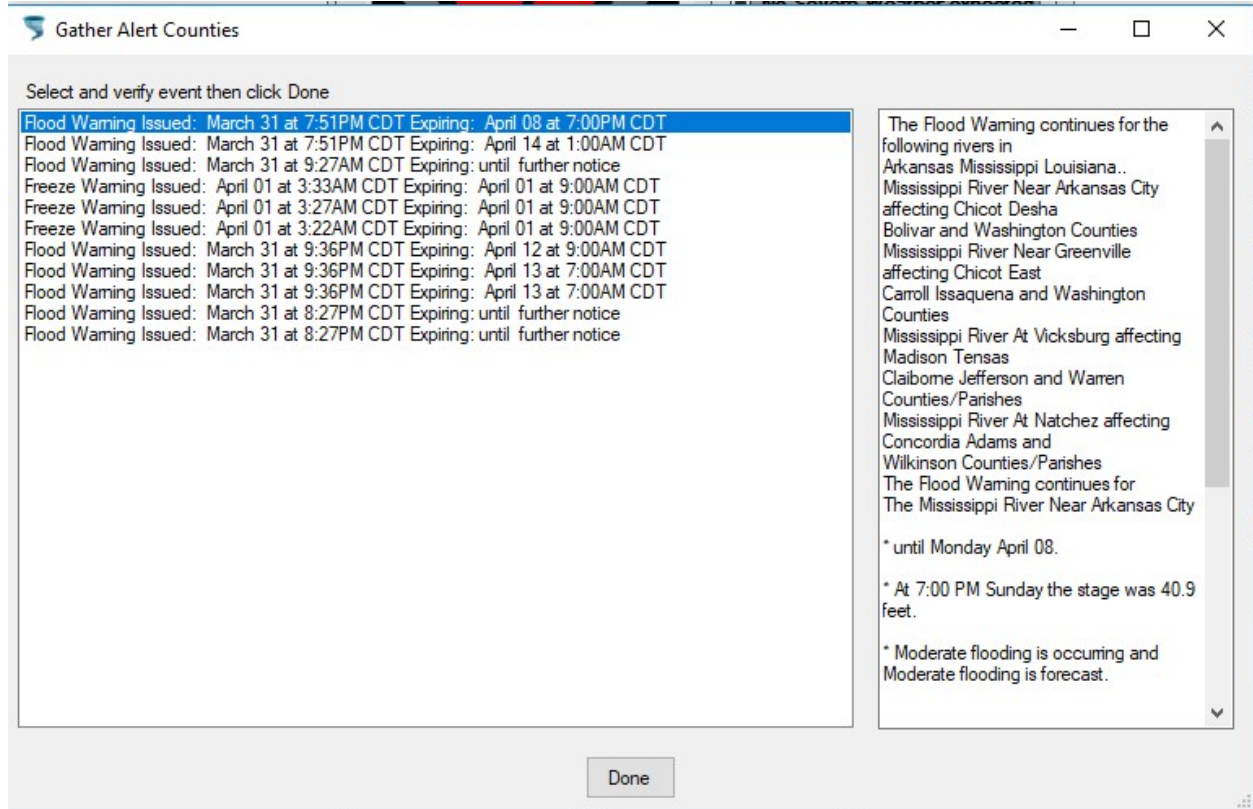


Reporting is the process of sending out Alerts and notifying the NWSChat room. In a perfect world we would one person doing Alerts and another doing the NWSChat, mainly because you need to be an amateur radio operator in order to have access to the NWSChat page.

Everything that comes from the NWS should go out as an alert. Conditions we receive from the Net will go the NWS if the criteria is met as well as Alerts. Both sending Alerts and NWSChat will use the Reporting Message area.

Alerts

To send an alert, click on the Gather button. Something like this will pop up.



Notice that the order is in descending order so the latest is on top. On the right side is the content of the WWA so you can examine it for the city/county pitfall (see Appendix B). You can cancel by clicking on the page X. Clicking on Done will populate the listbox with the matching counties and pre-populate the Reporting Message for the Alert.

Should any county be selected in error, remove it from both the listbox of counties (by clicking on it while holding down the Ctrl key) and the Reporting Message area.

Keep the size of Alerts to 160 characters or less as best you can. This ensures that the entire message will be received on everyone's cell phone.

When everything has been done, click on the Send Alerts button.

DO NOT click on the Send Alerts button when a Net is not in progress unless it is legitimate. There is not a practice feature. Feel free to test the Gather, but remember to not click the Send Alerts button while practicing.

The Online version requires a second step to achieve the same result. First click on the Gather button, then click on the Apply button after it returns.

NWSChat

Monitor the NWSChat for data in which to send Alerts. When we receive reports that meet the NWS criteria populate the Reporting Message with the data. Although you can exceed the 160 characters, try to keep it concise and as brief as possible. Also start with 'from Skywarn Arkansas - '. This can be pre-populated by clicking on an empty Reporting Message.

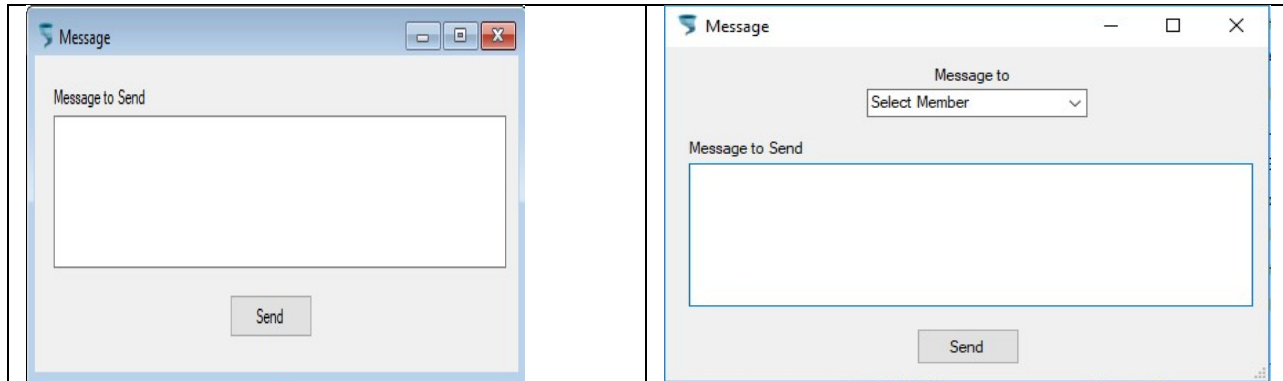
If a report comes in from the field have some paper and pen ready and take notes then construct the message to send to the NWS.

If a report comes in from someone on the web (will show up in the chat area), copy the related text from the Copy/Paste Chat and paste in the Reporting Message and alter it for sending. Be sure to include that it is not confirmed.

Copy the data from the Reporting Message and paste it into the NWSChat application. Then click on the NWS Notified button so net control will see that the report was made.

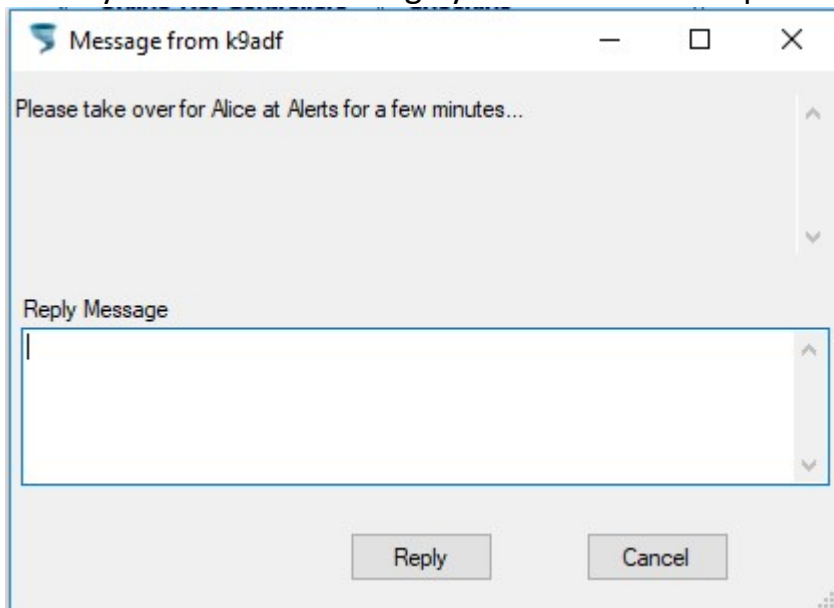
Appendix A – Messaging

One way to communicate during the Net is by Messaging privately. The Online version does not have messaging. The differences between the desktop apps are as follows:



On the left is the full version where you first select Message from the dropdown in the Online section and then click on who to send to. On the right is the team version where you first select who to start messaging with after clicking the Message button in the Options area.

When you receive a message you also have the option to reply. Here's a sample:



If you don't want to reply just click Cancel otherwise type your reply in the Reply Message box then click Reply.

Appendix B – Alerts City/County Pitfalls

Most content includes the state name Arkansas. That will create a match since we have an Arkansas county. The following can be used as a guide for things to work for when city/county/river names match. Content that uses city or river names can create this pitfall. If you discover more, please report it so it can be included for future reference.

Arkansas

- Arkansas City
- Arkansas Post
- Arkansas River

Benton

- Bentonville

Conway

Hot Spring

- Hot Springs

Jackson

- Jacksonville

Lonoke

Perry *

- Perryville

Prairie

- Little Prairie

Saline *

- Saline River

Scott

Searcy

Van Buren

White

- White River

‘*’ might not be an issue for the most part.

Appendix C – Recent Enhancements

A checkbox has been added above the Chat area (Include System Msgs) to either show all the system messages as well as other messages when checked or only non system related messages when unchecked. The applications begin at unchecked.

Online Chk and Messages in the duties area (already described above).