Enabling talkd (Console Chat) between logged in users on FreeBSD and other BSDs

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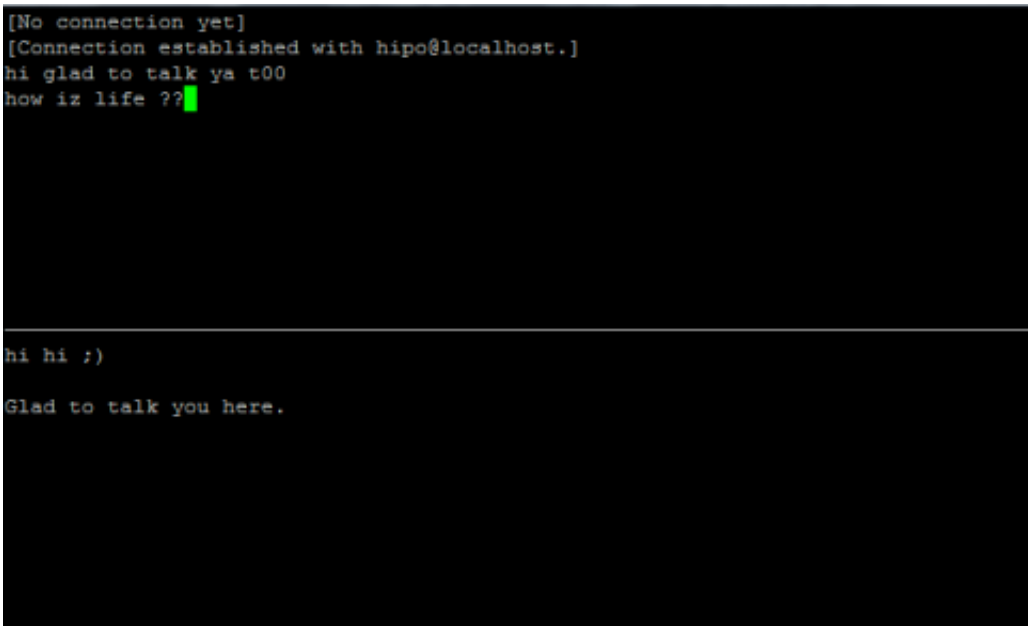

Those who are in familiar with older UNIXes, UNIX BSD derivatives and GNU Linux should certainly remember the times, when we hackers used to talk to each other using **talk** service.

Those who don't know what **talk** command is it is a simple console / ssh *utility to talk to another logged in users*.

Talk is very similar to **write** and **mesg** one liner messasing utilities available for *nixes, the difference is it is intendted to provide interactive chat between the two logged in users. People who came to know UNIX or free software in older times most likely don't know talk, however I still remember how precious this tool was for communication back in the day.

I believe still it can be useful so I dediced to install ot on one FreeBSD host.

In order to have the talk service running on BSD it is necessery to have **/usr/libexec/ntalkd** installed on the system this however is installed by default with standard BSD OS installs, so no need for any external ports install to run it.

talk doesn't have it's own init script to start is not written to run as it own service but in order to run it is is necessery to enable it via **inetd**

Enabling it is done by;;;

1 -- Editting *./etc/inetd.conf*

Inside the conf the line::

#ntalk dgram udp wait tty:tty /usr/libexec/ntalkd ntalkd

should be uncommented e.g, become ;;;

ntalk dgram udp wait tty:tty /usr/libexec/ntalkd ntalkd

2 -- Restart inetd

freebsd# /etc/rc.d/inetd restart
Stopping inetd.
Starting inetd.

talk is planned to be used for *peer to peer* conversations over SSH so in a way it is the GRANDFATHER :) of IRC, ICQ and Skype;;;

Here is an example on how talk is used ,, Let's say there are three logged in users

pcfreak# w
12:39PM up 3 days, 16:25, 3 users, load averages: 1.12, 0.91, 0.71
USER TTY FROM LOGIN@ IDLE WHAT
testuser p0 192.168.0.7 10:50AM - bash
hipo p3 192.168.0.8 12:23PM - w
root p4 :ttyp2:S.0 12:24PM - vim /usr/local/www/dat

I'm logged in with my username *hipo* and I would like to talk to *testuser* ;;;;

pcfreak% tty
/dev/ttyp3

You see I'm logged in on */dev/ttyp3* (this is the specific naming on BSDs) on Linux equivalent is */dev/tty3*So to talk the other user *testuser*;;;;;-

$ talk testuser ttyp0
[No connection yet]
[Waiting for your party to respond]

The *testuser* logged in via SSH will then get a message ||;

Message from Talk_Daemon@pcfreak at 12:44 on 2012/06/10 ...
talk: connection requested by hipo@localhost
talk: respond with: talk hipo@localhost

To enter a talk session then the logged in *testuser* has to type:

$ talk hipo@localhost