



FTP — File Transfer Protocol as It Relates to ACBL Unit 547

by Bob Gruber

FTP Background Information

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) programs are used to transfer files between computers. From a terminal or PC, files are uploaded to a Mainframe or Server. Going the other direction is called downloading. For the Ventura Unit, ACBL Unit 547, game files and hand records are uploaded from your PC to the (Syrma) server.

On your computer, you launch the FTP program. You have to tell the FTP software the address to upload the file(s) to. This address is a 32-bit number. But since such a number is not user-friendly, a number of alternative expressions are used. One of them is called a URL (Uniform Resource Locator). Another is a Host name.

Some servers allow these file transfers to occur anonymously (hence Anonymous FTP), where no user name or password is required. Most require a user name and password, especially to be able to reach specific directories on the server. Many FTP programs allow this information to be saved and used as the default values for future connections.

Ventura Unit FTP Choices

The Ventura Bridge Unit has an FTP program that Tom McCrackin of Santa Barbara created and tailored for uploading (.txt) game files to the proper directory on the Unit's Web Site Server. Unfortunately, it needs to be modified to upload Hand Records. Dick Wagner may have a copy of the modified software, but many other directors are using the Core FTP Lite program discovered and recommended by Tom Ciacio.

This freeware program has drag and drop functionality as well as the highlight and click a "Move" button/arrow functionality. It works for "pdf" files, the format for Hand Records, as well as "txt" or "htm" files. It works on the Vista operating system as well as XP. It allows downloading as well as uploading files. And did I mention it's free.

Downloading Core FTP Lite

To download the free FTP client software go to www.coreftp.com and click the DOWNLOAD button. When you download the program, be sure to put a shortcut on the desktop or some method to enable you to easily access the program. The shortcut icon is displayed below.



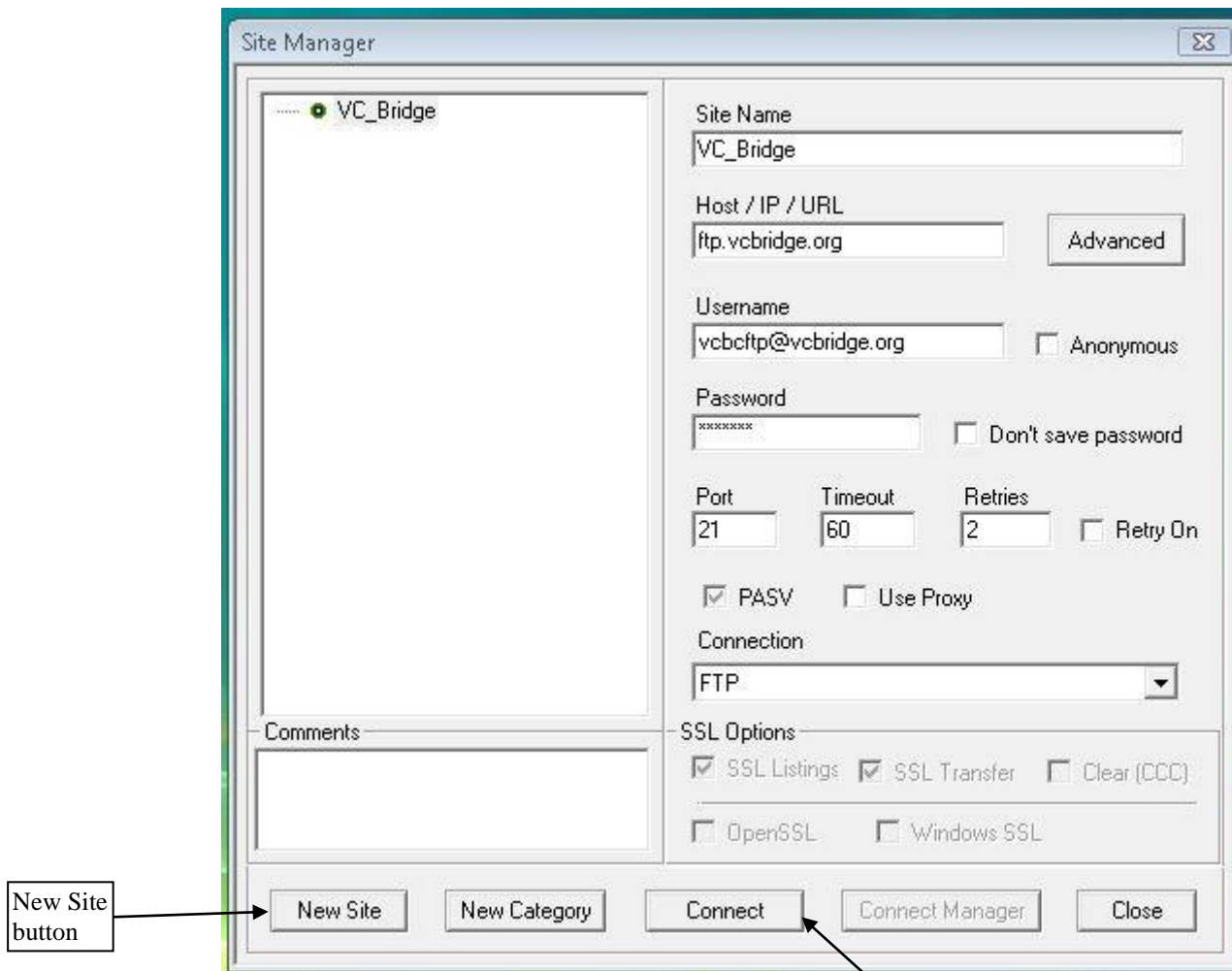
Although the icon spells out Lite, when the program launches, the title bar says Core FTP LE, where LE stands for Lite Edition.



Setting Up Core FTP LE

The first time you launch the program you'll have to enter some initial setup information. When you double click the "Core FTP Lite" shortcut icon on the desktop, a small flash screen will appear briefly, followed by the "Core FTP LE" program window, and then quickly by a smaller "Site Manager" window overlaid on top of the program window.

The right half of the Site Manager window is where you enter the information identifying the site/server you wish to connect to. But first, you click the *New Site* button in the lower left to create a Site Name, in this case, VC_Bridge, to easily reference this site by name in the future. The screen capture that follows shows the pertinent data.



Site Name VC_Bridge
Host / IP / URL ftp.vcbridge.org
Username vbcftp@vcbridge.org
Password ...
Make sure: Port = 21, Timeout = 60, Retries = 2
 Connection = FTP

Connect button

Another Ventura Unit Director can tell you the password if you don't already know it. Once this information has been entered, it will be saved under the name VC_Bridge.



Using Core FTP LE

When all the information has been entered, click the Connect button at the bottom center. The Site Manager screen will disappear (possibly after interacting with Vista's Password Manager as shown below).



There should be a flurry of messages in the window in the upper 1/3 of the Core FTP LE screen as the connection is completed. The middle third of the screen is split into a left half and right half. The right half is restricted to the directory on the server that contains the "TXT" results files and "pdf" Hand Records files. The left half needs to be set to:

C:\ACBLSOR\GAMEFILE\

Or wherever your game files and Hand Records are located on your computer.

Message Window

Drives / Folders

Directory Tree

Up Directory

Message Window

Filename	Size	Date	Permissions
..		02/25/09 11:04	
080220.ACM	15 KB	02/10/09 10:52	
080227.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 10:58	
080305.ACM	18 KB	02/10/09 08:09	
080312.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:10	
080319.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:11	
080326.ACM	12 KB	02/10/09 08:11	
080402.ACM	18 KB	02/10/09 08:12	
080409.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:13	
080416.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:14	
080423.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:14	
080430.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:15	
080507.ACM	14 KB	02/10/09 08:16	
..			
GAMEFILE		02/24/09 22:00	drwxr-xr-x
.ftpquota	11	02/12/09 22:13	-rw-r--r--
090130A.TXT	7 KB	01/30/09 16:40	-rw-r--r--
090130M.TXT	6 KB	01/30/09 18:24	-rw-r--r--
090131A.pdf	29 KB	02/12/09 17:20	-rw-r--r--
090131A.TXT	32 KB	01/31/09 16:50	-rw-r--r--
090202A.TXT	24 KB	02/02/09 18:58	-rw-r--r--
090203A.pdf	27 KB	02/03/09 16:39	-rw-r--r--
090203A.TXT	20 KB	02/03/09 17:43	-rw-r--r--
090203M.TXT	15 KB	02/04/09 06:20	-rw-r--r--

Host Destination Bytes Size Rate Type Status Source

No transfers...

Ready

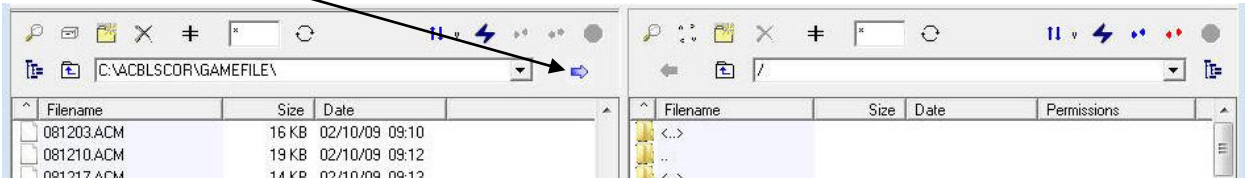
There are 3 buttons to help navigate to the desired Directory (sometimes called a Folder) on your PC: a) Drives / Folders, b) Directory Tree, and c) Up Directory.



As with all the buttons, resting your (mouse) cursor on any of these buttons will pop up a small box that describes—very briefly—that button’s function. Use any one of these buttons or a combination of them to navigate to the proper directory.

Uploading the File

As previously noted, you may drag and drop a file from the left half to the right half of the screen. If you highlight a file, notice that an arrow near the middle turns from gray to blue. Clicking that arrow copies the file from one half to the other.



Hand Records File Not Co-located with the Gamefile’s TXT File

If you have a Hand Records “pdf” file for that day’s game, but it’s not co-located in the same directory as the gamefile’s “TXT” file, you have 2 choices:

- 1) Use a program such as Windows Explorer—do not confuse with Internet Explorer—to move the Hand Records file to the directory containing the “TXT” file, or
- 2) Use Core FTP LE’s navigation buttons to change to that directory and then upload the “pdf” file using the method you’re comfortable with.

File Naming Convention

The text (TXT) files created by ACBLScore automatically use a naming convention of: YYMMDD.ACx, where

- YY = the last 2 digits of the calendar year,
- MM = 2 digits for the month, using a leading zero (0) for the 1st 9 months,
- DD = 2 digits for the day of the month, again, using a leading zero (0) if needed,
- AC = fixed characters, probably standing for AC(BL), and
- x = M, A, E, or L standing for morning, afternoon, evening or late.

The Ventura Unit website requires a similar format for the Hand Records file, but the extension is “pdf” not “ACx” and the date is followed by the “x” that normally follows “AC,” yielding: YYMMDDx.pdf

If you have a Hand Records file that you want to upload to the Unit’s website and it doesn’t follow this naming convention, you must rename it before uploading it or it won’t be available to users of the website.



08/20/08
12/11/10

Downloading Files

Normally, we upload files from the left half of the screen to the right half. But going the other way is useful if we want to copy an old file onto our laptop to be available to print out at the next game we will be directing.

Exiting Core FTP LE

When done transferring files, click the “X” in the upper right of the Core FTP LE screen.

Future launches of Core FTP Lite should have all the pertinent information already entered, with the possible exception of the password. When that’s entered, you’ll just need to click the Connect button to be ready for your file transfers.
