

Ticker Tape - Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers or guidance relating to questions that are frequently asked about Ticker Tape

What does it do?

Ticker Tape provides a way for administrators & Help Desks to quickly and easily 'broadcast' different messages to users at multiple remote sites in a non-intrusive way. It's easy to use administrative interface allows you to choose from either a set of pre-defined messages or construct your own with full control over the message type (i.e. whether it's 'informational', 'warning' or 'critical'), which sites the message should be 'broadcast' to and how long the message should be displayed for.

Ideal for proactively advising users of new system issues or updating them of the status of existing issues, keeping them happy and substantially cutting down irate calls to the Help Desk!

But I've got an email system / an Intranet to advise users of system status... Why do I need it?

Several reasons... one simple reason is that they normally require the user to 'do' something; check their mail or browse to an Intranet status page for example. And let's face it, they never read emails from the I.T. Dept anyway do they? ... and they're probably not even aware of the system status page on your Intranet...

...How do you communicate with your users when it's actually the email system that's down? You'd normally just field a flood of calls from frustrated users to an overstretched Help Desk?

Ticker Tape allows you to proactively advise your users of new issues and to keep them up-to-date as things unfold without interrupting them as they carry on working - they don't need to even attempt to contact the help desk as you can easily advise all 1,700 users on your remote sites that the email system is expected to be up 'n' running again in 20 minutes..

Is Ticker Tape free or do I need to purchase it?

It depends on how many different sites you wish to broadcast messages to. The free edition is capable of sending messages to up to a maximum of THREE different locations, if you want to send messages to more than that, you'll need to purchase a license to enable that functionality - currently, a maximum of 21 different locations can be controlled through the Ticker Tape Administrator interface (although this may increase in future depending upon feedback)

If you're interested in purchasing a license, use the links on the Ticker Tape Administrator Help menu or the Start menu to choose an appropriate licence based upon your requirements.

How does it work?

The concept is very simple: The unobtrusive & light weight Ticker Tape Agent is installed on each workstation and configured to periodically poll a site control file that defines what message each of the workstations within that site should display. This location can (and likely will) vary for each site. The Ticker Tape Administrator is then used to maintain each of

the control files, allowing the message and other parameters they contain to be easily altered on a per site basis, allowing different messages to be displayed by the agents within each site.

What's the maximum number of workstations on a site I can 'broadcast' messages to?

There isn't a specific defined maximum - each site could easily contain tens (or hundreds) of thousands of workstations. The only limiting factor would be the bandwidth between the workstations and the location storing the message control file for that group of workstations. However, in normal circumstances, as the message control file storage location is a file server that's *local* to the Agents, this is rarely a consideration.

What are the minimum Hardware system requirements?

Ticker Tape has only basic hardware needs; anything capable of running Windows 2000 or XP should be easily capable of running either the Ticker Tape Administrator or Agent.

What are the minimum Software requirements?

Both the Ticker Tape Administrator and the Ticker Tape Agent are written in VB6 and therefore require the VB6 run time modules to be installed on the host PC (some later Windows O/Ss, such as Windows 7 have this 'built-in') - this freely available prerequisite is available via the Ticker Tape web site (<http://www.johnnyfoster.com>) or directly from Microsoft at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=7B9BA261-7A9C-43E7-9117-F673077FFB3C&displaylang=en>

What systems has Ticker Tape been developed on / tested with?

Ticker Tape is currently developed on a Windows XP SP3 machine. Testing of the Ticker Tape Administrator and Ticker Tape Agent has taken place on the following Operating Systems:

Windows 2000
Windows 2003
Windows XP SP2 / SP3
Windows Vista
Windows 7

Ticker Tape doesn't install / work properly?

Sorry to hear that - I presume you've read the "Getting started with Ticker Tape" document which gives a step by step guide to installing both the Ticker Tape Administrator and Agent software? If not, please do so as it will likely help you get Ticker Tape quickly up 'n' running!

If you're still encountering issues after reading the getting started document or simply need some additional guidance please don't hesitate to send me a mail or post a forum message detailing your environment and the circumstances under which Ticker Tape doesn't work as expected.

While I'll do my best to respond to all requests for help, you'll understand that customers with licensed versions will be given priority when investigating any reported issues.

Ticker Tape is a 'God send' and has saved me loads of time - how can I ever thank you?!

Drop me a quick mail with your comments, how it's helped you and any suggestions you have to improve it - those I include in future releases of Ticker Tape will be credited to you.

If you're using the freeware edition and you really want to show your appreciation - especially if you're a corporate user - please consider donating a token amount via the PayPal button on my website (<http://www.johnnyfoster.com>) - this encourages ongoing development of Ticker Tape for everyone's benefit.

Can I customize the detail show on the Ticker Tape Administrator GUI?

Yes; various aspects of Ticker Tape can be customized to suit your environment including the pre-defined messages, Site names, Append message text and Agent message font family, size, speed, colour and on screen width. To facilitate Agent configuration, the Ticker Tape Administrator also provides a 'Live Preview' function which mimics exactly how the Agent will appear as you adjust the Agent message attributes.