

**Binary News Reaper (BNR2)**  
**V 0.6.5.356**

Designed by Patrick Aalto

**Beginners Guide**

By Jeff Snavely  
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## **Welcome!**

Welcome to BNR2, the second generation of the Binary News Reaper program. BNR is a newsreader program specializing in downloading binary files with ease. BNR is not designed for threaded text message reading or for posting articles to newsgroups. However, BNR can download and display individual text messages so that you can read the text accompanying a binary post without having to re-download the headers from a large binaries group in another standard newsreader.

This guide will help new users to quickly set up a typical installation of BNR, and then describe the basics of how to use the program. For a complete rundown of every feature available and additional advanced tips of getting the most out of BNR, see the Advanced Users Guide.

# 1. Installation

We will assume at this point, that you have just gone to the official BNR web site at <http://www.co.jyu.fi/~ap/blr.html> and downloaded both this document and the latest beta version of BNR2. First, you will need to unzip the archive into a directory somewhere, *C:\BNR2\* for this document's purposes. If you haven't encountered a *.zip* file before, you will need a program such as WinZip (available at [www.winzip.com](http://www.winzip.com)) to extract the files. If you haven't used an earlier version of the BNR2 beta, then you should have also downloaded the file *qtintf.dll*, which has been excluded from the archive to save space for those who already have it. If, when running BNR, the application does not load, make sure this file exists in the same directory as the executable (*C:\BNR2\*). If not, download it from the official BNR web site. All that is left for you to do is launch the program.

Double-click on the BNR2 icon in the directory you created. After the program finishes loading you will be presented with the main window of the program.

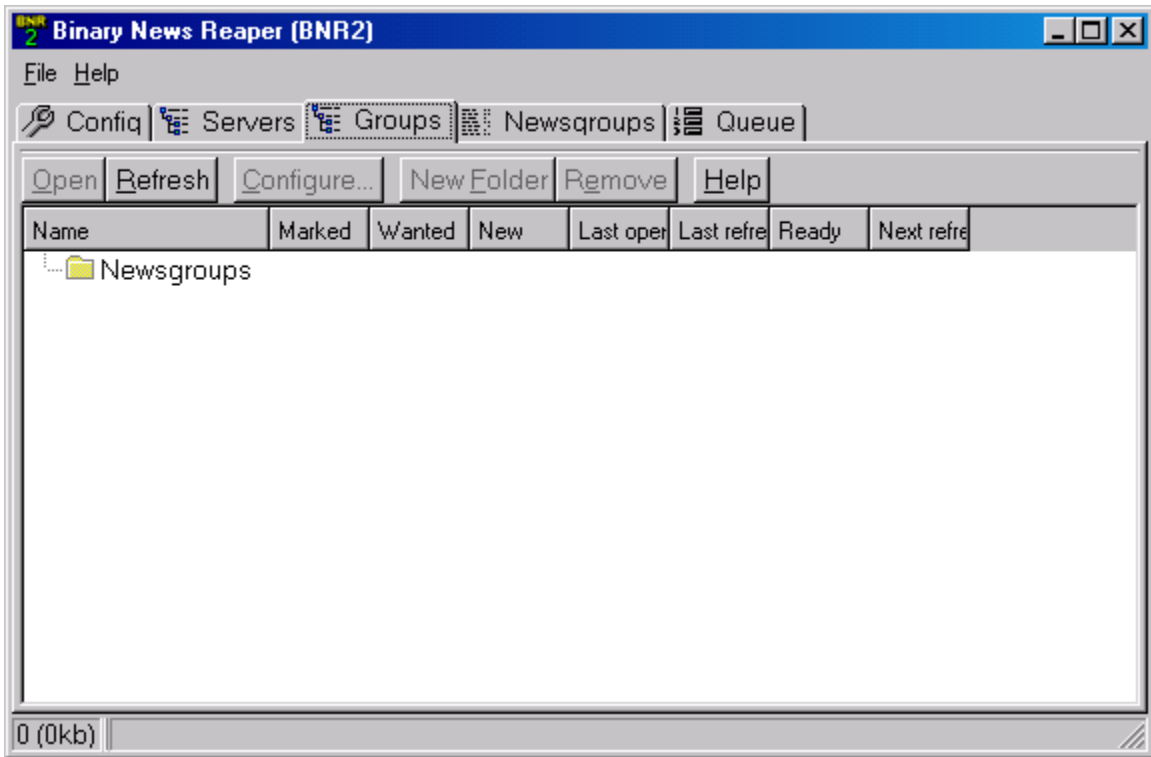
## **TIP: Add BNR2 Shortcut to Desktop and/or Start Menu**

You can make launching BNR2 easier by adding a shortcut to your Desktop or to your Start Menu, or both.

To add a shortcut to your Desktop, use the Windows Explorer ("My Computer" on the Desktop) to navigate to the directory where you installed BNR2, right click on the file *BNR2.exe* and then click "Send To" on the popup menu and "Desktop (create shortcut)" on the sub-menu that appears. Press the Ok button on the information window, and the shortcut will be created.

To add an entry to your Start Menu, first create a shortcut as described above. Then click and hold the left mouse button over the shortcut and drag the icon down to the Start Menu and hold the mouse still under the Start Menu pops up. Now, drag the icon over the Start Menu to the position where you would like the BNR shortcut to appear and release the mouse button. The recommended locations would be either in the quick launch section at the top of the first pane of the Start Menu or in the Program Files pane. If you did not want a copy of the shortcut on the Desktop, then select the shortcut on the Desktop, press the Delete key and answer Yes to the confirmation box.

Congratulations! If you've made it this far, then the rest is simple. Figure 1.01 shows the main screen you should be presented with. There may be several daunting buttons on it, but these are mainly here to allow you to use BNR to its full extent. We will go into more detail with each button as we need it and leave other more advanced features for later. This guide is intended to be an overview of the basics needed to configure the typical settings to get new users up and running quickly. More detailed explanations of all aspects of the program including many advanced options will be left for the Advanced Users Guide.



**Figure 1.01** – The Main BNR Screen

## 2. Adding Servers

BNR can't do much right out of the box. Before we can start downloading files from our favorite binary newsgroups, we need to configure how BNR works on your system. The first step in configuring the BNR program, is to configure at least one news server for BNR to connect to.

### 2.1. Add A New Server

To add a server, you need to click on the *Servers* tab to switch to the Servers page.

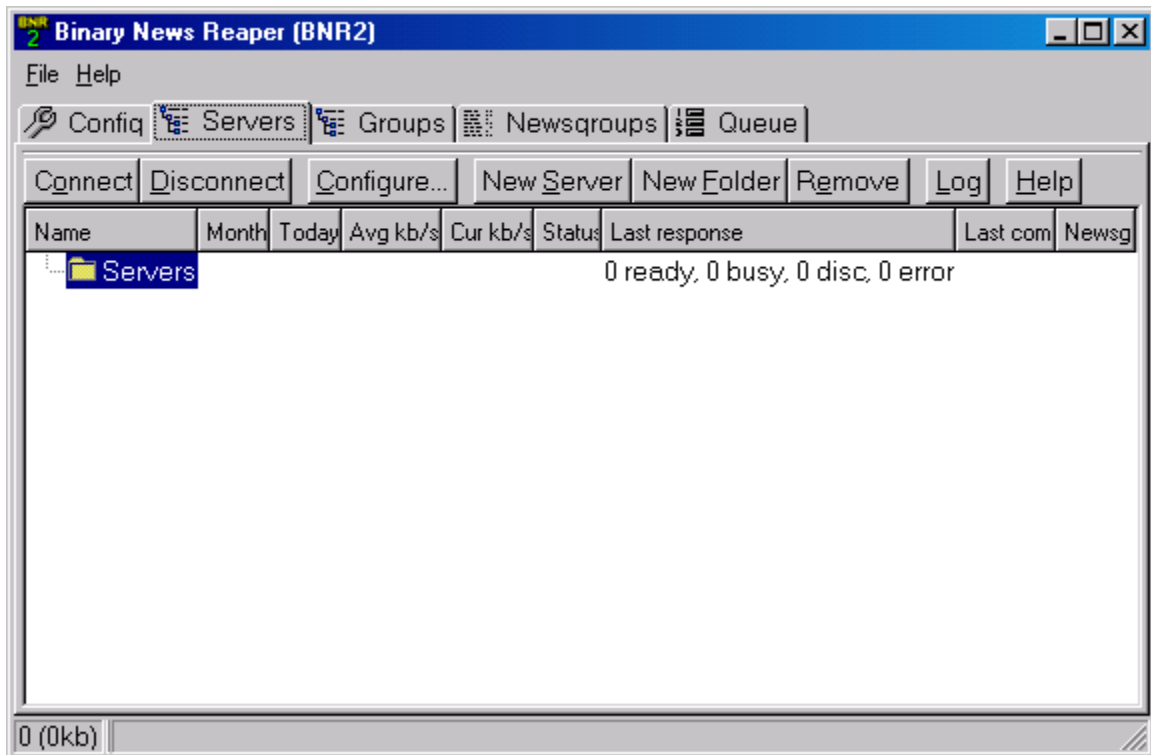
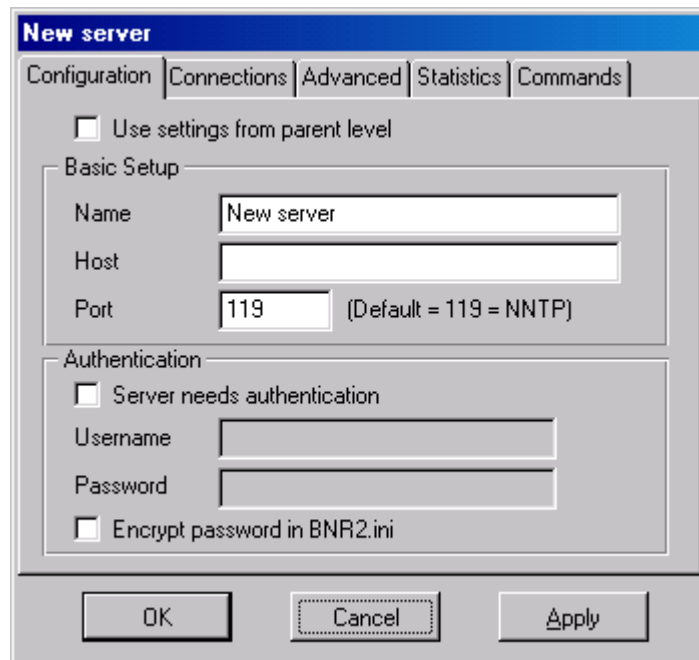


Figure 2.01 – Servers Page

Click the *New Server* button to add a new blank server entry and display the server configuration window so that you can fill in the settings for this new server.

### 2.2. Configuration Tab

The first tab on the server configuration window is for entering the information necessary to successfully connect to the new server



**Figure 2.02** – New Server Configuration Tab

First, you will want to replace the default Name "New server" with something a little more informative. This is the name that will appear throughout the rest of the program to help you, the user, identify this server. A good name would be the actual domain name of the server, but it doesn't have to be. You can put any name you want in the Name field.

**TIP: Use Prefixes in Server Names**

If you take advantage of the ability of BNR to utilize multiple news servers, the names you give to the servers becomes more important. Some of the screens in BNR will list the servers that a group or message is available on as a set of thin columns, which are only large enough to show the first few letters of the server name. If you have several servers that all start with the same word, such as "news", then it will become more difficult to figure out which servers have the groups or messages that interest you. In order to alleviate this problem, you may elect to prefix the names of the servers with a short 1-3 character code so they will all be uniquely identified in this thin columns. The system you use is entirely up to you. You could number them sequentially, or alphabetically, or you could use a combination of a couple letters used in the name of that server. Use whatever system works for you.

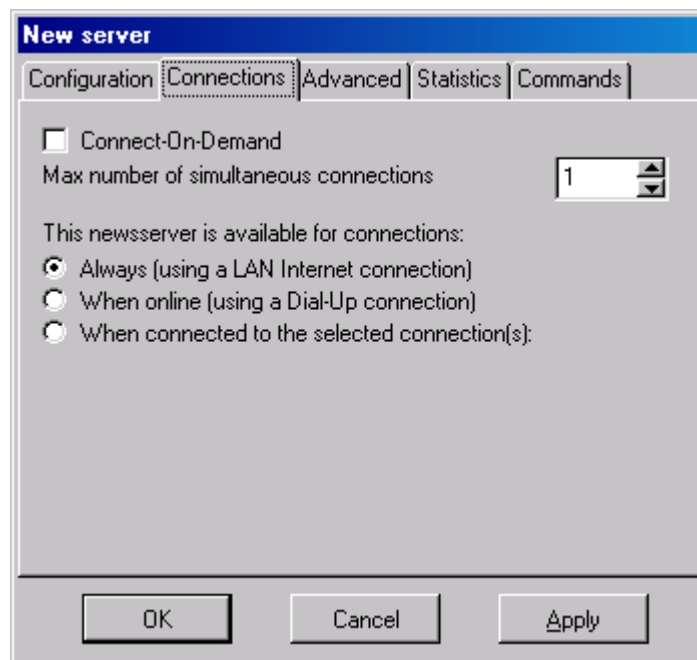
Second, you will need to fill in the Host address for the new server. This is the domain name for the server. If the server does not have a domain name, then you will need to enter in the IP address of the server.

**NOTE:** BNR does not currently support connecting to proxy servers.

If your news server uses a non-standard port number, then you will need to input this into the Port field, otherwise leave the default value.

If your news server requires you to log on to use it, then you need to check the checkbox for "Server needs authentication" and then enter in your Username and Password from the information you received from your ISP or other third-party news server provider. If you did not receive any login information, then you probably don't need to log in to use the news server.

## 2.3. Connections Tab



**Figure 2.03** – New Server Connections Tab

(optional) If you want BNR to automatically make connections to the server as needed for downloading data, then you should check the "Connect-On-Demand" checkbox. If you are concerned about controlling the Internet traffic on your computer, then you can leave this setting turned off, but you will have to manually connect to any servers that do not have this setting turned on to use them.

(optional) You can increase the maximum number of simultaneous connections to this server in an attempt to download files faster by using up to 4 connections to download up to 4 parts of the file simultaneously.

**NOTE:** Some servers have a limit to the total number of simultaneous connections. If you try to make more connections that you are allowed, the extra connection(s) will be closed automatically by the server. You should check the server's "Status" column on the server list when attempting to make multiple

connections to see if any error messages appear related to making too many connections. The format of the message is different for every server, but will usually tell you how many connections you are allowed to have. You should then return to this configuration screen by highlighting that Server and clicking the *Configure...* button, then choosing the Connections tab and entering a new number between 1 and the limit specified in the error message into the "Max number of simultaneous connections" field.

Next, you need to tell BNR when the server is available for use. If you are using an always on connection such as a Cable Modem or DSL, then you should leave it set to the default "Always (using a LAN Internet connection)". If you are using a dial-up ISP, then you can choose "When online (using a Dial-Up connection)" so BNR will only try to access the Internet when the Dial-Up connection is currently online. If you want to control when BNR can access the server, then you can choose "When connected to the selected connection(s)".

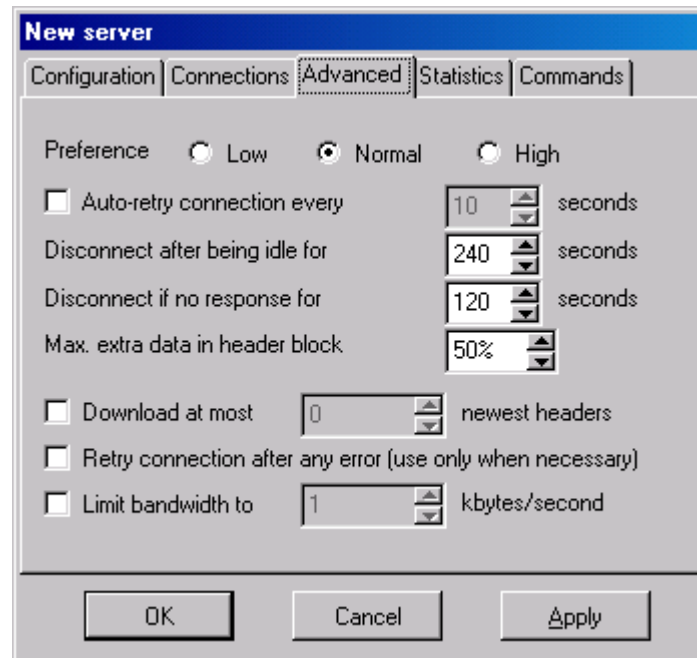
**TIP: Using the Always Available Setting for Dial-Ups**

If you are using a Dial-Up connection and want to leave BNR running all night but experience periodic automatic disconnects from your ISP or have other problems causing random disconnects, you might choose to set up your server(s) to be always available in BNR. If you do this, then BNR should attempt to redial your ISP whenever it hangs up and then continue where it left off. You will also need to setup your ISP login to be automatic so that your computer can get back online unattended.

**TIP: Using the When Connected to Setting for Problem Servers**

Sometimes, a server might go offline or may have some other problems preventing you from using it. If you are not yet willing to remove that server in hopes that the problem will be corrected soon, you could set the server to be available only "When connected to the selected connection(s)" so that BNR will not waste time constantly trying to connect to this bad server.

## 2.4. Advanced Tab



**Figure 2.04** – New Server Advanced Tab

(optional) You can use the Low, Normal & High Preference settings to influence which servers get priority in attempting to download messages. If a message exists on one or more servers with High priority, then those servers will be used exclusively for downloading those parts. If none of the High priority servers have a part, then BNR will try to download from one of the Normal priority servers. If those servers also do not have the part, then it will fall back to the Low priority servers.

### **TIP: Set Preferences Based on Server Speed**

One use of the preference setting is to assign Low, Normal & High preference to slow, moderate & fast servers (respectively) so that the slower servers will only get used when absolutely necessary to download parts that were missing or expired from faster servers. However, this method is becoming less beneficial as the download manager becomes more improved. BNR will automatically optimize parts based on past performance thus behaving similar to this method by default, while still utilizing the slower servers to download a couple parts while the faster servers are busy downloading the bulk of the parts. However, the BNR download manager is not yet able to automatically switch from a slow server to a faster server to finish the last few parts when the queue runs out so using this method could save some time in smaller download sessions.

### **TIP: Use Preferences to Limit Access to Pay Servers**

A good use for the preferences setting is to limit access to any pay servers you might be using. You could assign Low priority to any servers that charge based on the amount of data downloaded or which limit you to a small amount of data per day/week/month. You could assign Normal priority to any servers that charge a fixed rate or allow a larger amount of data per day/week/month. Finally, you could assign High priority to any free servers that you use or fixed rate pay servers that have no limits on the amount of data downloaded.

(optional) It is a good idea to check the "Auto-retry connection option every..." checkbox so that BNR will automatically retry whenever a server denies access. This is especially important if you use any busy servers that frequently deny access due to too many people being logged on at the moment.

(optional) If you are using servers with long retention and are viewing groups with a large number of articles, you may want to use the "Download at most \_\_\_ newest headers" command to limit the number of messages this server is allowed to retrieve from any group.

The remaining options on this tab and on the *Statistics* and *Commands* tabs can be left at their default settings for most servers. The two disconnect settings for idle and no response should be self-explanatory. The extra data in header block setting and everything on the *Commands* tab are advanced tweaking and troubleshooting settings beyond the scope of this document. The *Statistics* tab contains settings mainly for tracking the usage of pay servers that limit the amount of data that can be downloaded during a period of time. See the Advanced Users Guide for information on these additional options.

## **2.5. Downloading the Newsgroup List**

Now that we have our new server configured, you can click the *OK* button to return to the servers list screen. You are now ready to attempt to make a connection to this server to download the newsgroup list so that you can begin using this server. The new server you just created should be selected. If not, then highlight it. Now, click on the *Connect* button and BNR will attempt to make the connection. A large green panel should appear on the status bar showing the server name and its progress. After connecting successfully, BNR should begin to automatically download the newsgroup list. When this happens, the status in the status bar will show this server as "Receiving (new) newsgroups..." This process can take a long while for servers that keep a large number of groups or have a slow connect. You just have to be patient and wait until the status for the server changes to "Ready." Do not attempt to switch to the Newsgroups tab while the list is still being downloaded, or BNR will likely become very sluggish in responding to user input as it is busy constantly refreshing the list being displayed and you may find yourself stuck there for a while. When BNR finally finishes getting the list of groups,

you will be almost ready to start subscribing to the groups you are interested in, but first there is one more step recommended to reduce the amount of group configuration needed.

### 3. Configuring Default Group Settings

Before you start subscribing to groups, it is a good idea to set up your default group options so that each group you subscribe to will inherit those settings. If you don't do this, then you may find yourself making the same change to the configuration of multiple news groups.

First, click on the *Groups* tab to change to the Subscribed Groups page, not to be confused with the *Newsgroups* tab, which lists all of the groups available on the server(s) that have successfully downloaded their groups lists.

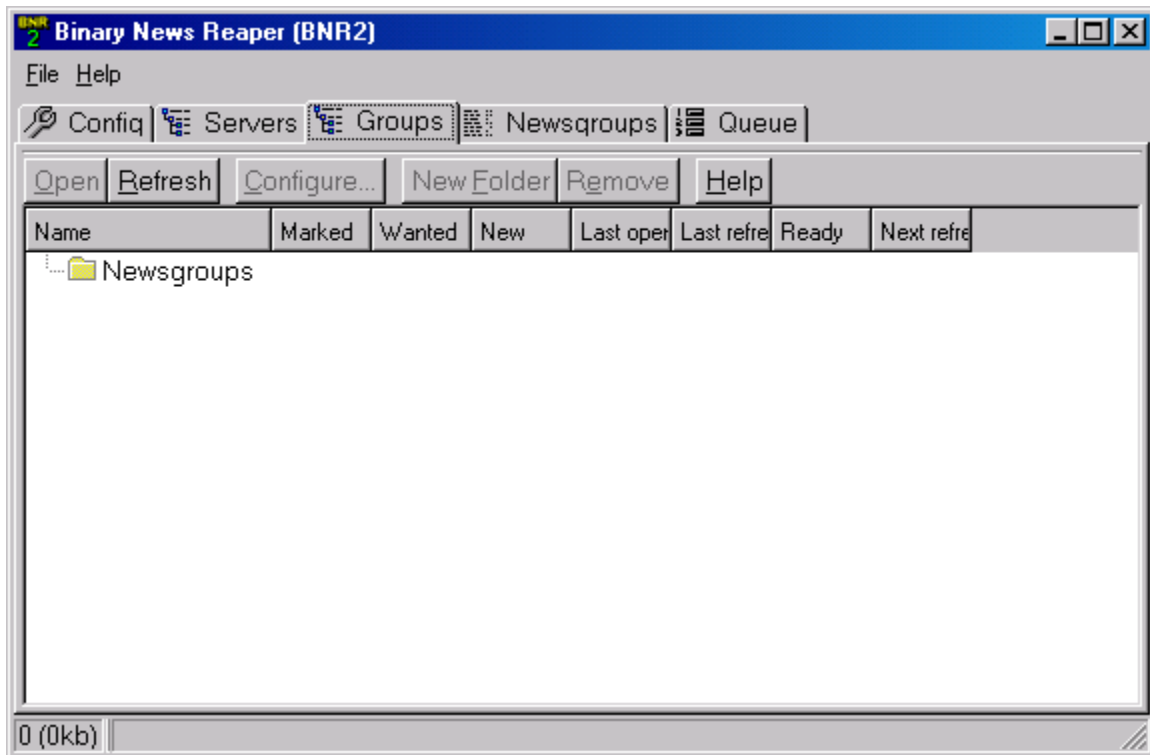


Figure 3.01 – Groups Page

To get to the default settings for news groups, highlight the *Newsgroups* folder in the groups list. When you do this, the *Configure...* button will become enabled. Click on this button to get the Configure Window.

### 3.1. Settings Tab

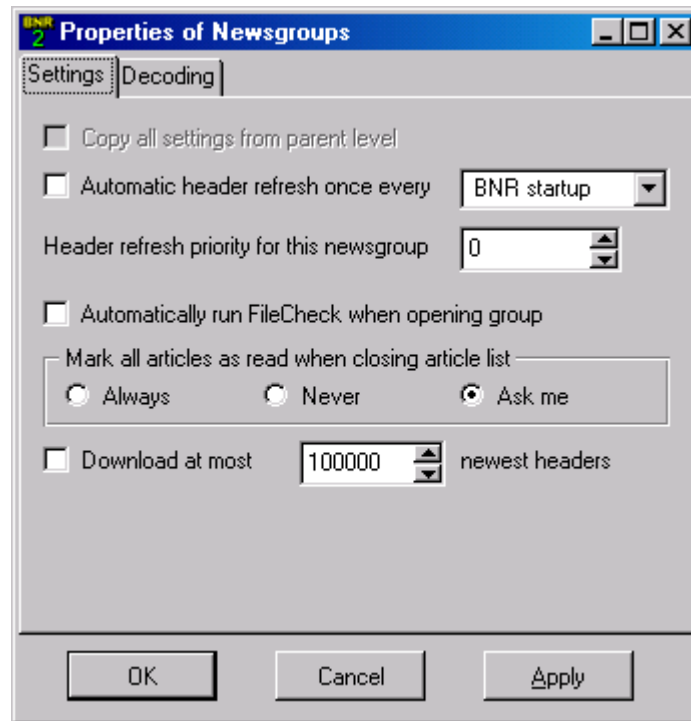


Figure 3.02 – Settings Tab

(option) The default behavior in BNR is to only refresh headers when you manually click the "Refresh" button in the Groups list page. If you want to automatically refresh headers every time BNR is launched or on a periodic basis, then you can check the "Automatic header refresh once every" option and then choose how often to refresh. The options allowable are a bit restricted. You can choose to refresh every BNR startup, every day, every 12 hours, every 6 hours, every 3 hours, every hour, or every 30 minutes.

(option) If you choose to set the "Automatically run FileCheck when opening group" option, then BNR will automatically check the messages in each group when you open the group. This check attempts to detect and color code files that you may have already download so that you won't waste your time downloading them again.

The "Mark all articles as read when closing article list" field allows you to choose how BNR should mark the remaining articles when you close the group. The options are to always mark the remaining articles as read, never mark the remaining articles as read, or display a message box asking for permission to mark all articles as read each time you close a group.

(optional) If you are using servers with long retention and are viewing groups with a large number of articles, you may want to use the "Download at most \_\_\_ newest headers" command to limit the number of messages that any server is allowed to retrieve from this group.

## 3.2. Decoding Tab

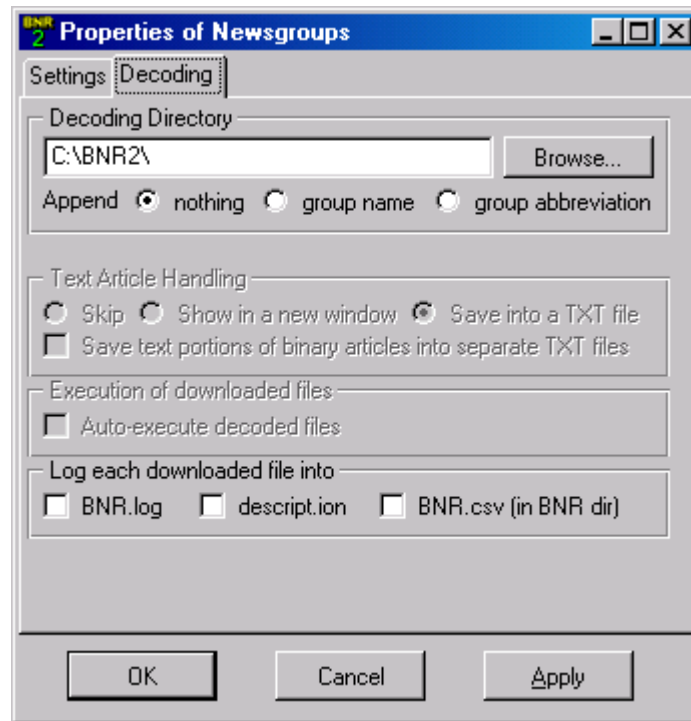


Figure 3.03 – Decoding Tab

The Decoding Directory field is where you tell BNR the default location to use for all of the binary files that it downloads.

(option) BNR can append the group name or abbreviation to the default decoding directory to keep files downloaded from different groups organized.

(option) BNR can record each downloaded file into any of three different log files: *BNR.log*, *descript.ion*, and *BNR.csv*. If you choose to log files to a *BNR.log* or *descript.ion* file, they will be created in the directory where files are downloaded. If you redirect the default download directory to different paths for different sets of files, then they will be logged to log files in those directories together with the files. If you choose to log files to a *BNR.csv* file, it will be created in the BNR directory.

**TIP: Logging to *BNR.csv* to Remember Past Downloads**

You can configure the BNR FileCheck to remember which files you have already downloaded even after you have moved them out of the default decoding directory by logging all downloaded files to the *BNR.csv* file and configuring the FileCheck to use this file as follows...

- 1) Check the checkbox to log download to the *BNR.csv* file.
- 2) After closing the Groups configuration window, go to the *Config* tab on the main BNR window.
- 3) Choose the *FileCheck* sub-tab under the *Config* page.
- 4) Click the *Add...* button in the bottom left portion of the screen under "CSV files for already downloaded files".
- 5) Click the *No* button when asked about adding all \*.*csv* files in a certain directory.
- 6) Direct the Open dialog box to the directory where you installed BNR2.
- 7) Select the *BNR.csv* file, which should appear in this directory.
- 8) Click the *Open* button.

If you previously used BNR 1.x and used this feature to record past downloads, you will want to be sure to copy your old *BNR.csv* file from the BNR 1.x installation directory into the BNR2 installation directory before downloading any files with the new version. Otherwise, BNR will start with a fresh file.

Click the *OK* button to save the default newsgroup options.

## 4. Subscribing to Groups

Now that we have the default group options defined, you are ready to start subscribing to the binary news groups that interest you. To get to the list of available news groups, click on the Newsgroups tab. The first column of the list shows the names of the group. Following this first column is a column for each server entered into BNR showing the number of messages available on each group at the time the newsgroup list was downloaded.

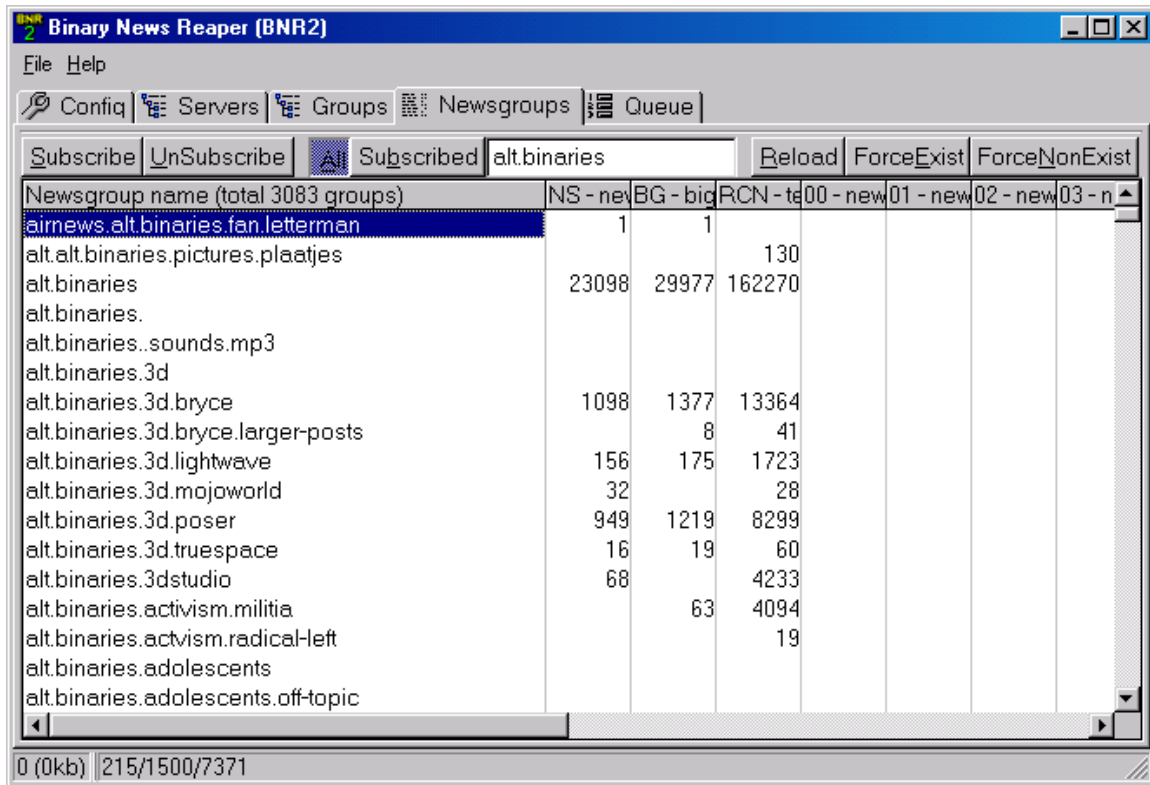


Figure 4.01 –Newsgroups Page

### 4.1. Browsing the Available Newsgroups List

You can browse through the whole list to find groups that you are interested in. If the list is too large, you can filter the list by entering a partial or full group name into the search box located just above the list and the list will automatically be reduced to show only those groups that match the string you entered.

**NOTE:** The newsgroup search filter is case sensitive.

### **TIP: Finding Binary Newsgroups Containing Files That Interest You**

BNR does not yet implement a global article searching mechanism to find a list of all groups containing posts with specific files. However, there are a few web sites that attempt to provide this service:

- [www.binnewz.com](http://www.binnewz.com)
- [www.mp3locator.com/main.htm](http://www.mp3locator.com/main.htm)

This service is, however, hampered by limitations inherent in the USENET system. Most news servers only retain binary posts for anywhere from a few hours to a couple of weeks, so matches appearing on these searches may be too outdated for the articles to still be available when you go to download them. It is also possible for some new posts to not propagate to the server you are using, or for posts originating from certain servers to be blocked by your server. It is even possible that your server might not offer a specific group at all. In the later case, you can contact your NTTP provider and request that they add the group to their server.

You can also use the group folder feature of BNR to do a search within all of the downloaded headers by opening the root Newsgroup folder and using the search box on the *Message List* page for that group folder.

After you have subscribed to a few newsgroups, you can use the "Subscribed" button to filter the list to show only the groups to which you are subscribed so that you can see statistics on how many messages are available on each of your servers for each subscribed group.

## **4.2. Subscribing to Groups**

Once you have found a group that you are interest in, you need to subscribe to the group, to add it to the group list back on the Groups page. To subscribe to a group, first highlight the group name in the newsgroup list and then click the *Subscribe* button.

## **4.3. Altering Group Settings (optional)**

Since we have already configured the default server settings, the groups subscribed to should automatically inherit the proper settings, but there may be cases in which you need to alter a group from the default settings. Changing the settings for a specific group is easy. First, you need to click on the Groups tab to go back to the Groups page. Then highlight the specific group that you want to alter and click the *Configure...* button to bring up the options for that group. By default, most of the settings will all be grayed out because the group is using the default options set up earlier. To enable the settings so that you can change them, simple uncheck the "Copy all settings from parent level"

checkbox on the Settings tab. Now, you can make whatever changes you need to alter this newsgroup from the default settings. Once you have finished altering the settings for the group, click on the *OK* button to finish.

## 5. Viewing Group Messages

Now that you have subscribed to some groups, you are ready to download and view headers for groups and start downloading files.

### 5.1. Refreshing Message Headers

When you first subscribe to a group, BNR does not automatically download the available headers for that group. You must go to the Groups page, highlight the group and click the *Refresh* button to download the headers. The *Ready* column on the server list shows the percentage of servers that have completed downloading headers.

#### **TIP: Manually Refresh All Groups At Once**

You can easily force BNR to refresh all groups by clicking on the *Newsgroups* entry at the root of the group list tree on the Groups page to highlight it and then clicking on the *Refresh* button.

### 5.2. Opening the Message List Page

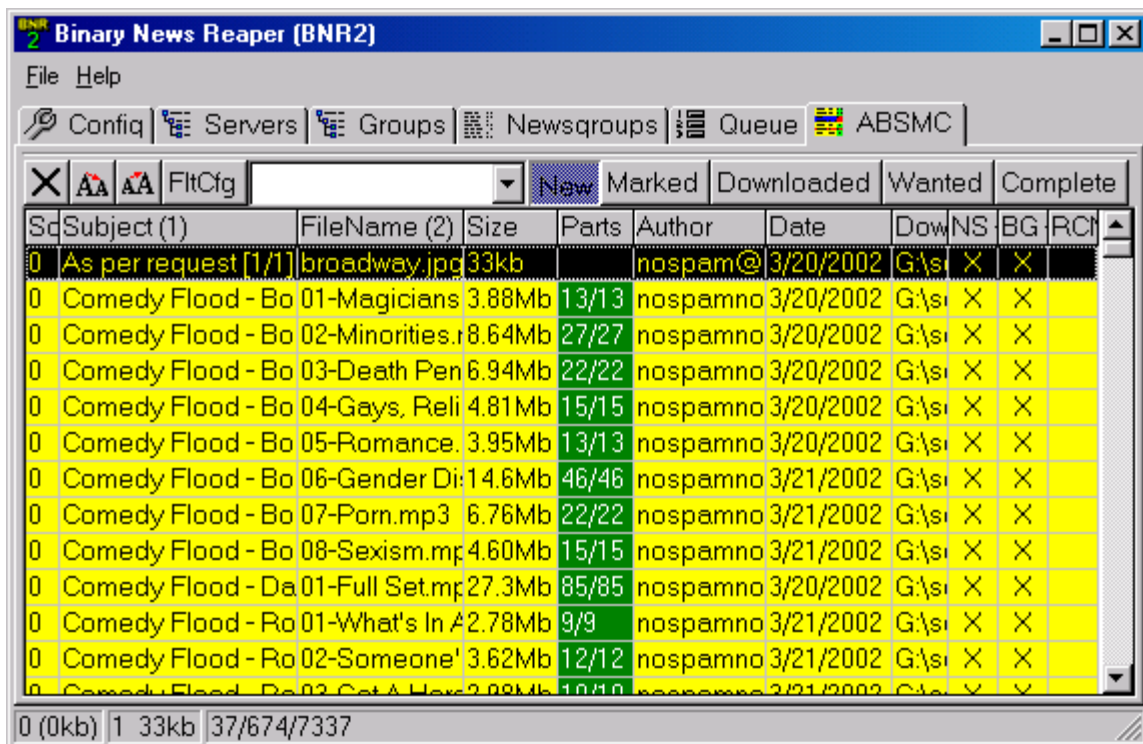


Figure 5.01 – Message List Page

Once the headers have all been downloaded, you can click the *Open* button to open a new page for the selected group. The tab for the new page appears on the end of the main tabs

with an abbreviation of the group's name on the tab to help differentiate between multiple groups open simultaneously.

You can increase or decrease the font size used in the message list using the *A<sub>A</sub>* & *A<sub>A</sub>* buttons beside the *FltCfg* button. The *X* button closes the page.

**NOTE:** The message list does not yet support automatic refreshing to reflect changes caused by new or expired messages. You should wait until the group has been fully refreshed before opening the group, or you will not see all of the available messages.

### 5.3. Filtering the Message List

The default view in BNR is to show only the messages that are not marked as Read. This filter can be toggled off and on by clicking on the *New* button. There are also many other options available to help you filter the message list in just about any way you might like. Like the newsgroups page, the message list pages also contain a search box where you can type in a keyword or phrase to limit the number of message displayed to only those whose subject contains the keyword or phrase. You can also define custom view filters for advanced filtering based on other properties of the headers.

#### 5.3.1. Add a New Custom View Filter

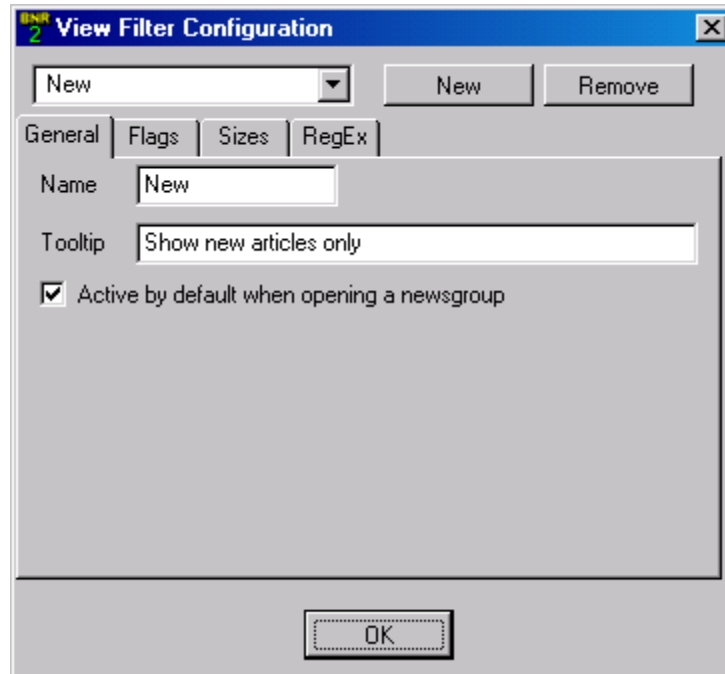


**Figure 5.02** – View Filter Configuration Window

Creating new custom filters in BNR is easy. First, click on the *FltCfg* button to display the View Filter Configuration window where you can create, modify, and remove view

filters. The dropdown list appearing in the top left corner shows the name of the filter being edited. To add a new filter, click the *New* button.

### 5.3.2. General Tab



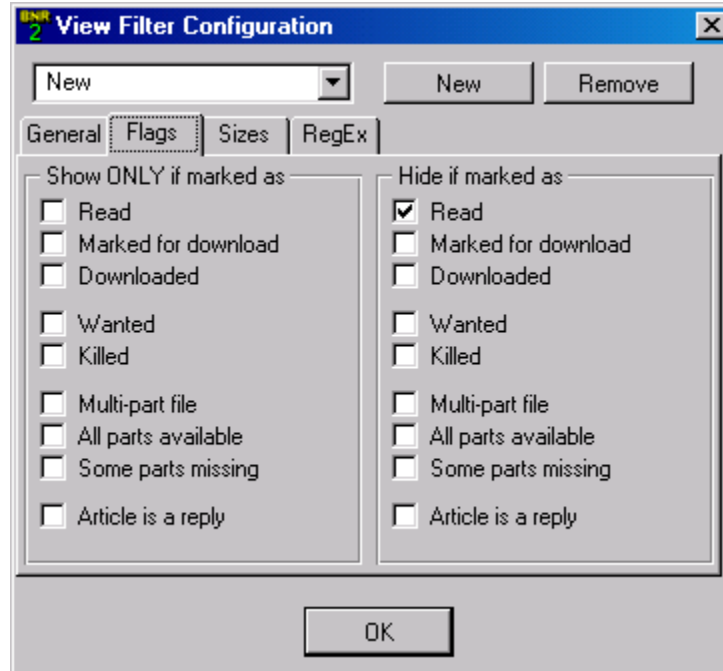
**Figure 5.03** – General Tab

A new filter named "Unnamed" is created. You should change this name on the General tab to reflect the type of filter you want to create. For this example we will create a filter to hide incomplete parts of multi-part messages, so you might name the filter "Complete". This name will appear at the top of the message list for toggling this filter on and off.

The Tooltip field shows the help message that appears when the user holds the mouse pointer still over a filter button for a few seconds. Enter a one-sentence description of the new filter such as "Show only complete messages."

If you want this filter to be turned on by default every time you open a group, then check "Active by default when opening a newsgroup".

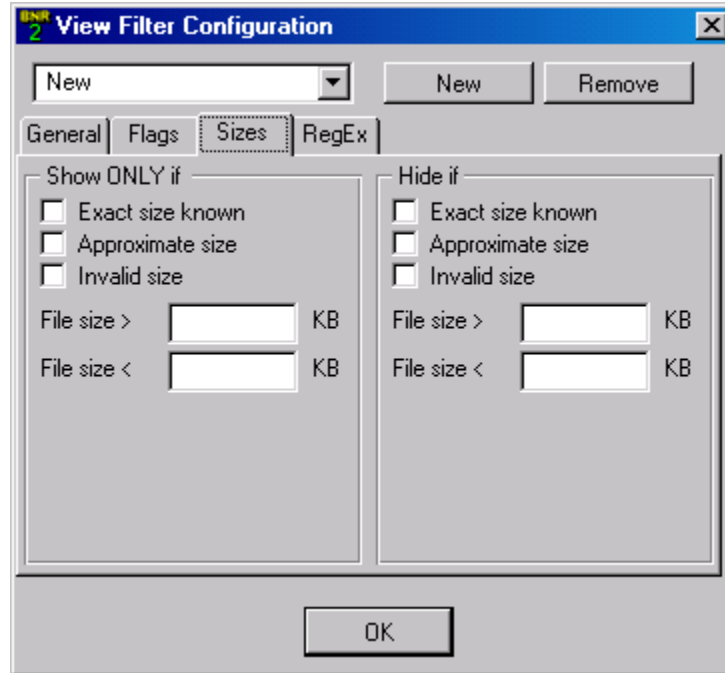
### 5.3.3. Flags Tab



**Figure 5.04** – Flags Tab

The *Flags* tab contains options for which messages to show or hide. The first column allows you to filter the message list to show only the messages that match the selected criteria. The second column allows you to filter the messages to hide any messages that match the selected criteria. For our example, you would check the "All parts available" option on the left column. Alternatively, the "Some parts missing" option on the right column should give the same effect.

### 5.3.4. Sizes Tab



**Figure 5.05 – Sizes Tab**

The *Sizes* tab contains options for filtering messages based on their sizes. Once you have the filter settings defined, click the *OK* button to close the filter View Filter Configuration window.

**TIP: Add the Standard BNR1 Filters to BNR2\***

Adding most of the standard BNR1 filters to BNR2 is easy. The *New* filter, which comes with BNR2 out of the box, is the same as the BNR1 *New* filter. The *All* filter from BNR1 is accomplished by not having any other custom filters turned on. To create the rest of the standard BNR1 filters\*, just create custom filters with settings as shown in the following table:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Filter Flags to Use</u>
Marked	Show ONLY if marked as Marked for download
Downloaded	Show ONLY if marked as Downloaded
Wanted	Show ONLY if marked as Wanted

\* The BNR1 filter to "Hide articles with no filename" cannot be duplicated. BNR2 also does not have an option to turn off the multi-part messages on a single line setting as in BNR1.

The *RegEx* tab is an advanced feature requiring knowledge of how to construct regular expressions and will not be discussed here. See the Advanced Users Guide for information on how to use this tab.

### 5.3.5. Combining Filters

All view filters in BNR are cumulative so that you can create complex filters by simply combining a few simple filters by toggling them on and off with the filter buttons across the top of the message list.

**NOTE:** The message list does not yet support automatically hiding messages in real time as they change and no longer fit the filter criteria. This is most apparent when marking files as Read. Instead of disappearing immediately, they merely change color as if the *New* filter were turned off. To make these files disappear, you need to double-click the *New* filter to toggle it off and back on again.

## 5.4. Downloading Files

### 5.4.1. Download a Single File

To download a single file, either double-click the message or right-click the file and select the *Mark for Download* command on the popup menu. If the file has not been previously downloaded, then either pressing the *Enter* key or choosing the *Execute* command on the popup menu will also mark the file for download. What a file it marked for download, it is added to the download queue to be downloaded from the first available server.

**NOTE:** The download queue is on a separate page from the message list pages. You do not have to keep a group open to download files from that group as was necessary in BNR1. The *Queue* page can be safely ignored by beginners until comfortable with basic usage of the program. It is covered in detail in the *Advanced Guide*.

**NOTE:** In order for marked articles to start downloading, the servers containing those articles must first be connected. If you have set up your servers to automatically connect on demand, then the servers should connect, if not already connected, and start downloading the parts immediately. If you have not used this option, then the articles will be on hold until you manually connect those servers with the *Connect* button on the *Servers* page.

Once the file is downloaded, double-clicking the file again or choosing *Execute* from the popup menu will launch the appropriate viewer for the type of file downloaded and pass it the file so that you can read, view and/or listen to the file you have just downloaded within BNR.

### 5.4.2. Download a Group of Files

You can download a group of adjacent files by first clicking on the first or last file in the group, then shift-clicking the file at the other end of the group and finally right-clicking

on the selection and choosing the *Mark for Download* command on the popup menu. You can also click and hold the left mouse button on one end of the group and then drag the cursor to the other end before letting go of the mouse button to select the group and then right-click and choose the *Mark for Download* command. Also, if the files have not been previously downloaded, you can either press the *Enter* key or choose the *Execute* command to mark the files for download.

### **5.4.3. Prioritizing Downloads**

If you have queued up a large number of files and want a particular file or group of files to be downloaded sooner, then you can use the + or - keys on the keyboard or right-click and choose the *Score +* or *Score -* menu commands to change the priority of the files. Files with higher numbers get downloaded first.

## **5.5. Cleaning Up the Message List and Old Downloads**

The *Mark As Read* command from the popup menu for the *Message List* page is very useful for managing all of the articles in large newsgroups and large combined groups. It is recommended that you mark articles that you are not interested in as Read so that you can then use the *New* view filter to hide these articles so that you don't have keep sorting through them every time you return to the same group. This can also be used to hide old articles that you have downloaded and are finished with them.