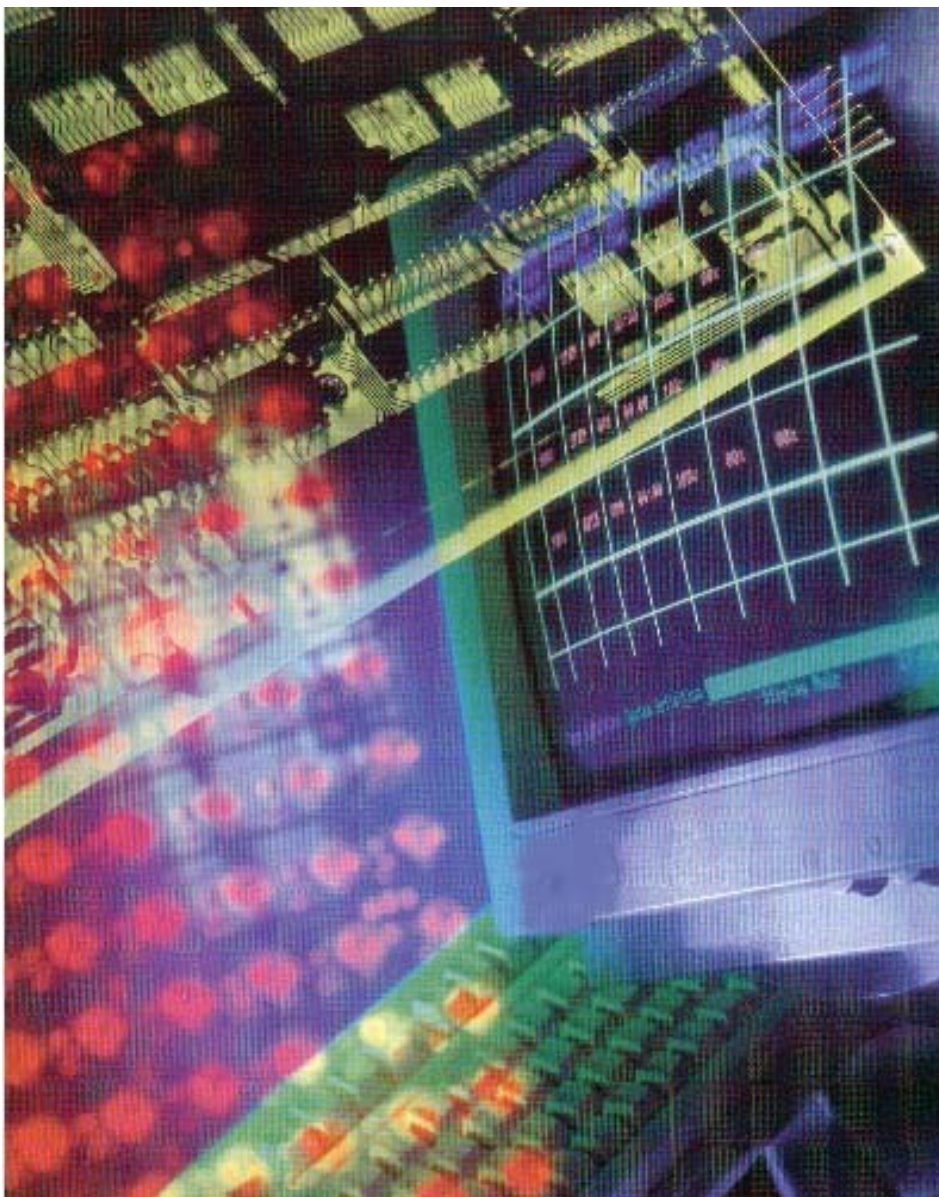


COMMANDER MANUAL



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SINGLE LINE DISPLAYS

BI - LINE DISPLAYS

MULTI LINE DISPLAYS

TIME & TEMPERATURE

HEALTH & SAFETY SIGNS

MESSAGE MANAGER - USER GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Message manager is a program which allows you to set up a number of “pages” of information which are to be output to one or more signs. For ease of reference these pages may be grouped into “messages”.

Pages can be set to output to a selection of signs at specified times using the “Schedule” options. These schedules can run hourly, daily or weekly.

Pages can also be set to output to different signs using the “Scenario” options which can determine which pages are sent to which signs on a single mouse click.

The pages, messages, schedules and scenarios are interlinked and are saved together in a single file with the extension .esp. A number of .esp files may be set up, each file may contain different information.

THE MAIN SCREEN

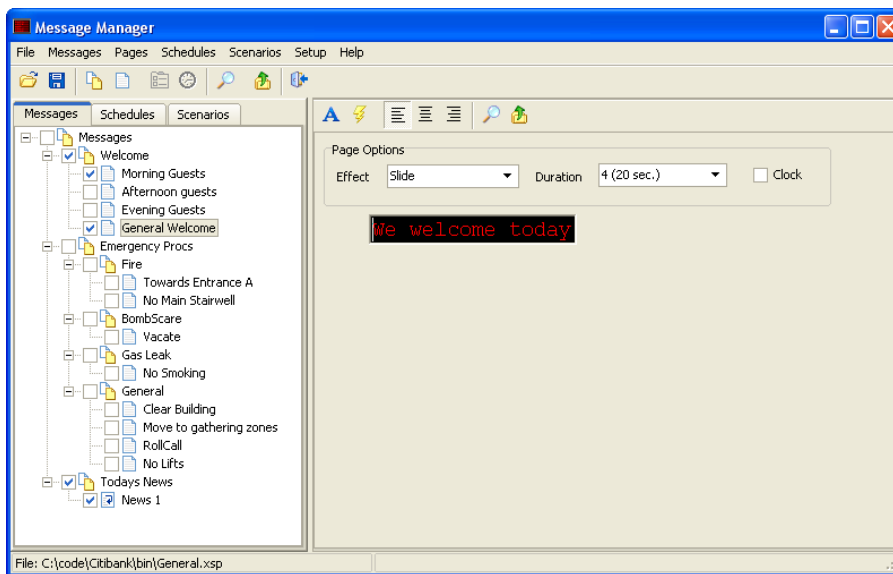


Fig 1. The main screen

The main screen (Fig 1) allows you to add, delete and edit data. The tab sections at the left hand side show which type of data you are currently looking at. Any toolbar buttons which are not applicable to the selected tab will be greyed out. Clicking on an item in a tab section will bring its details into the detail pane on the right hand side of the screen. Additional options are provided in the menus at the top of the screen.

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In Fig 1 we are looking at Messages which are groups of pages. Using the toolbar buttons we can choose to add a new message or add a new page. The same options are available from the main menu at the top of the screen. If we highlight a page by clicking on it, for example in Fig 1 the General Welcome page is highlighted, the page details are shown in the detail pane on the right hand side of the screen. The page content and settings can then be edited in the detail pane.

THE MAIN TOOLBAR

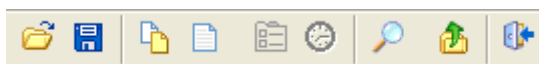


Fig 2. The main toolbar

From left to right the toolbar buttons have the following actions:

- The “Open File” button allows you to choose which message file (.esp file) to open.
- The “Save File” button allows you to save the current message file.
- The “New Message” button creates a new message – this button is enabled when the messages tab is selected
- The “New Page” button creates a new page – this button is enabled when the messages tab is enabled
- The “New Scenario” button creates a new scenario – this button is enabled when the Scenarios tab is selected
- The “New Schedule” button creates a new schedule – this button is enabled when the Schedules tab is selected
- The “Preview” button allows you to preview the page as it would appear on the sign
- The “Send to Sign” button sends all currently selected pages (pages/messages which have their checkbox ticked).
- The “Exit” button terminates the program.

Each button has a hint (tooltip) which will appear if you hold the mouse pointer over the button without clicking it.

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MESSAGES AND PAGES

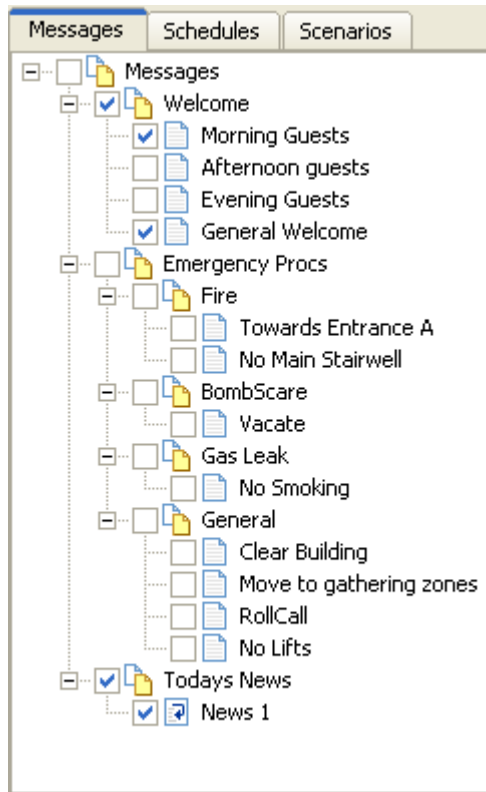


Fig 3. The message tab showing how messages and pages are arranged

Fig 3 shows the message tab in more detail. Pages can be grouped together into messages, if desired but it is not actually necessary.

The boxes which are checked indicate that these pages are currently selected for sending to the sign.

ADDING A NEW MESSAGE

In order to add a message, select the item you want to be the parent for the new message and either click on the “Add Message” button, right click to bring up a menu and choose “Create message”, or use the menu option at the top of the screen under Messages. In this way messages can have sub messages; in the example above “Fire” is a sub message of “Emergency Procs”.

ADDING A NEW PAGE

To add a new page, select the parent or another page in the message you want to add to, and either click on the “Create Page” button, right click and choose “Create Page” from the popup menu, or use the menu option under Pages at the top of the screen.

When adding a new page the “New Page” dialog box (Fig 4) pops up. At this point you must enter a name for your new page and select the type of page, Standard or Text file, which will be created.

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There are two types of page. A Standard page allows you to type in the text you want to appear on the sign. A Text file page allows you to select a text file which will provide the text which will be displayed on the sign. The contents of the text file will be reloaded each time the information is sent to the sign so it is possible to repeatedly edit the text file without having to change any details in the Message Manager.

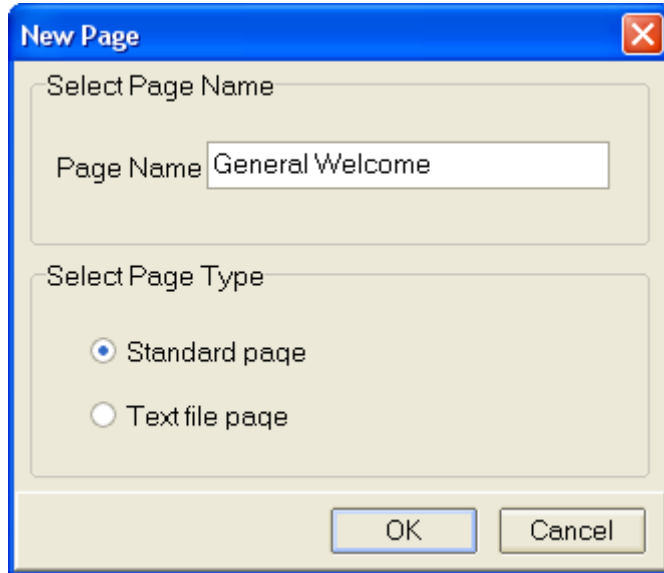


Fig 4. The New Page dialog

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STANDARD PAGES

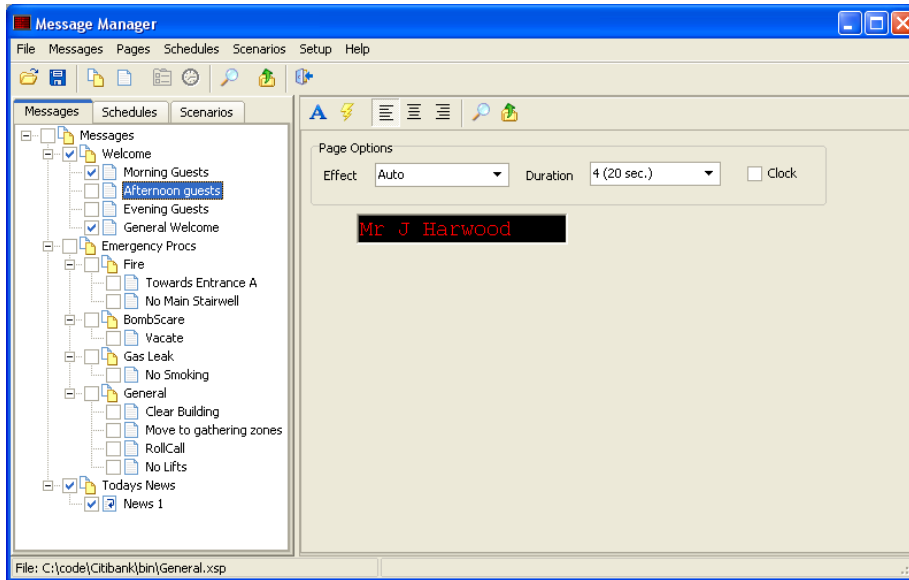


Fig 5. A Standard page

The black box contains the same number of lines and characters as the signs. Text should be typed into the box as you want it to appear on the signs. If the bottom line contains more characters than the width of the sign, the contents of the line will be displayed in sliding ticker format and the all the entered text will be displayed.

THE PAGE TOOLBAR

The buttons at the top of the Standard page editor allow you to select options for the formatting of the input text. From left to right the buttons perform the following actions.



Fig 6. The page editing toolbar

- Enlarge the selected text – this option appears to embolden the text on the sign, it also reduces the number of characters which can be displayed on each line.
- Sets the selected text to flash when it is output to the sign. This is denoted by being underlined in the black box.
- Sets the alignment of the text to left justified
- Sets the alignment of the text to centre justified
- Sets the alignment of the text to right justified
- Sends this single page to one or more signs

PAGE OPTIONS

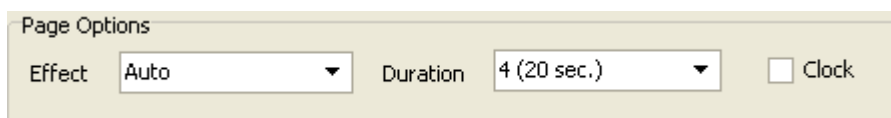


Fig 7. Page Options

The Page Options allow you to select the effect which will be used when the page loads and the amount of time the page will be displayed for. If the Clock checkbox is checked, the top line of the sign will display the current date and time.

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TEXT FILE PAGES

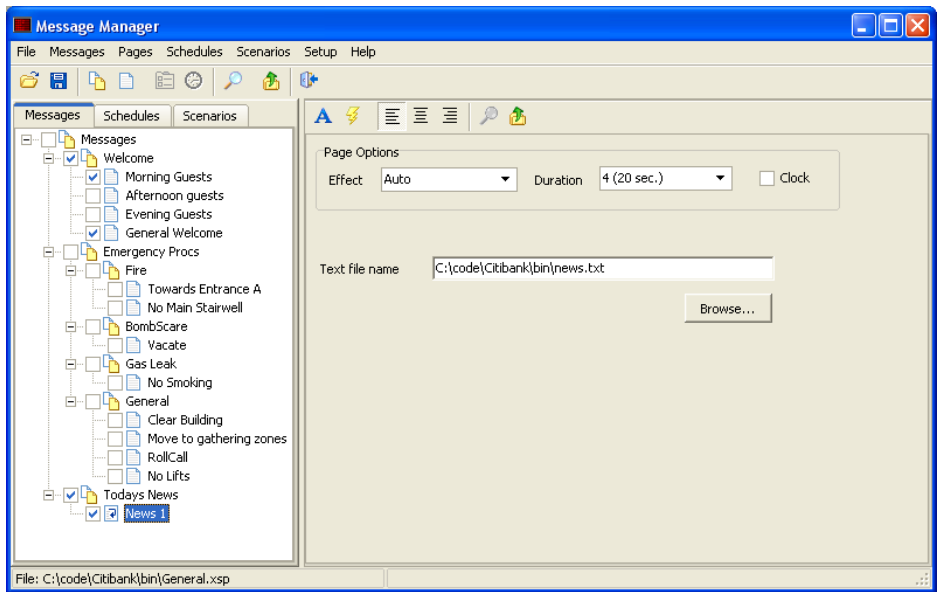


Fig 8. A Text File Page

A text file page allows you to enter the full file and path name to the file which you wish to display. Clicking the “Browse” button pops up a standard window file selection box which allows you to browse to the required file. When a text file page is displayed on the sign, each line of the text file will be displayed in turn. Lines which are longer than the width of the sign will be displayed using a sliding ticker type display. Lines which are less than or equal to the width of the display will be displayed using the selected page load option.

The first six buttons on the page toolbar have no effect, but you may still choose to do an immediate send of this page to a number of signs.

Within the message tree the Standard and Text file pages have slightly different icons.

SENDING PAGES TO SIGNS

Clicking on the “Send to Sign” button on the main toolbar will prompt you to choose the sign or signs to which you wish to send the currently selected pages. When the “Send to Sign” button is clicked on the toolbar, the “Send to Signs” box pops up (Fig 9). This allows you to select, by placing a check in the box, which signs you wish to send the currently selected pages to. Pressing “OK” will send the pages to the sign, pressing “Cancel” will abort the send to sign.

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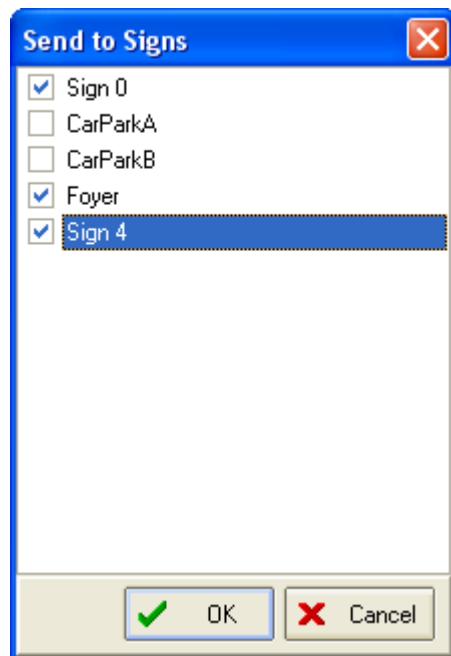


Fig 9 – The send to signs dialog box

To send a single page to one or more signs, click on the required page in the message tree. This will highlight the page and its details will appear in the right hand side. At the top of the page details there is a “Send Single Page” button. Clicking this button will popup the “Send to Signs” dialog box (Fig 9) from where you can select the destination or destinations for this page. “OK” will send the page, “Cancel” will abort the send.

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SCHEDULES

Fig 10 shows the schedules tab screen. If a schedule is checked, it is active and will run at its scheduled time. Schedules are not grouped; they are displayed in the tree in the order in which they were created.

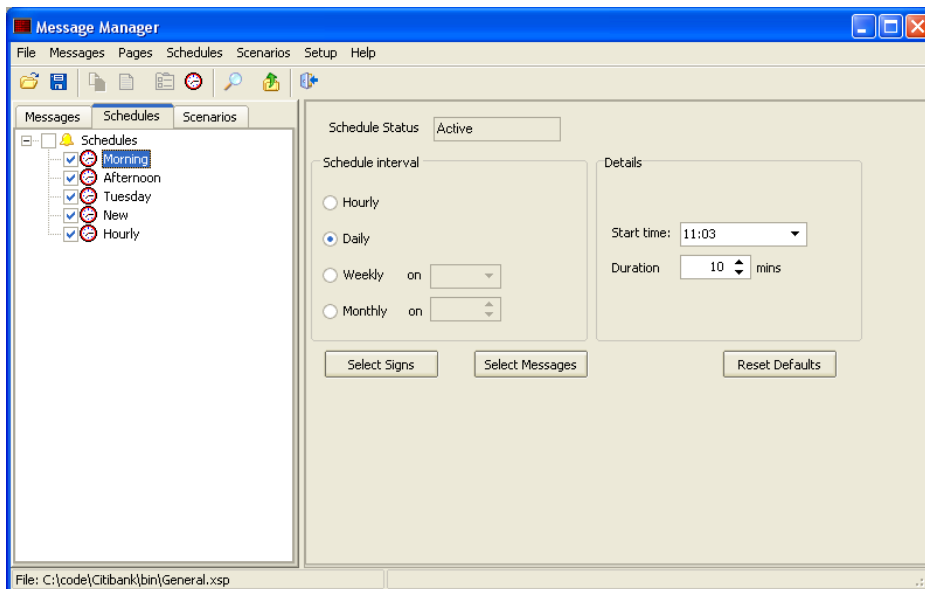


Fig 10 – The main screen showing Schedule details

Clicking a schedule will bring its details into the detail pane of the main form as shown in fig 10.

In the details pane you can set the schedule interval, using the radio buttons. If a weekly schedule is selected, the adjacent combo box must be used to select the day on which the schedule is run. If the monthly schedule is selected the adjacent spin edit box must be used to select the day of the month on which the schedule must run.

The start time must be used to select the start time of the schedule. If an hourly schedule is selected, the minutes portion of the start time will determine when in each hour the schedule runs. The duration of the schedule must also be set. All the scheduled pages will be cleared from the signs once the schedule's duration has completed.

Many schedules can be set and overlapping schedules are allowed.

The "Select Messages" button provides you with the mechanism to select which pages will be output during this schedule. Clicking this button pops up the select pages dialog shown in fig 11

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Fig 11 – The select pages dialog

In order to select a page in the select pages dialog, highlight it by clicking on the page name in the available pages list and then click the “Right Arrow” (top) button to move it into the selected pages list. To select a group, click on the group to highlight it, and click the “Right Arrow” button. All pages in the group will be listed in the selected messages. To remove a page from the selected messages list highlight it in the list and click on the “Left Arrow” button to remove the page from the list.

The order in which the pages are displayed is from top to bottom. To shuffle the pages into the required order, select a page in the selected messages list and use the “Move Up” and “Move Down” buttons to adjust the page order.

Clicking “OK” will save your changes, “Cancel” will abandon them. Both buttons return you to the main screen.

The “Select Signs” button allows you to select which signs the pages involved in the schedule will be sent to. The dialog box which pops up is the same “Send to Signs” screen box as the one shown in Fig 9.

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SCENARIOS

The scenarios section allows you to set up a number of scenarios which involve sending different messages to a selection of signs.

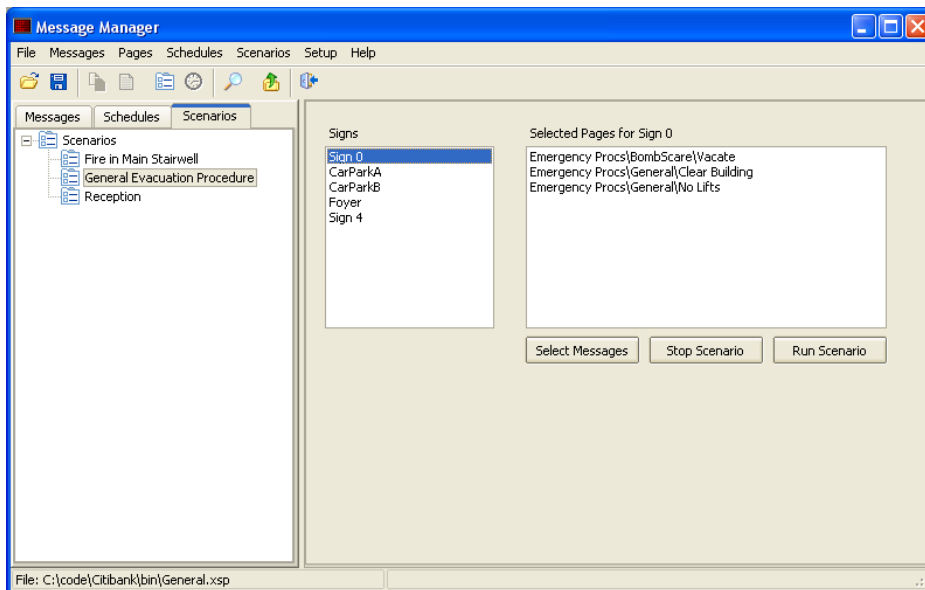


Fig 12 - The scenarios tab and detail pane

The detail pane in Fig 12 shows two lists. On the left is a list of the configured signs. Selecting a sign shows which pages will be output to that sign when the scenario is run. To add or delete pages within this list, use the “Select Messages” button to pop up the dialog shown in Fig 11 and described earlier, which allows you to select which pages will be output for that sign.

Clicking the “Run Scenario” button will cause the pages to be sent to the signs. Clicking the “Stop Scenario” button will clear the pages from the signs.

If one or more schedules are running at the time the “Run Scenario” button is clicked, the schedules will be overridden as the scenario takes precedence.

DELETING MESSAGES, PAGES, SCHEDULES AND SCENARIOS

An item can be deleted by first clicking on it to select it, then using either a right mouse click to pop up a menu from which delete can be chosen or, alternatively, by using the appropriate menu options from the main menu to delete the item.

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CONFIGURATION SCREEN

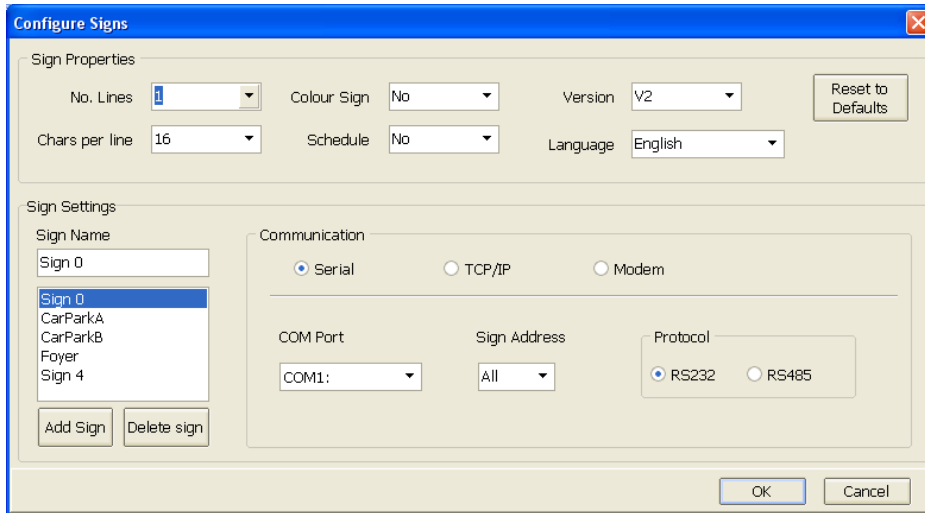


Fig 13 – The Configuration Screen

The configuration screen is accessed by using the main menu at the top of the main screen and choosing Setup, then Configure Sign.

This screen must be used to configure the signs which are attached to the system.

First, the size of the signs must be set. Size is specified as number of lines and number of characters. Then the additional sign properties must be set. Your PolyComp project manager will be able to confirm these settings. Normally the default settings are appropriate.

Note: Each .esp file must be used with the correct sign size configured. It is only possible to configure one sign size at a time. If two different sign sizes are required, two copies of the message manager program must be run, each of which is configured to a different sign size.

The sign settings configure how the communication works between the PC and each sign. Each sign which is attached to the PC must be added and configured. When you click the “Add Sign” button, a dialog box will pop up prompting you for a sign name. You should choose a unique name which will help you to identify the sign (perhaps by location), as you will need to specify which signs receive which messages.

Once the sign has been added, it can be selected by clicking in the list box to highlight it. Its communication parameters can then be set; again your PolyComp project manager will assist in this process.

Clicking the “OK” button will save the sign configuration to disk. Clicking “Cancel” will abandon all changes. Both buttons will return you to the main screen.

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