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The **Chess Engine Communication Protocol**, also called **xboard** or **WinBoard** protocol, is an open

[communication protocol](#) for chess engines to play [games](#) automatically, that is to communicate with other programs including [Graphical User Interfaces](#).

GUI

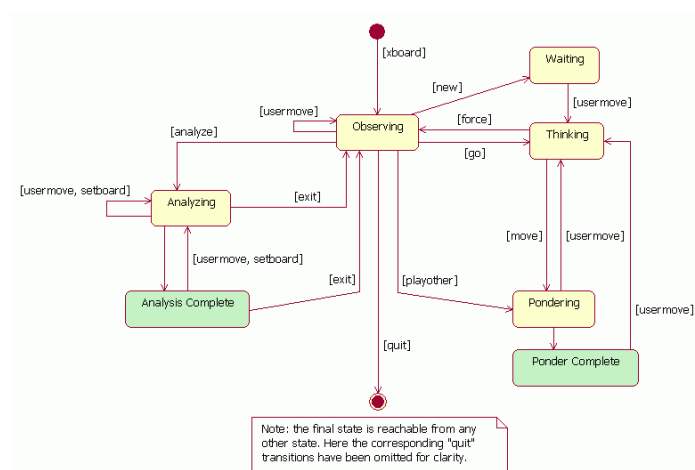
A [GUI](#) supporting the protocol is known as [XBoard](#) or [WinBoard](#), being for [Unix](#) (Posix) or [Windows](#) operating systems, respectively. Many other GUIs support the protocol, which is based on text commands, while requiring the engine to keep the state of the game internally. While the [Universal Chess Interface](#) is somewhat more popular today, the Chess Engine Communication Protocol protocol is preferred by some because it allows greater flexibility for the engine (for instance, in [pondering](#)).

How it began

[Tim Mann](#) in an Interview by [Frank Quisinsky](#), April 2000 ^[1]:

Originally, xboard and WinBoard were simply graphical user interfaces for [GNU Chess](#), then for GNU Chess and [Internet chess servers](#). Because the [GUI](#) and the chess engine are separate programs, several people thought of the idea of connecting their own chess programs in place of GNU Chess, and they began to email me asking how to do it. I think the first person to ask was [Shay Bushinsky](#), in November 1994. Over the years I received so many requests for this information that I was more or less forced into documenting and extending the ad-hoc engine protocol to support them. The document that exists now (chess-engines.html) evolved directly from the original email reply I sent to Shay. Unfortunately, because the protocol was never really designed, but just grew out of documenting the existing communication with GNU Chess, there are still several bugs and deficiencies in it today. It would be nice to make some major revisions, but then of course it would (at best) take a long time for the existing engines to convert over to the new protocol, so both would have to be supported, probably forever.

UML State diagram



WinBoard/XBoard protocol [UML state diagram](#) by [Alessandro Scotti](#) ^[2]

Version 2

[Harm Geert Muller](#) established a protocol Version 2 in September, 2009 ^[3], also covering [Chess Variants](#) and different board sizes.

Engines

- [WinBoard Engines](#)
- [XBoard Engines](#)

GUIs

Native

- [WinBoard](#)
- [XBoard](#)

Compatible

- [Arena](#)
- [ChessGUI](#)
- [ChessPartner](#)
- [ChessX](#)
- [Cute Chess](#)
- [EBoard](#)

- [jose](#)
- [PyChess](#)
- [SCID](#)
- [Scid vs. PC](#)
- [Scidb](#)

Utilities

- [InBetween](#)
- [PolyGlot](#)
- [Wb2UCI](#)
- [UCI2WB](#)

See also

- [CPW-Engine.com](#)
- [Engine Testing](#)
- [GNU Chess](#)
- [icsdrone](#)
- [Pondering](#)
- [UCI](#)
- [Vice XBoard/WiBoard-Videos](#)

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2005 ...

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- [Aquarium \(other GUIs too?\) and WB support => I am shocked](#) by [Miguel A. Ballicora](#), [CCC](#), February 27, 2010

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External Links

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- [Chess-Engine Communication Protocol](#) by [Harm Geert Muller](#) ^[4]
- [Chess Engine Communication Protocol](#) by [Tim Mann](#) & [Harm Geert Muller](#)
- [Chess Engine Communication Protocol - New Specs](#) by [Harm Geert Muller](#) ^[5]
- [XBoard News](#) by [Harm Geert Muller](#)
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- [bug-xboard mail archive](#)
- [Tinkering with Winboard...](#) by [Alessandro Scotti](#)
- [Winboard/XBoard UML state diagram](#) by [Alessandro Scotti](#)
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