

North Texas
PC NEWS

The logo consists of a stylized computer monitor with a keyboard below it. The letters 'PC' are prominently displayed in a large, outlined font across the monitor. To the left of the monitor, the words 'North Texas' are written in a smaller, serif font. To the right of the monitor, the word 'NEWS' is written in a large, bold, blocky font.

North Texas PC Users Group

7.7

July 1988



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Deadline:

All advertising and other material for publication in North Texas PC NEWS must be received by the NEWS staff by the 15th of the month. See copy deadline below.

Articles:

We would like to get more articles for publication in North Texas PC NEWS. Article submission is preferred via the Group Bulletin Board (to (M)ail, John Pribyl), or via Startext (to Mail Code 51563), or on disk (260K or 1.2M, 5 1/4 floppy). Prepare the material in ASCII format, unformatted. If you send a disk, please include a printed copy of the article to assure accuracy. If sending to the User Group Bulletin Board, use (M)ail mode, to John Pribyl. Include special formatting instructions, if any, with the article or in a separate (M)ail transmission.

Please do not indent, right-justify, or otherwise code the copy. If column alignment is critical, send two copies, one formatted, the other unformatted. If sending a disk, send along a hard copy that has been printed in the right format, with written instructions.

Double spaced, typewritten copy is acceptable if you do not own a modem or cannot put the material on a floppy disk. This copy must be received at least two weeks before the deadline to allow time for keying.

Send all material to the Editor at the address shown above.

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DEADLINE

**Copy deadline for August
NT PC NEWS:
Friday, July 15th.**

Meeting Dates:

- July Meeting - 2nd Sat. (9th)
- August Meeting - 2nd Sat. (13th)
- September Meeting - 2nd Sat.
(tentative)

Editors Notes...

Where are we going?

Reagan makes a good point in Prez Sez column this month. We're growing, and we need some inspiration (not to mention hard work and exercise) to grow into an organization we'll be proud of. We could continue on as we have been for the past few years, or we can develop, as Joe Brophy suggested a while back, "... a more organized approach to long range planning."

A brainstorming session is planned by the officers and board of directors to explore possibilities for the future and ways of implementation. If you have an input along these lines, make the effort to pass the recommendations along to an officer of the club.

You are part of the club. Be a part of the process that determines our future. Be sure you know where we are going ...and help us get there!

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Prez Sez...

Mea Culpa, Excitement & Growing Pains

Mea Culpa! I screwed-up. Last month, I identified CompuAdd's Superstore as CompuAdd "Warehouse." It's really "Superstore." Guess that wasn't a soft error. My apologies.

Summer '88 Excitement

If you listen to Jim Hoisington, President-Elect, you'll hear about an unprecedented series of major new PC product announcements coming this Summer. About one major announcement per week Jim estimates. The September NTPCUG Meeting should be super interesting.

And, Growing Pains

The DOM Central Committee – Is it representative of creeping bureaucracy, a new Glasnost, or, intent on submerging the individuality and community spirit of the Club?

No, it's just growth.

Sharp-eyed readers have probably noticed some expansion(s) on the page listing the Officers, Officials and SIG Leaders of the NTPCUG. It's growth – part of being one of the 10 largest PC user groups in the US.

Are we growing for growth's sake alone? No, but we are at a somewhat critical point in our development as a community.

Let me explain. We have become an important (we, and others believe) force in local personal computing activities. Proof for this belief lies in the last year's presentations by Microsoft's CEO, Bill Gates, Lotus' Harris Lancaster, National Sales Manager, Symantec's President, Gordon Eubanks, and other industry leaders asking to come talk to us.

They recognize our potential.

Look around you at the main meeting and SIG's. You'll see lots of very serious people, here because we are the best and/or only source available for the information and/or guidance needed to make their computers more effective, productive and enjoyable. How many people? More than last year, lots more than two years ago.

Why so many more? That's what Jim Hoisington, President-Elect, and I have been writing about for the past year. They're here, with us, because of the vacuum created by the increasingly complex nature of personal computing coupled with vanishing end-user support. As a community of PC users we are filling the void.

We are growing whether we wish to or not.

Program for July 9th Meeting.

9:00 AM to 9:45 AM (Auditorium)

- Broderbund Software • Graphic Animation
A Presentation by Norma Beck.

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM (Auditorium)

- Ashton Tata • A Presentation on dBase IV
Speaker to be announced.

The "crisis" I mentioned earlier is how to support an organization of this size, and importance to the PC community. We grew quite rapidly from a somewhat informal gathering of a hundred or so PC enthusiasts to our present size, using approximately the same infrastructure (and people). Unlike a business, we are all unpaid volunteers who have real limits to the amount of time we are able to invest in this enterprise if our personal, business and family lives aren't to suffer.

On the other hand...

A surprising number of our members come to INFOMART from Oklahoma, Louisiana, far South and/or West Texas for these meetings. Although they may live closer in, many other members/users plan and schedule at least part of their monthly activities around our meetings. They count on attending interesting, educational and lively SIG's, learning from the main meeting presentation and participating in the discussion and debate surrounding new products/software with other Club members.

We have an obligation to produce as advertised.

That means the Club must have backups for critical functions – such as SIG Leaders, backup presentations for those cancelled at the last minute (the missing Z Soft presentation in June is an example), backups who are trained to take over critical functions in case of transfers, business obligations or illness – or just for an individual who needs a "rest" for a month or two from the Club. (That does happen. In business and the health-care professions it's called "burn-out".)

The Club infrastructure has to grow and evolve to accommodate these needs. It means you'll hear more about "committees," formed to address specific areas of Club operations. Perhaps new job titles will also arrive.

The Club will, however, avoid the pitfall of uncontrolled growth simply for the sake of size alone.

An insensitive bureaucracy is a likely result, and we've seen what's happened to the BCS (Boston Computer Society.) At 26,000+ members, it appears to have become an imposing and impersonal monolith, a hungry juggernaut bent on devouring the smaller groups in its path. Unfortunately, the BCS path is both ever-expanding and yet unclear in direction.

Reagan

■

ON COMPLEXITY

No. 17 in a Series

Jim Hoisington

People who were using ProDOS 1.1.1 on their personal computers started the new year with a bad surprise. Their operating system would not accept a date beyond December 31, 1987. Their only solution was to go to an authorized dealer for their computer to obtain a free copy of the current version of the operating system for their computer, ProDOS 8. Fortunately, this didn't happen to IBM and compatible PC users, but software upgrades are unavoidable for all computer users.

There are several reasons for the people who produce software to come out with upgrades. The most important is to fix "bugs" with the previous version. It is almost certain that any piece of software that contains more than a couple of lines of code will contain errors. Software by its very nature is imperfect.

The problem is that changes to fix some problems often introduce a whole new series of problems into the program. The worst situation is that when the software is very important to the users. The vendor picks the worst problems from the list of known or suspected problems and works very hard to quickly send out an upgrade with only those "critical" problems fixed.

As soon as the upgrade is released, the programmers turn their attention to the less serious problems. In the meantime, the user's of the hurry-up upgrade find a new series of "critical" problems related to the earlier "critical" problems that were "fixed" by the new release.

When these new "critical" problems become known to the software vendor, they stop work on the less serious problems and turn that version of the software into a release which still contains the new set of "critical" problems. The programmers are then put to work on the new "critical" problem list.

This scenario explains why some companies only release software that is usable when the release number is odd or even, depending on how they got into the cycle. I can remember an operating system on a large computer where the user community lived by the rule of never applying an even numbered release.

Software companies also develop upgrades to add features to their product. Hopefully, the new features are added at the request of the people using the software. Sometimes, software companies will also add the new features to match capabilities of a competing product in the marketplace.

Both of these reasons to add features usually enhance the software product and are of benefit to people who are using or want to use the software. However, there is a third reason to add features and it generally does not enhance the product.

The third reason is that someone in the company adds a feature because they want it. They do this without consulting the user community or surveying the competing products. These features are rarely beneficial and quite often lead to the demise of the product if not the company.

Giving examples here would be easy. Several products come immediately to mind. However, I think I should admit here that I was responsible for several obscure and unused features in Professional Basic that only added to the overall complexity and size of the product. *Mea Culpa!*

Of course, from the user's standpoint, we all face the question, "Should I get the update?" I think that the answer is generally, "Yes." The only time I don't get an update is when I read in the trade press that the upgrade is so bad that a correction will be coming out quickly. Being very cynical about software companies, I wait to see if the company fixes the problems or goes out of business.

In any case, I back up the current version of the software before applying the new release so that I can put things back the way they were in case things don't go well.

Finally, consider the problems of some of the market leaders in sending out an upgrade. Lotus Development Corporation estimates that the potential demand for Lotus 1-2-3 Release 3.0 could reach 4 million copies. Think of the problems of shipping that many disks and manuals. Then, imagine the number of telephone calls that will come into the support lines during the first several months as user's have questions about the new features. As the size of the PC software market continues to expand numerically, the techniques for updating software needs to be well planned or it can overwhelm a company.

Now if I could just get through on the telephone to WordPerfect Corporation to get my questions answered about Release 5.0 ...

Jim a

From the Lotus Forum 88 in Boston.

Reported by Jim Hoisington.

Micro computers are appearing everywhere, even on television game shows. One speaker at the Lotus forum reported that the final category on the television show Jeopardy one night last week was MICROCOMPUTERS.

The answer was: "Rin Tin Tin, Lassie and OS/2".

The question was: "Name two actors and a dog."

Virus Lore

by K. A. Crawford and Kenneth Loafman

In the column published in last month's newsletter, I said that I hadn't talked with any one in the metroplex that had a virus. I should have said "anyone with a PC," because the Metroplex Macintosh community has been hit.

There continue to be stories in the media, some of which make computer viruses sound like The End of Western Civilization As We Know It. Innocent users download programs from bulletin boards, infect disks with the deadly stuff, unknowingly infect entire corporations. Silently, invisibly the plague spreads, leaving destruction and madness its wake. (Arpeggio from unseen pianist.) Can no one save us?

After reading a number of articles, including pieces written about the Macintosh virus problem, I became very nervous about my long term chances for survival. Ken Loafman, a programmer and member of the DOM Central Committee, listened to me panic on the topic at length and answered my questions on what computer viruses are, how they operate, and what I could do to protect myself from them.

He seemed so calm and reasonable about it all that it got me really irritated. I finally asked him what HE would do if HIS PC was invaded by a virus. "Why, play with it, of course," he said.

Play with it? Of course. After all, it's just another program.

Mr. Loafman calm on the subject of computer viruses is based on a number of factors:

- he backs up his files regularly
- he knows how programs are put together
- he has a rational estimate of the risk

So what is a computer virus?

Plainly put, a virus is a computer program that places itself in your computer without your knowledge. It does this by hiding inside some legitimate file, usually a COMMAND.COM file or file ending in .EXE (called an executable file).

Viruses fall into several categories. Ken prefers to classify them as pathogens:

1) Benign.

This kind does no damage to the system, but will cause novice users to be extremely nervous. It's behavior is 'cute', not harmful. For example, it will clear the screen, print "Gotcha" and go away without doing damage to your disk or data.

2) Malignant.

This kind does damage to the host system and will destroy data. Usually, this one hides in what appears to be a good utility program; and, while appearing to perform it's duty, will destroy the data on the hard disk. Sometimes this kind will destroy itself in the process of wiping out the hard disk, leaving the user with no clue about what really happened.

3) Contagious.

These may be either Benign or Malignant, but are best characterized by the way they can attach themselves to other programs and spread the infection from user to user.

Most viruses that we hear of today fall in the second and third categories. The key phrase is "that we hear of". Ken has yet to find a real virus in any of the downloads he's done, but he has read a great deal about the critters and the harm they do.

The Lehigh University Virus --A Real Life Example of a Virus Attack

Thanksgiving 1987, a virus started spreading in the Computer Lab at Lehigh University. A description of the virus was soon posted on Bulletin Boards coast to coast. The following description is from the message posted on the The Dot Prompt BBS (message courtesy of Dan Marmion who posted the message 1/27/88 on the NTPCUG Bulletin Board):

(1) In the "host", the virus is hidden in the stack space of the COMMAND.COM file. The COMMAND.COM file is a DOS file, the visible file of the system files. All bootable disks have system files. Hard disks usually have a COMMAND.COM file somewhere.

(2) Once a PC is infected, it can infect any disk that has a COMMAND.COM file IF AND WHEN a DOS command (such as TYPE, COPY, DIR, etc.) is used to access the disk. If the target disk doesn't have a COMMAND.COM file, it can't be infected.

(3) In the virus there is a counter which is incremented each time the virus infects another COMMAND.COM file. When the counter reaches a value of 4, the virus goes into action! Any disk in the PC, including the Hard Disk, is erased irretrievably: the boot tracks are nulled, so are the FAT tables, total destruction.

How would you spot the Lehigh UL Virus?

There is no change in the number of bytes in the COMMAND.COM file when the virus is spread, but the date on the COMMAND.COM file would change.

If you happened to remember what the date was originally on the COMMAND.COM file, the change of date would be a clue.

A more active test takes advantage of the virus's means of propagation. The virus writes to the COMMAND.COM file to infect a disk, so if a disk has a write protect tab, then there will be an error message about the write protect when the virus goes to infect the COMMAND.COM file on the disk.

So, you would boot up from a suspected disk and access a disk with write protect tab. If an write error message came up, then you'd know that the disk you booted from has the virus.

You would be suspicious of programs on a bulletin board that have a COMMAND.COM file.

You would worry about disks that had been used on some communal PC (say a PC in an office or a PC in a computer lab in a school) WITHOUT A WRITE PROTECT TAB. If a disk has a write protect tab on, then no virus is going to mess with your disk without you knowing about it.

And how would you protect your hard disk? Given the current hardware, it can't be done. You would have to have what the professional MIS types call THE DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN; or, as it is

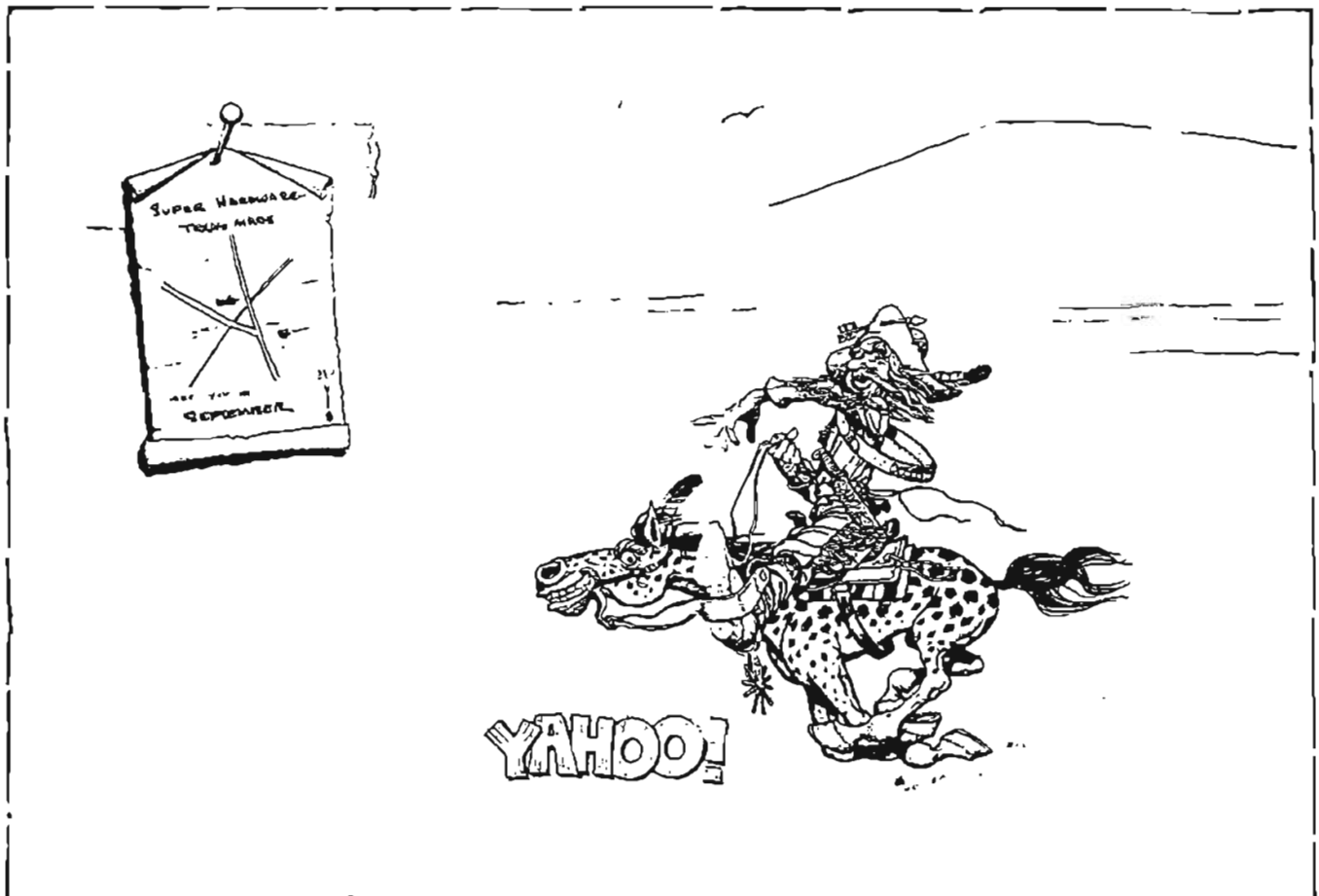
known to the humble PC user, the backup.

How do viruses infect a computer?

In the IBM-PC and other personal computers there is very little in the way of hardware (or software) protection. The most common ways for a virus to get into the system and cause damage are really very simple for a programmer to implement. The programmers that do this just make use of the lack of any protection.

Let's take a look at a couple of ways that have been discussed in the literature:

- 1) A virus could attach itself to a program. This was the method used in the Lehigh U. Virus. The virus adds its code to the end of the file (or overwrites a free data area), then modifies the file so that the execution begins with the virus instead of the original code.
- 2) Another common way is the Trojan Horse. The virus is contained inside a utility which has been obtained from a bulletin board, a friend, etc. The utility will actually function the way it was documented, but will leave a small bit of itself in memory. This is what they call a TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident)



program. Once in the memory, and attached to some critical point in DOS, the virus is free to do its work. Many things may happen then over a period of time, or may happen very quickly, such as corrupting data being read or written to the disk, changing the values randomly in memory, or any number of devious tricks.

3) The third most common virus is known as a Time Bomb. Using one of the tricks above, the virus may wait for a random amount of time to pass, for a particular date, or for a number of disks to be used in the PC, and then go into action. If enough time has passed, the user may even forget that this new utility was used and proceed to use it again, thinking that some hardware glitch is causing the problem.

This doesn't exhaust all the possible dodges, but you get the idea.

Who is at risk?

Viruses aren't magic, so make a realistic assessment of your behavior and the risks (if any) you are running.

Do you access bulletin boards and download files? The risks here are not too high that you will pick up a virus. There really are not that many viruses out there to begin with, and a good bulletin board Sysop will screen out anything that appears to be a virus. The keyword here is GOOD.

Do you share a PC at work? If so, does it have a hard disk? A PC with a hard disk can spread the infection by way of diskettes. If your co-workers are responsible people who always check the software they download before sharing it around, then you are probably safe. On a floppy based system, a simple warm boot will take care of any memory resident viruses that may be lurking around from the previous user.

Do you frequent computer labs? See previous paragraph, but consider a small additional problem: in an educational setting you run a higher risk of running into the sort of person who would write or distribute viruses.

If you don't do any of these things, what are you worried about?

What are Some Safeguards Against Viruses?

Ken sez: "Backups, Backups, and more Backups. Really not much more can be said on the subject. If your data is in only one place, then it's really easy for a virus to destroy all of the work you have done. If it's in more than one place, and one of those places is not online, then it would be impossible for a virus to

destroy the work you had saved. If you're paranoid like me, it would take mugging the PC, destroying the onsite backup, and also destroying the backup you have in the safety deposit box to put you out of business. I'm sure I'm covered from all eventualities (except terminal stupidity, but you can fill in the scenario on that one)."

Knowing where your software came from helps. If you download, download from a Sysop you trust.

Check out software before you use it. If you don't know how to check out software, find someone who does and learn from the master.

But the best safeguard is to backup the work you do. Backup files when you stop working on them. Don't wait until later, when you think it will be all perfect and done. Save your draft NOW, for there might not be a later.

Keep the originals of your programs filed somewhere safe. You may need them someday to restore your working copy. (Of course, you don't use your original program disks in your day-to-day work. Nobody does. Nobody sane, at least.)

What Kind of Sicko Would Write a Virus Anyhow?

Well, a person might not have to be a sicko, just inept.

Last Christmas, somewhere in Germany, some hapless soul decided to spread cheer and goodwill with a little Christmas greeting on the computer network. Instead, they brought the IBM network to its knees and put the fear of God into the hearts of Sysops everywhere.

The Pakistani Virus was created by a firm in Lahore, Pakistan. They thought people were stealing their software. They even put their phone number in the header, so that the pirates could call and straighten things out. As a result, they have been getting phone calls from all around the planet, making new friends, and apologizing to one and all. They haven't any idea how it happened.

Granted there are clever, malicious people out there who think they have something to prove. They usually cause more problems for themselves than others, and some of them actually live long enough to grow out of their problem.

You see, the idea that viruses are written by vandals overlooks one basic reality of life. The most dangerous person around your PC is you. You, with a song in your heart, CFORMAT on your screen, and no backups in sight.

K. A. Crawford
& Kenneth Loafman

■

Graph-in-the-Box (Release 2)

Reviewed by Bob Fowler

Do you ever wish that you had some neat graphs that would make your presentations a little more lively or varied? Are you tired of presenting your data in repetitive columns or tables? Do you think that you could show the changes in your sales or productivity more strikingly if you only had one of those expensive graphic packages, but you can't justify the cost for the few times in a year that you might use one of them?

If your answer is yes, then Graph-in-the-Box might be a package that will interest you.

Graph-in-the-Box (GIB) is a TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident or RAM resident) application that can quickly give a graphic table from within your favorite word processing or spreadsheet application. Just pop it up with Alt-G (or Ctrl-G if you want), run the cursor over the desired numbers, press F10, and presto, instant graphs. GIB also can work from your DOS prompt so that any numbers on your screen can be captured to present an instant graph.

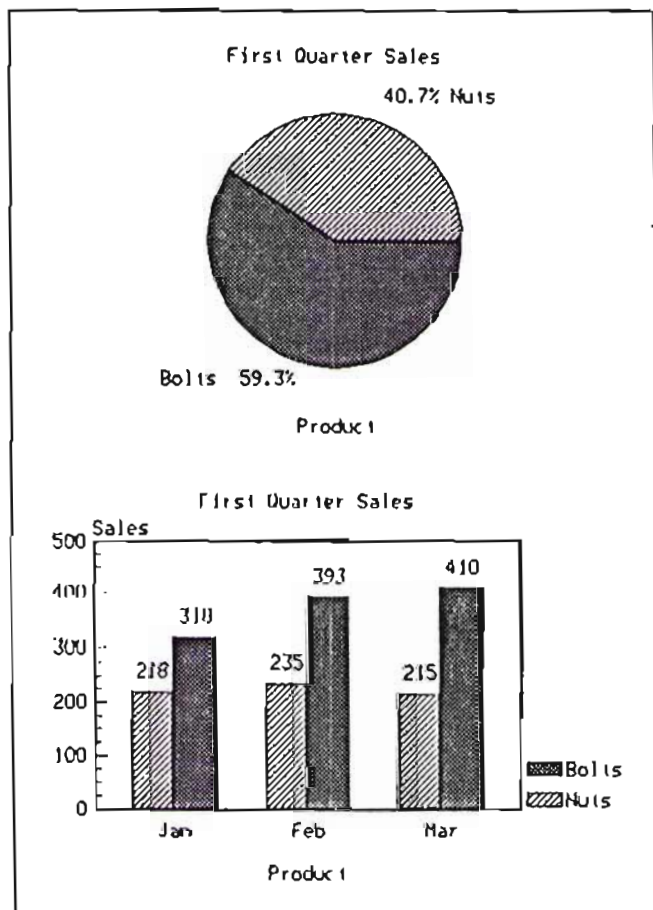


Figure 1. Samples Prepared with Graph-in-the-Box.

Cornucopia of Graphs Available:

You can choose from over 11 different chart types (e.g. bar, column, pie, etc.) with a number of variations on each. All common Graphic adapters (CGA, EGA, VGA, Hercules, MCGA) are supported, as well as most printers, including dot-matrix and laser, and the most common plotters. Color printers and plotters are also supported.

New in Release 2 are the VGA and MCGA (monochrome graphics adapter, i.e., Hercules & clones) support, the full-page and multiple-charts-per-page features, batch printing, file merge, slide show presentation capability, the ability to create HPGL and Postscript Files, and compatibility with Ventura Publisher and PageMaker(C).

Graph In a Box 2 Installation and Setup Easy:

Initial setup and configuration for your computer and printer or plotter is painless. Documentation is excellent. On screen, with an EGA adapter, the graphs produced by GIB are colorful and crisp.

On a dot-matrix printer (even with an inexpensive 9-pin printer), the graphs and text show surprising crispness and precision and are clearly of presentation quality. Clarity should be even greater with laser or plotter output.

Some GIB 2 Drawbacks:

GIB was not without its drawbacks in my hands. For example, I was able to call GIB up while in a Microsoft WORD document, but on pressing "ENTER" to start a data capture, my document screen turned green and all characters began flashing. In order to continue, I had to reboot. Also, according to the manual, one should be able to pause while printing a document, call up a graph, print the graph, and then continue printing the document. This would be an especially valuable feature.

Unfortunately, perhaps because of the printer buffer, I was never able to pause the printing in the place that I wanted to insert the graph. This latter problem may be related more to my use of the word processor than to Graph-in-the-Box.

Overall, GIB 2 Useful Package:

In summary, Graph-in-the-Box is a very useful application program for those who want a graphics package that has many of the features of the higher cost graphics packages, but cannot justify the several hundred dollars cost. GIB offers considerable flexibility in output and in ease of use for a list price of \$99.95. An upgrade for owners of the earlier version is \$35.00.

Bob

New England Software, Inc.
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Using Computers in Business

Starting Your Own Business

by Alan Lintel

One of the most intriguing aspects of the computer industry is the opportunities it offers new businesses. While starting a new business may offer many rewards, the road to success is often filled with potholes. Fortunately, many of these potholes can be circumnavigated with a little good fortune and a lot of planning.

The rewards of starting your own business are obvious: the challenge of being your own boss, the opportunity for earning a large income and the fulfillment of creating a successful product. The initial stages of creating a business, however, require an enormous effort, especially if this is going to be your first foray into the business world. Fortunately, you don't have to go it alone. There are a number of resources in the Dallas-Fort Worth area which are available to help you get started, or to help you rectify problems with an on-going business.

One such resource is the Northeast Texas Small Business Development Center. The NTSBDC is jointly funded by the Dallas County Community College District and the U. S. Small Business Administration. The NTSBDC recognizes that the strength of our economy is dependent upon the technological aggressiveness of small businesses. Unfortunately, the number of small businesses that fail within their first five years is approximately 50%. The NTSBDC provides small businesses with the information they need to prosper.

I spoke with Rosanne Uhlarik of the Dallas Subcenter of the NTSBDC. She told me that the number one reason start-up businesses fail is that they lack a realistic business plan. Rosanne gave me a thumbnail sketch of what a proper business plan should entail.

1. The mission of the new company must be defined. A clear vision of the company's purpose is necessary to chart the path that the company will take in its crucial formative years.
2. The human resources on which the company can rely must be identified. Aside from the technical expertise, a new venture probably will need business support as well. This step is important, since a bank will want to see the personnel involved in a new venture before lending money to it.
3. Marketing research must be performed. The research will involve identification of the company's customers, by what means the customers may be reached, identification of the

competition and how the competition can be overcome. The marketing research includes an evaluation of different types of advertising - direct mail, magazine advertising, and so on, with a comparison of the relative costs.

4. The operating costs must be determined. Each and every cost that the company is likely to incur must be considered. Underestimating the cost will almost surely result in undercapitalization - a leading cause of business failure (see below). Obviously, evaluation of the operating costs is a major undertaking. Fortunately, help is available through seminars conducted at the community colleges in association with the NTSBDC. If your cost estimate is higher than you anticipated, you will need to reduce costs in certain areas. Remember, there is a big difference between cutting costs and merely changing your cost estimates.

5. The revenue potential of the company must be considered. The cash flow should be charted monthly for the first year, quarterly for the second and third years, and yearly thereafter.

6. Research and development cost must be evaluated. The cost of protecting your technology with patents and copyrights should be included here. Also, you should reflect on how future developments will affect your market. ▶

Contract Programming Opportunity

We need someone to write a TSR that will simply change the baud rate of a PC's serial port to 38.4K baud. No screen display needed, but perhaps an audible indication that the action took place. If you can do it quickly and do it right, call me.

Tim Wilde 358-4800

Your business plan may be as important as your product, so don't rush it. While a business plan can be developed professionally, it is important you do the research yourself. Seminars on developing a business plan are available through the community colleges, and are highly recommended.

After formulating your business plan, you may explore financing possibilities. Two common paths of obtaining capital are through banks and venture capital firms. A bank wants you to run your company and is only interested in low risk loans. A venture capital firm is willing to assume higher risks, as well as own a chunk of your company. In return, a venture capital firm may offer much needed business expertise. Venture capital should not be dismissed solely because of its potential cost - remember, 50% of a million is much better than 100% of nothing. Alternatives to banks and venture capital do exist. The NTSBDC can help identify these sources of capital.

Rosanne also shared with me the ten reasons most business fail. In order of importance, they are:

1. Lack of business experience - this type of experience can be acquired by formulating the business plan.
2. Poor record keeping - owners are not aware of problems as they occur.

3. Plunging in head-first without planning.
4. Underpricing.
5. Underestimating time involved.
6. Undercapitalization.
7. Underestimating competition.
8. Setbacks and unexpected problems.
9. Extending credit too freely.
10. Expanding too rapidly.

I've been very impressed with the people at NTSBDC and particularly with the personal interest they take in the small businesses they counsel (for free). If I were starting a business, or trying to improve an ongoing business, I would certainly contact the NTSBDC early on, since they can quickly direct you to resources which will make your planning easier and more accurate. Their current location is over "Grumbles-Saloon" in the West End at 302 N. Market, Suite 300. Their telephone number is 747-0555. Some of the seminars they offer are: business plan development, marketing strategies, small business recordkeeping, computer applications, personnel management, international trade/export, financing alternatives, and home-based business development.

Alan A



Quality Service & Competitive Prices
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 Suite 105 Mon-Fri 9:30-6
 Plano, TX 75075 Saturday 10-5

Microsoft Launches Spectacular 'Word' Giveaway

Buy Microsoft® Word for IBM® PCs and compatibles by July 31 and get:

- **FREE** Microsoft Pageview
- **FREE** Bitstream® Fontware™ fonts package with Times Roman® and Helvetica® fonts

(Total suggested retail value \$485)

\$199

<u>IBM SOFTWARE</u>	<u>NEW ARRIVALS</u>
Lotus 123 \$279*	Draw Applause \$309
Quattro \$139*	WordPerfect 5.0 \$229
Sidekick \$118*	GrandView \$170

*While supplies last

Mark Your Calendar!

Don't miss demonstrations of Microsoft® Word by Microsoft Representative Susan Shanks from 5 to 7 p.m. on July 23 at Software Stop.

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Comes standard with:

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DISKETTES

BASF, FUJI, SONY, 3M, VERBATIM

3.5" DS/DD	\$13.99-15.99
3.5" DS/HD	\$39.99-41.99
5.25" DS/DD	\$6.99-7.99
5.25" DS/HD	\$12.99-15.99

Prices may change. All offers subject to availability.



Disk of the Month

by Kathryn A. Crawford

We're having a sale on PC-WRITE manuals!

Due to the fatigue factor (I'm really tired of schlepping these manuals to the monthly meetings), we are having a sale on the PC-Write manuals:

\$17.00 FOR A PC-WRITE MANUAL.

Featured disk for July: File Express 4.15 (Disk 277)

This is a flexible database management program that allows information to be input, displayed, sorted, and printed in virtually any manner. Our reviewer, Gerry Heine, recommends this program for the novice database user since this is a menu driven system with a guide that explains the terminology.

LOTUS 1-2-3 Copy Protection Removal (Disk 273)

Jim Hoisington came back from the Lotus Development meeting in Boston with a prize. Lotus gave the User Group representatives attending the meeting a copy of the Lotus Copy Unprotect and requested that the User Groups distribute the unprotect to the group members.

Jim got the disk to Mark Gunner, the DOM Central Committee member who is heavily into Lotus 1-2-3 and other game software. Mark got busy and reviewed the disk. One thing that Mark discovered was that the process of using the unprotect will erase some of the files of the unprotect. In other words, make a backup copy and read the documentation provided with the disk.

The Value Pack that Lotus is selling through the dealers has some additional files:

- Lotus 123 Add-In Manager, Learn Add-In and Speed-Up Add-In (the DOM already has these on Disk 215).
- Drivers for EGA and VGA monitors.
- Drivers for Postscript printers.

If you have an EGA or VGA monitor, or if you have a Postscript printer, you may still be interested in picking up the Lotus 1-2-3 Value Pack. The Value Pack costs \$15.00 and is available directly from Lotus or from your friendly neighborhood Lotus dealer.

June's featured disk: The GAGS Disk! (Disk 269)

As a serious collection of non-serious software, the primary purpose of the disk is fun; but there are

other reasons for promoting this disk. Gags have to be installed on a PC, and the way they get installed is very similar to the way viruses operate in systems.

In order to understand how something works it is frequently necessary to play with it. People are taking computer virus stuff very seriously, and its hard to imagine tinkering with something that you think of as being potentially fatal. It would be sort of like taking up bomb disposal as a cure for boredom. Computer gags, on the other hand, are pranks totally devoid of serious consequences and are something with which one can tinker with impunity.

Which leads up to what I promised you last month:

(See feature article "VIRUS LORE"

by K. A. Crawford and Kenneth Loafman. Ed.)

DOM Particulars

The North Texas PC Users Group makes these programs available as a service to the club and its members. We try to test all the programs, but we do not warrant the programs in any way. You must decide if a program is suitable for your use and will run on your system. If you ask, we will tell you what we know about any program, but the final decision to buy and/or use these programs is yours.

DEFECTIVE DISKS: We will gladly and without question exchange an unreadable disk for one of the same program. People returning a disk need to give us a written description of the problem so we can correct it.

DONATION OF SOFTWARE TO THE CLUB: All members of the club are encouraged to contribute copies of public domain software, shareware, and demos to the DOM. For each new disk of software contributed, you may select any disk in the DOM in exchange. The contributions will be reviewed before credit is issued at the next meeting.

PRICE: Members: \$2.00 per disk (if the program is on two disks, the price is \$4.00). Non-members: \$3.00 per disk. 3.5" disks: \$3.00 per disk.

MAIL ORDERS: At prevailing prices for the disks, plus \$2.00 mailing fee. Mail your orders to: NORTH TEXAS PC USERS GROUP, DOM Mail Order, P.O. Box 780066, Dallas, TX 75378-0066.

CATALOG DISK: The Catalog contains the readme files for the disks with a subject index. Currently the catalog is on two disks and costs \$4.00.

MEDIA: DSDD 5.25" formatted 9 sector. 750K 3.5" disks available mail order only.

AVAILABILITY: Disks sold out or not available at the monthly meeting can be obtained through the DOM Mail Order.

DOM VOLUNTEERS: If you would like to work the DOM Table for an hour during the monthly meeting, contact Howard Hamilton via the NTPCUG BB, or Connie Andrews (the Volunteer Coordinator) during the monthly meeting.

□

Junk Calls

By Mark Justice Hinton

Reprinted from PC Report, the Newsletter of the Boston Computer Society PC SIG

You are at the dinner table (or perhaps taking a shower) when the phone rings. You answer and an obviously recorded voice says, "Hello, this is Hal the Computer, and I'd like to send you some information about aluminum siding. Please wait for the tone and then tell me your name and address." If you are like most people, you probably went all the way through this first experience, maybe giving a false name or address for future contact. You'll probably just hang up the next time you get such a call, marking it as simply another annoyance to put up with. You get calls all the time from this or that organization, and it is easier to hang up on a machine than on a person.

Unfortunately, this may be the shape of things to come. At least one company is attempting to assemble a nationwide network of affiliated computer operators to distribute telephone advertising ("telemarketing"). Its sales pitch to manufacturers and politicians includes the cost effectiveness of computer-originated calling, as well as the ability to "survey" responses to that calling. Their expressed goal is to be able to reach one million homes a day by the 1988 election. Because of the relatively low cost of this kind of marketing, it doesn't take a very high response rate to justify this method.



Computer Help

"Providing PC solutions
and training"

(214) 522-HELP

Computer calling is fundamentally different from other marketing tactics. You decide when to watch TV or listen to the radio, and when to deal with your junk mail. The phone, however, forces you to accommodate it; it can ring at any time, and could be about something vitally important. Unlisted numbers have been protection from unwanted human callers, but won't be against computers generating phone numbers. You could put another machine between you and the outside world, but to be forced into such a defensive posture with what may well be your lifeline to the outside world strikes me as outrageous.

As computer hardware costs decline and demand for such services rise, nothing will prevent dozens of companies and entrepreneurs from entering the market. Unlike the mail, these junk calls will come anytime—day or night. If you take the phone off the hook or don't answer, the computers will just call again until they get through. The convenient phone will quickly become a burdensome vehicle for marketing that interferes with your interests and privacy.

How can we stop this? First, don't hang up. When you get one of these calls, wait until you have an opportunity to respond, then tell the machine your name and that you support legislation to ban the use of such solicitation methods. Next, contact the company or political party whose product is being sold this way and tell them you refuse to buy their product until they stop using such methods. Finally, write (or call) every possible politico (city, state and Federal) and tell them you resent this invasion of your home and you want it prevented.

As members of a PC users group, we have a special responsibility in this matter. If we take a stand on this issue, no one can accuse us of being Luddites, opposing any technological "progress." We also have access to sellers of these technologies, and they may listen to us. Those less informed, like many of our political representatives, will have to respect our informed dissent. Think about this the next time the phone rings.

■

Selected SIG Happenings

News and Meeting Notes on Special Interest Groups

(Material for this column should be sent to Phil Chamberlain, SIG Coordinator before the 15th of the month.)

Word Perfect SIG

This SIG did not start in June, but look for it on the schedule at the Infomart in July.

ASSEMBLER SIG

The July meeting of the Assembler SIG will be devoted to the subject of Macros. Members are encouraged to bring along a copy of their favorite. We will have a flip chart board available and will go over the structure and use of each one.

Andrew Chalk

COMM SIG

The Communications SIG had a large showing in June. The free form question and answer session covered a wide array of PC communications related subjects. Downloading on Compuserve using the Relaxed X-Modem error checking protocol was one area of discussion as was another regarding the operation of multiple BBS sessions on systems capable of true multitasking. We also had a short show-n-tell on RS-232 interfaces with a real live Breakout Box.

Over the months of July and possibly August the Comm Sig is going to have a live demonstration of the use of a breakout box. The goal of the demonstration is to help users better understand RS-232 and what is actually happening when a PC is connected to a serial printer or a modem.

Pete Testa

DOS SIG

June's DOS SIG meeting focused on using DEVICE=DRIVER.SYS and DRVPARM= statements in users' CONFIG.SYS files when adding 3.5", 720K floppy drives to their machines. SIG members reported a substantial problem attempting to add these drives, and in other aspects of configuration of the PC. SIG Leader Jim Hoisington reflected that the new DOS which is expected "Real soon now," may add further confusion.

The July DOS SIG meeting will continue the focus on setting-up PC's and configuring for maximum performance and/or convenience. Discussion of CONFIG.SYS will continue with emphasis on adjusting to meet PC enhancements over time via shifts in BUFFERS, FILES, and STACKS commands within CONFIG.SYS, and appropriate orders device implementation when using DEVICE= statements.

Should the expected new DOS arrive -- and be available -- before the July meeting, a major portion of the meeting will be devoted to our early explorations, bug-hunts and other new DOS experiences.

LOTUS SIG

As of the June meeting, Peyton will no longer be co-leader of the Lotus SIG. Peyton has been unable to participate as much as he would like to due to other responsibilities. Peyton was very instrumental in the operation of the SIG and has made numerous contributions. He will be missed.

Since Peyton is leaving, the Lotus SIG will need to find an assistant to assist in the SIG's operation. If you are interested in assisting with the SIG please contact Mark Gruner.

The subject for the June meeting was scheduled to be a presentation of the financial @ functions in Lotus products. However, since Lotus Development Corporation was giving a presentation to the Business Applications SIG, the members decided to join the Business Applications SIG and postpone the financial @ function presentation to the July meeting.

The Lotus SIG always takes time to answer questions that users are having about Lotus products. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Lotus 1-2-3 or other products, come by and join us this month.

Mark Gruner

PERSONAL USERS (BEGINNERS) SIG

Personal (versus professional) users, novices, beginners, new PC owners, soon-to-be PC owners... this SIG is for you!

This month we are completing our second offering of our 16 standalone classes covering the fundamentals. Since each class stands by itself, you can start attending at any time and be sure of getting all 16.

At our July meeting we will cover the last 4 of the 16 (and move right back to the first 4 in August). The classes are presented in numerical sequence at 9 A.M., 10 A.M., 12 noon, and 1 P.M. at each monthly meeting. The July classes will be: 13-Printer Setup; 14-Writing LOTUS Macros, 15-Major Categories of Software Application Programs available today, and 16-PC's to the end of the 20th and into the 21st Century.

Come join us as we learn and review the fundamentals!

Bob Presley
& Richard Terreo

STOCK MARKET INVESTING SIG

The last several meetings have featured presentations of software packages by OPTIONVUE, META STOCK and N-SQUARED. Tentatively, the next will be TELES-CAN of Houston, an online technical analysis program with a data base of over 8000 issues. This will round out our review of the typical technical analysis software currently available to the individual PC user.

The next series will be oriented more toward fundamental analysis and portfolios. We will explore spreadsheets and how they can range from the very simple to extremely sophisticated.

It is not the intent of this SIG to teach market analysis and trading but rather to show a sampling of the software which is available to enhance trading skills by using a PC.

Cliff E. Murphy

North Texas PC Users Group

Personal Users (Beginners) 16-class Revolving Schedule

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Class Title/Description</u>
Aug 88	1.0	Start Up
	2.0	Diskette Sizes & Formatting Each
	3.0	Copying & Backing Up Files
	4.0	Hardware
Sep 88	5.0	Fixed Disk Directories, Batch Files & Paths
	6.0	DOS Menu Systems on Fixed Disk
	7.0	Installation & Setup of LOTUS 1-2-3
	8.0	Running BASIC Programs
Oct 88	9.0	Writing Your Own BASIC Programs
	10.0	NTPCUG Disk of the Month Library
	11.0	PC Graphic Modes
	12.0	Bulletin Boards & Archive Programs
Jul 88 & Nov 88	13.0	Printer Setup
	14.0	Writing LOTUS Macros
	15.0	Major Categories of Software Applications Available Today
	16.0	PCs to the end of the 20th and into the 21st Century

Four Classes are offered each month (at 9:00, 10:00, 12:00 noon, and 1:00 pm). Across four months all 16 of the classes are completed, and the cycle starts all over again. Each class is independent of the others, thereby allowing people to begin attending classes any time their schedule allows. The classes are free and are open to all beginners, novices, new PC owners, soon-to-be owners and personal (vs. professional) users. Come join us as we cover the fundamentals!

Bob Presley and Richard Terreo, Instructors

Software Report

Dick Gall

Words & Phrases: The Salinon Programs Collection

Last month's PREZ SAYS column announced the Made-in-Texas Hardware theme for September's group meeting. Salinon Corporation provides a warmup for this theme with their series of unique Made-in-Dallas programs that implement a variety of fun and useful tools involving the creative use of words and phrases.

214-PHONE-US

WORDS THAT RING is the newest offering: a timely directory of telephone numbers that form words (and vice-versa). Such "vanity" numbers are gaining in popularity, but are becoming more difficult

to obtain. This program contains tables classified by word length or type and provides millions of possible telephone number/word combinations. The program costs \$49.95 (plus \$2 S&H) and can be ordered directly from Salinon at 7424 Greenville Ave., Suite 115, Dallas 75231, or by calling 214-692-9091 or 214-PHONE-US.

The other Salinon programs are:

SPECIAL DAYS (\$39.95) - 1-page personal Timescripts
 FOOTPRINTS (\$39.95) - historical TimeLines
 NAMER (\$99) - names for new products, etc.
 HEADLINER (\$99) - slogans, jingles, promotions OFF-THE-WALL (\$29) - humorous and unusual one-line phrases

Founded in 1985, Salinon's products reflect the company's belief in individual creativity "and in the computer's role in enhancing human creative potential". SPECIAL DAYS and FOOTPRINTS are easy to

Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community

Connie Andrews, Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Club. This is another in a regular series recognizing those Club members who have contributed their time and efforts as volunteers to assist in presenting the monthly meetings.

NTPCUG Volunteers are listed by area(s) served at the June 11, 1988, Club meeting. Some volunteers worked in more than one role, hence some names appear more than once.

SIG Leaders, officers and directors of the North Texas PC Users Group are also volunteers, and are listed on the back page of the newsletter.

INFOMART Liaison:

Stuart Yarus

Presentation/Equipment Setup:

Timothy Carmichael
John Ogle
Tom Fowlston*
Chuck Mansfield

Vendor Assistance/Setup:

Cedl Williams
Bob Russell
Lonny Cordell
Roy Minut

Information/Registration Booth:

Connie Andrews
Robert Bibb
John Ferguson
Jim Furman
Martin Gluck
Allan Harbaugh
Tom Krieg
John Mackoy
Jessie Miller
John Moore
Andy Oliver
Zack Porterfield
Connie Testa
Larry Tucker
Mark Weber

Disk of the Month (DOM) volunteers for June 11th meeting:

DOM Table:

Gene Carleton
Jay Chambliss
Don Chick
Lonny J. Cordell
Paul Crowder
Frank Devault
David Eastman
Patrick Flautt
Ginny Hooton
Gary Hotchkiss
Jo Johnston
Bob Karlebach
Dan Marmion
Michael Norris
Nancy Ogden
Tom Scurlock
John Sheppard
Jerry Stone

DOM Central Committee:

Preston Brashear
Kathryn Crawford
Mark Grunner
Howard Hamilton
Hal Horton
Ken Loafman
Dwight Neal

DOM Review/Preparation:

Kathryn Crawford
Mark Gruner
Howard Hamilton
Pat Henley
Bill Holloway
Harold Horton
Clifton R. Liles
Ken Loafman
Richard Terreo

* Tom Fowlston took a very, very rare day off last meeting.

If you are interested in participating as a Club volunteer, please drop by the Information/Registration Booth, or the DOM Booth at the next meeting July 9, 1988, and sign up for one of the Volunteer slots. Most of these will require an hour, or two, on a meeting day and can be quite rewarding in terms of getting to know your Club and its people.

use and fun because of their unique and interesting output reports. The very intuitive operation of NAMER, HEADLINER, and OFF-THE-WALL is nothing short of artistry in interface programming.

SPECIAL DAYS

This program uses a library of almost 10,000 titles, events, people and prices to produce a one-page timescript highlighting headlines, songs, awards, people and events from days gone by. Timescripts are available for any date from 1850 in three different reports: birthday, anniversary, and flashback.

A typical timescript lists 5 to 10 relevant items in 10 categories and arrayed in a certificate format (suitable for printing on parchment and/or fram-

ing). For example, a timescript for Ronald Reagan, born in Illinois on February 6, 1911, recalls:

- FEBRUARY 6: 1st radio-controlled flight (1948)
- OTHER FAMOUS PEOPLE BORN IN 1911: Tennessee Williams - Dramatist-Author
- OTHER FAMOUS PEOPLE BORN ON FEBRUARY 6: Babe Ruth - 1895
- THE BEST FROM 1911 - book Sixes and Sevens
- THE GOOD 'OL DAYS - bacon cost \$.25 per lb.
- EVENT AT AGE 3 - Mexico severed diplomatic relations with the U.S.
- MERRY MELODIES OF '11 - Golden Dreams
- PRESIDENT & VP: Taft & Sherman
- FAMILIAR FACES FROM ILLINOIS - Marjorie Main (Acton), Fibber McGee (Peoria)
- EVENTS - U.S. troops sent to border due to Mexican Revolution (3/7).

Features include menu-driven operation, document scrolling, printed documents saved to ASCII disk

file for integration with other software, font file for laser printers, and variable data option.

FOOTPRINTS IN HISTORY

A TimeLine is a multi-page document that shows key events from one's life embedded in the fabric of history. You pick any combination of Footprint's databases to display historical events alongside your personal events:

SPORTS	BUSINESS
U.S. HISTORY	ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
STRANGE & WEIRD	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
INTERNATIONAL	

Footprint's database management software lets you maintain active databases for up to 14 different VIPs. For instance, Carl Smith - example VIP -

- was born on April 1, 1909, just 5 days before Robert E. Peary and 5 others were the first to reach the North Pole.
- set a national Jr. high school record for the 100 yard dash on Nov. 22, 1925, right after skyscrapers were barred as a health hazard in Berlin on Nov. 2.
- on March 15, 1930, the Army talked Carl into enlisting, just after Pluto was discovered on March 13 and just before March 28 when Constantinople became Istanbul and Angora became Ankara.

SPECIAL DAYS and FOOTPRINTS promote fun among family and friends. They are also finding application as fund raisers and traffic generators at fund raising events for churches, schools, social clubs, and other non-profit organizations. Both run on IBM PCs and compatibles with 256K of RAM and DOS 2.1+, or 320k of RAM with DOS 3.0+. These newest Salinon programs were demonstrated at the group meeting in April.

NAMER

Namer is designed to create names for new products, services, or companies. It provides eleven different name generation methods combined with an electronic naming thesaurus containing over 10,000 name-parts in 500 different categories. These methods help the user form new names, create names that connote desired characteristics, and build slogans and acronyms.

The original name generator uses stochastic techniques, linguistic algorithms and filters to create new names. The connotation synthesizer selects from any combination of 14 categories such as high tech, quick, wholesome, etc. The adaptive learning method learns the style you like and trains itself to generate similar new names. The phrase maker generates phrases and acronyms from sets of word you input or selected from designated synonym categories.

Five basic name utilities test many types of letter and word combinations. The Dodging Profanities function will check a name against a list of hundreds of English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian words that may have off-color connotations and warns of possible matches.

The operation of the connotation synthesizer section is typical of the unique approach of namer. You select at least two and not more than four of the following categories. The program then lists combinations of word segments from the designated categories for review and selection into a candidates list:

- high tech
- powerful - big - important

- quick - agile - full of life
- devious - mischievous - harsh
- spiritual - mystical - theological
- inquisitive - communicative
- new - fresh - free
- analytical - knowledgeable
- growing - dynamic - leading
- wholesome - natural - secure/safe
- constructive - builder - action
- medicinal - healing - anatomical
- traditional - old - small
- beautiful - bright - soft

Namer comes with a users' guide and a 100+ page naming thesaurus.

HEADLINER and the TWO STEP

Finding clever and appropriate expressions is the forte of this program. It uses a database of over 33,000 catchy expressions and lines from many different sources, and provides the tools to quickly find and change them. Typical processes are key word searching, automatic phrase substitution, similarity or rhyme matching, acronym/aliteration construction, and profanity checking.

HEADLINER has been used to develop lines like:

"For the Powder and the Glory"
 "Success Through Performance"
 "To Each His Phone"

Salinon refers to HEADLINER as an active reference which does useful work by both storing and using what's been stored in a variety of ways. The basic approach consists of two steps:

1. Enter search words or phrases of interest and review the search options for possible new settings.
2. Review and edit the results. Return to step 1 again if needed and try a different set of parameters.

Overall, it is a fun and interesting way to create headlines, theme lines, slogans, and jingles with a PC. As with all Salinon programs, a full users' manual is provided as well as on-line help functions.

OFF-THE-WALL

This program generates humorous and unusual expressions and phrases. It uses a library of expression patterns and substitutes randomly selected words from its databases of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Over 70 patterns are included in the library, or the user can define new patterns and designate the location and type of database words to be tried within the pattern.

For example, Texans might open with a run on the pattern:

"It's big as a ... and twice as "

Test writers can create new levels of challenge for their subjects with:

"A is to as a is to "

As with all the Salinon programs, OFF-THE-WALL uses the unique ability to automate the review and selection process of filtered database information. This information is conveniently displayed in the appropriate context and format that lets the user concentrate on the creative aspects of identifying the best solution to a given need or problem.

Dick

2



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

The NTPCUG is a non-profit, independent organization of individuals learning to apply personal computers to practical problems. For additional information about the Group, call (214)746-4699.

NAME: (Last) _____ (First) _____ (MI) _____

ADDRESS: _____ (Suite/Apt) _____

OCCUPATION/PROFESSION: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: Home (_____) _____ Work (_____) _____ (Ext) _____ (Check Preferred. #)

Do you want access to the Club Electronic Bulletin Board? YES [] NO [] Already Have []

The NTPCUG expects and encourages volunteer participation by members in helping put on the monthly meetings at INFOMART. This usually consists of a few hours of your time each year. If asked, would you consider assisting the Group with one or more of the following activities:

[A] Working with NTPCUG Volunteer Committees?

Volunteer Areas from [A] above (Please check all that apply.)

- Information/Registration
- Newsletter
- Financial/Bookkeeping
- Equipment Setup
- Disk of the month (DOM)
- Publicity/Public Relations

[B] Giving a talk or demonstration to a small group?

[C] Giving a talk or demonstration to a large group?

[D] Being a volunteer, informal "consultant" in your area of expertise for NTPCUG members?

Would you be interested if the Group arranges instructional courses (at various levels) in any of the following areas at a cost per student of approximately \$5/classroom hour?

(Please circle or specify, indicating level preferred, i.e., beginning, intermediate, advanced)

- [A] Spreadsheet software – Lotus 1-2-3, Supercalc4, etc. (Please specify) _____
- [B] Data Base software – dBase, RBase, Reflex, etc. (Please specify) _____
- [C] Word Processing software – Word Perfect, Wordstar, etc. (Please specify) _____
- [D] Integrated software – Framework, Symphony, etc. (Please specify) _____
- [E] Programming Languages – APL, Assembly, BASIC, "C", Fortran, Forth, Pascal, (other) _____

Payment Received: Cash _____	Membership Classification: Regular (\$24.00) _____	Application Status: New Member _____
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Detach below for record of payment.

Applications should be mailed to: North Texas PC Users Group
 (Make checks payable to NTPCUG) P.O. Box 780066
 Dallas, TX 75378-0066
 Payment: \$ _____ Check No. _____ Date: ___/___/___ by: _____



North Texas Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 780066, Dallas, TX 75378-0066

Phone (214)746-4699 for recorded information about the User Group and meeting dates.

Board of Directors

Reagan Andrews, Ph.D., Chairman
Phil Chamberlain
Kathryn Crawford

Jim Hoisington
Sid Nolte, Ph.D.

The North Texas PC Users Group, Inc., is a non-profit, independent group, not associated with IBM or any other Corporation. Membership is open to owners and others interested in exchanging ideas, information, hardware, predictions, and other items related to IBM Personal and compatible computers. To join the Group, complete the application blank printed elsewhere in this issue, and send it with \$24 membership dues to the Membership Director whose address is shown at the bottom of this page. A subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership.

Officials

President -

Reagan Andrews, Ph.D. (214)828-0699 h

President-Elect - Jim Hoisington (214)416-3101 h

Program Chair. - John Ogle (214)470-9267 w

- Timothy Carmichael (214) 331-6302 w

Treasurer - Joe Brophy (214)891-8187 w

Secretary - David McGehee (214)681-0202 h

Membership Dir. - Robert Kolodner (214)821-6015

Disk of the Month - Kathryn Crawford (214)596-2539

Group Statistician - Connie Testa

Special Interest Groups

SIG Coordinator

- Phil Chamberlain (214)243-5034 h

Artificial Intel. Arnie Strand (214)824-7894 h

Astrometry - Arlin Collins (214)351-5137 h

Assembler - Andrew Chalk, Ph.D. (214)226-3461 h

- Stan Milam (817)548-1573

Business Applic. Bruce Schubert (214)991-5967 w

C Language - Sid Nolte, Ph.D. (214)233-6178 h

CAD/CAM - Don Crockett (817)430-3606 h

Communications - Pete Testa (214)495-7506

Cryptanalysis - John Taber Metro 430-8173

- John Thomas (214)660-1823

DAC Software - Mike Macaulay (214)960-6656

DBase - David Hayden (214)644-0923 h

DOS - Jim Hoisington (214)416-3101 h

- Reagan Andrews, Ph.D. (214)828-0699 h

Genealogy - Minnie Champ (214)341-6507 h

Hdw Solutions - David McGehee (214)681-0202 h

- Gary Johnson (214)937-9676 w

LOTUS - Mark Gruner (214)373-3147 h

Personal Users - Bob Presley (214)867-1679 h

-Richard Terreo (214)307-1259

Programmers - Kent Cobb (214)343-3554

- Jim Hoisington (214)416-3101 h

Stock Market - Cliff Murphy (214)279-7973

- Richard Hoierman (214)341-4774 w

Turbo Pascal - Don Chick (214)276-2524 h

- Stan Milam (817)548-1573

Wordstar - Quentin Marshall (214)746-4880

- Cliff Kinard (214)746-4880

*NOTE: To access the BBS by long distance,
use area code 817*

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Payment of dues, address changes, and inquiries about membership should be directed to

NTPCUG Membership Director

P.O. Box 780066

Dallas, Texas 75378-0066

(Check newsletter mailing label for your renewal date..)

Ask Dr. DOS No. 3

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Dear Dr. Dos -
I still can't figure out when you're on the level with us. Give me some more help.

Distrustful, Freeport

Dear Paranoid -
Look, if you asked me what's the best software to do desktop publishing and I said Ventura, I'd be serious. If I answered Wordstar, I'd be pulling your leg.

Dear Dr. Dos -
I'm thinking of taking a shot a desktop publishing and have a basic question. What specifically is the difference between a font and a face?

Neopublisher, Long Island

Dear Neo -
It's really quite simple. A font is the style, size and design of the letters. Some fonts more commonly seen are Times Roman, Helvetica and the famous Bandini Mountain style.

Face is a characteristic of some cross cultural populations, especially Asians. The loss of face creates great conflict which can sometimes lead to Speuku. This fatalistic behaviour has the positive side benefit of eliminating the need to worry about your hard disk, backups or surge protection.

Dear Dr. Dos -
You seem to be catering to computer people who know your inside jokes. I have trouble figuring out whether your reponses are on the level or you're pulling my leg.

How can I tell?

Not Sure, Queens

Dear Outsider -
I understand that you feel left out, ignored and concerned about my advice about SPAM, WD-40, computus interruptus and other computer elements we all should know about.

I'm sometimes amazed, however, at how my tongue-in-cheek approach bypasses the virtual memory of some people. From now on, when I'm about to TIC (Tongue-in-cheek you), I'll say (this is a joke) with some kind of explanation at the end of the sentence. Let's try it so you'll get the idea.

One of the cheapest ways to recycle your dot matrix printer ribbons is to lightly coat it with fabric softener, preferably the kind without a scent, and keep it in a warm spot for about 24 hours. Do not do this with film ribbons as they're harder to rethread in the cassette.

(This is a joke. Please do not use fabric softener as it gums up the works. Enddust is much better). (This is a joke). Enddust is really no better than fabric softener on the ribbon. Coat your monitor screen instead. (This is a joke). (This, however, is an endless loop. Please press any key to continue).

Dear Dr. Dos -
How can I decide what fonts and tpestyles to use on my newsletter. I have access to about 50 different kinds?

Fontfansier, Chicago Heights

Dear FF -
It is best to use multiple fonts throughout all the documents you produce. In fact, the more type styles per line the better. If you have 50, use at least 25 and change the point size regularly. This method impresses the reader and they realize you possess the latest soft/hardware. It also decreases their tendency to notice problems in style, grammar and spelling, not to mention content.



What's Wrong With Computers?

by Anomalous
Boston Computer Society

Computers are schizophrenic! The best model for the behavior of my computer is a group of people or a schizophrenic with multiple personalities, each person or personality (aka program) with his own language, the Tower of Babel in a box. Worse, each of these personalities in effect, uses two languages, one to listen and respond to, the other with which to respond. If I type his phrases back to him, he gets annoyed and pretends not to understand. Still worse, each personality is extraordinarily persnickety about how I use his language. To my computer, for example, DELETE*,BAK means something dramatically different from DELETE*.BAK. And finally, worst of all, none of these personalities is willing to make the slightest effort to learn my language or to show any common sense; if we are to interact, then I must learn their languages precisely.

A typical computer session begins with his asking me questions, to some of which I know the answers. (I thought that I got to ask the questions.) If I miss a question in this exam, or even type an answer in the wrong style, he responds with an irritating message and demands that I try again. If I'm able to pass this preliminary exam, then he just sits there doing nothing whatever until I try to tell him what I want. But my requests had better be properly phrased, else we're back to peevish messages. At this point, I sometimes manage to call up one of his other personalities, some of which are a bit easier to deal with because they ask multiple-choice questions. And since these are open-book exams (I have lots of books written in strange mixtures of English and computerish), I bumble along and maybe, just maybe, even accomplish something.

Now don't take this all to mean that you shouldn't get yourself a computer. Sometimes they're even fun. And after all, you are in charge here: you can pull his power plug, he can't pull yours. I have a friend, however, who has a computer that doesn't need a power plug. Scary!

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So What's This Fascination With Computers?

by Sidney Simon, Pioneer Valley PC UG
with editing by GS-BUG

I learned to fly airplanes at one time in my life. With a certain flair, I did landings and takeoffs, not necessarily in that order, and I came to know enough navigation to be able to do cross-country flying. I could stall and recover, I could fly "under the hood" and not see where I was going (or coming) and just with instruments, survive. Once I even did what they call a dead-stick landing. Those are useful if your engine dies. You dead-stick it or you die.

All of this is told to you not to make *me* seem impressive but to help raise the question: so what's this fascination with computers?

Because, you see, I could take flying or leave it. Actually, I left it. Because, to me, flying was boring. There was a lot to learn, of course, but learning it was somehow dull for me. And from day one, computers have never been dull and I can't see anywhere in the future where they *will* become dull.

Learning about computers has become totally engrossing. I would not have predicted that.

You sit in front of a glowing ersatz television screen, choosing to push your fingers around a tool, finding yourself alternately frustrated, tortured, filled with despair and occasionally tasting disaster. This is fun?

Yes, it is. Among the grandest fun I have known. And I have had my share of fun, even if I have only played one computer game in my life. The fun is the *learning*.

Learning interests me. I have been a teacher all my life and after some thirty-seven years practicing, I am finally getting the hang of it. During all those years, I have struggled to intrigue, excite, even enthrall my students with the magic of the content, the wonder of the theories and the allure of the acquisition of learning.

My XT clone enthralled, intrigued, excited and captured me in a week. Without much charm or grace, it thoroughly enamored me and has made me a continued computer addict.

I am most embarrassed to say *no other learning I have ever done has been so completely engulfing*. Certainly not learning how to fly an airplane. Not learning Spanish, nor calculus, not even Piaget's developmental stages. And worse, I can't seem to figure out just what this all-devouring appeal of the computer is about. Have you figured it out? Has your wife waiting for you to come to bed figured it out? Have your

children, when at a time of crisis they have to wait for you to solve a problem like how to get your printer to print in compressed mode figured it out? Has anyone figured it out?

Well, here are a few things I *have* identified as part of what has fascinated, thrilled, harmed, captivated, mesmerized and occasionally enslaved me to that thing called *computer*.

The Appeal of Instant Gratification

In computers, if you get it right, the computer gives you a precious gift by instantly rewarding you with the right answer. In a world which is increasingly bewildering, where politics confuse us, where the media uses us, where relationships are storm-tossed and careers unpredictably chaotic, what a comfort it is knowing that *SPSG* will bring up a prompt that you can believe in and that *SPSG* will do it every time. Carefully you weigh the alternatives, make a decision and results magically appear, the printer dances and gratification abides in your heart, instantly.

So it is with everything about computers. If you get it right, the gratification will be instant. The first time you make a directory, for example (`MD\SALVATION`) and it works, even if it comes out `\SALVATIO`, it's instant gratification. Do you remember that thrill?

Do you remember typing something single spaced and then wanting the whole document to be double-spaced? When you hit the right keys the whole thing, instantly, was double-spaced. What greater moment of instant gratification can there be than that?

The Dependability of Predictability

That's the second thing I get from computers - predictability. Instant gratification is nice and sometimes overpoweringly nice, but it is when the instant gratification is dependably predictable that computers begin to be addictive.

It is comforting because it is predictable. At this level of my computerhood, I can insert something into my `AUTOEXEC.BAT` and know that if I did it right, what I inserted will produce a predictable result.

So, instant gratification and predictability are two of the factors with which the computer has me hypnotized.

The Elegance of the Solutions

I know I must be simple-minded, but after almost fifty years on a typewriter, I was dazzled and remain dazzled by how the little letters can be juggled on a computer. And it is always with such elegance. Anyone who writes knows what I mean. You arrogantly insert an adjective and watch the little letters

Newsletter Article Submission.

We would like to get more articles for publication in North Texas PC NEWS. Subject matter is your choice. We've had feedback recently that many members would like to see more articles for new computer users. If you can't write an article for some reason, send in your ideas for subjects you want to read about in the newsletter. We have some excellent writers out there who would write more articles if they only knew the topics you would like covered.

Article submission is preferred via the Club's Bulletin Board (to (M)ail, John Pribyl), or via Startext (to Mail Code 51563), or on disk (360K or 1.2M, 5 1/4 floppy). Prepare the material in ASCII format, unformatted. If you send a disk, please include a printed copy of the article to assure accuracy. If sending via the User Group Bulletin Board, use (M)ail mode, to John Pribyl. Include special formatting instructions, if any, with the article or in a separate (M)ail transmission.

Please do not indent, right-justify, or otherwise code the copy. If column alignment is critical, send two copies, one formatted, the other unformatted. If sending a disk, send along a hard copy that has been printed in the right format, with written instructions.

Double spaced, typewritten copy is acceptable if you do not own a modem or cannot put the material on a floppy disk. This copy must be received at least two weeks before the deadline to allow time for keying.

Send all material to:

Editor,
NTPC Users Group
2025 Rockcreek Dr.
Arlington, Texas 76910

All material submitted will be considered for inclusion in the newsletter. The Editor reserves the right to edit the articles as necessary to maintain NTPCUG standards, including grammar, suitability, and length to fit available space.

continued from previous page

jump ahead of it in perfect order, never losing a space or a comma - that's elegance.

You Will Never Run Out of Things to Learn.

Finally, there is one last fascination, nay, mesmerization with this thing called computer. I don't know if that is what fascinates *you*, but it is clearly one of the most enthralling things for me. Flying had some of that and so did Spanish, but nothing like the opportunities to learn that a computer user is provided.

Can you imagine ever running out of something to learn or try with a computer?

So what is the appeal of the computer for you? Are you captivated by the thrill of the *instant gratification*? Is the *predictability* in an otherwise unpredictable world that fascinates you? Is it *elegance of solutions* that charms you? Or is it the fact that you will *never run out of things to learn*? ▲

LOTUS FORUM 88

by Jim Hoisington
President-Elect

Lotus Development Corporation asked the presidents of the 20 largest PC user groups to attend their FORUM 88 in Boston on May 23 through May 25. I represented the North Texas PC Users Group.

It was good to see many of the same people that I had met last fall at the Microsoft meeting. And, there were new faces as well.

The theme of the forum was "Developing the New Productivity." It was very well organized and the speakers were first rate. I was able to hear and to meet people whose ideas I have read and respected for many years.

On Tuesday, we spent 6 hours with the people who run Lotus Development Corporation. Jim Manzi, the president, took an hour and one-half from his busy schedule to not only talk to us but to listen. And that was true of all the other people, they listened to what the user groups wanted as well as told us what they thought they could do for user groups.

What I understood the Lotus people to be saying to us was that Lotus Development Corporation is no longer a start-up company. They have brought in a whole new group of professional managers and they have a much clearer vision of where they want to be in the market and how they are going to get there.

Like many other companies, Lotus is beginning to realize that PC user groups are not just a bunch of hackers. They now understand that we are made up of people who use computers in their businesses and that we meet together to see new software demonstrated and to exchange tips and answer questions on how to use the software that we currently have.

We were able to see some of the new products that Lotus has under development. The criticism several years ago was that Lotus was a one product company, that is certainly no longer true. I was very impressed one product that will run on a local area network and pc's. (Hint: it's not a spreadsheet.)

I must admit that I have not had a very high opinion of Lotus Development Corporation in the past. I think that their dropping of the copy protection scheme on their current products and their new people are promising. If they can bring to market the products that they showed us, they will do very well in the future.

Jim ▲




MEMBERSHIP CARD

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Meetings & Times

9:00 AM to 9:45 AM

AUDITORIUM

*** Broderbund Software ***

Graphic Animation. A Presentation by Norma Beck.

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

AUDITORIUM

*** Ashton Tate ***

A Presentation on dBase IV. Speaker to be announced.

Special Interest Group Meetings...

Scheduled SIG times could change. Check the Bulletin Board just before the meeting.

Check room numbers on the overhead display in the lobby at INFOMART.

9:00 - 9:55

Assembler
DOS
CAD/CAM
Hardware Solutions
Personal Users

10:00 - 10:55

Astrometry
Personal Users

11:30 - 11:55

Orientation

12:00 - 12:55

C Language
Communications
Personal Users
Stock Mkt Investing

1:00 - 1:55

Business Applications
LOTUS
Personal Users
Turbo Pascal

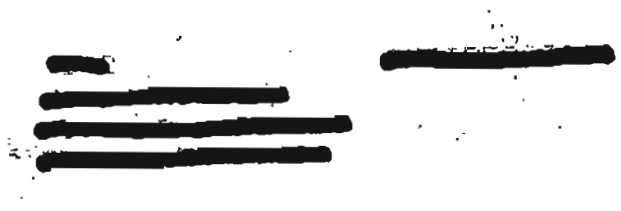
2:00 - 2:55

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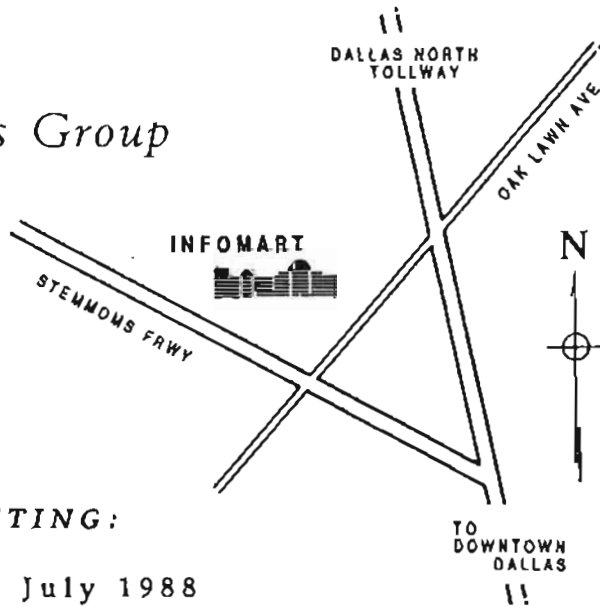
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9 July 1988