

# A User's Introduction to The *AIPS* Gripes Database

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## Abstract

The *AIPS* Gripes database is an **emacs**-based tool for maintaining all of the many user complaints and suggestions received by the project over its lifetime. The present document is an in-depth introduction to the use of this tool. It does not address how the tool was constructed, nor does it address the contents of the gripes.

## 1 Introduction

The *AIPS* Gripes Database is built within the **emacs** editor. It is mentioned throughout this document that many of the editor's functions and key-bindings apply when moving through and editing forms within the database. Although it is *not* essential, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself somewhat with **emacs** before starting. Throughout this document you will encounter some keystroke shorthand. Some basic definitions are:  $\wedge$  = **CTRL** = **C**ontrol key, **ESC** = **E**scape key, and **SPC** = **S**pace bar. If you see something like  $\wedge x$ , this requires that you to hold down the **C**ontrol key and hit the "x" key at the same time.

The database formerly resided on **baboon**, a Sun Unix-based Sparc station in Charlottesville. It now resides on **zia** a Solbourne workstation server at the Array Operations Center in Socorro. If you would like to use the database, you need only log onto virtual machine "**gripe**." If you are using an NRAO Unix machine, simply enter **rlogin zia -l gripe** at the Unix prompt. If you are logging in from outside NRAO, the complete rlogin address is **gripe.aoc.nrao.edu**. If for any reason this does not work, try to telnet to **gripe** with the command **telnet 146.88.1.4**. No username or password is necessary for any of these logins. The **viewgripe** procedure should start automatically and, when you exit the database, you should be logged out and returned to your own system.

After the **viewgripe** procedure finishes its initialization, the top level form of the database (the Selection/Options Form) should appear on your screen. Within this form you will specify the criteria by which a particular gripe or group of gripes will be selected.

## 2 Entering data and emacs functions

Many of the basic **emacs** functions will work when you are entering/editing data in the Selection/Options Form (as well as subsequent forms). "Arrow keys," if available, should work to move the cursor from character to character and line to line. Some of the other basic **emacs** functions are:

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\* $\TeX$ set and updated to 1994 by Eric W. Greisen.

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    ^f  move forward one character
    ^b  move backward one character
ESC-f  move forward one word
ESC-b  move backward one word
    ^p  move up one line
    ^n  move down one line
    ^a  move to the beginning of the line
    ^e  move to the end of the line
DEL    delete the character to the left of the cursor
    ^d  delete the character which the cursor is on
ESC-d  delete one word to the right of the cursor
    ^s  search forward for a specified string
    ^r  search backward for a specified string
SPC    space one character
RET    completion of form — select gripes
^x^c  exit the database
    ^g  stop some action by the program

```

Many more functions are available and are defined within the various help screens found throughout the database (typically activated by entering “?”, as you may notice in the menu line at the bottom of the screen). However, depending on your location in the database, some **emacs** functions (including some from the list above) may be disabled. For instance, no editing is allowed while you are viewing a **[read-only]** buffer of an individual gripe.

If you are at a prompt in the Selections/Options form which requires a fixed choice of entry (*i.e.*, **Status**, **Display**, etc.), hitting the **SPC** bar will show the possible entries. There is also the usual **emacs** completion function which will allow you to use the space bar to complete a string in such fields as long as a minimum number of characters has been entered to make the string unique. If there are several options for string completion, you will also be told the list of possibilities in a separate window. If there is ever any difficulty exiting/removing a second window, the sequence **^x-1** (**CTRL-x** and then the one key) should clear it. If there is not a preset list of options for an entry, entering a blank will simply insert a blank into the form. Note, blanks are not the same as no entry (all underscores).

## 3 The AIPS gripes selections/options form

The initial value of the Selection/Options form appears in Figure 1.

### 3.1 Retrieving gripes: selection criteria

The first step to retrieving gripes is to fill in the Selection Criteria section of the Selection/Options Form. Obviously, the more specific and complete the selection criteria are, the more likely you are to obtain a smaller group of gripes. At least one of the selection criteria: **User**, **Status**, **Keyword**, or **Arbitrary string** must be set. Be careful not to hit the **RETURN** key until the *entire* form is complete to your satisfaction. You do not need to fill the form in completely, but with fewer qualifiers, more gripes are likely to be selected. This could make locating a particular gripe more time consuming. If you wish to kill the retrieve process at any time during its execution, type **^g** and you will be returned to the Selection/Options form.

Take care when entering the values in the Selection/Options screen. Although string searches are not case sensitive, they are sensitive to spelling and syntax. In other words, the spelling of your entries for **User**, **Keyword**, and **Arbitrary String** in a **Gripe** needs to be entered *exactly* as they appear in the gripes themselves. If a “griper” used an abbreviation or nickname when they entered a gripe, then you need to enter their name as such. If there are multiple spellings of their name in the database, only those gripes matching your entries will be pulled. (For the **Status** and **Display** options entries, however, there is a

## AIPS Gripes Selection/options

## Selection criteria

```

User (Joe Blow) -----
Status (new, answer)    new_____
Keyword (MX, DBCON, tape) -----
Beginning date (dd-mmm-yyyy) 01-Jan-93__
Beginning Gripe no. (9456)  4900_
Arbitrary string in a gripe -----

```

## Options

```

Display (index, full, exit)  index__
E-Mail address (jblow@esu.edu) -----

```

Figure 1: Selection/Options form

minimum-match entry capability.) Initials are completely ignored at this time, so it is unnecessary to enter them.

The selection criteria are discussed individually below.

**User:** is the name of the person entering the gripe. Initials are ignored, but the name must otherwise match the name signed to the gripe. There are no predefined values for this field and if left empty (all underscores) gripes entered by all users will be accepted.

**Status:** is assigned to each gripe to indicate the amount of processing that it has received inside the *AIPS* gripes system. If you are entering a gripe **Status**, there are four possible options from which to choose for gripes entered under this new database system: **new** gripes have no answer at all, **answer-new** gripes have been answered but the answers have not been sent to the persons who wrote them, **answer-sent** gripes have been answered *and* sent, and finally **answer** gripes are *all* gripes which have been answered, whether they have been sent or not.

In addition to the statuses just mentioned, answered gripes prior to about number 4563 (those entered before about the second week of November, 1990) may also be marked simply as **answered**. These will have already been sent to the users, but you must keep this difference in mind when selecting a group of gripes which may include some entered before *and* after the transition to the current database system. Thus, it may be necessary to run your query twice — once for each “epoch” of entries.

Note that if **Status** is not entered (left all underscores), gripes with *any* status will be accepted.

**Keyword:** is the classification or classifications assigned to most gripes. This is frequently the name of the task or verb involved but may include other items. If **keyword** is not entered (left all underscores), gripes with any keyword will be accepted.

**Beginning date:** is a date entered in the form dd-mmm-yy (*e.g.*, 01-Jan-90) to select only gripes entered after the given date. If no date is entered, gripes with any entry date are accepted.

**Beginning Gripe no.:** sets the lowest gripe number which will be selected. Each Gripe is given a unique number more-or-less in the order they were entered. Selection by gripe number is faster than selection by date. If no gripe number is entered then any gripe number is accepted.

**Arbitrary string in a gripe:** allows selection by the presence of an arbitrary string of up to 35 characters within the gripe. One letter “words” and numbers are ignored. The target string can be anywhere in a gripe file, *e.g.*, this is useful if you don't know a user's first name.

### 3.2 Retrieving gripes: display options

Once you are satisfied that the Selection Criteria section of the Selection/Options form is complete, enter the Display Option(s) by which you wish to view data on the gripe(s). As is explained in the help screen, you may:

- (a) Enter **index** to view a simple index of the selected gripes,
- (b) Enter **full** to skip the index and view a "slide show" showing the full text of *all* selected gripes,
- (c) Enter **print** to either print the selected gripes on the NRAO laser printer or write the output to a file (`/tmp/gripestoprint`) (you will be prompted for your choice),
- (d) Enter **one** to view the (one) gripe whose number was specified in the **Beginning Gripe Number**, or
- (e) Enter **exit** to exit the program.

A valid Display option must be given.

If you think you might like a copy of any of the gripes which will be displayed, enter your e-mail address at the E-Mail Address Options prompt at the bottom of the form. You may send these gripes to *any* valid e-mail address which is supported through NRAO networks.

## 4 Retrieving a gripe index

Unless you know that your query will return only a handful of gripes, it would probably be best to start by viewing an index of your selection of gripes. After entering **index** at the Display prompt, pressing **RETURN** will display a concise list (ordered by gripe number) of the gripes which match the criteria you selected. Key properties of each gripe will be displayed along with a one-line summary of the gripe itself. The help screen (called by entering a **?**) for the index should cover the basics of cursor movement and individual gripe selection. Most **emacs** functions still apply. (If you need additional explanation of key bindings, etc., **ESC-x Helper-help** or **ESC-x Helper-describe-bindings** should help. These are usually available at any point in the database.) A sample Gripe index is shown in Figure 2.

### 4.1 Viewing specific gripes

From the index form, you are allowed to move the cursor to any gripe in the index and view its full content by hitting the **RETURN** key. You may then scroll through successive gripes (**SPC** bar) or previous ones (**P**) or return to the index listing (**q**). Again, entering a **?** will give additional help for active functions within the gripe screen. Once a Gripe appears on the screen, you can obtain a copy of it by e-mail by entering a lowercase **m**. If you did not give an e-mail address in the Selection/Options form, you will be prompted for one at this point. If you are using an NRAO machine in Socorro, NM, entering an uppercase **L** will spool this information to the laser printer. Entering **q** successively will bring you back out of the database to the Selection/ Options form. A sample Gripe (the first one in the Gripe index) is shown in Figure 3.

### 4.2 Retrieving information on the grippers from the index

If you wish additional information on the person responsible for a particular gripe, move the cursor to that gripe number and enter a lowercase **a**. This will give the "griper's" address(es), phone number(s), user number, etc. If you want information about any *other* person in the address database, entering a lowercase **l** anywhere in the Gripe Index form will yield a prompt for **Name:** at the command line. Enter a name (syntax and spelling sensitive) to retrieve said information. Once the User Information form appears on the screen, you can obtain a copy of it by e-mail by entering a lowercase **m**. If you did not give an e-mail address in the

## AIPS Gripe index

No.	User	Date	Status	Keyword(s)
4092	Alan Bridle	08-MAR-1990	NEW	EXTLIST
	Want option to list only a single file.			
4093	Alan Bridle	09-MAR-1990	NEW	VTESS
	VTESS writes wrong map type in header			
4142	Alan Bridle	23-MAR-1990	NEW	TVLOD
	Failed on IVAS			
4152	Alan Bridle	26-MAR-1990	NEW	PRTTP
	PRTTP bombed			
4153	Alan Bridle	26-MAR-1990	NEW	Output file names
	Why both OUTPRINT and OUTFILE			
4204	Alan Bridle	19-APR-1990	NEW	SL2PL
	Slice plots go offscale			
4205	Alan Bridle	19-APR-1990	NEW	SLCOL
	SLCOL doesn't collate slices			
4216	Alan Bridle	23-APR-1990	NEW	UVMAP
	UVMAP should work for packed data.			
4217	Alan Bridle	23-APR-1990	NEW	EXTLIST
	Needs a page formatter			
4218	Alan Bridle	23-APR-1990	NEW	SL2PL
	SL2PL is dying with a floating point exception			
4219	Alan Bridle	23-APR-1990	NEW	SL2PL
	SL2PL making plots that kill QMSPL and TVPL			
4220	Alan Bridle	25-APR-1990	NEW	pointless warnings
	Get rid of the non-standard program messages			

Figure 2: Sample gripe index

Selection/Options form, you will be prompted for one at this point. If you are using an NRAO machine in Socorro, NM, entering an uppercase L will spool this information to the laser printer. To return to the gripe index, type a lowercase q. A sample user information file is shown in Figure 4.

## 5 Viewing all selected gripes

If you want to skip the gripe index and simply review the entire contents of *all* gripes selected, you should enter **full** at the Display Options prompt of the Selection/Options form. The first gripe in the selected list will appear in its entirety. Again, this is read-only, and thus you are only allowed to use the **emacs** functions and key-bindings which can move the cursor and string-search through the gripes. You can only page through each gripe one at a time. When you have exhausted the list, you will be returned to the Selection/Options form. Again, additional help can be obtained at any point by typing **?**, **ESC-x Helper-help**, or **ESC-x Helper-describe-bindings**. Entering **q** will bring you back to the Selection/Options form.

## 6 Database support/assistance

This concludes the documentation for use of the *AIPS* Gripes Database. If there are any problems with the system or in your understanding of how to use it, please contact the database manager (Gustaaf van Moorsel) at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at (505)835-7396 or send an e-mail message to

AIPS Gripe report \_GRYPE-NO: 4092

\_GRYPE-ENTERED: 08-MAR-1990 12:13:09 \_SYSTEM: NRA01 Convex C1 7.1  
\_STATUS: NEW \_KEYWORD: EXTLIST  
\_ONE-LINE: Want option to list only a single file.  
\_USER: Alan Bridle \_USER-NUMBER: 76 \_AIPS-RELEASE: 15JUL90

\_GRYPE: It would be nice if EXTLIST had an option to list data only for the extension version nominated by INVERS, rather than for INVERS plus all higher version numbers, as it is now. An example is the application in which you have made many slice files (\eg\ 100) and wish to extract the parameters of, say the ninth. The present input structure allows you to suppress the unwanted data for the first eight, but EXTLI then insists on telling you about the last ninety! Would it be more logical for INVERS to specify the ONLY version number to be reported, rather than the FIRST one, as now?

\_ANSWERED-BY: \_ANSWER-DATE:  
\_ANSWER:

Figure 3: Sample gripe file

AIPS User Information \_USER-NUMBER: 76

\_USER: Alan Bridle  
\_ADDRESS: NRAO  
Edgemont Road  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
\_PHONE: (804) 296-0375  
\_EMAIL: abridle@nrao.edu

Figure 4: Sample user information file

gvanmoor@nrao.edu. We also welcome any suggestions for improving the performance or configuration of this database. If there are any features which you would like to see added to this system, please let us know.