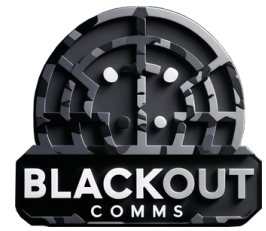# Using Blackout Comms

For the most part, use Blackout Comms like any other messaging app.

Blackout Comms on T-Deck & T-Deck Variants

For T-Decks, the touchscreen and trackball are primary ways you interact. The keyboard is used only when you are typing text.

Intuitive controls via touchscreen
GPS
Internal LoRa antenna
Trackball for easy scrolling and clicking
Data encrypted on removeable SD
Dedicated qwerty keypad
Charge via USB-C

Touch or Swipe
- Swipe the screen to scroll up and down
- Tap/touch icons

Type on the Keypad
- For all text entry
- Hold *sym* key for numbers & symbols
- Alt+B for backlight

Roll the Trackball
- Wakes up the display
- Scrolls the display up and down

Click the Trackball
- Wakes up the display
- Toggles between Home & Neighbors
- Other screen-specific functions

Blackout Comms on Lilygo Pager

The Lilygo Pager is similar to T-Deck, in terms of capabilities and components, except that **you interact with it entirely using the scroller and keyboard**. The pager does not have a touchscreen, so on-screen buttons are aligned with keyboard buttons.
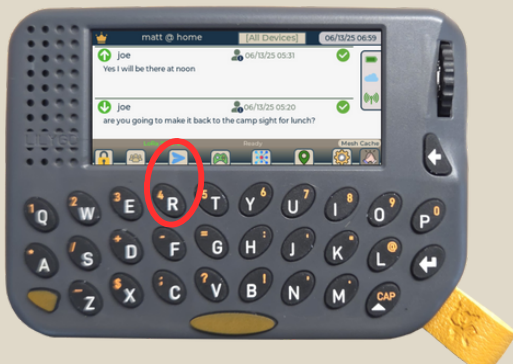
For instance, on the home screen, you create a new message using the 'R' key, which lines up below the message button.

On screens that accept text input (like the new message screen), you can **toggle the keyboard between *button* mode and *text typing* mode using the scroller**. Check the screen for instructions.

Power On: Press & Hold
Power Off: Tap Twice
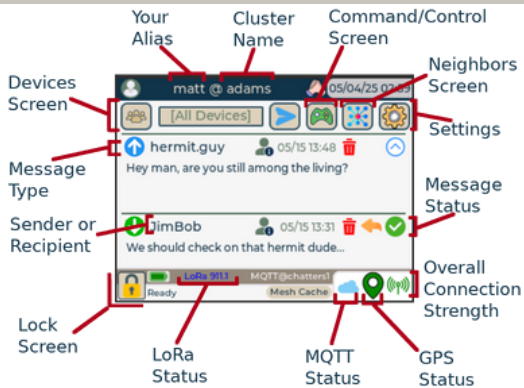Reset

⚠️ SD Compatibility

If you are using SD cards (recommended), you can move a T-Deck's SD card over to a pager (and vice versa). It will carry over *all* settings, messages, and password protection.

The screen layouts may vary, depending on which device type you are using, but the icons and functionality are the same across all devices.
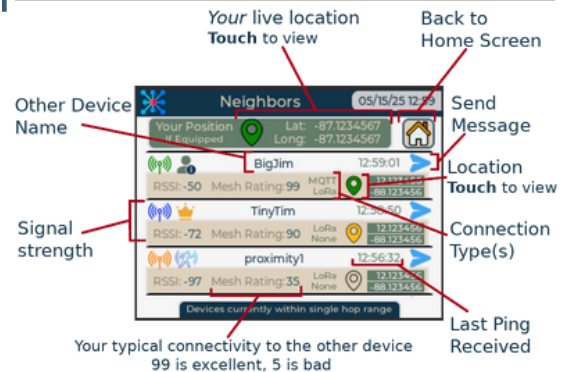
Home
View/reply to messages, device status.
This is the main screen of ChatterBox.

Your Alias · Cluster Name · Command/Control Screen · Neighbors Screen · Settings · Message Status · Overall Connection Strength · GPS Status · MQTT Status · LoRa Status · Lock Screen · Sender or Recipient · Message Type · Devices Screen

Trackball Click to switch back and forth

Neighbors
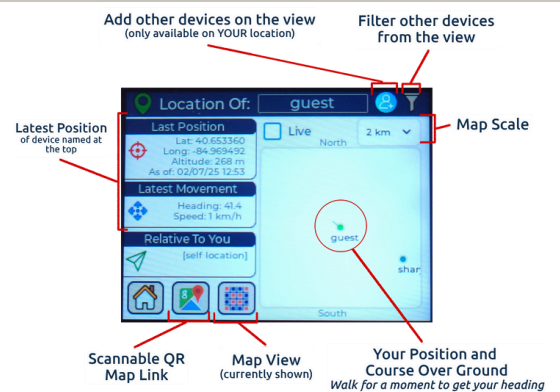View live signal strength & GPS coordinates of in-range devices

Your live location **Touch** to view · Back to Home Screen · Other Device Name · Send Message · Location **Touch** to view · Connection Type(s) · Last Ping Received · Signal strength · Your typical connectivity to the other device 99 is excellent, 5 is bad

Cluster Devices
See all devices in the cluster (even out-of-range), filter your message view, more.

Set other device as critical for quick access · Root Indicator · Device Type · Last ping · Location **Touch** to view · Send Command · View device's connections · View optimal mesh path · Broadcast device's public key · Filter home screen to this device · Send Message · Show/hide nodes · Show only critical devices
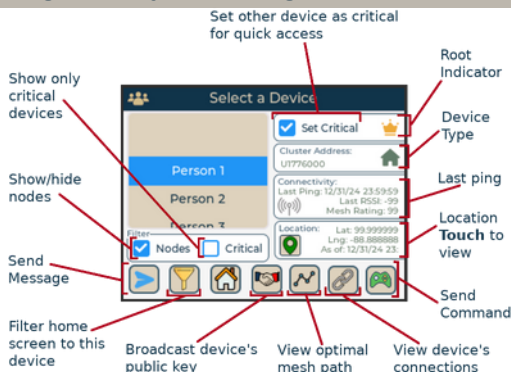
Location
Last known location for any device in your cluster (even out-of-range), where they are in relation to you.

Add other devices on the view (only available on YOUR location) · Filter other devices from the view · Map Scale · Latest Position of device named at the top · Your Position and Course Over Ground *Walk for a moment to get your heading* · Map View (currently shown) · Scannable QR Map Link

Direct Message

- For sending to a single person
- Happens automatically if you select a specific person/device when sending a message
- Use DM in all cases possible
- Highest delivery success
- Uses smart mesh path planning to route message

Broadcast

- For sending to as many people as possible
- Happens automatically when you choose [All Devices] when sending
- Only use when necessary
- No delivery guarantees
- Can tie up bandwidth if many are sent in a short time

Important Icons

Icon	Description
⬆ (green)	You sent DM (not mesh)
⬇ (green)	You received DM (not mesh)
⬆ (blue)	You sent DM via mesh
⬇ (blue)	You received DM via mesh
⬆ (yellow)	You sent a broadcast
⬇ (yellow)	You received a broadcast

Icon	Description
⌃ (green outline)	All message packets sent directly, not yet confirmed
✓ (green)	**DM**: Message was decrypted/validate and fully delivered to the other device
✓ (green)	**Broadcast**: At least one other device is now re-broadcasting your message
••• (blue outline)	Message packets are waiting to mesh in your out queue
⌃ (blue outline)	Your message was accepted into the mesh cache, and other devices are pushing it toward the recipient
✓ (blue)	Your message is confirmed delivered & accepted by the end recipient via mesh

Screenshot:

matt @ adams — 05/04/25 02:5

[All Devices]

hermit.guy — 05/15 13:48
Hey man, are you still among the living?

JimBob — 05/15 13:31
We should check on that hermit dude…

LoRa 911.1 — MQTT@chatters1
Ready — Mesh Cache

Icon	Description
📍 (green)	Live GPS
📍 (yellow)	Stale GPS
📍 (gray)	No GPS

Icon	Description
📶 (green)	Excellent
📶 (blue)	Very good
📶 (yellow)	Decent
📶 (orange)	Fair
📶 (red)	Weak or none

Icon	Description
👤	Communicator
👑	Root
📡	Link
🏃	Proximity Sensor
⏻	Relay Link
📷	Thermal Camera

Icon	Description
☁ (blue)	MQTT connected & healthy
☁ (gray)	MQTT not enabled
📶 (green)	MQTT enabled, but not healthy - WiFi connected
📶 (red)	MQTT enabled, but not healthy - WiFi disconnected

BLACKOUT COMMS

ALTWARE DEVELOPMENT

⚡ Amped Communicators

Amped communicators can transmit *much* farther than standard communicators.

Amped communicators have a LoRa amplifier, second battery, and controller built into the back of the enclosure.

- ***Both*** the T-Deck's battery and amp's battery must be charged
- The amp has its own on/off switch
- Both the amp & communicator must be powered on, or you'll only be able to transmit a few feet
- **You can charge them simultaneously** or one at a time
- **Never turn the amp on unless the T-Deck is on and the antenna is connected**
- Don't forget to turn the amp off when you turn the T-Deck off

Amp Charging Port
The amp battery is charged separately from the T-Deck battery. You can charge both at the same time or independently.

Amp On/Off Switch
Keep it on any time the T-Deck is on, remember to power it off whenever you power the T-Deck off.

T-Deck Charging Port
For charging the T-Deck battery and flashing the T-Deck firmware

ALTWARE
DEVELOPMENT

BLACKOUT
COMMS