

Sending FLmsg form data with Outpost

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The goal of this project is to take advantage of *FLmsg's* abilities to create forms and send them easily with *Outpost packet manger*. This will allow amateur radio operators to send form reports via packet radio to the EOC, or another radio operator.

After some experimentation, there is an easy way to use FLmsg with Outpost.

It involved five steps:

1. Install the necessary programs **and become familiar with them**.
Make sure that you set up Outpost to work with your system.
2. Create several directories/folders on your computer's hard drive that is easy to find from a File Open dialogue box. Your desktop is always a good choice.
3. Create and install an Outpost script that will automatically find the form, create a packet message using the form data, and then send the form data.
4. Use FLmsg to create your form
5. Run the outpost script to send the form data.
6. Convert messages in Outpost back to a ready to print completed form.

Step 1: Install the necessary programs

1. FLmsg - Forms manager <http://www.w1hky.com/download.html>
2. Outpost - Outpost Packet Manager <http://www.outpostpm.org/>
- Install and become familiar with Outpost and set up your TNC and the BBS of the stations you will be sending forms to.

Information on Outpost Scripting is available at:

<http://www.outpostpm.org/scripts/index.html>

Step 2: Create the a directory on your computer's drive for form files

1. Create a folder (directory) on your computer's desktop or on your hard drive so you can easily navigate to it from the Save and Open dialogue windows in the program. I created one titled:
"C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Messages"
Copy the full path to this folder. You will need this to edit the script.
2. Create a folder in Messages named "**Sent**" and a folder named "**Received**".

These folders are necessary so that when the form you created is sent to Outpost, it needs to be moved to the "**Sent**" folder so it is not sent again.

The "**Received**" directory is needed so when Outpost receives a form, you can easily save it in the received folder and it can be opened in FLmsg to recreate the form.

Example:  Messages
 Sent
 Received

You can rename these directories, BUT write the names down, as you will need the directory names to create a custom Outpost script.

Step 3: Create and install the necessary Outpost Script

You will need to create an Outpost Script to check a directory for new FLmsg forms, create a new packet message using the form data and send it.

We have developed a web page that lets you fill in a web form with your stations and the information you need to automatically pickup the FLmsg form data, create a packet message and send it via Outpost. Using the information you provide, the web page will create an Outpost script that you can paste a ready to use script into Outpost's scripting Tool.

You will need to know and fill in the web form:

1. The call sign of the station you are sending forms usually packet net control, or EOC, etc.)
2. Your call sign
3. The name of the TNC you set up in Outpost
4. The name of the BBS you want to send the message to
5. The path of a folder you will save FLmsg forms to.
6. The name of a subfolder that sent forms from FLmsg can be moved to after they are sent.

Go to www.sacvalleyares.org/contents/FLmsg to create your custom script
This web form will assist you in creating a custom Outpost script that will pick up FLmsg forms and send those forms via Outpost.

This web form lets you fill in the necessary variables to modify the script so you can copy and paste the finished script into *Outpost's Scripting Tool*.

Create a Script to Send saved FLmsg Form files from Outpost

This program will help you create a custom Outpost script to find and send FLmsg form files you have saved to outpost. The script will run find the file, create the message, send the form file, then exit until you need to send another form.

Your TNC Name (set in Outpost)	<input type="text"/>	example: KPC-3
Name of Target BBS (set in Outpost)	<input type="text"/>	example: ARES
Your Call Sign	<input type="text"/>	example: kg6sjt-1
Target CALL sign to send to:	<input type="text"/>	example: WU6X
path to FolderToCheck	<input type="text"/>	example: C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\messages\
Folder to move files to	<input type="text" value="Sent"/>	example: Sent
<input type="button" value="Create Script"/>		

Click the **Create Script** button, and a custom script with the information you provided will be displayed: (partial listing). The variables you filled in are displayed in blue. If you are familiar with Outpost Script, feel free to edit the script.

```
SCRIPT
Var fname as string ' variable holding the file name and path
Var nameonly as string ' variable holding the file name only
Var SendtoAddress as string ' variable holding who we are sending to
Var SendToBBS as string ' variable holding who we are sending to
Var FolderToCheck as String '
Var holding pathfolder to check
Var MovtoFolder as String '
Var holding pathflder to move files to
BEGIN ' *****Define the variable BBS that we will use *****
TNC = "KPC-3" ' use this TNC for all runs. This ' TNC must be set up in Outpost
first ' BBS = "ARES" ' name of the bbs you are sending the message to MYCALL =
"KG6SJT-1" ' Your call sign ' RETRIEVE = "PF" ' GET mail addressed to you and
bulletins SendtoAddress = "WU6X" ' Call of the station you are sending to '
SendToBBS = "ARES" ' ' Where to look for Flmsg files to send FolderToCheck =
"C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\messages\"
' Where to move the files after loaded in to outpost MovtoFolder = "C:\Documents and
Settings\Administrator\messages\Sent"
'***** end of setting variables *****
```

On the web page, SELECT ALL OF THE SCRIPT TEXT AND COPY TO YOUR CLIPBOARD.

3. Open **Outpost's Scripting tool**, TOOLS -> SCRIPTS -> SCRIPTING TOOL. Click on "**NEW**" to create a new script and copy and paste the the FLmsg-Outpost script in the scripting window. Save the script.

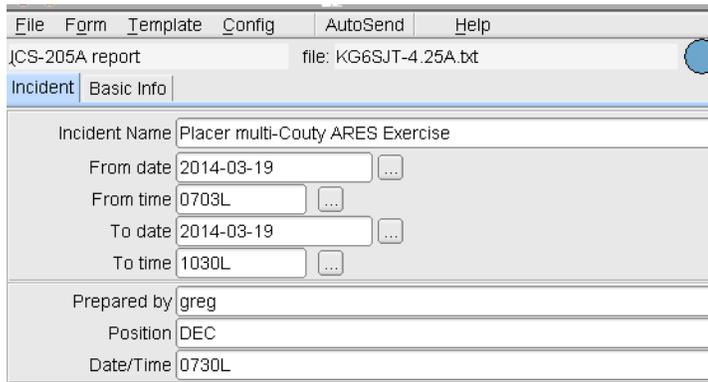
If you filled in the variable information on the web page correctly for your system and copy of Outpost, it should be ready to run.

Once you have saved your script, you can always open and edit that script.
more

4. Information on Outpost Scripting is available at:
<http://www.outpostpm.org/scripts/index.html>

Step 4: Use FLmsg to create your form

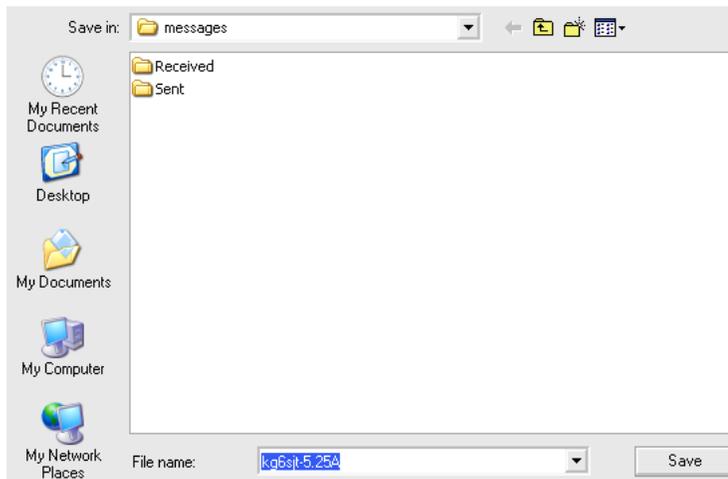
1. Start up **FLmsg** and select a form and fill it in.



The screenshot shows the FLmsg application window with the following fields filled in:

- Incident Name: Placer multi-Couty ARES Exercise
- From date: 2014-03-19
- From time: 0703L
- To date: 2014-03-19
- To time: 1030L
- Prepared by: greg
- Position: DEC
- Date/Time: 0730L

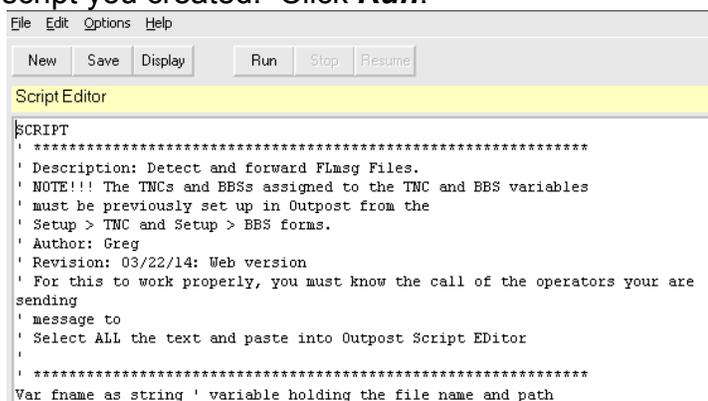
2. Fill in the form Click "SAVE AS" when finished.
Navigate in the "SAVE AS" dialog to **Messages** directory you set up earlier.



- 3.

Step 5: Run the outpost script to send the form data.

Outpost is running, start the program and the use "Scripting Tools" and open the script you created. Click **Run**.



```
File Edit Options Help
New Save Display Run Stop Resume
Script Editor
SCRIPT
! *****
! Description: Detect and forward FLmsg Files.
! NOTE!!! The TNCs and BBSs assigned to the TNC and BBS variables
! must be previously set up in Outpost from the
! Setup > TNC and Setup > BBS forms.
! Author: Greg
! Revision: 03/22/14: Web version
! For this to work properly, you must know the call of the operators your are
! sending
! message to
! Select ALL the text and paste into Outpost Script Editor
!
! *****
Var fname as string ' variable holding the file name and path
```

If all goes well and no errors, the script will find the form file you saved, create and address a new message to packet net control and then send it via packet.

The script will also check if you have any packet mail.

Step 6: Converting the packet message back to a form

In Outpost, if you receive a form file in your **IN BOX**, open the message and take a look.

If the beginning of the file starts with this tag: **<flmsg>**,
You know this is a form file.

From Outpost, click the FILE menu and click SAVE AS. Navigate to the Messages folder you set up earlier and save the file in the RECEIVED Folder.

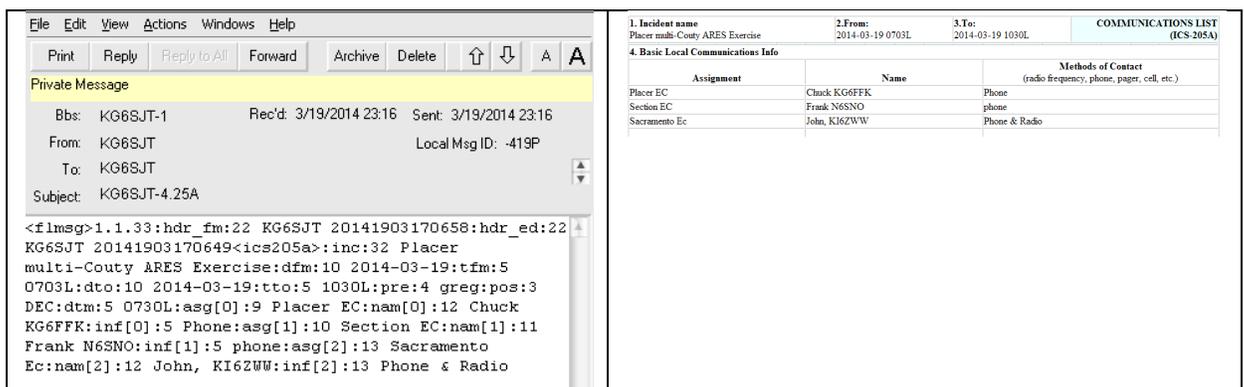
Outpost will append the suffix “.txt” to the message.

Open FLmsg. Click OPEN, in the navigation dialogue window, find the “Received” folder and select the file you received. You may have to Click ALL files for the file type.

You can also use FLmsg’s drag and Drop window to automatically convert the file back to a form.

FLmsg will open the file, select the correct form, and fill it in with the data that was sent. To view the ready to print form, select FILE -> VIEW-> HTML DELIVERY

Sample Received Form message converted back to a form in FLmsg:



The screenshot shows an email client window with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Actions, Windows, Help) and a toolbar (Print, Reply, Reply to All, Forward, Archive, Delete, Up, Down, A, A). The message header is as follows:

Private Message
Bbs: KG6SJT-1 Rec'd: 3/19/2014 23:16 Sent: 3/19/2014 23:16
From: KG6SJT Local Msg ID: -419P
To: KG6SJT
Subject: KG6SJT-4.25A

The body of the message contains the following text:

```
<flmsg>1.1.33:hdr_fm:22 KG6SJT 20141903170658:hdr_ed:22  
KG6SJT 20141903170649<ics205a>:inc:32 Placer  
multi-County ARES Exercise:dfm:10 2014-03-19:tfm:5  
0703L:dto:10 2014-03-19:tto:5 1030L:pre:4 greg:pos:3  
DEC:dtm:5 0730L:asg[0]:9 Placer EC:nam[0]:12 Chuck  
KG6FFK:inf[0]:5 Phone:asg[1]:10 Section EC:nam[1]:11  
Frank N6SNO:inf[1]:5 phone:asg[2]:13 Sacramento  
Ec:nam[2]:12 John, KI6ZWW:inf[2]:13 Phone & Radio
```

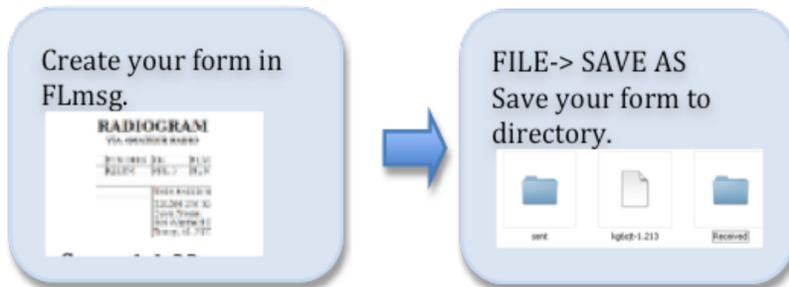
Below the message body is a table titled "4. Basic Local Communications Info" with the following data:

Assignment	Name	Methods of Contact (radio frequency, phone, pager, cell, etc.)
Placer EC	Chuck KG6FFK	Phone
Section EC	Frank N6SNO	phone
Sacramento Ec	John, KI6ZWW	Phone & Radio

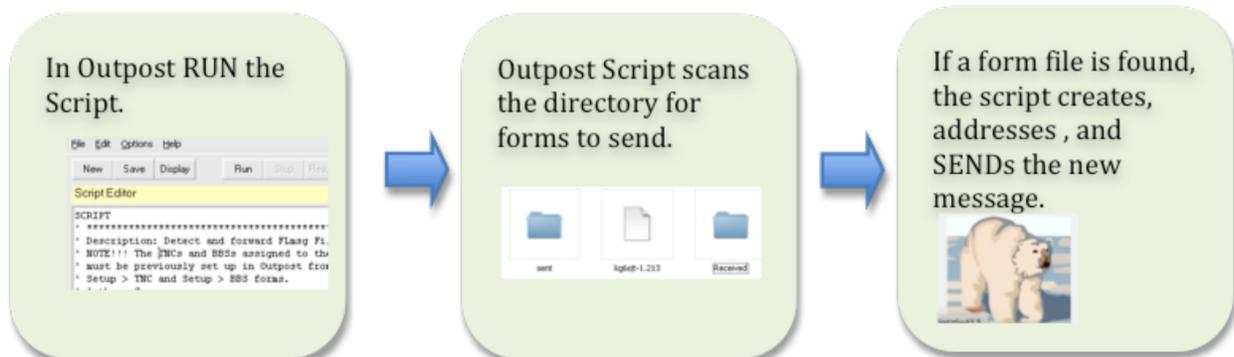
This all sounds more complicated than it really is. The hardest part is getting set up with the script, setting up Outpost correctly.

Using FLmsg with Outpost Workflow

Create and fill in your form in FLmsg and SAVE AS in the folder you created.



In Outpost, start the Send FLMS script.



When you receive a message containing a form (the for tag <form> will be in the message, Save that message to disk in the "RECEIVED" folder.



Good luck and have fun. Let me know if you have problems.

Greg

ARRL Sacramento Valley Section
District 3 Emergency Coordinator
kg6sjt@gmail.com
530-756-7267 home 530-219-0611 cell

Sample Outpost script. Feel Free to edit your created script

```
SCRIPT
' *****
' Description:   Detect and Create new message from FLmsg Files.
' NOTE!!!      The TNCs and BBSs assigned to the TNC and BBS variables
'              must be previously set up in Outpost from the
'              Setup > TNC and Setup > BBS forms.
' Author:      Greg kg6sjt@gmail.com
' Revision:    03/20/14: Original
' For this to work properly, you must know the call of the operators your are sending
' message to
' *****

Var fname as string          ' variable holding the file name and path
Var nameonly as string      ' variable holding the file name only
Var SendtoAddress as string  ' variable holding who we are sending to
Var SendtoBBS as string     ' variable holding who we are sending to
Var FolderToCheck as String ' Var holding pathfolder to check
Var MovtoFolder as String   ' Var holding pathflder to move files to

BEGIN
' *****Define the variable BBS that we will use *****

TNC = "kpc3"                ' use this TNC for all runs. This
                             ' TNC must be set up in Outpost first
,
MYCALL = "KG6SJT"          ' Your call sign
RETRIEVE = "PF"           ' Get mail addressed to you and bulletins
SendtoAddress = "WU6X"    ' Call of the station you are sending to
SendtoBBS = "ARES"       ' BBS you are connecting to

'** Where to look for Flmsg files to send
FolderToCheck = "C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\messages\"

'** Where to move the files after loaded in to outpost
MovtoFolder = "C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\messages\Sent"

'***** end of setting variables *****
LOOP
'** Check if one or more files matching this mask exist

    FindFile (FolderToCheck & "*" ) ' the * looks for all file types

'** Get the first file. Fname will contain a file name if one exists
    Fname = NextFile(0)

' Finally, check if a file exists
    WHILE Exists(FNAME) = TRUE

'** if the file exists, create a message and post it

        BBS= SendtoBBS ;
        FROM= mycall;
        TO=SendtoAddress ;

'** Put the file name (not entire path) in the subject line as well
        NAMEONLY = GetFileName(FNAME)
        SUBJECT=NAMEONLY
        MESSAGE=READFILE(FNAME)
        CREATEMESSAGE

'** Move the file to the "Send folder so it's not detected it again

        MOVEFILE(FNAME, MovtoFolder )

'** Get the next file name and repeat this all over again
        FNAME = NextFile(0)

    ENDWHILE

SENDRECEIVE          ' do this regardless if we found a file
PAUSE(300)           ' Pause 5 minutes (5*60=300) between checks
ENDLOOP
END

' *****End of Script*****
```