Introduction to Fldigi and the Narrow Band Emergency Message System (NBEMS)

Kevin, K4IVE

Howdy!

In this presentation I will demonstrate and explain how to download, configure and operate with the fldigi suite of software, available at http://www.w1hkj.com/.
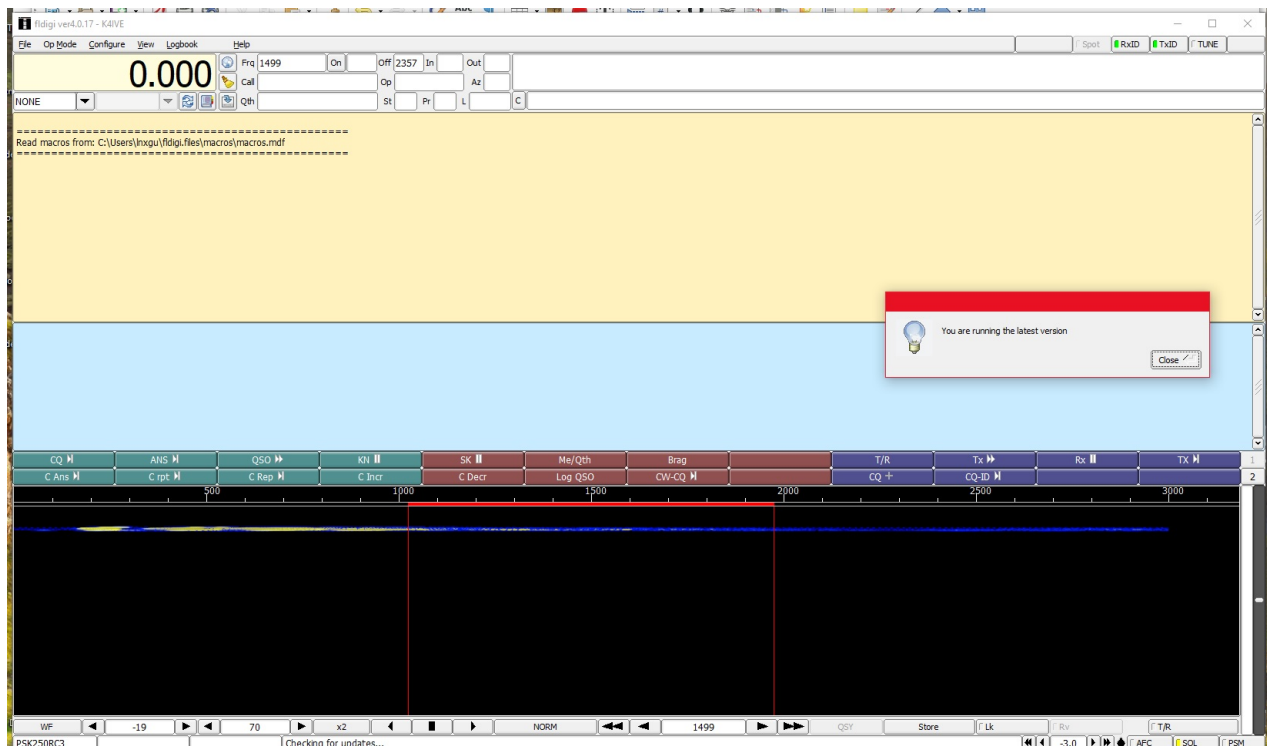
There are several applications needed to operate in all the available modes and radio network systems, but I will focus on the two most important, fldigi and flmsg. Fldigi is the base application for all the other additional applications and is the first piece of software needed to get started. I will also show you flmsg in order to see how radiogram and and other emergency system documents can be sent, forwarded and replied to over the air with no other equipment!

Fldigi:

To get started, go to http://www.w1hkj.com/files/fldigi and download the version for your operating system. For all Microsoft Windows systems, that would be http://www.w1hkj.com/files/fldigi/fldigi-4.0.17_setup.exe or possibly a newer version, since the software is updated regularly. While you are there, also download all the help files.

Also download flmsg from http://www.w1hkj.com/files/flmsg/flmsg-4.0.6_setup.exe since you will need it later…

Installation is very simple: just double click the fldigi-4.0.XX_setup.exe file and let it install. It only takes about four or five seconds and the open fldigi from the new shortcut on your desktop:
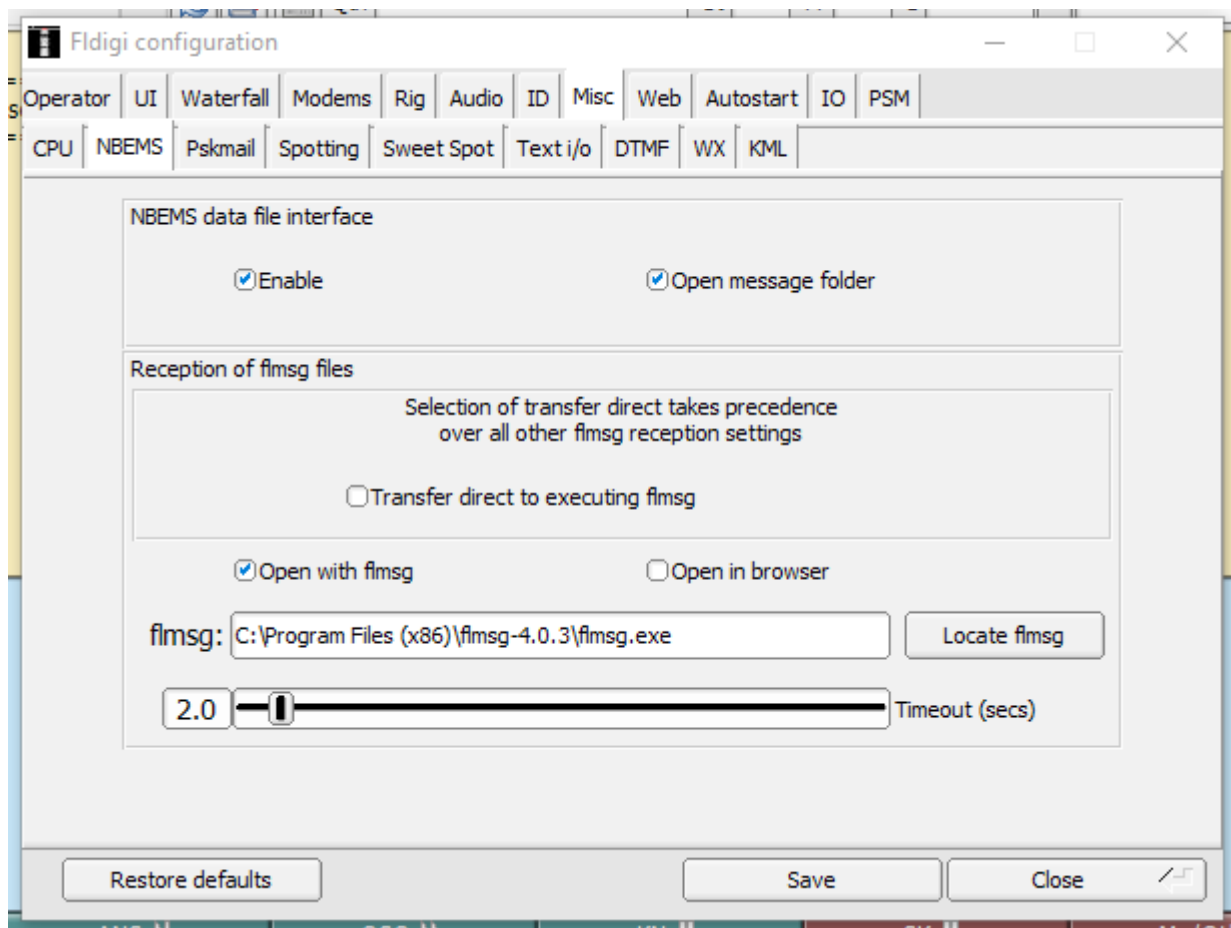
This is how I have my default setup. You will learn quickly that here are unlimited ways to set up the many parameters of this software. You can modify just about any setting to suit your way of operating!

You will first see a short setup dialog that will ask you your callsign and location, etc. from there you will see the main screen. The first thing to do is to click on the "Help" tab and open the "Beginner's Guide" link. That document will answer just about all your questions about setting up fldigi and from there, go to the "Online Documentation" link, right below that link. That document has every possible setting explained in great detail and will get you set up for just about any radio or computer combination.
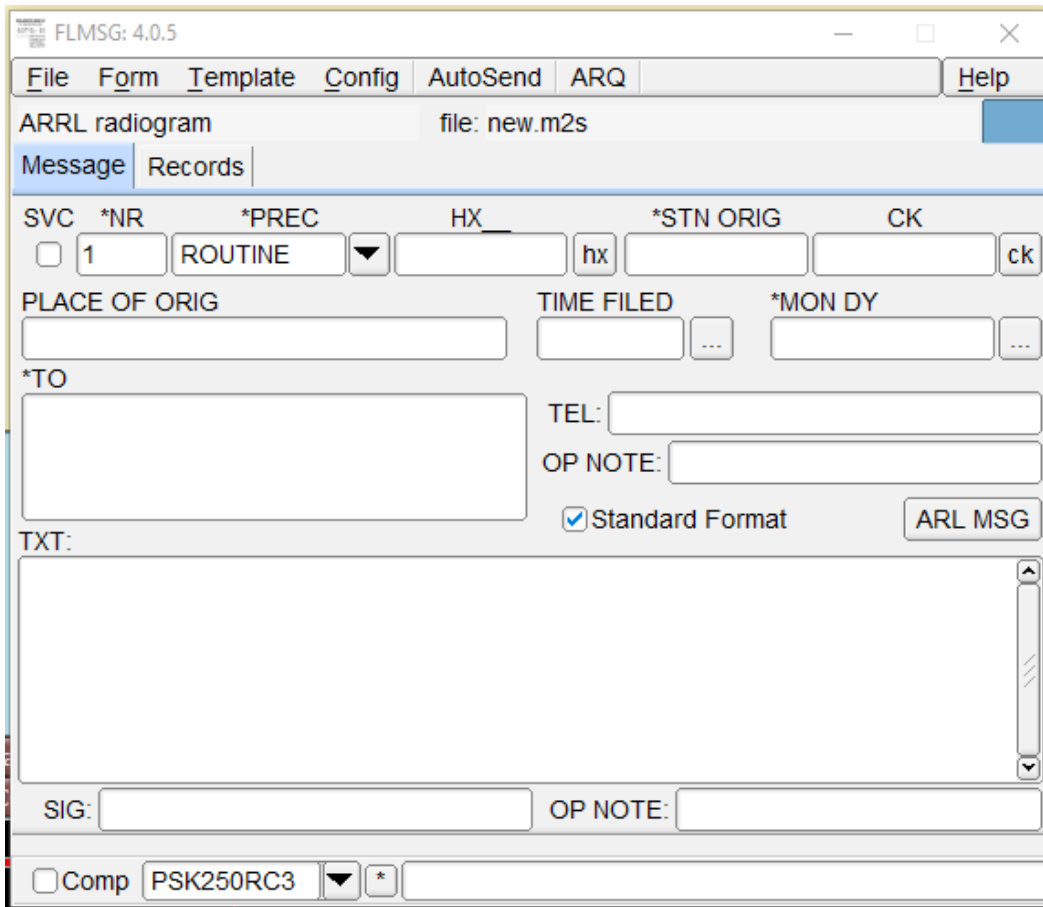
It is really important to make sure the two boxes marked "RxID" and "TxID" up in the top right corner are selected and the boxes are green. That will ensure you can receive a message on your first try and will make things easier for all your further use of fldigi!

Setting up your sound card under the "Configure|Audio" window will have a few settings that need to be adjusted for proper operation. Use: □ PortAudio for your sound system and adjust your Capture and Playback devices until you can hear and send audio through your onboard or external sound card. Windows has a horrible sound system ,so it might take quite a bit of fussing to get it to work…

Next, go to "Configure|Misc|NBEMS" and make sure the page has these settings:

You can change these setting to your liking later, but this will get you started with the least confusion and difficulty. Don't worry about the location of flmsg yet, we will install it now:

Go to your downloaded flmsg-4.0.X_setup.exe file and double click it to install. It will ask you a few questions about your callsign and whether you want the ☐expert interface. Yes, you do; check that box. Once flmsg is installed, go back to the above NBEMS window and ensure the path to flmsg.exe looks like the one abve. If not, just click on the "Locate" button and it will find it for you! Close both the fldigi and flmsg applications and open just fldigi.

You are all set to begin receiving and sending messages and you can connect to your radio through a digital audio interface of your choice. eg. RigBlaster, SignaLink, MFJ… Just go to the "Configure|Rig" window and set up your particular radio using either a manual connection through your CAR serial connection, or use one of the HAMLIB or RigCAT file for your radio (available on the fldigi web site under the "/xmls/(Brand of Radio)/" link.

OK, now what? How can you test your new system to see if it work? You can get on the local repeater and find me and I will gladly send you some cool files, photos, forms or text messages! If I am not available go to: https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AMh6NRYsovZh7i8&id=F24C5799D08FDF1E%214506&cid=F24C5799D08FDF1E and pick one of the weekly episodes of Shortwave Radiogram. This 30-minute digital transmission is broadcast from WRMI in Florida and Spaceline in Bulgaria on several HF frequencies. See http://swradiogram.net/ for further information.

These instructions will get you started and you will learn quickly that this is just the basic set of applications and that there are several mor programs written by Dave, W1HKJ, that are fun and interesting to use and experiment with. Give them a try!

If you are stumped on any of these instructions, or want more detailed information that the online help pages can't get you through, you can contact me via email at: https://www.qrz.com/db/K4IVE or k4ive@linuxmail.org.

Good luck, have fun an 73!

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