

Introduction

MacWeather allows you to connect to an Internet weather server to get current weather information and forecasts for a specified city. It requires a Mac Plus or higher with System 7.0 and MacTCP. MacWeather is shareware -- see the notice at the end of this document regarding payment.

What is MacTCP?

MacTCP is an extension that provides the Macintosh implementation of TCP/IP, a communications protocol which allows your computer to talk to other computers on the Internet. In order to use MacTCP, you must have some type of connection to the Internet -- either through a direct Ethernet connection or from a dial-up service with SLIP or PPP capabilities. MacTCP is currently a commercial product, but it will soon be bundled with System 7.5 when it is released. For now, the best way to get MacTCP is to get the book *_Internet Starter Kit for Macintosh_* by Adam Engst. This book is also an excellent resource for people new to the Internet and provides far more information on getting connected than I could ever include here.

Getting Started

When MacWeather runs for the first time, it will bring up the preferences screen so that you may choose what city to view. After selecting the desired preferences, the program will attempt to connect to the weather server and get the current information for the selected city. After making the connection, the current conditions and forecast are downloaded and displayed on the screen. You can cancel the download process at any time by pressing command-period. When MacWeather starts up the next time, it will automatically get information for the current city without bringing up the preferences screen.

Selecting a city can be accomplished by several different ways. First, in the Preferences window, you select the primary city using the pop-up menus. MacWeather will automatically get information for this city when it first starts up. In future versions of MacWeather, the hourly weather conditions for the primary city will be logged to a file to observe trends in temperature, barometric pressure, etc. At this time, I do not plan to add graphing support within MacWeather, but you may read the log files into any graphing program for viewing.

The second method of selecting a city is by using the Location pull-down menu. Any city chosen from the Location menu is a secondary city. Use this menu to switch temporarily to different cities of interest without changing the primary city setting. After you choose the city to view by using the City menu within the Location pull-down menu, MacWeather will automatically get information on that city.

The last method of selecting a city is by using the Recent menu within the Location menu. The Recent menu shows the primary city as the first menu item. If any secondary cities have been selected, they are shown below the primary city, separated by a dotted line. Use this menu to switch quickly between the last few cities viewed. When a new city is selected, MacWeather automatically gets information on that city.

Features

The following is an explanation of the major features of MacWeather. Extensive Balloon Help is also available to give specific help on any area you desire.

The large analog window is your main display for city conditions. The title bar indicates the name of the city in question. The top line of the window displays status messages when MacWeather connects to the weather server. After successfully retrieving the weather information, the status bar shows the time of the reported conditions. Double-clicking on the status bar is a shortcut to the city selection card of the Preferences.

The thermometer and barometer show the current temperature and pressure, respectively. The symbols at the bottom of the instruments indicate the direction that the temperature or pressure has changed since the last reading. The wind indicator shows the direction from which the wind is blowing, with the wind speed displayed in the center. Double-clicking in any of these instruments is a shortcut to the appropriate Preferences card for setting minimum and maximum values and units to display.

Below the wind indicator is an iconic representation of the current conditions. The text below the icon also gives a short description of the conditions. Finally, the instrument in the lower right corner displays the percent relative humidity. For those of you whose desktop space is scarce, you can also view this information in condensed form using the digital window.

For cities in the United States and Canada, local forecasts are automatically downloaded with the current weather conditions. The forecast is displayed by choosing the Show Forecast menu item in the Weather menu. Forecasts are not available from the weather server for cities outside the United States and Canada.

Near shore marine forecasts are also available for selected cities in coastal areas of the United States. To retrieve marine forecasts, click the Get Marine Forecast checkbox in the City Selection Preferences card. Choose Show Marine Forecast from the Weather menu to view the current marine forecast.

Climate data is available for many cities in the United States. To retrieve climate data, click the Get Climate Data checkbox in the City Selection Preferences card. The data that is reported varies greatly depending on the city. Some cities do not report climate data; others report daily temperatures and sunrise/sunset information; still others give detailed reports of the recent

trends in the local weather. Choose Show Climate Data from the Weather menu to view the current climate data.

The local forecast, marine forecast, and climate data can all be copied to the clipboard, saved as TeachText documents, or printed at any time.

Getting Help

Extensive balloon help is available to give brief descriptions of the various commands and their actions. This text is also accessible online by choosing the Help item in the Weather menu or the MacWeather Help item in the Balloon Help menu.

Using Other Servers

MacWeather is currently written only to work with the default weather server, downwind.sprl.umich.edu and its mirror server, madlab.sprl.umich.edu. madlab is a newer machine and tends to have less downtime than downwind. If you attempt to connect to a different server, very strange things may happen since MacWeather is designed to work with the output format from downwind and madlab. I am not aware of any other servers currently in operation that give data as informative as from those servers.

Firewall Users

MacWeather is still in a semi-beta state with respect to the firewall code. I may be adding socks support in the future, but for now, it's basically just a hack to get through the firewall. In the Preferences, turn on the Firewall checkbox and enter the name and port number of your firewall server. If you don't normally have to enter a port, just leave that field blank. For the prompt, type the last thing that you see from the firewall before you connect to an outside server. Save the preferences to see if it will work for you. If not, go back and turn on the Send CRLF checkbox. Some firewalls do not work properly when data is sent with only a LF. Send me mail if you have any problems.

Version History

2.0.4

- Many spelling corrections
- Updated cities for newly supported major cities
- Increased width of digital window slightly to accommodate longer conditions
- MacWeather FAQ now included

2.0.3b2

- No debugging information
- Changed "connect" to "telnet"

2.0.3b1

- Complete debugging information for firewalls

2.0.3 August 4, 1994

- Special release for _Internet Starter Kit_
- Fixed a few typos
- Window title now updated when starting a connection

2.0.2 July 25, 1994

- Removed PowerPC native code -- lots more testing necessary

2.0.1 July 25, 1994

- Fixed a bug which caused crashes when parsing forecasts

2.0 July 24, 1994

- Added support for hPa and km/h
- Added support for tons of new cities in the US and abroad
- Added support for near-short marine forecasts in the US
- Added support for climatic data in the US
- Added nighttime icons
- Added support for saving and printing forecasts
- Added Recent menu to switch between cities easily
- Added Default button for preferences
- Added support for firewalls (still buggy)
- Added units to wind speed display
- Redrew displays to make them look a little better
- Numerous minor bug fixes

1.1.1 March 8, 1994

- Fixed a bug caused by the last bug fix when conditions hadn't changed
- Fixed a bug with mouse clicks in the City Code edit field
- Increased the size of the thermometer and barometer slightly in preparation for minimum/maximum marks

1.1 March 7, 1994

- Enabled copying from forecast window
- Rewrote icon picking code -- hopefully it now recognizes most of them
- Removed alert message for no icon available
- Fixed a few bugs related to edit boxes in the prefs window
- Added Location menu

- Fixed a bug which caused the forecast to be erased when conditions hadn't changed
- Added smaller digital display

1.0 February 27, 1994

- First public release

To Do List

- Support for Apple Script
- Support for Apple Guide
- Log conditions for primary city to file
- Option to put temperature (or whatever you want) in menu bar
- Clean up of data presented in the various forecast windows
- Add sliders for daily min/max of temperature and pressure

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Michael Wellman
Scott Gruby
Edward Wolpert

Firewall Testers: Shawn Ramer
Jay Thomas
Scott Walker

Shareware Notice

MacWeather is shareware. If you like it, please send \$10 to:

Christopher Kidwell
3405 Tulane Drive, Apt. 2
Hyattsville, MD 20783

Please include your E-mail address if you have one. Acknowledgements of payment are typically sent via E-mail within a few days of receipt. If you do not get mail from me, please send me mail -- your mail address may have been missing or unreadable. Registered users are updated via E-mail when they are released and also get special information about planned features and problems with the weather server. The most recent version can be found on my home page: <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~kidwell/>

Site license information is available upon request.

Bug reports may be mailed in or sent via E-mail to:
kidwell@wam.umd.edu

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