

# Submitting to the Automated Acceptor

## Student's Guide

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Department of Computer Science  
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### Table of Contents

1. Installation	2
2. Submitting an Assignment from Your Computer	3
3. Multiple Submissions	7
4. Submitting from the CS lab.	7
5. Known Bugs and Alarming Behaviors	7
6. Getting Help	7
7. The Automated Acceptor and the Honor Code	8

**Disclaimer:** Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are accurate and complete. However, the Automated Acceptor Project is ongoing. It is always possible improvements and bug fixes have been implemented since the last update of this document. The current version of this document will be available from the Automated Acceptor Homepage:

**<http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~acceptor/Acceptor.html>**

## Installation

Using *Submit* requires a computer running Windows (95/98 or NT) or Unix, and a 32-bit connection to the Internet. It will not run on DOS or Windows 3.1. This document contains instructions for Windows systems.

In order to operate *Submit*, you must first obtain and install the Java Runtime Environment, a free software package from Sun Microsystems, Inc.

- **Downloading the Java Runtime Environment JRE from the Internet:**

- 1) Using a web browser (such as Netscape or Microsoft Explorer), connect to the Java website at **www.javasoft.com**
- 2) Click on the link for Products & APIs in the left-hand column.
- 3) Scroll down click on the Java Runtime Environment - JRE 1.1.7B link.
- 4) Click on the JRE 1.1 Win32 Release link. Click on the Continue button. Click the Agree button on the Export Terms and Control page.
- 5) Click on the FTP download `jre117B-win32.exe` button to start the download process. In the Save dialog box, select a folder and click the Save button. This will copy the file `jre117B-win32.exe` to the location you just selected; this file is a self-extracting archive. Be sure to remember the location you chose.

The Java Runtime will also be mirrored from the Acceptor Home page, so you may obtain it when you download the Acceptor Client as described below. Note, the Acceptor Client will work with versions 1.1.3-1.1.6 of the Java Runtime.

- **Installing the Java Runtime Environment JRE on your computer:**

- 1) Installation in the Windows environment is straightforward. Using the Windows Explorer, find the folder where you saved the Java Runtime file, `jre117B-win32.exe`, and double-click on the file. This will launch an installation application.
- 2) Unless you want to customize the location the Java Runtime will be installed to, just click the Next button on each dialog box until the installation is complete. Note the location in which the Java runtime was installed; e.g., the default location would be `C:\jre1.1.7B`.
- 3) Now you must add the location of the Java runtime executable to your system path. The instructions given here assume this is the default location (shown above). If not, use the correct location when you edit the path.

**For Win95/98:**

- Use Windows Explorer to look in the root directory on your C drive.
- There should be a file named `autoexec.bat`
- Open that file in an editor (Notepad will do) and find the line that starts with "path=".
- Go to the end of that line and type a semicolon, followed by `C:\jre1.1.7B\bin`.

**For WinNT:**

- Go to the Start menu, to Settings, and start Control Panel.
- Open the System tool and click on the Environment tab.
- In the top window, scroll if necessary, and find the line starting with Path.
- Click on that line and the path string will be displayed in the text box line labeled "value" near the bottom.
- Edit that line to type a semicolon, followed by `C:\jre1.1.7B\bin`.
- Click on the Apply button and close the System tool and Control Panel.

- **Downloading *Submit* from the Internet:**

- 1) Using a web browser (such as Netscape or Microsoft Explorer), connect to the Automated Acceptor Home Page at <http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~acceptor/Acceptor.html>. Scroll down to the section for the Acceptor.
- 2) Select the appropriate version of *Submit* for your course and click on the link to download it.
- 3) When you are asked to choose a location to save the file, choose any location you like, but be sure to remember where you saved it. The self-extracting archive for *Submit* will be copied to your computer.

- **Installing *Submit* on your computer:**

- 1) Using the Windows Explorer, find the folder where you saved the *Submit* archive file, and double-click on the file. This will extract the contents of the archive file to your computer, creating a number of subfolders as well. Do not delete or alter any of these files. By default, *Submit* will be installed in a folder named *Submit* or, perhaps *xxxxxSubmit* on the root of the current drive (where *xxxxx* is a course or index number); you can change that during the extraction process if you like.
- 2) You can run *Submit* by double-clicking on the file *Submit.bat* in the *Submit* (or *xxxxxSubmit*) folder. To make it easier, you can create a shortcut on your desktop. Right-click (click the right mouse button) on the file *Submit.bat* and drag it to the desktop. When you release the mouse, a menu will pop up; select Create Shortcut(s) Here and you can then run *Submit* by double-clicking on the resulting shortcut icon.

## Submitting an Assignment from Your Computer

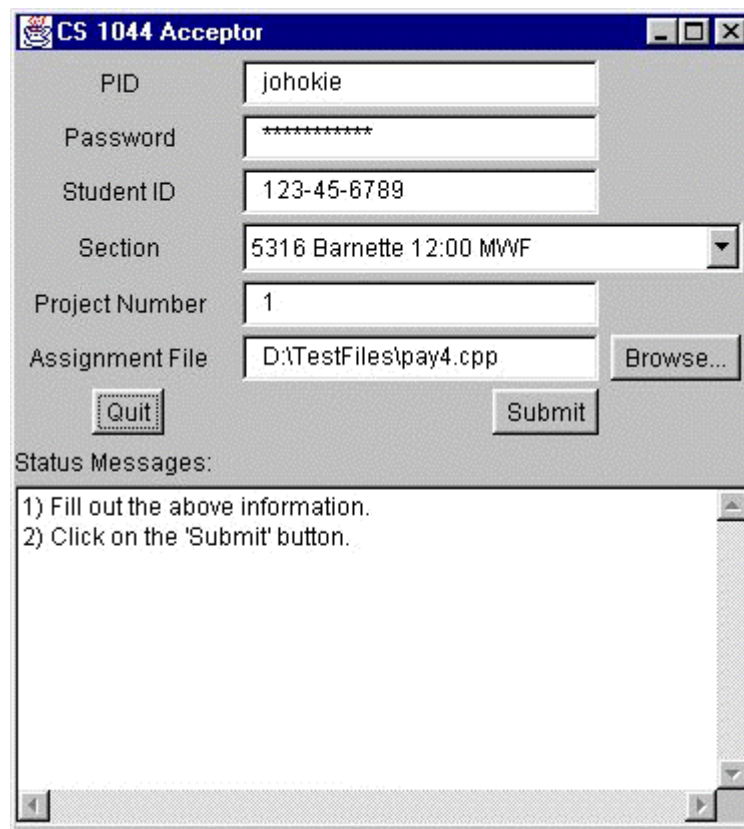
This section describes how to use *Submit* to send in an assignment file for automated archiving. You can follow these steps after *Submit* has been installed onto your computer (see **Installation** above), or from one of the Windows NT computers in the Computer Science Undergraduate Laboratory in McBryde 116-118.

1. **Connect to the Internet:** *Submit* is designed to work over the Internet. Before you can use it, you must first run your communications software, like VTNet98, and connect to the network.
2. **Starting Submit:** To run *Submit* from Windows, go to Windows Explorer and find the folder into which *Submit* has been installed, then double-click on *Submit.bat*. Alternatively, if a desktop icon has been created for *Submit*, just double-click on that. You will be presented with the following window (the name in the title bar at the top, and the list of Course Index choices will vary):

3. **Filling Out the Submission Form:** The window depicts a form that needs to be filled out in order for you to make a submission. You must fill out all of the information (PID, Password, student ID, class index, project number, and assignment file name) or *Submit* will not allow you to send your assignment. Use the arrow keys or the mouse to move between fields — the tab key is not interpreted properly. Each of the fields in the form is discussed in detail below:
  - **PID:** Enter your university PID (this is the same name you use when you connect to the university network or check your e-mail). This must be your original PID, not an e-mail alias. (Note: don't include @vt.edu)
  - **Password:** Type in your PID password (this would be the same password you use to connect to the university network or check your e-mail). As you type, each letter of your password will appear as an asterisk (\*). This is done to hide your password from the sight of anyone who might be watching over your shoulder. Be careful that you type it correctly.
  - **Student ID:** Your social security number.

- **Section:** Click your mouse inside this field to get a list of class sections and index numbers. Make sure you select the correct time, instructor, and index number for the class you are enrolled in, or your assignment will be rejected.
- **Project Number:** This specifies which assignment you are submitting. For example, if you are making a submission for the third homework assignment, your instructor may specify you should enter "3" here, or possibly "HW3" or "Homework3". Be sure to follow the instructions you are given for filling in this field. This is *not* the number of submission attempts you have made for this assignment. Entering the wrong thing here may result in the rejection of your submission.
- **Assignment File:** Fill in the name of the file you wish to submit. You can also select the "Browse" button to visually search for the file. Be sure you send the correct file, otherwise confusion may arise.

The resulting window should look something like:



The screenshot shows a Windows-style application window titled "CS 1044 Acceptor". It contains a form with the following fields and controls:

- PID:** Text box containing "johokie".
- Password:** Text box containing "\*\*\*\*\*".
- Student ID:** Text box containing "123-45-6789".
- Section:** Dropdown menu showing "5316 Barnette 12:00 MWF".
- Project Number:** Text box containing "1".
- Assignment File:** Text box containing "D:\TestFiles\pay4.cpp". To its right is a "Browse..." button.
- Below the form are two buttons: "Quit" and "Submit".
- Below the buttons is a "Status Messages:" label and a text area containing:
  - 1) Fill out the above information.
  - 2) Click on the 'Submit' button.

4. **Submitting:** Once all of the above information has been entered, click on the "Submit" button. This will send in your assignment for automated archiving, provided that all of the information you typed in is correct. Four things will happen when you press the "Submit" button:

- A. Your PID and password are checked for authenticity. If you entered your PID or password incorrectly, you will get a dialog box with an appropriate message and be asked to check the spelling of your PID or re-enter your password. For example:



This check is done using the Virginia Tech campus e-mail server. Occasionally you may get a dialog box indicating that the Authentication Server is unavailable:



If this happens, check your network connection (for example, try viewing the Acceptor web page with your Web browser). If that works, the e-mail server is probably either down or refusing connections because the system load is too high. Wait a few minutes and try again.

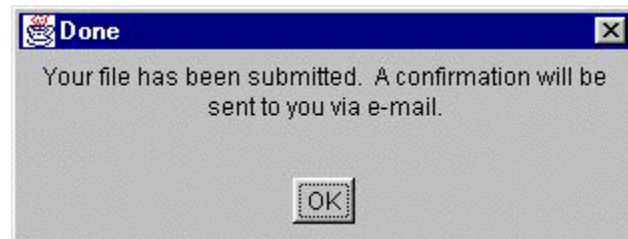
- B. *Submit* connects to the Automated Acceptor server. If you get a message saying a connection can not be made:



check that your communications software is running and is connected to the university network. If your computer is on the network and you still get a connection error, the Acceptor server or some other university network device might be down. Try again later.

There is one other known cause of a connection failure at this point. If you are using a 16-bit network connection, such as the 16-bit Trumpet Winsock provided with the old WNet software, then *Submit* will not operate correctly. In this case you will have to either submit your assignment from the Computer Science Undergraduate Lab or switch to a 32-bit connection; the simplest solution is to obtain and install the current VTNet software package (after all, it's free).

- C. Once a connection has been made, *Submit* will send your ID number, PID, section number and project number to the Acceptor server. The Acceptor will check to see if your ID number and PID match the roll file for the specified section. If they don't, you will receive an e-mail message from the Acceptor indicating the problem and your submission will be rejected. If everything checks out properly, *Submit* will send your file over the network to the Acceptor server where it will be timestamped and archived.
- D. After the Acceptor server has received your file, it will disconnect from *Submit*, which will display the dialog box below:



At this point your submission is complete, and you can quit *Submit* by clicking on the Close "x" button in the upper right-hand corner of the *Submit* window or the "Quit" button.

5. **Getting Results:** The Acceptor server will automatically archive your submission, and then send you an e-mail message as follows:

Your submission has been accepted and archived:

```
File:   johokie.1.1.doc
Length: 515072
Time:   Thu Aug 27 11:44:09 EDT 1998
```

The length shown in the e-mail message is the number of bytes that were transferred from *Submit* to the Acceptor server. You should compare that to the size of your file: right-click on the file name in Windows Explorer and click on Properties in the pop-up menu.

If you make an error in selecting your Section, or entering the Project Number, you will receive a message indicating that; for example:

```
You are not enrolled in the section you specified: 1000
You may have specified the wrong section.
Please submit again with the correct information.
This did not count as a submission.
```

Under normal conditions, the e-mail message should be sent within a few minutes.

## Multiple Submissions

Some instructors allow assignments to be submitted more than once. This gives students a chance to fix problems that were detected by the Acceptor. The number of submissions that are allowed depends on your instructor. The Acceptor server will automatically ignore any submissions you send beyond the maximum number allowed by your teacher. How multiple submissions is also up to the instructor. Some may use the highest grade from all of your submissions. Others may use the grade from your last submission. If multiple submissions are allowed, the Acceptor will archive each with a different filename.

## Submitting From the CS Lab

If you do not have Internet access at home, you can make a submission from the Computer Science undergraduate laboratory. Bring the file you want to submit on a 3 1/2 inch Windows formatted floppy disk to McBryde Hall room 116-118. Ask for a Pentium running Windows NT (if the machine is running FreeBSD, login, type **sash halt now** and re-boot into Windows NT). All of these computers have *Submit*. If you are submitting from the Undergraduate Laboratory, there may be some additional steps you must follow; these directions will be available in the Lab. Don't hesitate to ask the Lab Consultants for help if you have problems making your submission.

## Known Bugs and Alarming Behaviors

**Enrollment Issues:** The Acceptor will indicate you are not enrolled in the class if you enter an incorrect ID number, or if your PID is not correctly recorded in the roll file the Acceptor uses. This may be because you selected the wrong section, entered your ID number incorrectly, or because there is an error in the roll file. If the Acceptor insists you are not enrolled in your section, contact your GTA or Instructor as soon as possible to resolve the problem.

**E-mail Notification Problems:** The rate at which the Acceptor is receiving submissions will determine how long it takes for an e-mail message to be sent to you; normally you should receive a message within 5 minutes. In some cases, the Acceptor may fail to get a connection with the campus e-mail server when it attempts to send your e-mail notification. In that case, you will not receive an e-mail message, although the archiving of your submission will be completed. We're working on this problem. If you don't receive an e-mail confirmation, contact your GTA and ask them to confirm the submission.

## Getting Help and Reporting Problems

**Sources of Help:** If you need additional help using *Submit*, see your Instructor or your GTA, not necessarily in that order. If you have questions about a submission, bring a copy of the e-mail message sent to you by the Acceptor.

**Bug Reports:** Problems and possible bugs can be reported to the Acceptor Administrator by e-mail: [grader@cs.vt.edu](mailto:grader@cs.vt.edu).

**Do not** send an e-mail reply to the messages from the Acceptor — no one will either read or respond to such messages.



## The Automated Acceptor and the Honor Code

Each assignment you submit to the Automated Acceptor is subject to the Virginia Tech Honor Code, just as if you had given the assignment to a human for evaluation.

Your Instructor will specify precisely what sources of help are allowed and how much, if any, collaboration with other students is allowed. Be certain you understand and follow the rules set by your Instructor. Ignorance of those rules is not an effective defense before the Virginia Tech Honor Court.

Regardless of the rules set by your Instructor, each of the following is considered a flagrant violation of the Honor Code and will result in a formal charge:

- submitting an assignment written by another student as your own, individual work
- submitting an assignment designed to alter the operation of the Acceptor's archiving mechanism
- submitting an assignment designed to crash or otherwise damage the operation of the Acceptor software or the machine on which it is installed
- editing computer generated output, such as an e-mail message sent by the Acceptor, and presenting that altered version when raising a question relating to your submission
- attempting to access or alter files on the machine on which the Acceptor is installed, whether physically or via a network connection; the sole exceptions would be normal use of *Submit* and if the Acceptor machine is also used as an FTP repository for course-related files

This list is not intended to be comprehensive; resolve any questions you have about these policies with the Instructor of your course.

All submissions to the Automated Acceptor are archived. The assignments submitted to the Acceptor are automatically analyzed for suspicious similarities. When such similarities are found, the assignments involved are compared (by humans) and charges are filed with the Honor Count if the similarities warrant action.

<p>The Honor Code will be strictly enforced by the Instructors and GTAs who use and administer the Automated Acceptor. All assignments submitted shall be considered pledged graded work, unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your work will be covered by the Honor System. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity. The faculty and students of Virginia Tech will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.</p>
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