

Customizing Ticker Tape

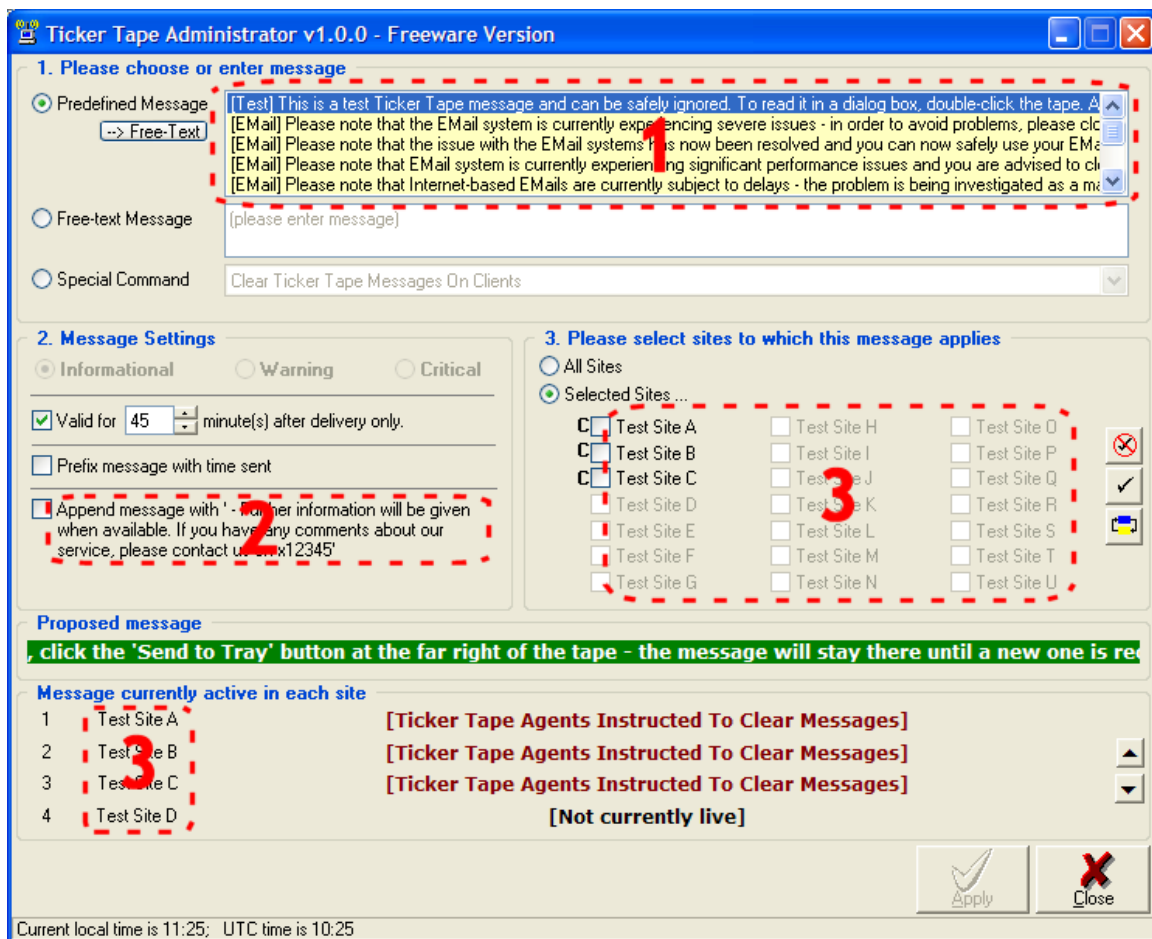
Overview

As installed, the Ticker Tape is configured to manage messages for up to three test sites 'hosted' on the same computer also – this allows you to familiarize yourself with the Administrator interface and, after installing the Agent software to the same machine also, allows you to quickly see the interaction between the Administrator and Agent on a single machine (this is described in more detail in the "Getting started with Ticker Tape" document.)

In live use however, you'll need to alter the configuration of the Ticker Tape Administrator to match your own environment – the Site names, control file locations and pre-defined messages for instance - this document explains how to alter the various configuration files that define each of those items. Note that the configuration files should *only* be altered using a basic text editor such as Notepad that won't introduce unnecessary formatting and that it would be prudent to make a copy of any configuration file prior to making any alterations!

Steps to customize the Administrative interface

As indicated in the screen shot below there are three discrete areas that can you'll likely wish to alter; the pre-defined messages, the text appended onto messages by default and the Site names.



1. Pre-defined messages

The pre-defined messages are a group of usually generic messages relating to the status of your core systems and are defined in the "*TickerTapeMessages.ini*" file – along with the actual text of the message, each pre-defined message also defines several other message parameters which are used to default the settings within the Administrator interface accordingly;

- **Category:** A user-defined category such as 'email' or 'finance' merely used to identify to the user the type of message.
- **Severity:** Set to either "Info", "Warning" or "Critical" and used to default the message type radio buttons (within the 'Message Settings' frame) – this sets the colour of the message shown at the Agents accordingly
- **Validity:** The default length of time in minutes after delivery that the message automatically expires. When set to 0, the message will not automatically expire and would need to be manually cleared using the 'Clear Ticker Tape Messages On Client' special command (or, if appropriate, replaced with a different message)
- **Append:** The default state of the 'Append message with...' checkbox (within the 'Message Settings' frame) and must be set to either "Yes" or "No" - note that the actual message to append is stored in the *TickerTapeAdmin.ini* file (as described below) and *not* in the messages file.
- **Scope:** Must be set to either "Global" or "Regional" to defined whether the message defaults to being sent to either 'All Sites' or just 'Selected Sites' (within the 'Please select sites to which this message applies' frame)

The format of the *TickerTapeMessages.ini* file is very basic and is detailed at the top of the file itself also. As an example, the first two pre-defined message entries from the file are shown below and relate directly to the first two default pre-defined messages shown in the Administrator interface;

Test

Info

45

No

Regional

This is a test Ticker Tape message and can be safely ignored. To read it in a dialog box, double-click the tape. Alternatively, you can drag it left and right using the mouse. To send to the System Tray, click the 'Send to Tray' button at the far right of the tape - the message will stay there until a new one is received, it expires or the agent is instructed to clear its message.

;

EEmail

Critical

0

Yes

Global

Please note that the EMail system is currently experiencing severe issues - in order to avoid problems, please close your EMail client down as soon as possible.

Other than the semi-colon (which is just used as a means to separate the individual message definitions and ignored by the Administrator software) the lines above relate directly to the parameters described earlier (note that the message itself is wrapped onto several lines here)

2. Append message text

The 'Append message text' is added onto the end of any message that is sent out to the Agents (if the checkbox is ticked) – this generic text would normally relate to the standard contact details for your help desk for instance.

Editing the message shown here is merely a case of altering the 'AppendMessage' text in the *TickerTapeAdmin.ini* file. As noted earlier, the file should only be edited by a simple text editor such as Notepad to ensure that its format remains as the Administrator software expects it.

3. Site names (and control file locations)

The *TickerTapeSites.ini* file is critical in that it defines not only the Site names shown within the Ticker Tape Administrator software, but also the locations that it writes the Ticker Tape Agent control file to for each Site.

Each line in the file defines the three required settings for an individual site - its name as shown in the Administrator interface, the path to the sites control file and whether the site is active or not within the Administrator interface.

There are 21 sites currently defined (though, as installed, not currently active) listed in the file – The entries for the first five sites are shown below and these entries relate directly to the first five sites as shown in the 'Please select site to which this message applies' frame;

Test Site A,TestSites\TestSiteA,active
Test Site B,TestSites\TestSiteB,active
Test Site C,TestSites\TestSiteC,active
Test Site D,,inactive
Test Site E,,inactive

In the excerpt of the *TickerTapeSites.ini* file above (which is taken from the file as initially installed), the first line configures the first site to be called "Test Site A" and defines its control file location as a path *relative to the software installation directory*, "TestSites\TestSiteA" – however, this is purely to ease initial testing and is *not* the norm.

Usually, the *TickerTapeSites.ini* file would be expected to contain your actual office names and, critically, the UNC path to the area in which the Administrator software writes the Agent control file. The Agents would then also be configured to look within this same area for updates from the Administrator software. For example, a more realistic *TickerTapeSites.ini* file would look like;

New York,\\USNEWFS01\TTShare,active
London,\\UKLONFS01\TTShare,active
Detroit,\\USDETFS01\TTShare,active
Test Site D,,inactive
Test Site E,,inactive

In this instance, the servers in New York, London and Detroit would each have a share configured on them called 'TTShare' to which the Ticker Tape Administrator software would have *both* Read & Write access and the Agent would have Read access. Alternatively, and just as valid, would be a UNC path to a particular

directory rather than a share, e.g: \\USNEWS01\d\$\Apps\TickerTape\Messages

Please refer to the "Getting started with Ticker Tape" document for more information regarding Sites and their use.

Customizing other aspects of Ticker Tape

In addition to the Ticker Tape Administrator GUI-centric customization above, there are various other parameters that can be configured – each of these settings is held in the '*TickerTapeAdmin.ini*' file in the Ticker Tape Administrator software directory and are explained below. As above, any editing of this file must be done with a basic text editor such as Notepad and you're advised to make a copy of it before altering.

- **InformationalBackground**
 - o Defaults to 'green': 32768
 - o This is the background colour for 'Informational' messages
- **InformationalForeground**
 - o Defaults to 'bright white': 16777215
 - o This is the foreground colour for 'Informational' messages
- **WarningBackground**
 - o Defaults to 'amber': 32896
 - o This is the background colour for 'Warning' messages
- **WarningForeground**
 - o Defaults to 'bright white': 16777215
 - o This is the foreground colour for 'Warning' messages
- **CriticalBackground**
 - o Defaults to 'red': 128
 - o This is the background colour for 'Critical' messages
- **CriticalForeground**
 - o Defaults to 'bright white': 16777215
 - o This is the foreground colour for 'Critical' messages
- **DefaultTickerSpeed**
 - o Default in ms: 250
 - o This setting controls the scroll speed of the Agent message and is defined in milliseconds. The Agent will wait this amount of time before moving its message to the left by one character. In order to minimize Agent CPU usage and ensure the Agent message is easily readable, it is recommended that this setting is left at the default.
- **MessageWidthPercent**
 - o Default in percent of screen width: 85
 - o Introduced in v1.1, not available in earlier versions
 - o Allows the width of the Agent message bar to be controlled from the Administrator; valid values are between 20 and 100
- **MessageFontFamily**
 - o Introduced in v1.1, not available in earlier versions
 - o Default: *Verdana*
 - o Allows the Font Family shown for the 'proposed message' in the Administrator interface, as well as the actual Agent message bar itself to be altered to any valid font family. Please note that the chosen font family must exist on the Agent workstations in order for it to be displayed as expected.

- **MessageFontSize**
 - Introduced in v1.1, not available in earlier versions
 - Default: 9
 - Allows the size of the font used in the 'proposed message' in the Administrator interface, as well as the actual Agent message bar itself to be altered to any valid value for the chosen font family, with the Agent automatically adjusting its height to suit.