



North Texas PC Users Group

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DEADLINE
Copy deadline for May
North Texas PC NEWS:
Tuesday, April 10th

Meeting Dates:

April Meeting - 2nd Sat (14th)
May Meeting - 2nd Sat (12th)
June Meeting - 2nd Sat (9th)
(tentative)

*Our volunteers are
the greatest!*

EDlines

Have you ever wondered why sometimes people who have computers don't use them? I've got a friend who has a really nice 286 laptop with a hard drive and a modem and most of the best selling software loaded onto it and... well, all the bells and whistles you can cram into a case that size. I went over to his house the other day and caught him banging away at an IBM Selectric. I asked him, "Why don't you use your computer for that?" To which he replied, "I need to make a table and it takes

too long to break out the manual and read how to put tables in my document. With this (the Selectric) all you do is set the tab stops." My jaw dropped. I couldn't understand why this guy bought his laptop. I guess he had to get a computer for status — sort of like a car phone. He knew a little bit about using it, but he really didn't know how to put it to use. In addition, I doubt he ever spent any serious time with his software manuals. It blew me away.

Now I don't claim to be an expert, but I like to think that I make intelligent use of the tools at my disposal (and my computer is frequently the most intelligent choice).

continued on page 13

Submitting Articles for Publication in North Texas PC NEWS

1. **Article Style.** Type all copy flush left without justification. This includes headings, bylines, and the first line of each paragraph. Place a credit byline (author's name) between the title and first paragraph. Leave a blank line between paragraphs.

2. **Media.** All copy exceeding 10 lines should be submitted via the NTPCUG BBS or on floppy diskette(s) - (5.25" or 3.5" DOS formatted). If you want the disk returned please include a self-addressed return-postage-paid mailer. If you submit your article in hardcopy and expect us to transcribe it, bear in mind that we don't type so well. Most times, hardcopy-only-articles get filed in the Void.

3. **File Formats.** ASCII text files are preferred. Use .TXT extension for ASCII files. If formatting is crucial, Microsoft WORD and WordPerfect files will be accepted. Other word processor file formats may be acceptable but only if the article is accompanied by hardcopy and an ASCII file version of the article. Word processor files create a lot of extraneous work for the editors. If the article can be ASCII-fied, please do so.

3. **Submitting Articles.** You may use one of three methods.

a) **NTPCUG BBS (Preferred).** Log-on to the BBS and select (U)pload from the main menu. Your default file transfer protocol will be displayed. If you want to change your default protocol, use the (P)rofile option. Once you have set the file transfer protocol, select the (A)rticle option from the upload menu. You will be prompted for the filename to upload. Enter the filename (don't use drive or path name). The BBS will prompt you to begin the file transfer. (Refer to your communications software manual for instructions on transferring files.) After the file transfer has been completed, you will be prompted to, "press any key to continue..." You will then be prompted for a one-line description of the file. Enter the description. To exit the Article Upload Menu press ENTER until you get back to the Main Menu. (OPTIONAL - Send a BBS mail message to Douglas McQuaid regarding your submitted article.)

b) **Snail Mail (a.k.a. U.S. Postal Service).** Put the article on a floppy diskette and mail it to: 4302 Rainier St. #111, Irving, TX 75062

c) **SneakerNet.** Track down one of the editors at the monthly meeting and give them a diskette with the article on it.

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Program for April _____ Timothy Carmichael _____

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

To Be Announced

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

MCI Mail**MCI Mail - Electronic Mail for the 90's***Speaker: Mark Haley, MCI Mail Representative*

This live MCI Mail demonstration will show how to send electronic mail or faxes using a PC, a LAN, or a mainframe, and how MCI Mail's X.400 gateway ensures compatibility with all electronic mail facilities during the 90's. Every member of the audience will be offered a free MCI Mail account with \$100 of free usage, i.e. worldwide faxes or electronic mail.

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

NT PC Users Group business meeting.*Come to the meeting. You'll be glad you did!*

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

To Be Announced

Prez Sez...

The Second Annual Volunteer Meeting of the North Texas PC Users Group

On Thursday, March 15, 1990, we held the second "annual" Volunteer meeting for the User Group. Actually the first annual volunteer meeting was held in 1988 so we had to stretch "annual" just a bit. By now we know how this meeting went (I'm writing this on March 10) and I know I enjoyed it.

The purpose of this volunteer meeting is many fold. The President, Board of Directors and Officers (such as Volunteer Coordinator, Membership Director...), SIG Leaders and Assistant SIG Leaders organize and conduct this meeting to recognize those members who have willingly given of their time and their expertise to the furtherance of the User Group.

Another purpose is to ask new blood to become involved in volunteer activities. At this writing we are in need of a Public Relations Officer, Advertising Manager and Membership Director. Also, the Volunteer Coordinator, Connie Andrews, always needs more good people to help in numerous areas on Super Saturday. As Connie Andrews points out, "it takes approximately 150 volunteers to run each Super Saturday". Hopefully we filled all the Club's needs with this important Volunteer meeting.

Thank you Volunteers, SIG Leaders, Assistant SIG Leaders, Officers -- you keep us moving forward!!

Cryptanalysis Returns and at a New Time

You may recall that Cryptanalysis SIG Leader, John Taber, took a much needed break and put the Cryptanalysis SIG on hold for several months. Well, the Cryptanalysis SIG is back as of the March 10, 1990, Super Saturday. However, this SIG now meets at 10:00 am as opposed to the former 2:00 pm meeting time. Welcome back John Taber and the Cryptanalysis SIG.

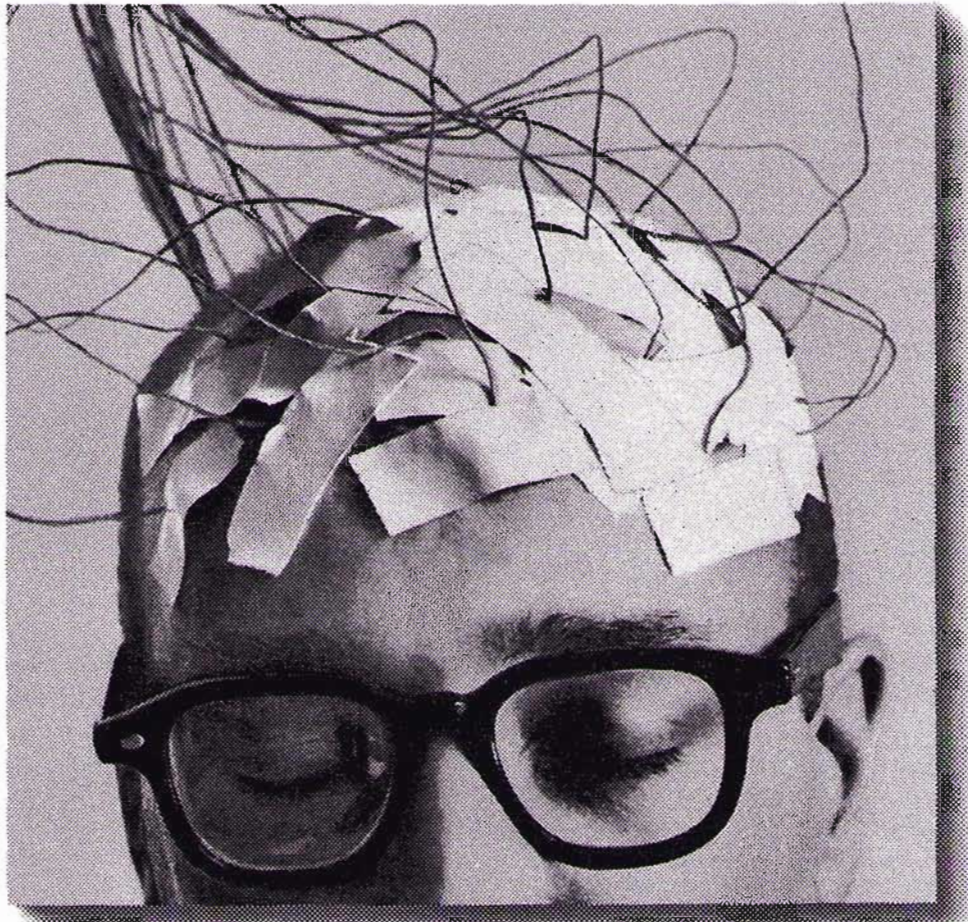
Interface '90 Plus

Seems several User Group members, including myself, attended the Interface '90 Plus exposition and conference at the Dallas Convention Center. The exposition ran from Tuesday, March 6, through Thursday, March 8, 1990, and was produced by The Interface Group and Business-Week. The Interface Group produces the world renowned COMDEX in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Conferences scheduled at Interface '90 Plus included Wide Area Networks, Voice Technology, Local Area Networks, ISDN, Personal Computers



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and Workstations, Network Planning and Design, etc. IBM had significant presence but both Reagan Andrews and I noticed the obvious absence of other key players like Novell, Banyon, 3COM Corp., TOPS and so on. The "Program and Exhibits" booklet listed approximately 183 exhibitors but somehow the show seemed smaller or the facility under booked. Perhaps I'm still numb from the November COMDEX '89, Las Vegas, Nevada, which easily overshadowed my previous experiences at the Muskogee, Oklahoma, World's Fair.

There was a significant presence of Canadian vendors. I counted an even dozen which accounts for about seven percent in the total exposition area. All the Canadian exhibitors were bunched together so it seemed like more. One Canadian firm called Kano Tech Distributing Inc., 130-8851 Beckwith Road, Richmond, BC, Canada V6S 1V4, had an interesting product called "The PC Buddy System". Their routine went something like this, "How often have you or your staff waited for someone to leave their desk so you could slip in and do a quick job on the computer? How often have you come back to work and found somebody has moved your computer to their work area?" Kano Tech has a "smaller than a typical switch box" device that allows up to eight sets of monitors and keyboards to daisy chain to a single PC at distances up to 300 feet. There are no software diskettes. Everything is handled through hardware, firmware, cables and one PC Buddy Box per work station. The limitation is that only one user can be on the system at one time, however, you don't have to move the PC for others to use it. If the "SYSTEM FREE" light is on at your PC Buddy Box you push a button and the monitor and keyboard at your desk are up and running the PC.

One of my personal favorites present at Interface '90 Plus was Lucky Computer Company of Richardson, Addison and Arlington, Texas. They displayed their 286 and 386 computers. Pat Chang, owner of Lucky, seems to be able to "do it all the right way". By the way, they manufactured the 386 on which we run the User Group Bulletin Board System.

Window Express

In the Vendor area this month was an interesting product which works with either Windows 286 or 386. If you're tired of the DOS manager then take a look at Window Express presented by James A. Butler of The Chamberlain Incorporated, Bedford, Texas. Window Express gives you an icon based menu system which runs with Windows 286 or 386. You can execute programs that run under Windows or those that do not.

Zack Porterfield 

ISDN Comes to Texas

by Doug Gorrie (NTPCUG)
Joe Howard (Southwestern Bell Telephone)


Imagine sitting at your PC in your office, being able to send a picture and facsimile to another PC, while an employee of the company branch office in Houston talks to the regional supervisor in yet another city, and all over the same single transmission line. Sounds a little futuristic? Well, the future is here, as recently announced by Southwestern Bell Telephone's introduction of their Integrated Systems Digital Network (ISDN).

ISDN is an end-to-end, all digital telecommunications network for business and residence customers. It allows the simultaneous transmission of voice, data, images, and text over single pairs of wires or glass strands in fiber optic cable, which comprise the regular telephone network. An ISDN network is the ultimate in efficiency due to the ease with which new technology can be introduced to the public telephone network. When ISDN is universal, customers will be able to access any kind of voice, data, or image service as easily as placing a telephone call.

Southwestern Bell is in a transition period with regard to ISDN. To fully realize the potential of ISDN, the Texas telecommunications network must be predominantly digital. Currently, the Texas network is a mixture of analog and digital systems.

Analog signals travel in continuous waves; thus, information-intensive media like high-speed data, file transfers, graphics, image and video processing are limited by the frequency or bandwidths of the transmission. Special networks are required, with the additional costs of managing those networks.

Digital systems, by contrast, generate separate pulses of light to move voice, data, and image communications. These systems are faster, more reliable and more efficient, allowing a business to manage only one network.

Presently, Texas leads the country in the number of operational ISDN lines. Southwestern Bell has two major contracts in Dallas. Rockwell International in Richardson initiated ISDN service in 1988. Rockwell uses ISDN to increase voice management capabilities and to take advantage of flexible data communications. More recently, AT&T announced that it has become the first ISDN customer in downtown Dallas. Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. will be investing about \$10 million in its downtown Dallas network to make ISDN service available in the first quarter, 1990. In future issues of PC NEWS, we'll discuss more about ISDN, and how it will enhance your communications capabilities. And watch the Comm SIG Happenings for related issues, or better yet, stop by! 

The Trials and Tribulations of a Custom Application

by Karl Thord Dockray, MD, DABR, ABNM

10 I THOUGHT I WANTED MY OWN COMPUTER SYSTEM
 20 SO HIRE A PROGRAMMER
 30 SPEND MONEY
 40 BUY EQUIPMENT
 50 SPEND MONEY
 60 TRY THE SYSTEM
 70 GO BACK TO 30

Old hands will recognize this continuous do-loop. It is an accurate reflection of what happened to me in working with computers. In 1980, I needed some clerical and billing help in reporting x-rays. There was nothing on the market that would perform the functions. So, I set out to do it myself. Five years of pain and \$104,000 later the job was done, sort of.

Come with me thru those thrilling days of yesteryear. Watch an "expert" do one stupid thing after another. Laugh at, or learn from, my bad experiences.

Color me a computernik. Not a programmer, but a published operations analyst and system designer. My bibliography sports a 1968 time study of the work steps in filming 9,000 patients, a 1978 summary of time spent in reading 100,000 cases and a 1970 co-authored thought-piece estimating how computers might help us do this kind of work. In the world of information processing, that's old. Then, multi-megabuck main frames running punch cards were the order of the day. Mini-computer design was dormant in the souls of machine builders and an apple was only a fruit.

My academic boss was granted three million dollars by the American College of Radiology (ACR) so he, me and a host of others, developed a system that did everything computable in x-ray. It worked. But, who could afford the required ten million dollar machine or its \$25,000 software? As the sun set, I went off to private practice and our system died a gentle death in the bottom of a file cabinet.

Private practice was good to me, perhaps too good. I was invited to a smallish suburban hospital with 50 active beds. By itself, it was a piece of cake. Soon, one and then another rural hospital asked for consultation services.

Case reading volume grew and so did complaints. "Doc, your reports are a week late". This from doctors at a distant hospital where my consultation visits were made at seven day intervals.

Expenses rose. \$800 dollars a month was going for transcription of my dictations. And my accountant turned grey as five percent of billable work never made it to the books because paper charge slips were

lost or incompletely filled out. There were delays in generating and typing 1,500 statements a month.

Not to worry. I will whip up a program myself. After all, I was an expert. Twenty-four months later, I was still "evaluating the literature" to find the "best language" and trying to take a quick course to "polish my programming." It was becoming clear that there was no "best" language and that I would never make time to take a course. So stop fooling around. Buy a machine, and start. This is 1982.

What software to buy? There wasn't anything that would run on inexpensive personal machines and satisfy my needs. Again, being a self-styled "expert" in the information field and bubbling with hubris, it was easy to fool myself. "We will design our own...commission a programmer for a few weeks. After a few thousand dollars, we should be on line...maybe we could copy some of the features of the old ACR system, and sell it for big bucks." But, I get ahead of myself.

First, I am very fiscally prudent. Some would just say cheap. For example, my cars are old to the point of decrepitude. One has 170,000 miles...the youngest only 90,000. My home is modest. You get the drift. This attitude colored everything I did while commissioning software and buying equipment. Watch how it costs more.

The challenge was to design a system that would transcribe the full texts of all radiologic reports with all of their variable features. X-ray literature listed one scheme after another but none had been truly successful. And, none that I knew of could run on small machines.

After getting a computer to make a report, one had to find ways to get the text to eight hospitals and clinics scattered over a 14,000 square mile territory. Lastly, the reporting system should be teamed with a billing module. It would be nifty if the billing computer would collect the charges, diagnostic codes, and all the other needed material on its own.

The answer seemed simple. Hire the husband of your wife's friend. He worked for a major electronic company and could program. Take his advice. Pay him \$50 an hour. Wait. Wait some more.

His advice on equipment purchase was very good. The portable machine he recommended had not been built yet but he knew the designers and their intentions. So we waited a year.

The machine, once available, came in a box labeled Compaq. It was somewhat portable at 40 pounds and it ran like mad. Then we installed his program crafted to satisfy the work-steps in my earliest paper. It worked too.

In brief, the program let me type in patient header information followed by varying abbreviations that I

made up as I went along. The abbreviations were stored in memory together with the full text of the x-ray finding or impression that I wanted to be typed out. For example, the arabic number two would call out several paragraphs describing a normal chest. "TIC4" and "NPOLYP" would reflect the findings of extensive colonic diverticular disease followed by a line denying any polyps.

As the months went by, additional features were added to store the reports, search for them, and provide the billing office with a paper copy. Another subroutine collected all appropriate reports in a batch and shifted them to a modem. By engaging the modem and directing it to dial the rural hospitals, the complete text of the interpretations could be printed on their teletypewriters.

The time was 1985 and I was down for about \$6,000 of equipment and software charges of \$10,000. Things began to go astray. It is best that when one asks a programmer to program, one receive recordings and documentation of what was programmed. I did not forget, but I kept putting it off. It was too much trouble, and the programmer was too nice a guy. Then I began to ask for bells and whistles. Things got really out of hand.

My communication with the programmer became very sketchy. "I am in a panic! Do me a sub-routine that will ____". Another call the day after. "Stop the presses. I need another feature". He would appear with the program amendments, but there was no time to permit their refinement. Just slam the floppy discs in the machine and press ahead. "Warp Factor 8, Mr. Sulu."

The four phones in my office ring like a bookie joint. Doctors and technologists rush in and out of the reading room constantly. "Does my patient have a cancer? What is the report on that lady? There was just no time.

I think the programmer got disheartened. Output slowed and new features did not seem to work very well. He did buy a new Mercedes, the wife got a fur, and then he had a Rolex to tell time by. His bill for \$18,000 dollars arrived. My office still had no code and no documentation. We stopped doing business.

What about the billing system? Another programmer tried to work with what was in the machine from the first worker but it was hopeless. No documentation, you know.

Early on, I hoped the chief secretary could request from programmers the functions that she wanted to be automated. Ideal in concept. However, she was of the old school, and I mean classic business times. She had worked with my father in his insurance business. Then I hired into his office, his equipment and her. She was not up on computer jargon, and the old programmer did not know business or accounting

principles. Fortunately, the new programmer was very sensitive and after two years of struggle, the secretary learned to express herself in computerese. They junked the old software and started over.

The story of equipping the office is complicated if not Byzantine. In 1984, it seemed reasonable to start information processing slowly and in stages to avoid the antibodies and resistance caused by suddenly converting a manually oriented staff to computer and electronic recording. The first effort was to buy a used IBM PC. Free software from Medicare let us begin filing claims directly to their computer. So far, so good. Then, I sent a redundant machine from my hospital down to the office. The programmer was to install the billing software in it and we would save money. The secretary said it was not big enough. I laughed. The programmer laughed. The program was installed and the secretary laughed. The machine was totally filled. Neither I, nor the programmer appreciated the size of the office files. So, buy a bigger machine.

We heard of the wonders available from local area networks. Mesmerized by a salesman who had an earnest face, and who was just setting up a new storefront to sell equipment, I commit. I authorize the purchase of a "cheap" LAN. When other units with known brand names were selling at \$50,000, I spring for one that was only \$20,000. Unfortunately, each time two clerks entered the same file, the software locked up. Then, the memory died while in for repair. Pleas to the small manufacturer in California went unheeded because they were distracted by early bankruptcy proceedings. My office was dead in the water.

More calls to California went unanswered. Then, some luck. Gossip with a friendly lawyer went like this. "When next you call, ask for the company president or their in-house counsel. Whisper the phrase 'Texas Products Liability Code' in Gothic tones of doom".

This code is pretty tough with strong penalties for performance failure or refusal to honor implied warranties. At last, I connect with the computer company's lawyer. I spoke Gothic like never before. There was a gasp on the other end of the phone and my \$20,000 came back in the next mail.

A bullet had been dodged here. Two lessons:

1. Stick with name brands.
2. Stick with local vendors who have experience—and a demonstrated track record.

But, there is more. In 1987, a replacement LAN bombed and yet a third one with improved software was installed. My bankers were delighted to extend credit. ►

There have always been break-downs since the invention of the lever. Computers are no different. After several disc crashes, kludges caused by my own operating errors, and one great power outage that fried my controller board, I bought an additional personal machine configured exactly like the one in use. This promoted a great peace of mind. Lose one... just fire up the spare.

But having a back-up unit does not mean you are making copies of accumulating data for safe-keeping. I had to lose more information because I was too lazy, too harried, or too rushed. I am here to tell you, backing up 10 to 50 megabytes of data on floppy discs is a pain. The lazy man's out is tape streaming recorder that is truly a delight to run... \$2,000 but worth every nickel.

It is 1988. My original Compaq has been upgraded from two floppy discs, to a 10 MGB hard disc, and then again to a 20 MGB device. It fills with 8,000 patients and the old 8088 chip is struggling. What I used to think was fast operation is boring me to tears. It may be time to convert to the 80386 chip..styled by some computer ads as fast enough to burn the sand off a desert floor. My tongue hangs out in anticipation, but my enthusiasm is dashed by a \$12,000 price tag. Frugle as always, I call a computer brokerage on the East coast.

A fellow on the electric telephone looks at his list of used machines up for sale by individuals across the land. Yes, there a Compaq Portable 386 with 1K RAM and a 100 MGB disc in Minnesota. It is only \$6,000. I buy. My local vendor checks it before we send the money. It works. I am pleased. It dies in the third month.

Three thousand to replace the hard disc. So it goes. I think I am still \$3K ahead of the game. It was a nuisance to go thru the crash but the machine is a honey and it is working like gangbusters now. If you become a constant user, one can sense the speed differences, and an upgrade becomes worth every possible effort or cost.

Back at the office, things are beginning to click. First, we get hit with Medicare requirements to add the trouble- some codes that describe what procedures were done and what diagnoses were made. No problem. The programmer makes a slot for them in my reporting program. The numbers are automatically appended to the mnemonics I type in. For example, when I type the two-letter abbreviation for a GI series, Medicare gets fed its required CPT number for that procedure. Then, if one diagnoses a duodenal ulcer (DU), they get the ICD-9 number as well. I don't think my billing clerks have to rummage thru coding books more then once a day. Remember, we had been doing electronic claims submissions with software given us by Medicare. Their old program would not carry their newly required codes. Again,

no problem. A cooperative software designer with a package devoted solely to ECS whips up a new program and we keep on trucking. It took some money, but by now, one is numb and keeps writing the checks.

What is the upshot of all this. I read a case from a hospital 90 miles distant. It has been made two hours ago and brought directly to my main hospital by courier. The header and findings go into to my reporting machine. A modem is engaged and the distant hospital gets the report immediately. My machine is rung up by the modem from the office billing unit.

All the patient's identifying data, the procedure done my diagnoses and the qualifying Medicare codes are taken directly into the billing unit memory. All header data is already recorded so only a few more strokes are required to file a claim or draft a statement. The whole magillah is sent to the Medicare computer in yet another city before the close of business. Now that's fast. And relatively pain free. Whoa. Is all this worth a \$100,000? Maybe so, maybe no. You are welcome to write your reports with a quill pen or dictate them anyway you wish at low dollar cost. But my doctors are now used to getting immediate full-text reports as their patients walk out of my department. They think that's normal and want more. These same doctors in my main hospital could pick another radiologist whose personality is much more pleasing. But most continue to request my services. The same goes for the little hospitals. One tried another itinerant radiologist, then the professors from our local medical school. Finally, they came back to me. When referrals are maintained in \$10 and \$50 thousand dollar chunks, it does not take long to pay for a program.

I complained to the chief secretary that the office computer system did not let us reduce the clerical staff. "You ninny, we did not have to hire another clerk when the billings jumped twenty percent" said she.

I would spend double the money again and again.

A note of caution if you decide to enter the computing world. Everyone, and I mean everyone, will have a story about how the science screws up. Face it. It does, but be brave. Mess up, try again, and then succeed.

Be braced for the self-impressed computer gurus who lurk at every corner. These are the talkers, not the doers. They will speak sagely about bit speed and megaflops, recite the latest buzzwords and state with complete authority that only the X machine or the Y software will work. One feels so dumb in their presence. They may be right about one time in a million. Be nice to them, but get on about your business. ►

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Other C Titles

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No. 38 in a Series

by Jim Hoisington

PC users are growing increasingly frustrated with DOS. The problem with DOS is that it is locked into a memory constraint of something less than 1 megabyte. That constraint is imposed by Microsoft and it doesn't look like they're going to remove it any time soon.

Why would they do that? What's wrong with DOS?

DOS stands for Disk Operating System but it would be better named "Diskette Manager." It is primarily a file manager.

If you buy the DOS Technical Reference or one of the many books that list the services offered by DOS, you find that DOS spends most of its time minding its disk(ette) files. There are only two DOS services that deal with the screen, one for the printer, a couple of keyboard services. Most of the rest of the DOS services deal with disk(ette) files.

What is even worse is that DOS is not particularly well suited to handle those files on large hard disks. Because the disk(ette) information is stored on the outermost edge of the storage media, DOS constantly has to move the read/write head back out to the edge to find out where to go next.

This wasn't too serious in the days of slow machines and small (180K) floppy diskette drives. Now that 100+ megabyte drives that are now becoming standard on fast 80386 machines, it's a real bottleneck.

Another problem with DOS is how it names files. In its limited world of 8 plus 3 characters, DOS only recognizes three kinds of files. Files that end in .BAT are assumed to contain commands that you can type at the C: prompt. Files that end in .COM or .EXE are assumed to contain a program. DOS attempts to load files ending in .COM and .EXE into memory and to give con-

trol of the computer to them. If you type the name of any other file at the C: prompt, DOS comes back with that familiar "Bad command or file name" message.

This simple environment was usable when we wanted to run one or two small programs that created a small number of data files. However, most of the businesses that I visit these days are demanding more than that from their PC's.

So what are some of the things we should look for in a replacement operating system for DOS. First, it should provide more screen and printer services, isolating the program from the type of device attached to a particular machine. Second, it should provide a more efficient system for accessing and managing large disks with many files. Finally, it should provide better memory management. Programs need to have access to more memory and we need to have more than one program in memory at once. (I'm thinking of network drivers and communications systems. I'm not necessarily advocating the need for the complexity of multitasking.)

Operating systems that provide all these features have been around for a couple years and yet DOS is still the dominant operating system. Why is that?

We humans do not adapt well to change. We have all struggled to learn the intricacies of DOS. We use our computers to assist us in doing a variety of tasks. Learning a new operating system takes us away from what we want to do with our computers.

Why we will switch to a new operating system? Not because of any of the features I just mentioned but because we will be forced to. Our applications are "Out of memory" and Microsoft isn't going to let DOS access additional memory.

What will the new operating system be? The one that provides the least complex migration and learning path. We've got more important things to do than learn a new operating system.

Jim

▲

Trials and Tribulations ... continued

They will still be talking while you are on line and making money.

Maybe you can sell your program. What about mine? So far, it has stirred some letter enquiries but no sales. I can't even give it away. And, it is so neat. It should work in anybody's office and maybe even downtown at the parts store.

Karl T. Dockray

(Editor's note: See the accompanying article "A "Generic" Record ..." on page 17 for a more detailed description of the software developed by Dr. Dockray)

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Upgrade to Release 3

by Wade Mayfield

By all means do! I did and I'm glad I did. It has been said that opinions are like noses, everybody has one. Some say I have a big nose. Does that mean I have a big opinion also? Anyway, my opinion of LOTUS' release 3 is very big. Lotus magazines latest issue (March 1990) says that most their readers upgraded to Rel. 3. I think that the reason is 2.2 is not enough of an upgrade. Especially with all that 3.0 has to offer. If you have release 2 or 2.01 and ALWAYS, upgrading to 2.2 doesn't seem like to much of an increase. I don't mean to knock it because it is a good program too, although I believe release 3 is better.

Do you remember when everyone thought that 128k was more than enough room and that Lotus was a memory hog because it used more than that? In those days no one worried about the 640k barrier DOS has; no one ever thought it would be reached (apparently). It sure does present a problem today. We need something like OS/2 to increase the barrier or take it away completely. YEAH, that would be great!

Someone complained about the Graphs in 2.2 because he couldn't use the graphs he had made the 2.01. What a guy! I bet he complains about his new cars because he can't use the old parts. Maybe he doesn't buy new cars, for that reason. Who knows? More than that, who cares, right. Don't get me wrong. I'm all for compatibility, both backward and forward. I believe the code should be as small and compact as possible. Although, within reason, to use it for other features. If graphs are that important and you don't want to upgrade then you can get FREELANCE or GRAPH WRITER or something.

It is a privilege to write about this program. LOTUS is the best spreadsheet program on the market for the IBM Personal Computers. Yes, that is a biased statement, for I am partial to LOTUS because they were with The IBM PC from the beginning. Apple had Visicalc and they wouldn't make it for the IBM. Fortunately for us someone saw an opportunity there and took it. The result was LOTUS 123, but that is another story. At first it was simple, in comparison to what it does now, but still, it was far better than VISICALC. That is my opinion of course, but I imagine many of you will agree with me. Even with all of its improvements, it is still compatible with all its previous versions. Recently there were two upgrades in 123. They would be release 2.2 and release 3. I had the choice to get either one because I have an 80286 processor in my "AT" and a math coprocessor and I decided to get release 3. I have LOTUS 2.01 and ALWAYS so I figured I didn't need Release 2.2. I believe it was the right decision. Even though it is

still slower than 2.2 most areas, but I don't need the slight increase in speed enough to get 2.2 (Lotus 123 rel 2.2). There are some features that 2.2 has that rel 3 doesn't have, such as "ALWAYS" and a neat extra when you are in the STEP mode. You actually see the macro, as it is executing, at the bottom of the screen and each step is highlighted as it executing. One wish I have with ALWAYS is that it will allow you to use color in printing. This you can do in rel 3 to a limited extent, as you can in any release of LOTUS. Release 3 allows you to print graphics on the worksheet and, using the imbedded printer commands, it is possible to use different colors. You also can use the COLOR command within the PRINT menu under OPTIONS-ADVANCED submenus. I would not recommend using them together. Sometimes the results are not what you want. Both are very good in their places.

Now, about 123 Rel 3. Some of Rel 3's features are File linking, on screen graphics with the Lotus Multi-byte Character Set (LMBCS), extended sorts in a Database, as well as the ability to use an external database (i.e. dBase III+), multiple worksheets per file, multiple files open at same time, superior graphing ability, hot view graph (very good), new range features, new macro features, new print features, new @function features plus many more.

The Group Mode is a nice feature. As you make your models you turn the Group Mode on and as you increase the size of the columns on one worksheet all the rest of the worksheets are adjusted automatically. The same column that is or group of columns.

Another nice feature is Automatic cell formatting. Suppose you type in the date like this 03/03/1990 instead of @date(90,03,03). Normally you would get 3 divided by 3 divided 1990. With the Automatic cell format on, it would automatically recognize it as a date. You can format cells for currency too. You can add notes at the end of a formula, to help you remember what it does. Some very useful features. Wouldn't you agree?

An added feature that release 3 has that it isn't suppose to have is the @clean function. Don't look for it in the documentation because you won't find it. It was meant to be a release 2.2 feature. What the function does is remove the control characters (including Word Processing formatting characters) from a string. This might prove to be handy if you want to bring text in from a word processor. This is a feature that is already in Symphony 1.2, I know.

The best feature I like is Hot Linking. It is also the most useful. Especially to those who have very large worksheets. I'll include a couple of examples to demonstrate. ➤

Here is an example of linking sheet and/or files together. Suppose you have a company with 3 departments or a corporation with 3 divisions and each department has a large spreadsheet of its' own. With release 3 all you do is point to the cell you want to link or type in the range or cell references like you would in any formula and the cells are linked together.

In the above figure worksheet 'A' totals the cell called Gross Sales in the other 3 worksheets. You can make another file with only Macros on it. Put it behind them and never have to worry about messing up a macro when you add or delete rows. Really neat.

A	A	B	C	D
1	Consolidations			
2	Total Gross Sales:			825000
3	Total Gross Expenses:			400000
4	Total Net Profit:			425000
5				
6				
7				

have to move your cursor to column 'B' or 'C'. Then press Worksheet, Window, Graph. That would be done after you enter into the menu of course.

There is a lot more to release 3 than this and I don't want to spoil your excitement by telling you everything. I invite you to see for yourself by Upgrading to release 3. Or buy it if you don't have an earlier release. But remember, you have to have an 'AT' type computer with at least a megabyte of RAM.

Wade Mayfield

D	A	B	C	D
1	Division C			
2	Gross Sales:			175000
3				
4				

C	A	B	C	D
1	Division B			
2	Gross Sales:			400000
3				
4				

B	A	B	C	D
1	Division A			
2	Gross Sales:			250000
3				
4				

A	A	B	C	D
1	Consolidations			
2	Total Gross Sales:			825000
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

Graphing is easier in release 3 too. Once you pick a graph type, you press (F10) graph and up pops a graph of the information on your sheet. You can have a graph on the screen with the worksheet by moving the cursor over to the place you want it and press Menu, Worksheet, Window, Graph. Using the next example you can see it for yourself.

In this example you can have an instant graph of the figures in this worksheet by placing the cursor anywhere in the range to be graphed. For example, you might put your cursor in column 'D' row 2, 3 or 4. You could put the cursor in column 'A' even. If you wanted a graph in the worksheet you would



Selected SIG Happenings

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups

(Material for this column should be sent to Andy Oliver, SIG Coordination, before the 10th day of each month)

Beginner's Pascal SIG

After the first two meetings, the SIG is past the "drudgery" of learning about Reserved Words and Symbols, Identifiers, and the fundamentals of operating the Integrated Development Environment (IDE). We've been delineating the differences between the IDE, Pascal Syntax, program logic, and programming "style". In April, we will discuss the steps in programming development, continue to build on some simple programs, and learn how to write Procedures and Functions.

Phil Chamberlain

Business Applications SIG

The March Business Applications meeting hosted the distinguished Maurice Kelley, database expert. He answered the most searching questions on which database manager is best for specific applications. Our thanks to him for a most enlightening afternoon. Especially good was the question and answer session where Maurice made specific recommendations based on attendee's individual needs. The April meeting will host our favorite people from Word-Perfect. Let me know if there is some special feature you would like to hear more about. See you there.

Bruce Schubert

Communications SIG

If all goes as planned, our March meeting will have included a presentation by Mark Haley of MCI MAIL. A PC viewer and phone line were used to demonstrate the use of MCI MAIL for both electronic mail and the sending of FAX documents. Mark indicated that a FAX can be sent from a PC to any known FAX number in the country (or even further?) without incurring long distance charges. Not a bad deal for \$0.25 per pop.

To make a good deal better, Mark offered those interested a special promotional offer, the first \$100 of usage of MCI Mail free and waived the yearly sign up charge. We hope you were one of those present to receive yours. The subject of ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) has come up in recent meetings. In the near future, we plan to host ISDN experts in both the SIG meetings, and in a special auditorium presentation tentatively scheduled for May. Watch these pages and the BBS for details. Speaking of the BBS, there are also plans to review procedures for accessing and utilizing the BBS. The PC NEWS of February, 1989 described in great detail how the first time user can access the BBS, but recent changes in BBS procedures warrant discussion. We'll also discuss how to best utilize such features as Electronic Mail and how to upload/download articles and software. If you have questions about the BBS, stick with us and we'll help you out. See you there!

Doug Gorrie

Cryptanalysis SIG

The Cryptanalysis special interest group restarted in March, however, we have a NEW MEETING TIME of 10:00. The user's have requested that we start this SIG again, from the beginning. The April meeting will cover several subjects, including the following files which have been uploaded to the NTPCUG Bulletin Board. If you have a modem and are a NTPCUG member, try downloading these files and bring your questions to the April meeting.

CRYPT.BIB	cryptanalysis bibliography
CRYPT1.TUT	transposition cipher tutorial
CRYPT2A.TUT	simple substitution with word divisions
CRYPT3.TUT	simple substitution without word divisions
CRYPT4.TUT	how to solve for cipher keys
CRYPT5.TUT	playfair cipher
CRYPT6.TUT	vigenere cipher

John Taber

Database SIG

The database SIG has determined that the need for a multi-part series designed to teach the concept of how to build a database from the electrons up will best serve the needs of its members. In order to do this Rodney Haas and Vincent Gaines are leading a series of classes to teach beginners to use DBASE III/IV. The series is expected to last 8 - 10 months at the beginning level. At that point we may:

- 1) Repeat the series.
- 2) Continue discovering more functions of DBASE III/IV.
- 3) Learn to develop in another database.
- 4) Determine our direction when we get there.

At the January meeting we discussed our example case. Our goal was to set up an inventory system for a hardware store. This will enable us to learn the techniques for building our own applications. We soon discovered that we could ask for more than we could program in an 8 part series. So.... In order to make this experience most beneficial to the members we have selected a text for teaching the database class. The book we are going to follow is DBASE IV WORKBOOK AND DISK from QUE Publications. 19.95 from Soft Warehouse. Our original project was A point of sale system for three goods with several sub-categories such as part number, model, color, manufacturer code, unit of measure, price, and quantity on hand. This will be changed to follow the lesson plan in the workbook. We feel that this is the best way to teach the course and will enable everyone to follow along more effectively.

The subject for the February meeting was to discuss the basic layout of the database structure. During the meeting we discovered:

- A) That you begin the process by defining what are called data fields. (Analogous to column/row titles in a spreadsheet).
- B) Indexing is a method to quickly find things.
- C) That data field descriptions should accommodate future expansion.
- D) Different types of data may be specified to prevent errors.
- E) Indexes are the way to cross reference the different files.
- F) Setup files are used to store and reference redundant data.

For the month of March learned to use the actual program to set up the data files. We recommend the DBASE IV Workbook and Disk by

Que. Regardless of which book you have please READ THE FIRST 2 CHAPTERS. Any book on DBASE will do for this introductory course. Also work your way through the tutorial that comes with the dBase IV package if you wish to. Rodney will bring his portable PC and we will work us through the lessons. There are 2 ways to use DBASE III or IV - by using the menu provided or the dot prompt - we will likely use the dot, simply because it works better on the laptop/overhead projector. We will be posting class notes to the bulletin board. Log on to the database conference and download notes.zip. See you there.

Rodney Haas
and Vincent Gaines

DOS SIG

It's hard to resist some announcement about a new DOS version that allows protected mode operation with unlimited compatibility for users with "older" software that will cost less than \$50 at retail - and be self installing - for April 1 release. That would rank up there with rumors that 1M, 60ns DRAM had fallen to \$1.50 chip - or that Intel had a "secret" 486 upgrade chip for 386 PC's and would retail kits at \$250. Instead, we'll keep plugging along with 3.30A and 4.01 (Ughhh) and continue talking about working with the DOS extenders. Plans call for a view of Andrew Chalk's magnificent CONFIG.SYS file discussed in March, so DOS SIG members can see for themselves what creative use of the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT can bring. April's DOS SIG Meeting will close with the usual Q&A session.

Reagan Andrews

Genealogy SIG

The March meeting featured a presentation on 'Computer Bulletin Board use by Genealogists' presented by Jim Rash. Jim is the SYSOP of the OakLawn Online BBS (214 358-5192). His board has a Genealogy Calendar showing upcoming genealogy events in the D/FW area. He also has a bulletin listing the date/time and subject of the next Genealogy SIG meeting. Using his BBS as an example, he

showed how to logon, select a message area (the Genealogy Message Conference of course) and how to read and reply to messages. This Genealogy Message Conference is connected to a network of other bulletin boards not only around the country but around the world! It is updated with from 75 to 300 new messages every night. Jim showed how we can select the messages we are interested in, compress them, and then download them to our system where we can read them and compose replies at our leisure. He then showed how the next time we logon we can send our replies and receive the new messages that have been received. This is done using a communications protocol (Procomm, Qmodem, GT Power Terminal, etc.) and the MEGAMAIL READER program. This software is available for download from his BBS and will also be available at the Genealogy SIG next month.

Ronald Fairbrother

LAN SIG

Mark Haley of MCI Communications Corp. discussed the MCI Mail service and its use in a LAN environment for our March LAN SIG meeting. This was a very informative presentation and generated quite a few questions for Mark. The April session is not completely set at this time (March 10th) but we hope to have an Arcnet authority speak to us. We are finalizing arrangements for one of the original developers of Arcnet to be with us on Saturday, April 14th. This person is now with Performance Technology in San Antonio. If the Performance Technology presentation in the auditorium is at 10:00 AM, we will join them downstairs (Check the schedule in the inside back cover). Otherwise, we will have the speaker available in the LAN SIG meeting room for questions and answers. See you on April 14th!!!

Bernie Van Roekel

Lotus SIG

The subject for the March meeting was a presentation given by Gordon Lowe of Borland International on Quattro Pro. Gordon works for Borland in the Dallas area and gave

a presentation in the auditorium in December, and this presentation was a follow up. Gordon illustrated the power and flexibility of Quattro Pro. Some of the features illustrated included compatibility with 1-2-3, worksheet linking, graphics, and publishing. Gordon did an excellent job and the audience was rather enthusiastic. In conjunction with the presentation, SoftSource was offering upgrade packages for Quattro Pro for \$99. Originally SoftSource was going to bring only 25 to 30 copies of the program, but Mark was able to convince them to bring 50. Well then Gordon talked them into 75 copies and Margaret Gilbert was certain that they had too many. Well once again, the NTPCUG has amazed its vendors because they sold all 75 copies and could have sold more.

The April meeting will be a presentation on the Macro Add-in manager for Release 2.2 of 1-2-3. The Macro Manager allows users to have macros available in memory all of the time regardless of which spreadsheet is in memory. Many of the commands that are issued, such as formatting cells, would be excellent additions to a macro library. Mark also intends to have a collection of macros on disk that he will have at the meeting and will give out for fifty cents per disk. The macro manager capability has been available in Symphony for quite awhile but is now available for 1-2-3. Come on by and see how this works. The Lotus SIG always takes time to answer questions that users have on spreadsheet programs. If you have one, come and see if the SIG can help you out.

Mark Gruner
and Pat Henley

Paradox SIG

I gave an introductory level presentation on database design techniques at the March meeting. Entity relationship modelling as championed by my other favorite database bunch (Oracle) and data normalization was covered. Since I'm writing this before the meeting, I can safely say that the presentation was a great success and the attendees left in a database designing lather! I will not be in town for the April meeting, as the meeting is

scheduled Easter weekend. This is one of the traditional weekends for a return to the natural state. No, no, not THAT natural state! The other one, Arkansas. Of late it seems a lot more pleasant going there, knowing that J.J. is here, and not there. Due to this holiday weekend scheduling problem, I feel that the best thing to do is cancel the April Paradox SIG meeting. I would hate to have someone go to the time and effort of working up a presentation and have less than a full turn out, which is more than possible for that weekend. I have contacted the local Borland office and they have agreed to do the May meeting presentation. We have not discussed what will be presented. I have requested that the presentation be of a general introductory nature. I'm also shooting for a technical how to, more than a golly gee marketing presentation. I'll keep you posted on this one. Yo, experienced Paradox users and developers, out there, I'm waiting to hear from y'all on when it is you can get up and strut your stuff in front of the group. The presentation input basket is empty. I'm in need of introductory and overview presentations. I would also like to have some real life case studies. The case studies would show others what and how things can be done with Paradox. Plan on a thirty-minute presentation with the remainder of time devoted to questions and answers. My number is 492-1315.

Fred Williams

Personal Users SIG Happenings

This Special Interest Group (SIG) is for you!...if you consider yourself

any of the following: ...a novice...a new PC owner...a beginner with PC's...a person curious about PC's...a soon-to-be PC owner...a personal (versus professional) PC user...or...a PC user needing to review some "fundamentals".

We offer sixteen (16) individual, stand-alone classes covering the "fundamentals of personal computers." Four classes are offered at each monthly meeting of the North Texas PC Users Group (2nd or 3rd Saturday on the 7th floor of the In-fomart in Dallas). After four monthly meetings (covering four classes each), the entire 16-class curriculum is begun again. The classes are presented in numerical sequence, but you can take them in any sequence convenient to your personal schedule. The classes always start each month at 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 Noon, and 1:00 PM. Since each class is a "stand-alone"...i.e. self-contained and NOT requiring any other classes as prerequisites...you can begin attending at any time convenient to your other priorities and schedule. In addition to receiving informative instruction from people very knowledgeable in their field and class topic, you also receive a set of handout notes for each class, to allow you later review. There are no homework assignments, no pressures, no tests, and no dumb questions. You don't even have to be a member of the NTPCUG before you attend...ALTHOUGH YOUR ARE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN NTPCUG AND VOLUNTEER YOUR TALENTS.

This 16-class curriculum of PC fundamentals is specifically designed to be the kind of learning ex-

perience you always wished existed... where you are accepted just as you are, and where you can gain knowledge without the hassles...and best of all...the classes are FREE!

Join us as we learn and review "THE FUNDAMENTALS."

The four classes for APRIL 1990 will be:

9:00 AM	Class 1.2 - Start Up
10:00 AM	Class 2.2 - Diskette Sizes and Formatting Each
12:00 Noon	Class 3.2 - Copying & Backing Up Files
1:00 PM	Class 4.2 - Hardware

Bob Presley

Word SIG

Back to the real world after WORD for WINDOWS' March debut with Microsoft. We'll be looking (still) at Style Sheets and MACRO's while discussing some of the tips passed along by the Microsoft people. One area open for discussion will be the future of the SIG in terms of Word for Windows (WfW) sessions in addition to WORD 5.0A, or as a separate series. Since the two programs are very, very different in terms of necessary operational environment, hardware, configuration, etc., WfW may belong in a separate SIG, or as alternating meetings of the WORD SIG. The April WORD SIG will terminate in the usual Q&A interchange between members and leaders concerning WORD 5.0A, earlier versions, and problem areas members are experiencing.

Reagan Andrews

▲

EDLines continued from inside front cover

Then, yet another day, I was talking to another friend about editing articles for the newsletter. And I blew this guy away. He couldn't believe that I wasn't using a macro for the editing process. I thought, "Am I as bad as Mr. Selectric?" Well, I don't think I'm that bad, but I am going to write a macro to satisfy myself. Maybe I should stick a Post-It next to my monitor that says: "PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH!" but then I'd have to

write a macro that prints on Post-Its.

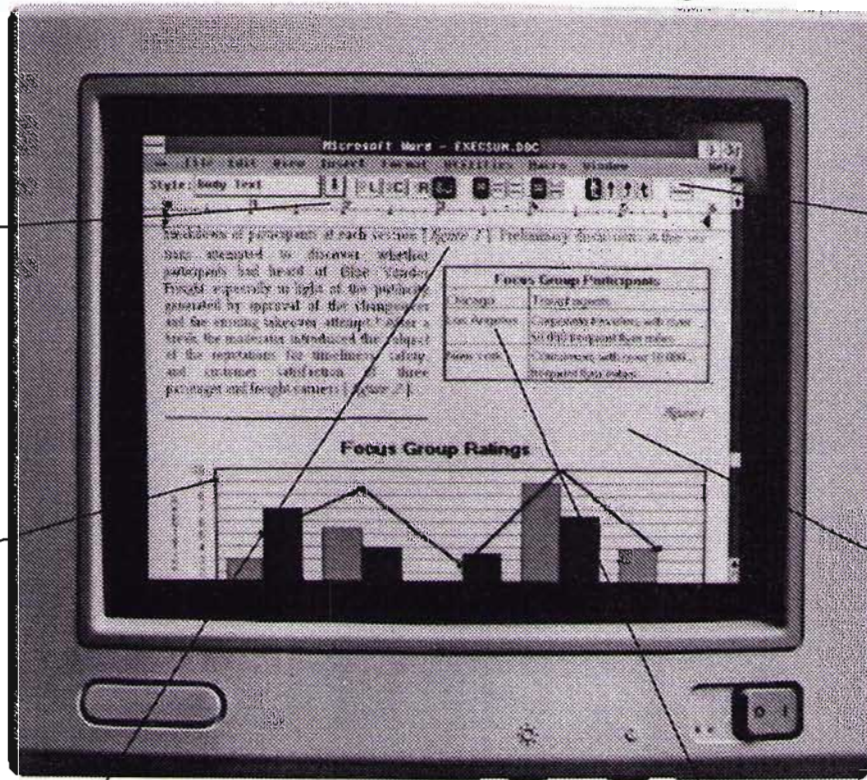
Hey, speaking of Post-Its, why don't you write one that says, "WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE NT PC NEWS." and stick it on your monitor. We really need your help in keeping these pages full. If you have an idea for an article, but don't know how to get started, call me and I'll try to help you develop the idea into an article. My number is (214) 255-1732 (no calls after

10:00 pm please). Remember, we try to fill the newsletter with articles written by our members. Without your help, we would have to use articles from other users groups. So, if you have any opinions about hardware, software, or PC trends, dust off that old word processor and write an article.

Douglas McQuaid

▲

Word processing will evolve more on this page than it has in the last ten years.



Location, location, location.

Use the ruler to make every thing flush left, or right. Or centered. Single-spaced. Double-spaced. Anywhere and any way you want it.

A symbolic gesture.

Icons on the ruler allow you to make format changes with a simple click of a mouse.

A dynamic exchange.

Through dynamic data exchange (DDE), any changes made to the original spreadsheet will show up here automatically.

What you see is what you get.

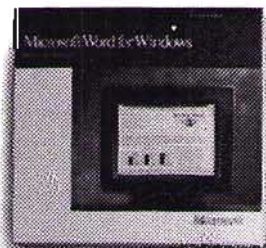
With WYSIWYG, you see exactly what your changes are the instant you make them, right on-screen. And through Page View, you get a full-size, fully-editable view of your page. You'll see headers, footers, multiple columns, and graphics in their exact locations.

It's a wrap.

You can move or resize any positioned object and watch the text automatically wrap the whole thing into a nice, neat package.

We've got tables covered.

This feature makes creating a table as easy as creating a spreadsheet, sending the TAB key the way of carbon paper.



When it comes to word processing on a PC, new Microsoft® Word for Windows™ isn't like anything you've ever seen. To see what we're talking about, call (800) 541-1261, Dept. K64.

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The Variety Store

(New or unusual hardware/software/applications for IBM small computers and compatibles.)

A horse is a horse, unless, of course, The Horse is Intel's Proprietary 80386!

We're a family-oriented Group, organized by our usage of the 8XX86 CPU chips. That is, we are bound together by the 8088, 8086, 80286, 80386, and/or 80486 CPU chips that power our PC's. And, that may change.

We may soon discover we are really bound by our operating systems rather than CPU chips. We may be a DOS community, an OS/2 community or a Windows/DOS community.

Why? Lots of talk is spreading around the media that Compaq (The Houston Clone Maker), AST and many other makers (except IBM) are becoming less than joyful over Intel's simultaneous "lock" on 80386 chip production and their growing prominence as a major OEM provider of complete systems.

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article noted this paradox for the "other" system makers - i.e., dependence on Intel CPU-chip production schedules while competing with another Intel division for machine sales. IBM's an exception. IBM can make their own 80386 chips. They're the only non-Intel concern that can.

Lots of interesting rumors and PR releases in the last several weeks highlight this situation and provide possible scenarios for solution of the paradox. First of these was Microsoft's comments that OS/2 would be "portable" and could (would) be ported to a number of highly-interesting, non-Intel-powered platforms.

Obvious candidates here are the various RISC chips circulating at present. RISC is an acronym - Reduced Instruction Set Computers - and is the hottest thing since buttered toast among the work-station crowd these days. If OS/2 (initially rumored to be very highly hardware specific) can be ported over to the RISC-for-lunch bunch, how about DOS? Or, how about DOS/Windows? Would it be that hard to accomplish?

Motorola (manufacturer of the 680X0 Macintosh CPU chips) doesn't think so. (We'll wait and see...)

One thing real major electronics makers discovered in the '70's was the folly of tying themselves to a sole-source supplier for critical components. Rumors in March emphasized that spot-market price on the Intel 386SX and 386DX chips was escalating rapidly in March due to unanticipated demand for the entire 386/486 line(s). Smaller PC makers, already on thin margins due to bloody pricing competition, are said to be evaluating a number of alternative strategies.

Meanwhile, lots of software publishers are in the process of removing the various "hardware hooks" they've used in the past to gain speed advantages - all to make their software "seamless" under DOS or OS/2 on any hardware platform.

Interesting question: Can anyone name a second-source maker for Motorola's 68020, 30 and 40 chips?

WordPerfect 5.1 "Fixes" now -- and two months from now

WordPerfect Corporation, best known for their many, many product "bug-fix" releases after the original product release (figure that one out) and only the

date/time stamp gurus know for sure, has released an interim bug fix for *WordPerfect 5.1*.

It will be followed (a-la 5.0) with another bug fix release in two months. *Deja vu?* It should sound familiar.

Current (January 19 is date/time stamp) release addresses problems with implementation of expanded memory drivers that don't strictly adhere to LIM 4.0 standards, and some printer deficiencies. A second release (?March?) will target a problem with serial mouse drivers on ports other than COM1:.

If this all sounds a little like PC-DOS 3.2, you're right. WordPerfect stated they release bug fixes at about two month intervals without any change in the product number. Only way users can tell which version of *WordPerfect 5.1* they have is by the date/time stamp on the program files.

Fixes are free to users who report problems fixed in the release. All others have to pay \$10 for the fixes. Hrrmmmm ...

Oklahoma Returns - PC Designs Rises From the Flames

Makers of exquisitely-crafted PC's, PC Designs reports they will emerge from Chapter 7 bankruptcy via sale of the hi-tech manufacturer in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Known for their machines' excellent performance and durability, PC Designs was one of the best-kept secrets in the business.

And, that's probably why they wound up in Chapter 7.

According to company spokespeople, sale of the company will bring the marque back to the PC world after finalization and approval by the bankruptcy court. ▶

Honest Microsoft re-numbers Bug-fix release with terminal "A"

Back in Redmond, WA, they do things differently than in Orem, UT. Microsoft, publisher of WORD 5.0, has released a bug-fix for that product, but has renumbered it 5.0A. Did the same thing with the "fixed" version of DOS 3.3 (3.30A) and 4.0 (4.01).

This fix fixes the problems users with long files formatted in WORD 4.0 have had in the transition to 5.0 with headers and footers. In addition to the bug fixes, Microsoft also updated many of the printer drivers, including support for new printers such as the new Hewlett-Packard LaserJet IIP, for example.

Although Microsoft said the maintenance release would be available only to WORD 5.0 users who reported bugs, they also made it available to WORD SIG's in many PCUG's. That includes the NTPCUG. The maintenance update to 5.0A can be obtained via the NTPCUG WORD SIG.

If you can't beat them, Pick as a Process under UNIX

Pick is another well-kept secret. One of the more powerful business-oriented DBMS systems, Pick sprang from the minicomputer community several years ago (1973) to the super-micro and micro communities. But, Pick's been battling heads with UNIX for space all the time.

Solution? Run as a process under UNIX and quit struggling for OS supremacy. Pick can go either way – as an OS or as a UNIX process.

According to Dick Pick, Pick Systems President, the combination should be "ideal." Pick will run as a process under UNIX where each Pick user is a separate UNIX process, thus integrating the best of both worlds. It was described as a seamless interface by Gil Figueroa, Pick Systems executive vice president, who stated that users would be able to execute standard UNIX commands from Pick BASIC or TCL while Pick commands would be available

from UNIX.

A Xenix implementation of Pick from The Santa Cruz Operation is planned for the near future Pick officials reported. (Stretched? Of course. I've not reported any UNIX junk for awhile.)

Question: How do you know you're at a LAN conference?

Screwdrivers – just the right size for RS-232 connector fasteners were favored giveaways at the recent Interface '90 Plus WAN/LAN conference held in Dallas, TX, in early March. I think this trend was started by US Robotics and Hayes at one of the early Comdex conferences in Las Vegas, but sure was noticeable at the Dallas meet.

Actually in second place behind chocolates (Gotta feed the addicts), but last much, much longer. Most come from modem makers, but one, from REACT Computer Services, Inc., a data-recovery specialty outfit, was slightly larger and more comfortable if you've got large hands.

Question #2: How do you know you're anywhere in a strange town?

Streets On A Disk from Klynas Engineering of Simi Valley, CA, may solve that problem in the future. Available for all major US cities and most counties, Streets On A Disk comes on 5.25" disks for PC's and compatibles and supports VGA, EGA, CGA (B&W) and Hercules MGA graphics standards.

Claimed to be 3 - 4 times faster than their competition, the new release, 4.0, features AUTOPLACE and AUTOROUTE that allow address tokening and travel routing directions that handle one-way streets, overpasses and freeway exits. It's available locally at major software outlets.

Need a global View? Go inland PC Globe, Inc. from Arizona

Don't know why shown at Inter-

face '90 Plus, but PC Globe 3.0 looked super – and unfortunately completely up to date. This is more than just a global mapping program, it's more like an atlas on a disk.

PC Globe 3.0 has world, continent and country maps. Country maps show locations of major cities, elevations, lakes, rivers and mountains, and other geographical features. It also features a database with population, age distribution, ethnic groups, health statistics, economic data, etc. Everything in short, but 20 year-old, no longer extant geopolitical boundaries.

Special utilities including automatic currency conversion(s), time zone for major cities, point-to-point distances (and bearings), miles/kilometers toggle and data export capability are also included. PC Globe 3.0 screen saving is featured in .PCX (Paintbrush) format and the program requires 512K RAM, floppy or hard disk drive, DOS 2.0 or higher and supports VGA, EGA, CGA or Hercules MGA displays.

Hey! Is this April, or what? IBM says no PM font standard "standard"

IBM sneezes and the PC world winces. Evidently, there won't be any one OS/2 Presentation Manager font standard if recent PR releases are accurate.

I may quit writing about fonts and PM at this rate.

One unfortunate aspect of GUI (graphical user interfaces) is that font standards came into play, with corresponding accuracy of screen and printer fonts playing an increasingly larger role in the eyes of the user. Prior to the recent controversy over whose font standards would be implemented, most of us thought some form of the Adobe PostScript standard was the most likely candidate for both PM and WINDOWS/PM major roles.

That was before IBM/Microsoft seemingly endorsed the Agfa Compugraphics font-scaling technology (seen now in H-P's Type Director) before the Seybold Con-

ference last Fall. A major player in professional font/typesetting circles, the Agfa choice seemed to present a good alternative to Adobe's very high licensing fees. Besides, its a very fast, very comprehensive system.

Fact that the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet printers are far and away the dominant force in business settings and the H-P PCL graphics standard works very well with *Type Director* made this make a lot of sense.

While it's true that Adobe PostScript is the "darling" of the

desktop publishing crowd (and was pushed very hard by Apple), it's also very slow, bulky and not really that appropriate for business settings that are primarily text oriented. Hence the popularity of the H-P printers and standards.

Until the Seybold Conference. That's when Microsoft/Apple (strange, strained bedfellows) announced adoption of Apple's *Royal* font technology as the driver for *PM* and future *WINDOWS/PM* products. *Royal* has vanished, and now Apple and Microsoft talk about *TrueType* in-

stead. Actually just a name change.

Things turned full circle in March as IBM endorsed (again) the Adobe PostScript standard for *PM*, but allowed as how the other standard(s) would also be supported (initially) in *PM* products.

IBM's March announcement touched off a flurry of comments from all players involved, Apple, Microsoft, Adobe and IBM, each of whom justified and defended their various positions. Oh, well...

■

A "generic" Record Maker-manager For Personal Computers

by K.T. Dockray, MD, DABR, ABNM

FUNCTIONS

Software was written for a physician to satisfy his needs in creating descriptive text and distributing it to widely separated people and places. It is estimated that its flexible, or generic recording features, would make it usable by almost anyone with the same needs.

Records are made by filling 9 fixed fields with names, dates and other discriminators. Most fields are assisted so that dates are automatic and a single character will print multiple words to save typing. An unlimited number of spaces then advance to the screen that accepts alpha-numeric mnemonics.

On printing command, these abbreviations generate full text from a cache that describes what the operator sees, thinks, or does. Both the codes and the printed texts are chosen by the operator and modifiable at the screen at any time.

Ad lib comments are handled by a free entry space of 4,000 characters. Filling the record adds the operator's name, date and time. Reports can be printed immediately at the operator's desk or sent via modem to remotely-situated teletypewriters. For bills, electronic claims submission and accounting, all data is sent directly to the memory of a central office LAN.

The program has five main databases with add/delete/update sub-functions. There are nine

printing variables, 3 utilities, and eight search methods such as case by name, by referring doctor, etc. Commercial software finds phrases or any single word in the memory.

HARD AND SOFTWARE

Compaq Portable 386 1000 RAM, 100 MGB Winchester disc with custom software in compiled dBase III+, Sidekick, Hayes Smartcom II, Gopher, Paperchase, AMA/NET, Greatful Med, and Carbon Copy accessories. Maynard streaming tape back-up. Local Okidata Micro-line 92 printer, remote Akosha printers with Avatex 1200 baud modems. Estimated capacity 30,000 records at 3,000 bytes per file. Office LAN with Compaq 386 server, Novell SFT NET-WARE, 300 MGB memory, Compaq 286 and Corona terminals run compiled dBase III+ billingware, Side Kick, E-Z Claim by Impact, Carbon Copy and Lotus 1-2-3. U.S.Robotics modem. Three local Okidata and Texas Instruments printers. Estimated capacity 100,000 records.

SYSTEM DESIGN

In 1982, a solo radiologist was swamped with cases from a 100 bed city institution plus referrals from a net of six rural hospitals and clinics. Many complained of reporting delays caused by traditional dictation and manual transcription. Typist's salaries were \$300-\$800 a month. Five percent of billable work was lost to paper shuffling.

Existing software for x-ray text reporting was limited and PC equipment was questionable. Osborne's portable was clearly inadequate, so the first Compaq was chosen. A programmer began hacking screens and functions to cut typing strokes, enable the generation of full text for all x-ray reports, and manage the records held in memory. Design of the functions and their execution con-

►

straints were based on analyses of radiologic work steps (See Dockray, K.T. in Radiology of 1968, AJR of 1970, the Society of Photoptical Instrumentation Engineers, 1978, and Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Symposium on Computer Applications in Medical Care, 1985.)

Touch-typing entry was selected because of its speed. Mouse control, bar-code scanning, and voice commands to computer memory were too slow. The first program in Pascal took only codes calling text from memory, a parallel of the Harvard CLIP system. It was found that a free-text space was needed for uncodable, ad-lib comments. This was gained by rewriting the instructions into a relational database.

As diagnoses and chargeable procedures were entered by the doctor, automatic parts of the program appended CPT and ICD-9 codes. These are numbers required by government payers like Medicaid and Medicare to help with their clerical problems. Since case headers, informative text, and diagnostic/charge codes were already recorded, clerks had only to import the data from the radiologist's PC, add a few modifying strokes to make electronic and paper claims, print statements, and begin accounting.

RESULTS

The records manager now holds 16,000 patients in 50 MGB of memory. Each report is available for local or distant printing within seconds. All transcription salaries have stopped and there are no more complaints about late reports. Typing strokes have been cut 40-60% and information content of reports doubled. Modem relay of charges directly to the memory of the office LAN stopped paper billing losses. Referrals from rural hospitals increased as their clinicians received reports within short hours of patient examination.

COMMENT/DEBATE

The system came up in 1984. Critiques and objections to this package or the notion of computers in general promptly followed. "Your package works only for x-ray". Nonsense. Anybody who has to make records can use it. Put anything you wish into the code cache to print anything you need. Send it anywhere you can and bill it anytime the spirit moves. A general practitioner's physical exam, the surgeon's incision and drainage or parts numbers for a '38 Ford car are all the same to the memory.

"Typing is too slow. I am waiting for voice". Go ahead and wait. These machines are very slow, and have trouble with the full range of complex text reporting because their memory requirements are large. Unavoidably, a voice system becomes expensive. Another point. Drum playing is just touch typing with sticks on tight skin. Imagine how long it

might take to speak every note of a 10-bar riff laid by Buddy Rich. Then, time him as he plays it.

Typing is a secretary's job". OK. Dictate your regular report and give your secretaries the computer. Odds are that their output will accelerate as they begin making their own codes that anticipate what you are about to say. Good transcriptionists are that way. However, this observer prefers to keep their salary in his own pocket.

"Memorizing code sucks". You are right to a degree. But most codes are abbreviations that you already know and use daily. Put them in the machine together with anything else you need. And, you can remember the ones you make up because they are uniquely yours. Most medical workers already know several hundred that are used in regular charting. If you forget one, a search function can screen it for review in seconds.

"Does it really work?". Yes. This scenario happens. An emergency brain CT is done at 9 AM in a referring hospital 80 miles away. A courier brings it in by 11. My report is on the rural hospital's teleprinter by 11:20. Charges are sent to the billing office and the claim filed with the regional BC/BS/Medicare computer before the close of business.

CONCLUSION

It is possible to generate descriptive text material thru stringing or concatenation of short codes that pull long word strings from memory. A records management system enables output of information to local and distant sites. A method is provided to integrate billing and charge functions with a separate local area network. The method of text creation is such that the system should be usable by anyone in almost any work situation.

K. T. Dockray ■

(Editor's note: Dr. Dockray has donated the software described above to the NTPCUG DOM. If anyone would like to review it for the DOM, please contact Howard Hamilton.)

SWAP  SHOP

Four lines free each month to members; 5th through 10th lines at 30 cents per word. Larger ads at commercial space rates. Send check to the Editor for words exceeding the four-line limit. Free ads are on a space-available basis.

*** 20% Discount to NTPCUG Members ***
 Individual, Business Taxes & Accounting
 Call for free estimate, 15+ years experience.
 Call Bruce Schubert, CPA 233-8353



Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community

Connie Andrews, Volunteer Coordinator

Some of our volunteers mentioned in this column may feel discomfort at the idea of being singled out for special praise. No problem ... Because they'll get it sooner or later, anyway, like it or not.

I think David McGehee is one of those volunteers. David has been a member since our REAL EARLY days, and over the years has quietly put in many hours on our behalf. He is currently serving as Secretary of the Users Group, Leader of the Hardware Solutions SIG, and Assistant Leader of the WORD SIG.

David is patient and always finds time to help others out. Like his work on the volunteer drive to get David Allen a computer in 1988. (David Allen in 1988 was an honors student at Stephenville High School and suffering from a severe form of Juvenile or Rheumatoid Arthritis.)

Marie McGehee, David's wife, was also active in that drive and has been involved in other special projects for the Users Group over the years. Did you know that it used to be Marie's voice you heard when you called the User's Group recording to find out about the next meeting?

For being there for us, David and Marie, thank you!

In this issue we are acknowledging volunteers who served for the month of February. Don't forget our officers, directors, SIG coordinators and leaders, newsletter publisher, editor, staff and writers, newsletter exchange and BBS staff are all volunteers; their names are listed in other sections of this newsletter.

INFOMART Liaison

Stuart Yarus
Robert Hilliard
Archie Pinkney
Robert Andrews
Martha Eickman

Presentation/Equipment Setup and Breakdown

Timothy Carmichael
Tom Fowlston
Rudy Serra

Auditorium Tickets

Pehl. Lee

Information/Registration Booth

C. D. Agee
Mike Ashley (Anchor)
K. B. Barton (Anchor)
Randi Boucher
Ed Brown
C. E. Francis
Paul Fredd (Anchor)
Rick Griffith (Anchor)
Judy Griffiths
Allan Harbough (Anchor)
Hank Holt (Anchor)
Linda Irby
John Mackoy (Anchor)
Larry Matzek
Claudia McDonald
Stacey Naftel
Andy Oliver (Anchor)
Raymond Reyes (Anchor)

Steve Saunders

Connie Testa (Statistician)
Arne Trickett
Larry Tucker (Anchor)
Jose Valenciano (Anchor)
Paul Williams (Anchor)

Disk of the Month (DOM):

DOM Central Committee
Preston Brashear
Charles Carter
Mark Gruner
Howard Hamilton
Kathryn Loafman
Kenneth Loafman

DOM Volunteer Coordinator

Bill Drissel

DOM Table

Roy Bales
Stan Berlin
Gene Carleton
Charles Cashion
Jay Chambliss
Bill Drissel
Kent Haven
Jo Johnston
E. M. Kelley
Zack Loafman
Duane Martin
Bob Post
Tom Scurlock
Claude Walston

With Special Thanks to:

Joe A. Allen
Paul Corbett
Shawn Dunn
Pat Henley
Bob Karleback
Jerry Stone

DOM Review/Presentation

Richard Bauman
Steve Lanier
John Puckette

Paul Van Dreal
(2 reviews)
Ann Weatherall

Public Relations Committee

Francis Bright
Peh L. Lee
Elwood Lindell
Charles Lucas
Tony Noguerras
Reagan Andrews

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

1. Via BBS: (817) 461-0425 (metro) or (817) 461-0506 (metro). Sign up on the Volunteer Conference - make the subject matter your area of interest.

2. Meeting day: Sign up at the Information Booth or DOM Booth to work those areas in a coming month.

3. By phone:

Auditorium Presentations

Timothy Carmichael 331-6303 (h)
661-4626 (w)

DOM Booth Activities

Bill Drissel 264-9680 (h)

DOM Software Review

Howard Hamilton 644-5721 (h)

Information Booth and General Information

Connie Andrews 828-0699 (h)

Disk of the Month

Disks released at the March 1990 meeting.

Disk 460AB. The Gags Disk III, 3/90 - Collection of Trick/Gag Programs.

It's Ba-ack!! Another collection of trick/gag software to play jokes on your friends at work or play. None of these programs will do any damage to your PC.

ALIEN, BIRTHDAY, and ILOVEYOU will allow gremlins to post alien messages or "I Love You" messages at regular intervals.

DRIP is memory resident program that will cause characters to fall off the screen. COMMIE and MACEMUL takes your very expensive IBM PC and turns it into a very cheap Commodore 64 or Macintosh computer. MACEMUL requires graphics.

MURPHY and RODNEY have some great oneliners. MURPHY is based on Murphy Laws such as "An object will fall so as to do the most damage". RODNEY has oneliners from some of Rodney Dangerfield comedy routines. Some of the material may be inappropriate because of language.

ER1 thru ER8 are funny MS-DOS error messages like "Abort, Retry, or Shoot?" The program SILLYDOS will not allow you to execute simple MS-DOS commands and will come back with a little quip.

PANIC is designed to pop up after so many carriage returns and will pretend to reformat your hard disk. PANIC is not for the faint of heart - read PANIC.DOC before using. JOKE pretends to reformat also but not as seriously. JOKE2 will pretend to erase files but it doesn't.

CATF is a very simple aquarium program that requires graphics. REBEEP keeps the computer beeping till a key is pressed. Then there is THATSALL that plays the Looney tunes theme "That's all Folks" and requires graphics.

MUSHROOM brings a commercial to your PC. One of the best examples of digitized sound, it combines speech with music to provide a commercial for an air freshener.

REDROSE is another example of digitized sound. Here you have an old time singer singing "Red Roses for a Blue Lady" over and over again. BAKTALK2 turns the computer into a lovesick person. HEADACHE fills the screen with ASCII characters in a rapid fashion.

This software was collected and donated by Shawn Dunn & Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by prepared by Shawn Dunn.

Disk 461. CompuFile 2.0 DEMO, 7/88 - Disk cataloging system DEMO Global Software Systems of Greenwood, Indiana Shareware Registration: \$59.95

This program allows you to catalog your disk collection (floppy or hard) and this demo version is limited to 20 volumes. Like any filing system that works, it requires a volume name. If you don't have one, it will add one for you. It will even let you add your own identifying "CompuLabel". This library manager program allows you to add, delete, and modify volumes/files in the database. It does everything that it promises. It performs both well and in an intuitive manner. Functions that are used often usually are available by simply pressing <enter> (as defaults). The program will read files in subdirectories faultlessly. However, when they are put in the database, the path information is placed illogically. Since the path is not displayed as part of the filename, it is very easy to overlook. The program presents a very colorful screen that is customizable by the user. The user is also able to turn sound off and on. [The editor found the overuse/abuse of sound in this program annoying.]

The program operates in color text mode and will therefore work with CGA, EGA or VGA. It was successfully evaluated in both CGA and VGA. Other system requirements are 256K and DOS 3.0 or later. It was successfully evaluated with an XT clone and a AT-386 clone. You must have FILES=20 or more in your config.sys file since a large number of files are open to operate this database.

Installation is simple. Printing operates strangely. The lines per page were set to 60 and it proceeds to consistently print 45 files (50 lines) per page. It will print to a disk file or direct to the printer. Printout is simple text (no codes are required).

It has both context-sensitive help files and printable documentation files.

Software donated by the publisher, Global Software Systems.

This review prepared by LeRoy Thompson.

Disk 462. 1-2-3 Tax Templates for 1989 -- 1040A.WK1 and 089TAX.WK1

- 089TAX.WK1
- Form 1040, Schedule A/B/C/E/SE
- and others
- By Duncan E. Barnett, CPA
- 1040A.WK1
- Form 1040A
- By Leslie A. Wheeler
- 1295 Sobre Vista Road
- Sonoma, California 95476
- Shareware Registration Fee: \$10.00

1040A.WK1 is a 1-2-3 worksheet for form 1040A which is often referred as the short form which many people can use. This Lotus 1-2-3 Tax Template is very short, but does serve its purpose which is to help determine your tax liability based on the inputs you provide. To use the worksheet or template, simply retrieve the file named 1040A.WK1 and input the necessary numbers in the un-protected cell. The worksheet is very straight forward and easy to use. ▶

Since many taxpayers need to file their taxes on form 1040 or the long form, the author has another shareware product for this long form. This additional worksheet includes Form 1040, schedules A- F and SE, Forms 2106, 2119, 2441, 4562, 6251, 8606, and 8615 for a shareware fee of only \$25.00.

The 1-2-3 worksheet 089TAX.WK1 is for Form 1040 or the long form and is designed to print the results directly on the various IRS forms. This worksheet comes up with two windows where the bottom window has basic information on how the worksheet is structured. Be prepared to spend a little more time when using this worksheet since the verbiage of the various forms is not included in the file.

****WARNING**:** This and other tax preparation programs should be thought of as fast and semi-smart adding machines only. The program cannot contain all the logic necessary to connect all the provisions of the tax laws with the particular situations of all taxpayers. The IRS will hold you responsible for all errors in your return, whether mathematical or substantive. Reliance on a tax program will probably not save you from penalties (including fraud) or interest charges, if you claim some tax benefit you are not entitled to. Use this and other tax programs for preliminary calculations and "what if" scenarios to check the tax effects of making or not making IRA contributions, etc. Thoroughly check the instructions that the IRS furnishes with each form to be sure that you are entitled to use the form, and that the data is properly entered and that all adjustments and limitations have been applied. Be sure that you are not required to fill out additional forms or schedules not included in this package. And manually check all calculations, and table lookups to be sure that the figures are correct. There could always be mathematical and logic errors, incorrect assumptions, and other obscure errors that do not show up in trial runs with sample data.

This software was donated by the authors, Leslie Wheeler and Duncan Barnett.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner.

Disk 463. BassTour 1.0, 10/88 - Bass Tournament Fishing Game - BassTour 1.0, Richard Olsen, 83 Mill Road, Littleton, Ma. 01460, Shareware Registration: \$10.00

BassTour is one of the best games to come out in a while. It is a fun simulation of a real fishing tournament that you can play in a short practice session or spend hours trying to catch the big lunkers. The game has levels for the novice, the intermediate, and the pro. The variety of lakes you fish keeps the game interesting almost indefinitely and the registration fee is one of the most attractive around for a quality game.

BassTour is a fishing tournament game in which you have complete control of a fully rigged bass boat. You control where it goes and how it gets there. Your bass boat has all of the latest accessories including a trolling motor, LCD chart recorder, a rod box containing six different fishing rods, and a fully stocked tackle box we would all be proud to own. The object of the game is to catch the heaviest five fish limit on each of three days of the tournament. The fisherman with the highest total weight wins the tournament.

As in real fishing, it's not always easy! Each day of the tournament allows you to fish for six hours. Just about

everything you do takes time. You make the trade offs. You must bring your boat back to the weigh in area before the six hour fishing day has elapsed and have your fish weighed in.

What You Need To Run BassTour:

IBM PC or compatible with at least 512K of memory and EGA or VGA card and EGA/VGA monitor. BassTour will NOT run on CGA, Mono, or Hercules video cards. You can run BassTour from a floppy or hard disk. BassTour will support mouse operation.

This software was donated by NTPCUG member Rick Griffith.

This review prepared by Rick Griffith.

Disk 464ABC. PC-File 5.0, 1/90 - Database Program, c1990 ButtonWare, SHAREWARE FEE = \$129.95 + \$5.00 shipping

PC-File is an all-purpose database that can organize, manipulate, update and retrieve information. Its ideal for customer and address files, invoicing and billing, customized form letters, sales tracking and analysis, itemized lists, inventory and much more. You can import and export database files for dBase, PC-File:db, PC-Calc+, as well as any DIF file or Mail-Merge file. Text files can also be imported/exported: WordPerfect files, Peachtext files, fixed length, and fixed length with carriage return. PC-File 5.0 works well with PC-Calc+ and PC-Type II, ButtonWare's spreadsheet and word processor.

Other features:

- Redesigned menus and functions
- Greatly increased speed
- Customized up to five data entry screens, with up to 128 fields
- Retrieve data from multiple databases
- Versatile report writer for fast and easy custom reports
- Graph line, pie, bar charts and more (Postscript supported)
- Print mailing labels or print on the envelope itself
- Telephone dialing and phone log
- Mouse support

Requires two (2) 720K floppy drives OR a hard disk with at least 1MB free. This evaluation copy comes on 3 diskettes: Disks A and B contain the programs and demonstration data bases. Disk C contains the documentation files. The manual is 408 pages long, which is about 2 inches of paper, so make sure that you have at least that amount in your printer! There is also a file with a short list of the commands (CARD, see Disk A), and a demonstration database comprised of 53 questions and answers about PC-File functions.

NOTE: PC-File 5.0 is the updated version for BOTH PC-File+ 3.0 and PC-File:dB. This release of PC-File takes the place of ALL PREVIOUS RELEASES.

The source for this software was NTPCUG member Roy Bales.

This review prepared by Roy Bales.

Disk 465AB. Mean Streets DEMO, Interactive detective thriller, Access Software, 545 West 500 South; Bountiful, Utah 84010, 1-801-298-9077 1-800-824-2549

This Disk is a demo of Access Software's new adventure game - Mean Streets. In this game, you are a "detective

hired by the beautiful daughter of a university professor to uncover the facts about her father's death." The game includes 27 animated characters which respond to questions, bribes, and threats. You travel around through San Francisco and Los Angeles, where the game takes place, in a Lotus Speeder - a 3-D solid-fill simulation of a land and air vehicle. Mean Streets features a proprietary new technology developed by Access Software that allows MS-DOS computers to play digitized sound effects, music, and speech.

The disk contains three individual demos - one each for CGA-4 color, EGA-16 color, and MCGA-256 Color. They each contain sample scenes, from the game, showing off the animation and sound. This demo is highly recommended for anyone who is interested in adventure games, PC graphics and animation, and digitized sound. Many of the animations include live actors and are quite impressive in the MCGA-256 Color demo. Even with the CGA-4 color demo, you will be astounded by the realistic sound which includes speech you can really understand.

System Requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 or 100% compatible computer with CGA, EGA, MCGA, or VGA graphics adapter; MS-DOS 2.0 or greater; and 640K of memory. A Hard Disk or RAM Disk is highly recommended. Many files are unZIPed on the fly during the game.

If you like adventure games, you will certainly want to buy the Mean Streets adventure game. The game itself requires only 512K of memory and includes mouse support. In addition to the graphics adapters supported by the demo, the TANDY-16 Color adapter is supported. The suggested retail price is \$59.95. This demo disk is neither interactive nor copy protected.

Mean Streets Demo was donated to NTPCUG by the publisher, Access Software.

This review was prepared by Richard Terreo.

Disk 466. Laser Letterhead Plus 2.0, 12/89 - Letterhead/Mailing List Mgr, Consultant Pharmacist Services, Inc., 5571 46th Avenue North, Kenneth City, FL 33709-3601, Shareware Fee: \$39.00

Laser Letterhead Plus is an excellent program that creates letterhead stationary for those people and businesses that do not have that fancy paper for letters. Not only does the program make letterhead stationary, it will also print labels for letters, print envelopes with TO and FROM addresses. Finally, the program maintains a database of address to print mailing labels and/or envelopes.

Laser Letterhead Plus requires IBM PC/XT/AT or equivalent equipped with 512K RAM and a hard disk or high density floppy (1.2 MB or 1.44 MB). Operating system must be MS-DOS 2.1 or higher. Color and monochrome monitors are supported. All HP laser printers are supported except the original HP Laser Jet. One other important requirement is a proportional font - either a cartridge or a soft font. Letterhead printing requires proportional fonts.

This is a nice program for making your own letterheads. You can have a business or personal letterhead with the date as part of the letterhead. Another nice touch is that

you can surround the letterhead with a box, single or double line. You can even have background shading.

Now for the label capabilities. Included is a complete mailing list manager that can be used to print envelopes or mailing labels. The program will print both the TO and FROM address on the envelope. Mailing labels are in two rows of 10 for a total of ten per page. You can also print return address labels. The program prints 30 return address labels on a page - 3 columns of 10 addresses.

There is a file called MANUAL.DOC that contains a 50+ page manual. The manual is designed to print on a laser printer and includes all information to get started. You need to pay particular attention to the setup menu (F10) and font names.

This software was donated to the NTPCUG by the Author.

This review prepared by Paul Van Dreal.

Disk 467. 3-D Menu 2.0, 2/89, Hard Disk Menuing System, By Tony Minichillo, 528 McRoberts Avenue, Toronto, Ontario Canada M6E 4R4, Shareware Fee: \$39.00

3DMENU, version 2.0, is an excellent hard disk menuing system. With registration the user gets all the normal perks, including the latest version of the program, a complete user's guide, a year's worth of technical support, etc., plus a twist - - an \$8 commission on anyone else who registers their copy and notes your name and registration number.

The documentation that comes on the disk is for version 1.1 and is seven pages long. The disk also contains a batch file to install 3DMENU.

3DMENU features pop-up and sub-menus with three-dimensional effects and user-selectable colors for each portion of the menu screens. The author claims mouse support, but reviewers could not verify this. A screen-saver utility included has a five minute default which may be altered by the user. A DOS shell is included, as well as context-sensitive help which is accessed data on the function or file data being plotted. Up to five separate plots (called "stacks") may be handled simultaneously. You may overlay and compare one function or set of data points against another by not erasing between plots. The top "stack" is unique in that values are plotted as discrete (x,y) points without connecting lines.

Short manual is inadequate. Sample FUNC.FCN and DATA.DAT supply ASCII function and data files for testing program features, a nice plus.

The program works well once you spend an hour figuring out how it works. Easily graphs ASCII data files (stock prices) and mathematical functions (SCUBA diving nitrogen uptake curves). You can quickly compare an ideal curve from a function or formula with the data from an experiment, identify outlying points, and repeat on up to five plots. Ability to generate data file from a complex function for further plotting is useful too. Program deficiencies include lack of color, lack of full page graphics printer driver, and dynamic axes which use logical rounded values that could be toggled on/off.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: CGA, Hercules, or EGA (in CGA mode). An optional mouse is supported (not

tested), or you may use keyboard cursor controls. Graphics printed output via dot matrix printer only.

This software was donated by NTPCUG member Robert M. Monaghan.

This review prepared by Robert M. Monaghan.

Disk 469. XACT Series Calculator 3.0, 3/89 - HP Calculator Emulation, CalcTech Inc., 13629 Bellevue- Redmond Rd. Suite 202, Bellevue, WA 98005, (206) 643-1682

XACT Series Calc is a shareware set of three complete, full featured emulations of Hewlett Packard's most popular handheld calculators:

- HP-11C - Scientific Calculator
- HP-12C - Financial Calculator
- HP-16C - Programmers Calculator

The programs will be most useful to those who are familiar with the HP series of calculators. These calculators use what is called RPN logic which means that their is not an equal sign (=). While this may sound strange, adding machines use RPN logic when adding and subtracting.

Registration: The commercial version of any single calculator is available for \$28 + \$4 shipping. Alternatively, you can order all three models for \$48 + \$4 shipping. The commercial upgrades include many features not in the shareware versions. These additional features include TSR pop up capability, mouse support, data import/export function, full programming which may be saved to disk, simulated tape, and printed manual. Registration is by check, VISA/MC.

Each calculator program gives a graphical representation of the actual HP calculator and is mapped out on the PC keyboard. The numbers "1" through "0" at the top of the keyboard and the three rows below them are used for the HP Keypad. The function keys "f" and "g" can also be activated by pressing the left and right shift keys respectively. Also the numeric keypad can be used for all numbers.

The 11C calculator program faithfully represents the HP's power in calculating a polynomial equation and the 12C calculator program did equally as well on present value and depreciation problems.

This software was donated to the by the publishers, Calc-Tech Inc.

This review prepared by Rick Griffith.



Disk of the Month MAIL ORDER FORM

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

Mail form to: NTPCUG, DOM Mail Order, P.O. Box 780066, Dallas TX 75378-0066

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North Texas PC Users Group

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

Member # _____

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Phone: (Check Preferred No.) Home ____ (____) _____ Metro? Y ____ N ____

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Occupation/Profession: _____

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Do you want access to the NTPCUG Electronic Bulletin Board? Y ____ N ____ Already Have ____

Please initial here _____ if you do not wish to have your address included on member lists sold for the NTPCUG's benefit to advertisers of IBM compatible products.

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

1. Working with NTPCUG Volunteer Committees? (Please check all that apply.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin Board (BBS)
<input type="checkbox"/> Disk of the Month (DOM)
<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Setup/Breakdown
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial/Bookkeeping
<input type="checkbox"/> INFOMART/Vendor Setup | <input type="checkbox"/> Information/Registration/Membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations/Advertising
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Interest Group Coordination |
|---|--|

2. Working with Special Interest Groups? (Please check all that apply.)

- | | | | |
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<input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft WORD | <input type="checkbox"/> Assembler
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<input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy
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<input type="checkbox"/> Hardware Solutions
<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Programmers
<input type="checkbox"/> WordStar |
|---|---|---|--|

3. Being a volunteer, informal "consultant" in your area of expertise for NTPCUG members?

If so, list area(s): _____

Detach below for receipt.

Applications should be mailed to: North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.
 P.O. Box 780066
 Dallas, TX 75378-0066

Received: \$ _____ Check No. _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____ By _____

Meetings & Times



9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

To Be Announced

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

MCI Mail
MCI Mail - Electronic Mail for the 80's

(See page 1 for description of programs.)

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

To Be Announced

Special Interest Group Meetings

For possible time changes, check the Bulletin Board just before the meeting and the overhead display in the lobby at INFOMART.

9:00 - 9:55

Assembler
Community Volunteers
DOS
Hardware Solutions
Personal Users

10:00 - 10:55

Cryptanalysis
Graphics
Local Area Networks
Paradox *
Personal Users
Unix/Xenix

12:00 - 12:55

Beginners Pascal
C Language
Communications
Personal Users
RBase
Stock Mkt Investing

1:00 - 1:55

Business Applications
LOTUS
Personal Users
Turbo Pascal
Windows & OS/2
WORD

2:00 - 2:55

Advanced Programmers
DAC Easy Accounting
Databases

11:30 - 11:55

Orientation

Special Interest Groups

* Paradox SIG will not meet in April.



North Texas PC 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.

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 newsletter, and send it with \$24 membership dues to the Membership Director whose address is shown below. A subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership. The Group meets once each month, usually on the second Saturday. See cover for date, time and place of the next User Group meeting.

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Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

Phil Chamberlain
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Jim Holington

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Stuart Yarus John Pribyl

NOTE: To access the BBS from outside Area Code 817, use Area Code 817. (This is NOT a toll call from Area Code 214.)

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

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

(Check newsletter mailing label for your renewal date.)

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