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Deadline:

All advertising and other material for publication in North Texas PC NEWS must be received by the NEWS staff by the 10th of the month prior to publication. See deadline information below.

Circulation:

North Texas PC NEWS circulation was 1937 last month.

Member distribution was 1577; remaining copies were distributed to PC user groups around the country, and to advertisers, prospective members and others with common interests.

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DEADLINE
Copy deadline for February
North Texas PC NEWS:
Friday, January 10th

Meeting Dates:

January Meeting - 3rd Sat.(18th)
February Meeting - 2nd Sat.(8th)
March Meeting - 1st Sat.
(tentative)

New Year's Resolutions:

No. 1: To help at our Saturday meetings.
No. 2: etc.

Phone numbers are on page 23.

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: 10429 N. MacArthur, #360, Irving, TX 75063

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

Table of Contents

President's Message	1
Andy Oliver	
Batch File Tips and Utilities <i>First of a series.</i>	3
Mitchel A. Hoselton	
The World of C++ <i>A product review</i>	7
Jim Hoisington	
Cells & Ranges	8
Betty Brooks	
Nominees for Office in 1992 <i>Official Ballot</i>	13
Nominating Committee	
Colorix <i>A Review</i>	25
Neil Berkowitz	
How Does it Work? <i>Zero Surge</i>	26
Andy Baird <i>Boeing Employees Computing Society</i>	
On Complexity, No. 59 <i>Mainframe Computers</i>	28
Jim Hoisington	
<i>Special Items:</i>	
Agenda	1
Variety Store	10
SIG Reports	14
Member Application Blank	14
New Disks from the DOM Squad	20
Volunteer Guide	27
Officers, Meetings & Times	29

Program for January _____ Timothy Carmichael _____

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Personal Software Review

Parsons Technology

Anne Rawland, Director of Corporate Communications

Parsons Technology, a computer software development firm, currently markets 20 affordable products in five divisions including financial, personal improvement, personal productivity, utility and church software. Based in Hiawatha, Iowa, Parsons employs over 200 people and maintains a customer base of approximately 700,000. This presentation will review the full product line and will demonstrate products such as the money manager and accounting package MoneyCounts and spreadsheet software ProCalc 3D.

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Get a Jump on April 15 with the 1991 Personal Tax Edge and other Time-Saving Software

Parsons Technology

Anne Rawland, Director of Corporate Communications

Personal Tax Edge calculates and prints IRS-approved tax forms for preparing federal and state returns. The program includes nearly 40 of the most popular federal forms schedules and worksheets used by individuals. The package includes a Tax Planning Version and a Final Filing Version with state modules available for the first time. In addition to Personal Tax Edge, the legal document generator It's Legal 2.0 and the hypertext reference Resident Expert for DOS will be shown. There will be a drawing for free products. *

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

NTPCUG Business Meeting

There will be a drawing for a free copy of Microsoft Visual Basic and several other software packages. *

* Tickets for each drawing will be given out from 10 minutes before until 15 minutes after the start-time of the meeting to attending NTPCUG members who show proof of membership.

PREZ SEZ

I'm beginning to grasp what Jim Hoisington meant as he left the November meeting chanting, "One more!" The responsibilities, time and effort required to volunteer as an officer and director are, at times overwhelming. Yet, the rest of the time it's fun.

On behalf of the board, and speaking personally for the NTPCUG, I want to thank Jim for his commitment. To do this job three years as President-Elect and three years as President is truly commendable.

I did not let Jim hang up his beanie in retirement, though. He has been asked to stay on as a Director of the corporation for the next year. Of course, since this is being written before the elections, rumors have been floating around that Jim will try to stuff the ballot box with write-ins for Bill Gates.

In looking back, the group can be proud of our progress and the leadership that brought us that progress. In looking forward, I want to make sure that the group is doing everything that it can to

benefit the members and the community in the effective use of personal computers.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

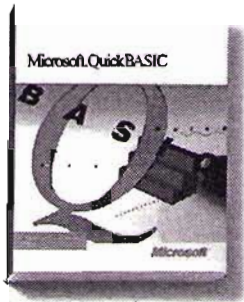
Volunteer for an hour at the DOM table or the Information Booth. Check with the Volunteer Coordinator about other areas. Thank your SIG leaders for good presentations. Make suggestions to the SIG Leaders for future presentations. Relieve the SIG leaders by volunteering to show the SIG how you use an application.

It looks like I'm going to have to add PREZ and SEZ to my spelling dictionary for the next twelve months. NTPCUG is another one. My guess is that words like "NiT-PiC" and "UG" only show up in the Advanced Programmers' meetings.

It's getting late.

Andy Oliver

♠



Compiling your application is as easy as choosing **Make EXE File**. If you need help on a language keyword, it's only a keystroke away.

Zip. Bam. Boom.

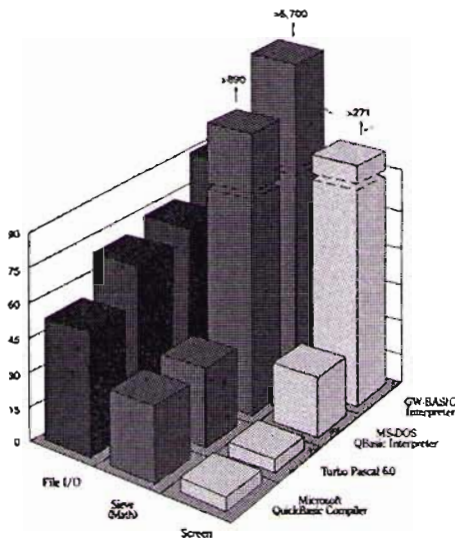
That's how it feels to build a DOS[®] .EXE with the remarkable Microsoft QuickBasic[™] compiler.

To start with, you can zip right along when writing code. Because you'll be working in a fast development environment that includes debugging aids such as watch variables and conditional breakpoints. And a multiple-module, multiple-window, syntax-checking editor. Plus context-sensitive help that answers your questions with a single keystroke or mouse click.

Then, when your app is completely finished, just unleash our high-speed native 80x86 compiler. And bam. You'll have a 100% standalone executable that's very quick. Very powerful, too, since it can access all 640K of DOS memory.

The final result: a fast, sophisticated application that can be distributed without paying any runtime fees.

So call us at (800) 541-1261, Dept. T14, or see your Microsoft dealer. And find out how Microsoft QuickBasic compiler can create your own personal boom in programming.



Benchmark comparison shows the speed of the Microsoft QuickBasic compiler.

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PROGRAMMER'S TIPS

Key Features

- High speed native 80x86 compiler
- Max DOS capacity
- Multiple Modules
- Run/Edit/Continue w/o recompiling
- PROCEDURES & FUNCTIONS w/ local variables & parameter passing
- User Definable data types/structures
- SELECT CASE & DO/WHILE
- Line Numbers & GOTO/GOSUB
- Watch Variables

Microsoft QuickBasic Compiler	MS-DOS QBASIC Interpreter	GW-BASIC [®] Interpreter	Turbo Pascal [®] 6.0
Yes	No	No	Yes
640K	160K	64K	640K
Yes	No	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	No	No
Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Allowed	Allowed	Required	Allowed
Yes	No	No	Yes

More powerful than QBASIC Interpreter or GW-BASIC, Microsoft QuickBasic is as structured as Pascal, yet surpasses it in productivity.

- Use the exclusive QuickLib's to add new commands and functions. For instance, specialized math, file I/O, database, and graphics.
- You can use hundreds of 3rd party/shareware libraries. Or make your own QuickLib's by compiling a Microsoft QuickBasic module.



Batch File Tips and Utilities

The First in a Series by Mitchell A. Hoselton, Ph.D.

Series Introduction

This is a tutorial series about techniques for writing efficient, powerful and, possibly, elegant batch files. It is not a series subtitled "The Joy of Batch File Programming," or "Zen and the Art of Batch File Programming." It will be an introduction to practical tips and utilities that make writing batch files more interesting, more satisfying and more rewarding. Too many PC users think that "batch file" means only AUTOEXEC.BAT. They think that utilities are only for other people. Unfortunately, they are missing opportunities to make computing much easier. There is more to batch files than AUTOEXEC.BAT and more to AUTOEXEC.BAT than setting DATE, TIME, PATH, and PROMPT.

On my C: drive I have over 100 batch files occupying 110 Kbytes. The largest are several Kbytes in size. Most of them I've written myself. The DOS prompt hardly ever appears, and then only when requested. Most of the batch files are linked together so each one can be selected from a menu created by another. Many of them print menus on the screen; all the menus respond to single letter keyboard selections. These batch files launch all the important applications and most of the minor ones.

There is only one overriding reason for writing batch files. Batch files save time. Once an application is successfully launched from a batch file, its name and its command line switches can be safely forgotten. From that time on the batch file will take care of the details.

The batch file control language (BFCL, for short) provided by DOS offers only a few programming tools. The key to writing powerful batch files is, therefore, largely a matter of hard work and good luck. It takes work to learn useful tricks and techniques and it takes luck to find the right utilities to fill in the gaps that DOS left behind. The plan for this series is to take some of the work and most of the luck out of writing and using batch files. It will provide an introduction to the most useful programming tips and utility routines available. The main focus will be on enhancing batch file programming options, flow control features and programming sophistication. No batch file related topic will be excluded.

This series will, over time, provide coverage of all the basic batch file commands. It will cover tips and suggestions that inexperienced users can appreciate. It will also include tips that power users can use to

push the BFCL to the limits of its capability. Anyone who has written a batch file will know something about the limitations of the BFCL. Using all the tricks in the book will not make it a great programming language. To get a quantum leap in batch file performance requires adding new features to the BFCL. If Microsoft won't provide them, batch file programmers can still turn to third party utility routines that expand their programming options.

These articles will help all users overcome some of the worst shortcomings of the BFCL. Everyone should find several new tricks or utilities that they can use when writing batch files. The various articles will demonstrate to beginners the full range of options that batch files can provide for them. The series should motivate them to start writing batch files. The series will help experienced users improve their batch file writing skills and introduce them to utilities they have not seen before.

The Sources

So where does all this information come from? Some tips and ideas are rediscovered by batch file programmers of every generation. Some of the tips come from books. The best ones come from computer magazines; PC Magazine and PC/Computing being the two best sources. Anyone who wants to develop a personal library of batch file tips and utilities should scour the computer magazines for a steady supply of more good ideas.

The sources for utility routines are equally diverse. Public domain and shareware utilities are often available from bulletin boards or discount software houses. Many are available in libraries of programs accessible on CompuServe and from other on-line database services. PC Magazine operates a service called PC MagNet.

I've been clipping and saving items from every source at my disposal since before I bought my first PC. Some of the utilities mentioned in my files are shareware, some are public domain and some are commercial programs sold by software vendors. Some of them are available on Disk-of-the-Month diskettes sold by the North Texas PC User's Group. The important criterion for inclusion in this series is not the source. What really counts is, "How can this utility help those who write batch files do a better job?"

The Series Standard PC System

Unless specified otherwise, articles in this series assume a standard PC system that consists of a 386 compatible PC with at least 2 megabytes of memory, two floppy disk drives and one physical hard disk. The hard disk has two or more partitions. The active partition (C:) has DOS 5.0 installed and is known as the active DOS partition. A printer, if required, will be a parallel device connected to LPT1. A modem, if

required, is attached on COM1. DOS batch files work on all PCs with all versions of DOS. The details change, however, with each DOS version. This series is generally, but not exclusively, limited to covering DOS 5.0.

Booting Up The System

The story will start at the beginning; at the very first step of the PC boot cycle. The remainder of this article covers the steps that occur prior to the appearance of the DOS prompt on the screen. That may not sound like much territory to cover. However, a lot happens when the computer powers-on. Every programmer should have some appreciation and a general understanding of what is happening inside the computer at all times. That is even true for batch file programmers. Now is as good a time as any to start working on developing that understanding.

It takes only a few seconds between power-on and the execution of the first line in CONFIG.SYS. Nevertheless, all the important actions undertaken by the hardware without the benefit of outside control occur in those few seconds. DOS makes its first critical actions in those few seconds. There is even time for the most unusual, the most powerful and, possibly, the most dangerous utility on any computer to take control of the PC during those few seconds.

The boot process was described in the May 1991 edition of PC/Computing, more or less, along the following lines:

1) Turn on the PC. At power-on, the CPU clears its data registers and resets the program counter register to F000h. The "h" means hexadecimal notation. The first megabyte of PC memory consists of the segment addresses from 0000h to FFFFh, inclusive. F000h is the permanent memory address of the first instruction of the boot program stored in the ROM BIOS chips. (In hexadecimal notation the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to F are used to represent the digits zero to fifteen. The positions indicate the integer powers of sixteen instead of the integer powers of ten that are encountered in decimal notation. For example, 3AFh = $(3 \cdot 16^2) + (10 \cdot 16) + 15 = 943$. Hexadecimal notation is convenient because it provides a compact form for expressing the binary numbers that the computer uses internally.)

2) The CPU starts processing the ROM BIOS boot program which runs the Power-On-Self-Test (POST for short). The POST begins by testing for memory malfunctions. The POST was described in some detail in the February 13, 1990 edition of PC Magazine.

3) The POST checks that the input/output devices are working properly. These tests look at such devices as the keyboard, the video card and the hard and floppy disk drives. The POST tells the CPU to read the CMOS memory area and then determines if the devices are where the CMOS says they should be. (CMOS memory is maintained by a battery when the computer is turned off. CMOS memory contains information about the amount of memory, the clock,

Multiboot - Using Four Operating Systems From One Hard Disk

What follows is definitely not for novice users or the idly curious. Unless the hard disk has a current complete back up, even the desperately needy should not attempt to install or use the following utility.

Another way that users can change the boot sector is by installing the utility known as MBOOT (short for MultiBOOT). Douglas Boling wrote MBOOT. He described it in the February 26, 1991 edition of PC Magazine. A copy of the program can be downloaded from PC MagNet. (See any issue of PC Magazine for instructions on accessing PC MagNet.)

The Programmers Shop sells copies of MBOOT at (800) 421-8006 for \$60. Bolt Systems publishes MBOOT. It requires DOS versions 3.0 or higher and claims it can switch between DOS and OS/2. A copy of the PC Magazine article or the MBOOT manual and careful attention to all the instructions are essential prerequisites for safely installing and using MBOOT. MBOOT first saves and then rewrites a portion of the boot sector on the C: drive. It modifies that boot record so that when booting from C:, the boot sector loads and executes ad-

ditional non-DOS code stored in a new MBOOT file. The new MBOOT code pops up a menu of installed operating systems. The user can install up to four operating systems in MBOOT. The user selects one of the four from the MBOOT menu, or accepts the default operating system, each time the computer boots-up.

During the DOS 5 Beta test program, I used MBOOT to ease the chore of moving between DOS 3.3 and a sometimes unreliable beta version of DOS 5. Actually, MBOOT kept two versions of DOS 5 installed. One version to load DOS 5 HIGH and the other to load DOS 5 LOW. The system was easy to reboot after a crash by selecting a working DOS version from the menu. It was not necessary to keep bootable floppy disks available (I know they're around here somewhere) for each operating system. I did not even have to decide, until after the menu appeared, which operating system to use.

MBOOT reserves enough clusters at the beginning of the data area on the active DOS partition to hold the DOS system files. After the user chooses an operating system from the menu, MBOOT loads the correct system files into that first group of clusters. (Note: Before

the diskette and hard disk drives, the display type and the keyboard.) The POST beeps once after it finishes its work.

4) The ROM BIOS boot program checks for a formatted diskette in drive A:. On a series standard PC system the diskette drive is usually empty. The ROM BIOS boot program checks for an active formatted partition on the hard disk. If neither a formatted diskette nor an active formatted partition exists, then the ROM BIOS boot program displays an error message and stops processing.

5) The ROM BIOS boot program loads a special program called the boot sector or the boot record from the diskette or the active hard disk partition into memory and executes it. This is called bootstrapping. The boot sector resides in the first physical disk sector of every diskette and hard disk partition formatted by the DOS operating system.

6a) After the boot sector loads into memory, it takes over from the ROM BIOS boot program. When the ROM BIOS boot program initiates execution of the boot sector, DOS gets its first opportunity to control the boot process. Whoever writes the boot sector, controls the boot process from this point forward. From now on, everything is software controlled. The hardware is available as a tool for the software to use; nothing more. The user can change the boot sector, for example, by changing the PC disk operating system. Changing from one DOS version to another, from MS-DOS to DR DOS, from DOS to OS/2 or

XENIX usually changes the boot sector, if only slightly.

Most of us should leave writing new boot sectors to Microsoft or Digital Research or IBM. Making the slightest change to the boot sector is always dangerous. Douglas Boling may be one of those rare exceptions who can get away with rewriting the boot sector. What he did is amazing. See sidebar.

6b) Under MS-DOS operating systems, the main job of the boot record is to search for another program called IO.SYS. IO.SYS is the first of the two system files stored at the beginning of the active DOS partition. If the boot record cannot find IO.SYS, it puts an error message on the screen and stops processing. Usually, the boot record finds IO.SYS, loads it into memory and executes it. IO.SYS includes a subroutine called SYSINIT that handles the rest of the boot process. IO.SYS resides in memory at all times.

7) SYSINIT loads MSDOS.SYS into memory. MSDOS.SYS is the second system file stored at the beginning of the active DOS partition. It does not start executing immediately. Like IO.SYS, MSDOS.SYS resides in memory at all times. It is called upon by other system modules to handle various tasks. During the day to day operations of the PC, MSDOS.SYS is called upon to execute programs, manage files and respond to hardware interrupts.

8) SYSINIT searches the root directory on the active DOS partition for a file named CONFIG.SYS and tells MSDOS.SYS to process the commands in that file. The

the appearance of DOS 5.0, the two system files were always located in consecutive clusters at the beginning of the data storage area. MBOOT was written to handle the delicate task of swapping the system files for each installed operating system into and out of these reserved clusters. DOS 5.0 no longer cares if the system files are in consecutive clusters, but MBOOT does care. It will crash if the DOS 5.0 system files get broken into non-consecutive clusters.)

The current system files may be too small to use all the clusters that MBOOT is reserving. If so, MBOOT marks any extra clusters as bad. Other DOS programs will not try to store data there. The current system files might be larger than the system files of the last operating system. In that case, MBOOT will mark a few extra clusters as good in order to make room for larger system files of the incoming DOS version.

To form this pool of reserved clusters, MBOOT looks at the installed operating system it finds when it first rewrites the boot record. MBOOT reserves only as many clusters as that operating system is using to store its system files. Therefore, it is essential to install the DOS version that has the largest system files onto the hard disk prior to installing MBOOT. To switch between DOS and OS/2, users must install OS/2 before

installing MBOOT. MBOOT also swaps the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files for the incoming and outgoing operating systems. It does not swap the different versions of COMMAND.COM, but that can be handled easily by each CONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT.

Finally, MBOOT executes the code that it saved from the original boot record. The normal boot process should continue unaffected by this little excursion. This technique worked for several months without a single MBOOT related problem during the DOS 5 beta test. Nevertheless, as soon as the final DOS 5.0 version was released, I removed MBOOT. There was no reason to tempt fate further than I already had. However, where multiple operating systems must be kept readily available, MBOOT seems to be the only option available.

Install and use MBOOT with care. In principle, it is possible to keep working versions of OS/2, DOS 5.0, DOS 4.01 and DOS 3.x on one hard disk at the same time. Even better, the operating system is selectable from a menu without resorting to boot floppies. A known problem with MBOOT is that Peter Norton's SAFE FORMAT program will not work properly after MBOOT modifies the boot record on the hard disk. DOS's own FORMAT program works fine, however. **A**

list of commands in CONFIG.SYS can include loading instructions for specialized programs called device drivers. (MSDOS.SYS is itself a kind of device driver.

The next installment of this series will discuss a very useful device driver called BOOTCON.) The list in CONFIG.SYS can also include other commands that specify system configuration options. These include the BREAK status, the number of DOS BUFFERS, the DOS command, the number of FCBS, the number of FILES, the letter of the LASTDRIVE and the number of STACKS.

CONFIG.SYS can also include a SHELL command. The SHELL command will load COMMAND.COM, or an alternative command processor, and use it to adjust the size of the DOS environment, set the COMSPEC variable or specify an input/output device other than the console (console = CON = keyboard + monitor).

9) SYSINIT tells MSDOS.SYS to load COMMAND.COM into memory and execute it. If the SHELL command in CONFIG.SYS has already loaded a primary command processor, SYSINIT just tells MSDOS.SYS to execute the one that is already loaded. The primary command processor, which is COMMAND.COM by default, searches the root directory of the active DOS partition for a file named AUTOEXEC.BAT and processes any commands contained in that file. Eventually, COMMAND.COM displays the DOS prompt on the console or on the input/output device specified by the SHELL or CTTY commands.

A portion of COMMAND.COM stays resident in memory at all times. After it finishes processing AUTOEXEC.BAT, COMMAND.COM splits itself into resident and transient parts in order to make more memory available for applications to run. All user access to DOS, whether from the keyboard or from a user written batch file, is provided exclusively by the command processor. When COMMAND.COM finds the name of an executable file (*.COM or *.EXE) at the command prompt or in a batch file, it tells MSDOS.SYS to load and execute the program. When a program exits back to DOS, COMMAND.COM takes control again. Then it either resupplies the DOS prompt or reads the next line of the batch file.

How Batch Files Work

There is a distinction to be made between "executable programs," like IO.SYS and COMMAND.COM, which are resident in or loaded into and then executed from memory, and "config-files" like CONFIG.SYS or "batch files" like AUTOEXEC.BAT, which remain resident on the disk, are not executable and merely contain lists of commands for other system modules to carry out (they are interpreted files). Batch files are more like scripts than programs. MSDOS.SYS and/or COMMAND.COM read the commands in these files one line at a time. They load and execute the requested programs or system modules. When control returns to COMMAND.COM, the process repeats itself at the next line in the file. Processing continues one line at a time until the end of the config or batch file is reached. Then COMMAND.COM activates the DOS prompt.

Writing such a batch file may not seem like programming at all. However, some of the lines in batch files are calls to internal modules of COMMAND.COM. These are the batch file control commands that constitute the BFCL. The eight primary batch commands are CALL, ECHO, FOR IN DO, GOTO, IF, PAUSE, REM and SHIFT. For some purposes the EXIT command should also be considered as part of the BFCL. These commands can customize the batch file, change the order of execution and perform various tests. They include some primitive branching and looping capability that can change the execution order. The BFCL, as it turns out, is a fairly primitive "interpreted" programming language. It is the one programming language that almost everyone needs to know something about.

Batch files can handle a wide variety of tasks. These range from two or three liners up to files with hundreds of lines. Large or small, most of them are quite useful. It is simpler to write a batch file than to remember all the command line switches on many applications. Complex batch files can present entire menus full of choices. All batch files save time because they only require that each line be typed correctly one time. They only require a determination about the correct order of execution one time. After that, all those details can be forgotten. Users can concentrate on using application programs to get the important jobs done. The BFCL complicates the process of writing all but the simplest batch files because it provides so few flow control options.

Batch file utilities alleviate some of the inadequacies of DOS's native BFCL by providing more sophisticated options. Batch file tips help users exploit all the power that is available within the limited capabilities provided by DOS in the BFCL. Tips and utilities are the two major themes this series will address in the coming months.

Part 2 of this series makes a first pass through the CONFIG.SYS file and introduces a useful routine for managing multiple PC configurations. It is called BOOTCON and it is a little easier and a lot safer to use than MBOOT for controlling the configuration at boot-up. BOOTCON cannot swap operating systems, however. Only MBOOT can change operating systems on the fly. BOOTCON incorporates different configuration choices into a single file and lets the user choose one from a menu at boot-up.

Part 3 takes a first look at batch files by examining the DOS environment and introducing a utility that can check for installed device drivers.

KEY WORDS:

386 (PC with Intel 80386 CPU and supporting chip set)
 AUTOEXEC.BAT
 Batch File
 Batch File Control Language (BFCL)
 BFCL (Batch File Control Language)
 Boling, Douglas
 Bolt Systems
 Boot Process
 Boot Record
 Boot Sector
 BOOTCON

Booting
 Bootstrapping
 Boot-Up
 BREAK
 BUFFERS
 CALL
 Cluster (minimum sized section of
 hard disk addressed by DOS)
 CMOS (Charge-coupled Metal Oxide
 Semiconductor)
 Command Processor
 COMMAND.COM
 CompuServe
 COMSPEC
 CON (Console)
 CONFIG.SYS
 CPU (Central Processing Unit)
 CTTY
 C: (C-Colon - 1st Hard Disk
 Partition Name on a PC)
 Digital Research [[Incorporated]]
 (DRI)
 Disk Operating System
 Disk Sector
 DOS 5.0 Operating System (Microsoft
 Corporation)
 DOS=
 DR-DOS (by Digital Research)
 ECHO
 Executable Program
 EXIT
 FCBS
 FILES
 Floppy Diskette [[Drive]]
 Flow Control (Looping,
 Branching, User Input)
 FOR IN DO
 FORMAT
 GOTO
 Hard Disk [[Drive]] [[Partition]]
 Hardware
 Hardware Interrupt
 Hexadecimal Notation
 IBM (International Business
 Machines)
 IF
 Interpreted File
 IO.SYS (MS-DOS System File)
 LASTDRIVE
 MBOOT (MultiBOOT, by Bolt Systems)
 Microsoft [[Corporation]]
 MSDOS.SYS (MS-DOS Sys. File)
 MS-DOS (by Microsoft)
 North Texas PC Users Group
 Operating System
 OS/2 (by IBM)
 PAUSE
 PC Magazine; Feb. 13, 1991;
 February 26, 1991
 PC Magnet
 PC (Personal Computer)
 PC/Computing; May 1991
 POST (Power-On-Self-Test)
 Programmers Shop, The
 REM
 ROM BIOS (Read-Only Mem.Basic
 Input/Output System)
 SAFE FORMAT, Peter Norton's
 Script File
 SHELL
 SHIFT
 Software
 STACKS
 SYSINIT

THE WORLD OF C++

Product review by Jim Hoisington

A videotape training course from Borland.

This is the first time I've used a videotape training course and it took me some time to get used to switching between the television, the workbook and my computer. The course consists of two video tapes, a workbook and a diskette containing the code for the workbook lessons. To take the course, you first watch a lesson on the tape, then you read the chapter in the work book corresponding to the tape lesson. Finally you work through the practice sessions described in the workbook using the code provided on the diskette. You must have a C++ compiler (not necessarily Borland's compiler) to take full advantage of this course.

There are 22 video sessions with David Intersimone of Borland as the instructor. Each session is from 5 to 8 minutes long and focuses on two or three topics in the C++ language.

Each chapter in the workbook expands on the topics discussed in the videotape lesson. The workbook gives one or two practice problems for each topic. To complete the practice problem, you modify a base set of code provided for the lesson and then compile it to see if your modifications work as expected. For most of the practice problems, Borland also provides a piece of code with the modifications so you can check your work against theirs.

I can recommend the course with two reservations:

1) The course assumes that you already are a proficient C language programmer. It uses that knowledge of C as a basis for C++. It would not be of much use if you don't already have a good working knowledge of C.

2) The course spends quite a bit of time going into the problems of the C++ language specification and how to avoid them. At times, it gets into some technical issues of compiler building and may discourage some programmers. Don't worry, you can still learn and use the language even if you don't understand these parts.

The course does a good job of introducing C language programmers to C++. And the videotape format allows you to work at your own pace and to review those lessons that are not easily grasped the first time through.

Jim

▲

CELLS & RANGES

- an eclectic collection of spreadsheet information

by Betty Brooks

Freelance Graphics for Windows is a Winner

Once you have filled some of the cells in your spreadsheet with numbers, you might want to graph the results. The graphics capabilities on 1-2-3 have not really kept up with the rest of the other competing spreadsheets, but Lotus has a great product, Freelance, which beats all the competition in presentation graphics creation capabilities. The DOS versions of Freelance Graphics have always improved with each upgrade, now version 4, and are known for their versatility and ease of use. But, the newest version, Freelance Graphics for Windows is almost alone on the top of the heap. It has a tremendous number of new features making it easy to produce a great looking presentation in a short period of time. Of course, as with the DOS versions, you can easily import data from your 1-2-3 spreadsheets. This new Windows version also uses DDE and allows live links with 1-2-3 for Windows and Excel. I have tried the paste and linking abilities and am very impressed, especially since the WYSIWYG formatting was also brought along with the data.

There is a large library of clip art included with the program to further help enhance your charts as well as Adobe Type Manager, which gives more fonts. Add all these features together and Freelance has a lot to offer.

You can create a coordinated slide show by using the Smart Masters which are essentially a group of master templates ready for you to input the data and labels. Freelance provides 60 different styles of Smart Master sets to choose from by scrolling through the list in a dialog box which even shows a thumbnail sketch of what each style looks like. Each set contains a group of standard templates which allow the optimal looking output for the type of information you want to use, like a bullet text chart or a bullet and graph chart, etc. When creating a good presentation there are some guidelines to follow such as using no more than 6-8 lines on a chart. By using the Smart Masters, you will turn out professional looking

charts that also follow many of the guidelines. Once you have set up all your pages for the presentation, you can still change the Smart Master set you are using with just a couple menu commands which will automatically implement the changes necessary.

There is a slide light table where you can use the mouse to move the order of the pages around until your presentation is set up to your satisfaction. Once it is complete, you can easily create a run time slide show which can be sent to anyone who has DOS on his computer, Windows is not necessary. You can also print out a variety of handout styles to go with the presentation, including speaker notes. I especially like the 4 slides to a page style which leaves each page quite readable, while saving on the amount of paper needed to reproduce the presentation for handouts. There are many dialog boxes to help you through all operations including the printing options, which makes using Freelance for Windows incredible easy.

As with all of Lotus' Windows products, Freelance has Smart Icons to help speed your work. I have become quite dependent on their use in 1-2-3/W, AmiPro 2 and Freelance for Windows. I especially like the Smart Icons for file open, save and cut and paste in all these products. I also have used the slide show icon frequently to see a quick show of the pages I have set up so far. There are icons which have macros attached which I use to allow quick access to AmiPro and 1-2-3/W. The macros are very easy to edit in the Tools SmartIcons menus. Although some other competing products are now introducing icon bars, none of them come close to the customization, variety and number allowed in Lotus products. They can really speed up your work and productivity in using the products, especially once you are used to the menu structure. If you are not sure what a particular icon will do, you can move the mouse to that icon and press the right mouse button and a description of the icon's operation will appear on the top line of the screen. Believe me, this is sometimes very necessary since it is hard to remember what 20 or so of those little icons can do. Sometimes the pictures could signify more than one kind of operation, though most are pretty easy to figure out.

I have helped my husband work out a presentation using Freelance for Windows with both of us doing some of the work. It was easy for either one of us to pick up where the other left off because the entire presentation is kept in one file with the pages in order the way you set them up and saved the file. The presentation looked very professional and eye catching thanks to the Smart Master set we pick out. We both enjoyed working with Freelance for Windows and would readily recommend it to anyone who has the need for improved graphics and has Windows. ▶

Help with 1-2-3 Problems

The following questions and answers are part of the information the user group receives from the Lotus CD Prompt disk each month. The same information is also available on the World of Lotus on Compu-Serve. Both serve as a good way to look up answers to your problems.

DOS 16M and VCPI Error Messages in 123 3.1

What are the DOS16M error messages in 123 3.1?

SOLUTION: 123 3.0 and 3.1, and DOS16M check various parameters of the hardware such as its ROM ID (the identification of the ROM is actually its checksum) and system software configuration. 123 makes a best guess as to the correct switching technique. When conflicts in memory occur during the switch one of the errors below might occur for the corresponding reason.

DOS16M / VCPI Error Codes Likely To Occur:

Error Code: Message:

- 1 "Not Enough Extended Memory."
- 6 "Not Enough Memory to Load Program."
- 15 "Protected Mode Available Only with 286, 386 or 486 CPU"
- 16 "Cannot Run Under OS/2."
- 17 "System Software Doesn't Follow VCPI or DPMI Specifications."
- 19 "Computer Must be AT- or PS/2 Compatible."
- 20 "Unsupported DOS16M Switch Mode Choice."
- 21 "Requires DOS 3.0 or Later."
- 18 "Extended Memory Range Required for this Computer; Clones that Reserve Memory will Cause this Error."
- 31 "Protected Mode Already in Use on this Virtual Machine; Some Other Non-compliant Software is Running in Protected Mode."

Error Codes Unlikely to Occur:

Error Code: Message:

- 0 "Involuntary Switch to Real Mode."
- 8 "Cannot Open File."
- 9 "Cannot Allocate Stack."
- 10 "Cannot Allocate Memory for GDT."
- 13 "Cannot Allocate XFER Buffer."
- 23 "No Memory for Page Table."
- 25 "Cannot Initialize VCPI."
- 26 "8042 Time Out"

Errors Codes that Should Never Occur:

Error Code: Message:

- 2 "Not A DOS/16M Executable."
- 3 "No DOS Memory for Transparent Segment."
- 4 "Cannot Make Transparent Segment."

- 5 "Too Many Transparent Segments."
- 7 "No Relocation Segment."
- 11 "No Passup Stack Sectors - GDT Too Small."
- 12 "No Program Control Selectors - GDT Too Small."
- 14 "Premature EOF."
- 22 "Can't Free Memory."
- 28 "Memory Error, Avail Loop."
- 29 "Memory Error, Out of Range."
- 30 "Program Must Be Built -Auto For DPMI."

Creating a Sorted Paradox Table PRODUCT: 123 for Windows 1.0

How can you create a sorted Paradox table through 123 for Windows?

SOLUTION: The instructions below assume that the customer has already installed the Paradox DataLens driver that ships with 123 for Windows. To create a sorted Paradox table in 123 for Windows, follow these steps:

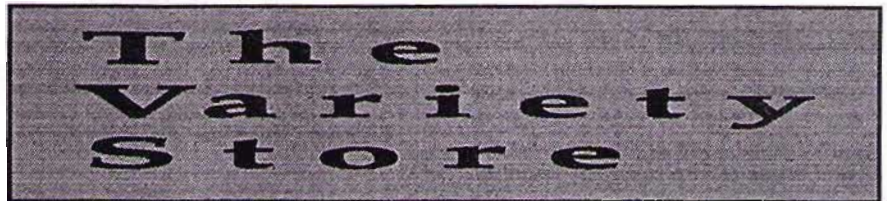
1. Select / Data External Create Name.
2. Select Paradox, specify a directory, a file name, and a range name.
3. Press RETURN at the Table Creation String prompt.
4. Select Definition Create-Definition. Specify an output range.
5. Quit from the menu.
6. In the definition range, edit the field type (the second column) for the field to be sorted by, so that it contains an asterisk after the apostrophe and before the field type. For example, here is a definition range edited to specify sorting by the "Name" column.


```
Name *Alphanumeric 7 NA NA NA
Dept Alphanumeric 9 NA NA NA
```
7. Repeat Steps 1 and 2.
8. For Table Creation String, enter: SORT ASCII, SORT INTL, SORT NORDAN or SORT SWEDFIN, to specify any of the four Paradox sorting orders.
9. Select: Definition Use-Definition.
10. Select: Go.

Note: Because this process requires that the definition range be edited, the `{Alt}Data External-Options Create-Table` dialog box cannot be used to perform the operation. The dialog box has no option to use an existing definition range.

Betty A

Betty has a spreadsheet and database consulting business called Records & Ranges. She can be reached at 214-618-1608 (4312 Bragg Place, Plano, TX 75024) if you have any questions or suggestions for this column.



Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

(A personal view of new or unusual hardware, software, and applications for IBM small computers and compatibles.)

Bigger really is better -- even if 90's Trend is to much smaller PC's

Otherwise, Confusion reigns ...

Gloom & Doom in media this month

So much movement among corporate entities must mean something -- but, what? We already know there's a recession.

IBM is reorganizing, downsizing and trying valiantly to resurrect the "glory days" of 1981-82 when they were only PC show in town. Lotus, donning newer, more PC (I don't mean personal computers here) robes announces further downsizing (layoffs), and Microsoft just keeps growing along.

Will IBM lose 340,000 employees?

National media source (anonymous here) had an interesting headline that indicated IBM would shed 340,000 employees (the entire North American contingent?) while it really meant another 20,000 IBM folks would be offered an opportunity to seek personal growth -- somewhere else.

Lotus made news on several fronts -- mostly having to do with personnel management -- and, none of which seemed to counterbalance the almost unanimously "boring" label applied to 1-2-3 for Windows by media critics.

Most of the "news" is gloomy and not that good for a holiday season. Also, there's been so much posturing, announcements and counter-announcements that I've lost track of who's doing what and to whom. Figure it will be us in the long run.

WP "bug" stories boring

Meanwhile, success is blunted by stories of *WordPerfect 5.1* for *Windows version 1.0* bugs (boring) while the press ignores similar stories from a number of other sources (equally buggy product releases.) While I do love WP bug stories, most of what I read seems to be a rehash of earlier news and is losing its flavor.

Real news is on the monitor front With many new 17" models this year

Last month, while trying to identify a genuine Comdex theme, I overlooked the obvious. Real "stars" at Comdex this year were the 15", 17" and 19-21" monitors being shown by several makers, and used for demonstrations by almost everyone working with *Windows 3.X*.

We've seen Goliaths in the past -- 27-37" beasts aimed strictly at the presentation/demonstration market -- at Comdex. Also saw the specialized (CAD/CAM and professional page-layout) 19-21" monitors with stratospheric prices.

GUI's heritage -- tired eyes

GUI (*Windows 3.X*) really is driving the large-monitor market.

This year marked the entry of the 17" VGA and SVGA monitors aimed at a more general PC-user market with more "friendly" pricing. Thought came to mind that this may be best indication of a maturing technology with more than a few users entering the "bifocal era" and appreciative of the larger screens and much higher resolutions.

Screens that looked "good" at 640 x 480 VGA are almost impossible to read at 800 x 600 and 1024 x 768 for most of us. Larger monitors are in order when working at such "fine" resolutions.

Macintosh enters market

Another "feature" widely seen this year is advertising that indicates suitability for use with Macintoshes (for traditional PC monitor makers) and for PC's (by traditional Macintosh monitor makers.)

Radius, NEC, IDEK and MAG are good examples. ▶

The Variety Store

Blending of the standards will take time, and may be hard transition for some Macintosh vendors accustomed to traditional (list only) Macintosh pricing practices.

Comdex comparisons difficult

Making performance/price comparisons at Comdex was impossible. Many vendors quoted "list" prices they knew would be much higher than street prices for their products, while other vendors were more direct and straightforward.

Same thing applies to delivery dates and model availability. Heard that there were problems in 17" tube production by one vendor that could affect delivery schedules by several monitor producers. Some models displayed were purely for show and would never make dealers' shelves.

Also there are massive problems attempting to estimate screen quality in an environment like Comdex with uncontrolled overhead and adjacent lighting, stray magnetic fields, etc., etc., etc. It's a lot like selecting good stereo speakers - after you've heard too many, you just can't judge subtle differences between models.

NEC's new MultiSync FG's Feature high resolution

Featuring flat screens, no black border and reduced magnetic fields, the new NEC line looked super, both in the NEC area and at a number of software demonstration areas using the new series to demo their products. The new NEC's come in 15" - 21" models with

28mm dotpitch throughout. "Low-end" monitor is the 3FGx, a 15" model capable of 1024 x 768, non-interlaced EVGA and 8514/A operation.

NEC's 5FG (17") and 6FG (21") are capable of 1280 x 1024 non-interlaced, 74 Hz operation, and appear "larger" than their specifications indicate as a result of the flat-screen technology and absence of borders.

Flat square screen technology is credited by NEC with providing more usable screen area, 19% - 36% over conventional designs, and marked the mass shift to "flat" screens among almost all vendors this year.

NEC did have the best demonstration area for monitors - out of the main convention hall and in a smaller, side room where lighting was placed and controlled for optimum display. Good thinking and showmanship.

IDEK shows high-end, FST 14" - 21" series

IDEK monitors haven't been as well-known as NEC in this area, but their Comdex display was at a level that demands consideration. According to IDEK people, they have been positioned in the upper level, CAD/CAM market until recently.

At Comdex they were showing an excellent series ranging from a 14", VGA monitor to stellar 21" FST monitors capable of 1280 x 1280 resolutions at equally stellar prices. Star of the exhibit had to be the new 17", MF-5317 monitors capable of 1280 x 1280 resolution (non-interlaced) at a somewhat less stellar pricing level. There are actually three monitors in the 17" series, the MF-5117 (1024 x 768, non-in-

terlaced), MF-5217 and MF-5317 mentioned above.

I thought the IDEK's looked "better" than the NEC monitors. But, I saw them at different times on different days and this may have been a factor here. The IDEK line(s) will be priced slightly higher than the NEC's, but have a different feature array in terms of input, controls, etc., that may suit some users better.

CTX enters 17" field With FST CPS-1760

Until I stopped by CTX at Comdex, I thought of them as low-end VGA vendor. Was I surprised.

CTX was displaying a very interesting line of FST 15" - 21" monitors with non-interlaced, 1024 x 768 (14" and 15") to 1280 x 1024 (17" and 21") resolutions. All monitors in the new line are capable of VGA, SVGA, 8514/A, XGA and MacII operation. Most of these new CTX monitors are priced substantially lower than their competition (quoted Comdex prices) and are good, basic monitors without some of the automation seen in other makers' lines.

According to CTX people at their display, the 17" monitors should retail around the \$1,000 price range early in 1992.

Samtron joins 17" crowd With SC-726VL monitor

Samtron is best known for their low-priced, monochrome monitors usually included (locally) as part of a PC package. They were one of the first moderately-priced "flat" screen monochrome vendors and have produced a number of EGA and VGA monitors distributed as "private" brand units. ▶

The Variety Store

Introduction of their new, 17", 1024 x 768 non-interlaced, very low magnetic field units may indicate a substantial shift in pricing (down) for this size range. Samtron quotes a "list" price of \$1,229 for the monitor to be delivered in the 2nd quarter.

Best guess is that it will be heavily discounted in the D/FW area and will probably come in under \$1,000.

MAG Innovision announces 14" - 17" FST MX series

MAG is a brand not seen that much locally. The new FST monitors in 14" and 17" models should change that. Featuring Trinitron CRTs with with 1280 x 1024, non-interlaced capabilities (all sizes) the monitors looked very good. Nice design in addition to good electronics.

One of the features seen here was impedance switching allowing up to 10 MX17's to be linked in a daisy chain configuration without significant signal attenuation. Raises a question whether several smaller monitors or one large monitor make best choice for demonstrations and presentations.

Pricing on the MAG units was not announced at Comdex, but judging from the market aim, may be on the high side for typical user pocketbooks.

Radius pushes multi-Platform capabilities

Radius, a staple in the high-end Macintosh field, was pushing 15" - 21" monitors capable of operation from either Macintosh or PC machines. Their 19" and 21" monochrome "Two Page Display" monitors were capable of 1280 x 960 resolutions with Windows 3.0 drivers looked quite good.

The 20" "Precision Color Display/20" was also good looking at 1024 x 768, but seemed somewhat over-priced compared to the newer NEC and IDEK monitors with better capabilities.

One of the interesting points observed with most primarily-Macintosh vendors was pricing that seemed out of touch with the PC market. Coupled with "odd" resolution specifications (1152 x 882, for example) this would indicate a possibly painful learning curve ahead for these vendors until they get the feel of the PC market.

Best screen at Comdex Was not on a monitor

Best looking screen at Comdex was shown by Electrohome and was 120" diagonal. Electrohome's ECP 4101 Acon data/graphics and video projection system was running 1280 x 1024 (non-interlaced) or 1020 video lines resolution.

Model on display was running as rear projector, but can be electronically switched to run

in standard (front) projection mode on screens up to 25' (300") diagonal measurement. According to Electrohome, the 4101 should be used only with 6' diagonal or larger screens.

That's the way to do *Windows*. Only \$19,995.

Pleasant Addiction at Comdex - Hillerman's Navajo Detectives

I've become addicted to Navajo detectives. Happened during Comdex this Fall. Picked up a copy of Tony Hillerman's *A Thief of Time* in D/FW while waiting on our flight to Las Vegas.

Comdex is so frenetic with meetings, exhibits and interactions with vendors and representatives that you really need something to regain balance at the end of the day. Hillerman worked.

Actually, the addiction began about a year ago when I read a strange book, *Cyberway*, by Alan Dean Foster involving fractals, Navajo mysticism, sand paintings and murder. Hillerman's books were written in the 1970's and early 80's, aren't fantasy or science fiction and don't take the twists that appear in Foster's books. But, they are perfect for about 200 minutes of diversion.

Problem. I've been through eight more of Tony Hillerman's books since Comdex (all I could find in the area) and am starting to experience withdrawal symptoms ...

Reagan



January is election month... here are the nominees.



Doug Gorrie

If you attend the Communications SIG at 12:00 on Saturday, you have probably met Doug. He is the SIG leader. This SIG deals with modems, BBS's, fax boards, and emerging telecommunications standards. An interesting side note is Doug's real job; he works for Southwestern Bell Telephone. Doug is also part of the team that supports the user group's Bulletin Board System.



Jim Hoisington

Jim is the current president of the NTPCUG. He helped start this group. Jim has been acting Membership Director for over the past year, and he is the groups "postal carrier" in that he picks up and distributes the mail from our P.O. Box. He co-leads the DOS SIG, and hangs around the Advanced Programmers SIG to dig up dirt to print in the newsletter. Jim serves as North Texas' representative to the international Association of PC Users Groups. In his other life, Jim is a husband, father, and I think he finds time to consult/contract program to get a paycheck.



Reagan Andrews

Reagan is a board member now. He is the other co-leader of the DOS SIG and the leader of the Microsoft Word SIG. You may have noticed his by-line in the newsletter on the column *Variety Store*. Reagan works for the federal government (VA Hospital) where he treats veterans suffering from delayed stress syndrome, and he has a private practice. He and his wife have made the annual pilgrimage to the Fall COMDEX computer show, and Reagan always has an interesting commentary on this event.



Mark Gruner

Mark is currently on the Board of Directors, too. He leads the Lotus and related spreadsheet SIG along with helping with two of the sixteen Personal Users SIG series that deal with Lotus 1-2-3. Mark has served in the past as NTPCUG's representative to the Computer Council of Dallas. His real life includes being an Accountant for EDS, husband, and most recently, a proud father.

USE ORIGINAL BALLOT - Copies not acceptable



Official 1992 ballot

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc



Nominee for President-Elect

Vote for 1

Doug Gorrie

Nominees for Board of Directors

Vote for 3

Jim Hoisington

Reagan Andrews

Mark Gruner

Mail ballots to Secretary, North Texas PC Users Group, P.O. Box 780066, Dallas, TX 75378-0066 or bring to January meeting. Mailed ballots must be received by the Secretary no later than January 20, 1992.

Selected SIG HAPPENINGS

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups

(Material for this column should be sent to K.B. Barton, SIG Coordination, before the 10th day of each month)

Assembler SIG

Our December meeting featured a general discussion of the various Assemblers and Disassemblers on the market. A number of members brought sample code illustrating the wide variety of source code that some of these Assemblers, especially with the simplified segment directives, will accept. Our January meeting will feature a discussion of the ins and outs of programming for the various keyboards that can be found attached to PCs by Glynn Brooks. As usual, please check the BBS for any last minute changes.

Frank Cavallito

Business Applications/Dac Accounting SIG

The December meeting of the Business Applications/Dac Accounting SIG was a presentation by Bruce Schubert of various software packages which would be well suited as Christmas presents. Hope you had a Merry Christmas and that Santa brought each of you the software of your Dreams.

The January meeting will be a make up for the one scheduled for November. Due to a SERIOUS scheduling problem, DacEasy had other plans for Eddy Landry which got stretched over our meeting date, and yours

truly had to improvise. Fortunately, there was lots of help from Bruce and several other SIG members, and we were able to cover some questions which seemed to be helpful to those who were considering Dac as their accounting software and to some new users.

Eddy Landry has carefully checked his schedule and has agreed to meet with us on January 18th. This delay may be fortunate due to the fact that DacEasy Software has reached the beta test stage on one of two new Personal/Small Business accounting programs. Eddy will not only describe it to us, but by meeting time, will be able to demonstrate DacEasy's "Instant Accounting". There should be hundreds of NTPCUG members who could make use of the program described to me. If you can make it to our January meeting, you'll have an opportunity to make your own evaluation and ask questions of the man who can give you an authoritative answer.

Eddy has offered to bring along some DacEasy software for a drawing. You must be present to win!

Putt Shaw



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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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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.



Communications SIG

Since my partner Doug decided that I've been slacking off too much, he asked me to do the SIG notes this month. I think that even he deserves time off for good (?) behavior.

In December, we had fellow club member Charles Jacobus present Carbon Copy+ in a real world application that he uses in his job as a consultant. The ability to remotely access another computer and take total control of its resources was discussed in detail by means of a live demo using two machines, one remotely located at his office. It was an exciting presentation. Thanks Charles for your help.

We also spent some of our meeting time stuffing our faces with goodies provided by fellow SIG attendees. Thank you all for the great food and drink that was prepared for the occasion.

For January, we plan to have another volunteer demonstration by club member David Martin. The topic will be Compuserve, one of the largest online information services in the U.S. He will present some of the many possible sources of information available from this company as well as tips on how to minimize your online cost and maximize your data gathering. Be sure to come.

In the Spirit of the recent Holidays, Doug Gorrie and I want to thank you for making the COMM SIG a part of your Super Saturday activities. For those of you who have not stopped by yet, we welcome all people who are interested in communications via computer/terminal, etc. If you are new to computers and telecommunications in particular or you just got a new modem/comm software package from Santa, come tell us about it. Our forum is diverse and loaded with people from all walks of life who share a common interest, to crack into the Pentagon mainframe. (Just Kidding!) Stop by and see us at noon for plenty of Q & A as well as lively demos from our club members.

Bill Green

C++ SIG

In December, we discussed `read_string`, a routine that I wrote as an alternative to `scanf`, and `read_form`, a dialog-box processor built with `read_string`. Our plans are a little vague at the moment, but I suspect we'll continue with these topics in January. No matter what the subject, the debate will be stimulating and the arguments heated. Join us!

Kent Cobb

DOS SIG

Still trying to sift through all the post-Comdex news about DOS? So are we, and we'll (Jim Hoisington and Reagan Andrews) share our confusion with members of the DOS SIG at the January Meeting.

Already there are rumors of disk/file compression technology to be added to MS DOS 5.1 early next year. Does it work? Mostly. Is it the best solution? Probably, perhaps, maybe in some cases. Why? Why not?

Jim and Reagan will attempt to answer questions about this technology that DRI introduced with DR DOS 6.0, and Microsoft is rumored to be preparing for 1992. If we don't know the real answers, we'll probably make some up, as usual.

Otherwise, we'll have the usual Q & A format at the end of the January DOS SIG Meeting if Infomart healing idiosyncrasies allow.

Reagan Andrews

General Genealogy SIG

There were 55 present at the Genealogy SIG in room 7001, November 16, from 9 to 10 a.m.

The November topic was "Calendar For Family Reunion" and brought by Leonard McCown. Leonard is the hard-copy librarian for the General Genealogy SIG. The calendar software used by Leonard is Calendar Creator Plus which is available at the local stores for about \$50. Leonard's reunion calendar is designed for a specific reunion that has been meeting yearly for over twenty years. It focuses on the de-

scendents of his great-great grandfather. The calendar has a picture of his great-great grandfather that hangs on the wall during the year with the current month below. The months are stapled to the bottom of the portrait so can be torn off at the end of the month. The monthly calendar displays pertinent data (birth, death, marriage, etc.) for each descendent (dead or alive) in the day section. Any blank spaces at the beginning or end of a month display information about the reunion's ancestry.

January 1992 seems to be "Genealogy Month" as there will be at least three full Saturdays of workshops. An all day affair called GEN-TEC'92 will be held January 18th, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Plymouth Park United Methodist Church, 1615 W. Airport Freeway, (S.H. 183) Irving, TX. This event will be a "hands-on" workshop including demonstrations by a large assortment of genealogy vendors. This workshop is being sponsored by the Irving and the Grand Prairie Genealogical Societies. The cost will be \$10 for pre-registration and \$12 at the site. Mail registration to GEN-TEC'92, P.O. Box 532036, Grand Prairie, TX 75053 or call 214-986-1964 for more details. The Computer Group of the Collin County Genealogical Society is putting on two PAF workshops on two different Saturdays in January, 1992. The workshops will be at the Collin County Community College. The first will be January 11th and will cover the basics of PAF software. There will be at least one computer per every twenty people attending. The second workshop will be January 25th and concentrate on the Research Data File (RDF); the Collin County Computer Genealogy Group has put together a series of programs to take advantage of the RDF. The December 14th General Genealogy SIG program will be on current software and computer hardware available for genealogy, comparing the advantages and disadvantages. There will be no meeting of the General Genealogy SIG on January 18th 1992 as everyone is encouraged to attend the GEN-TEC'92 workshop.

Al Sanford

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PAF SIG

There were 51 present for the Personal Ancestral File (PAF) SIG November 16th. The PAF SIG meets in Room 7001 from 10 to 11 a.m. PAF is a \$35 software genealogy program good for beginners or experts with versions available for IBM compatible or Macintosh computers. SIG President Travis Morris is doing well after his recent back surgery. Leonard McCown brought in a Texas size get well card which everyone signed. Art Rubeck, the disk librarian for the General Genealogy SIG, will lead the SIG through December.

The November 16th program consisted of two parts, the first gave a quick rundown on how the Family Search Program works and the second solicited inputs for the improvement of the PAF software. The Family Search Program is a computer software program that is designed to work with the CD ROMS that are now at all the LDS libraries. The PAF improvement list was requested from a letter from the developers of PAF in a letter dated October 3rd to Travis Morris, the PAF SIG leader. The list of suggestions from the people present were collected by Art, collated, and sent to Salt Lake November 30th. Some suggestions from the PAF improvement list included: variable length data fields, interchange data between PAF and Family Search without use of GEDCOM, link child to more than one family, use window environment for easy access to all programs from anywhere in the program, documentation separate from biographical notes and single documentation refer to multiple families, individuals, or events, allow PAF to interface with commercial data bases and word processors, and allow users to define their own fields.

Suggestions from the floor in the November meeting were: create a standard for function keys (i.e. F1 Help, F10 Save, ESC to get back to screen, etc.), Display to be put at what level you are in (i.e. 0 = lowest, 1 = next higher, so that 0 and 4 takes

you back to Pedigree Search, for instance), a PAF shareware version for schools, use of foreign characters in the place field. The next meeting will be 14 Dec and will be brought by Art Rubeck. The topics will be PAF ability, Pen Rite, and Notes.

Al Sanford

Investors SIG

The December meeting, appropriately enough, is about candlesticks. The festivities will be hosted by Wayne Morris of N Squared, the company who brings you the Analyzer program which accesses a number of databases and performs a variety of technical analysis upon selected data. Candlesticks refers to the price pattern when a stock is charted and to the method of analyzing those patterns. This is a subject which is addressed in more specialized texts and software.

In November, many of us were introduced to the theory of fractal behavior of financial markets. If we assume that human behavior is rational, then we have efficient financial markets to which mathematical analysis can be applied to predict future trends from historical data. Unfortunately, some price movements in the market can only be described as chaotic: understandable if one views human nature as irrational at times. Consequently, nonlinear techniques are being used to explain and hopefully predict chaotic price behavior instigated, we assume, by chaotic humans.

The basis for exploring this theoretical avenue are B. Mandelbrot's article, "The Fractal Geometry of Nature" and E. E. Peters, "Fractal Structure in Capital Markets." For some obscure reason, our speaker, William Housey responded to a question from the floor that the equations which underlie his theory and practice are proprietary information. For those who wish a more public disclosure of the underlying mathematics try the article in Financial Analysts Journal, September-October 1991, "Testing Chaos and Nonlinearities in T-Bill Rates."

To bring order to chaos, Nash Kapoor will initiate proceedings with a brief commentary on the behavior of the Dow Jones Industrial Average and

will close by accepting any questions that you may have.

Jo Johnston

LAN SIG

Regardless of what the LAN SIG Happenings said in last month's newsletter (written before the November meeting took place), we discussed Novell's newest offering - NetWare Lite - during the November LAN SIG meeting. We were fortunate to find enough copies of NetWare Lite 1.0 that included a free copy of DR DOS 6.0 to complete our group purchase. During the December LAN SIG meeting we got back to the LAN seminar series and discussed "LAN Design Considerations." In January we will discuss "LAN Installation Considerations" and in February a local representative of Artisoft will be with us to talk about Lantastic. Come join us. We're having fun in the "LAN of opportunity" every Super Saturday at 10 a.m.

Bernie VanRoekel

Lotus SIG

The subject for the December meeting was the spreadsheet publishing add-in WYSIWYG that ships with 1-2-3 release 2.3, 3.1, 3.1+, and the Windows product. Betty gave the presentation and Lotus Development was kind enough to send the user group copies of a handout called "1-2-3 WYSIWYG Tips and Techniques" that includes many features that are not included in the 1-2-3 documentation. The handout was well worth it and hopefully Mark will bring some additional copies to the January meeting in case you missed the December meeting. Also on display was Mark's son, David. His wife, Robin discovered the LAN SIG and was very interested in the topics being covered. David only attended because his parents felt the need to be there, but hopefully, he learned a lot at his first NTPCUG meeting.

The subject for the January meeting will be the add-ins Solver and Backsolver which are available in 1-2-3 for Windows, and version 3.1+. Solver and Backsolver will add capabilities to your work. Backsolver changes a value in a problem so a formula that uses that value equals an amount you



specify. In other words, given an answer, Backsolver will determine the inputs needed to get the desired answer. The solver add-in helps to analyze data by providing enhanced what-if capabilities given certain goals specified by the user.

There are also two other items worth noting with respect to the Lotus SIG. The first item is that the Lotus SIG is considering changing its name to the Spreadsheet SIG so that other spreadsheets and spreadsheet-related products can also be presented. Since the Lotus SIG often answers questions concerning other spreadsheet programs, this name change might be a good one. Your comments on the name change would be welcome. Send a BBS message to Mark Gruner, or catch him at a monthly meeting.

The second major announcement is the starting of a new SIG called the Spreadsheet Developers SIG. If all goes well, the Spreadsheet Developers SIG will be given a time slot at the January meeting. The focus of the Spreadsheet Developers will be problem solving and workshop environment. The intent of the new SIG is to answer specific questions that users are having in an application and to discuss the latest tips and tricks that they have discovered in the past month. Many other user groups have this type of SIG, and the NTPCUG is going to give it a try. The Lotus or Spreadsheet SIG will continue to exist and present capabilities of spreadsheet products.

Come on by and check the Lotus/Spreadsheet SIG or the Spreadsheet Developers SIG.

Mark Gruner

Spreadsheet Developers SIG

January marks the initial meeting of the Spreadsheet Developers SIG. The SIG will devote its time to solving problems that users are having in developing spreadsheet applications. It is designed for those at or above the intermediate user level. The SIG is designed to be much more interactive with attendees providing ways to

solve problems that others are having. Given the nature of the SIG, there will be no set agenda or presentation. Mark Gruner and Betty Brooks will be the leaders of the SIG for the time being. Both Mark and Betty will try to suggest a topic to discuss during a meeting. However, if someone has a problem to address, the SIG will offer solutions to solve the problem.

As you might imagine, this SIG should be very interesting to many users. Since it is also the first meeting, the form and structure of the Spreadsheet Developers SIG could change over time. However, the new SIG will have no affect on the Lotus SIG. With any luck, both SIGs will prosper and better meet the needs of the user group members.

The suggested subject for this first of many meetings, we hope, will be the direction that members would like the SIG to take and tips and tricks that folks have come up with recently. Incidentally, it does not matter what spreadsheet program you use such as 1-2-3, Symphony, Quattro Pro, Excel, SuperCalc, or another.

Mark Gruner

OS/2 for End Users SIG

For the next few meetings we'll be discussing the functions and features of the latest beta version of OS/2 2.0. We'll be focusing not only on running OS/2 applications, but also the new capabilities for running DOS and Windows applications.

Much of our time will be spent in discussions of the new workplace shell and its advanced object oriented user interface. Whenever possible we have live demonstrations to reinforce what's being discussed.

DOS and Windows users are always welcome as well as die-hard OS/2 users.

Last meeting, we reviewed some basic workplace shell object manipulations and then broke early to allow everyone time to visit the OS/2 2.0 exhibit in the IBM Infomart office. We all then attended the OS/2 2.0 "The Integrating Platform" presentation by IBM's Wayne Caswell in the main auditorium.

Hope to see you soon at 12:00 noon.

Bob Fermier

Paradox SIG

I would like to thank Greg Kane for accepting the Assistant SIG Leader position. Greg is very active in the world of Paradox and has been a very busy developer for several years. Greg handled the November meeting program while I had to attend to other business related to the potential swapping out of the NTPCUG's BBS software. A step many feel is long overdue. I will be presenting the December meeting program. I intend to cover the coming Paradox attractions from Borland unofficially scheduled for sometime in the first quarter of '92. January is not firm yet, but with Greg's help, I'm sure we will come up with something.

Fred Williams

Personal Users SIG

The SIG leader will take the month of January off to attend other SIG meetings. The 16-Curriculum schedule will resume in February. Please check this column in the February newsletter.

Bob Presley

Advanced Programmers SIG

Neural networks were the topic of discussion this month. After much recursion, and diversion, John West made the final point which ended the discussion. It was something about the 80286 processor being brain dead. Make your own statement. Stop by the Pro SIG to end your day at INFOMART.

Jim Hoisington

Quicken SIG

Attention!!! For all of you who have patiently waited through the temporary nature of leadership in this section, try again. W. L. Harris, whom you all know and love from a meeting this fall which he agreed to lead, and Billy Pitts, no less knowledgeable, have offered to take charge. There has been a persisting interest and need for this SIG as evidenced by the attendance and questions.

As a forum for questions and answers, please call the NTPCUG's



BBS. W. L. Harris has been monitoring the bulletin board, so you can address your questions and comments to the mailbox for ALL which accepts messages of general interest or to W. L.'s mailbox. How about some suggestions for a meeting format.

Would you like to set up a telephone exchange to help with problem-solving? Is the personal, business or investment use of Quicken of greater interest? With tax season upon us, how about discussing the pros and cons of the infamous tax coding for Turbo-Tax?

The most obvious choice for a program is the attributes of the latest version of Quicken; the perennial question is whether to upgrade or not to upgrade. The next meeting will address this and the Windows application, which many of you may be interested in.

Jo Johnston

Windows Applications SIG

The January, 1992 Windows Applications SIG meeting will focus on what to expect in Windows 3.1. I will bring along copies of several articles that describe what is new in Windows 3.1 and we will have a group discussion of its new features. Several members of the SIG are beta testers of Windows 3.1 and we will discuss the features of 3.1 that have been put into the public domain by Microsoft.

If you are interested in finding out about the improvements that will be coming in Windows 3.1 in April, this will be a good meeting to attend. This meeting will let you know how Windows is improving and becoming a more stable system to work with.

Arthur English

Windows Developers SIG

The January, 1992 Windows developers SIG will be devoted to code sharing. Please bring along a diskette with any Freeware, Shareware, or program that you have developed yourself that you feel will help other Windows programmers

with their development. At the meeting we will discuss the software being contributed and collect it so we can build a Windows Developers SIG disk to be distributed at the next meeting.

To start, I will be contributing a Windows Dynamic Link Library (DLL) with source code that contains several handy program callable functions. One of the functions is a Windows scanf function that can be used to read information into a Windows program using a format similar to the C scanf function. I have found it to be very handy for debugging purposes.

Please don't come to the meeting empty handed. Bring along a disk with something useful on it and you will receive a disk full of Windows programming source code and utilities at the next meeting.

Arthur English

Word SIG

Word for Windows 2.0 is out and most Word SIG members should have received their upgrade announcements by the time of the January Meeting. We'll look at the new version and discuss whether it's worth the price.

Advance answer from Reagan is "Yes", the new update is definitely worth the time and price. This is a significant improvement over the Word for Windows 1.1 version that has lurked on many hard disks, mostly unused, while devoted Word users have kept generating copy from DOS WORD 5.0 and 5.5. It's good enough to make a lot of folks switch to the Windows 3.X standard.

The January Word SIG Meeting will continue to focus on problem areas Word users are experiencing in daily operation with a general Q & A session at the end of the meeting. Focus will be on interface issues and printer driver problems.

Reagan Andrews

WordPerfect SIG

WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS Tip of the Month! (We now have to start differentiating between DOS and Windows since some of our members

have both.) "Block" is probably the most versatile feature of WordPerfect. There are over 40 things that can be done with blocked text. Here's a few you may not know about. Once you have the information blocked, you can PRINT it (Shift-F7), SAVE it (F10), PROTECT it from splitting by a natural page break (Shift-F8), CHANGE CASE (Shift-F3), turn it into a COMMENT (Ctrl-F5), or SORT it (Ctrl-F9). Then there are the nine appearance and seven size attributes under Ctrl-F8, four options under Mark Text (Alt-F5), and the four choices under Move (Ctrl-F4). These four move choices are available for a block of text (which is read left to right like sentences), a column of numbers (which is read top to bottom) or a rectangle (great for cleaning up a DOS file).

Now on to our January business. C.J. Bains will be conducting the January 18th session with a "how-to" on macros. She'll show us how to create practical macros that we'd use every day. With an emphasis on the macro editor, C.J. will talk about some basic commands of a programmed macro: {Label}, {For}, and {Variable}. As always, bring your questions (on macros or any subject) and we'll spend the last part of our hour on Q's and A's.

Lori Quinn

MS Works SIG

The new MS Works SIG will explore this easy-to-use, low-cost package that is now available for Windows as well as DOS. MS Works includes word processing, spreadsheet with graphics, database and communications with features that meet the needs of many users and common commands for easy of use. The SIG will provide users a chance to ask questions and offer tips on features. Part of each session will be a briefing on a common task related to full use of the product. As more people become involved, the SIG will follow their needs, including those coming from AppleWorks or other programs and those using different versions of Works. Contact Mike Firth, 827-7734, in advance of the first meeting in January, if interested or just come.

Mike Firth

NEW DISKS



...from the DOM Squad

Disk 674. Windows Benchmark 2.0, 10/91 - PC Magazine Benchmark Program from Ziff-Davis Publishing

PC Magazine's Windows Benchmark program will work with any version of Windows and is designed to test the performance of Windows on a particular hardware platform. You can run the test individually or all at once. The tests performed include Blocks, Curves, Lines, Polygons, Rectangles, Text, Clipping, and others. Test results may be sent to the screen, text file or both. To run the benchmark program, issue the File Run command and Run WINBENCH.EXE from the drive and/or directory of your choice. To print the documentation, place this disk in drive A: and type COPY A:WINBENCH.DOC PRN at the DOS prompt.

Some of the changes from version 1.1 of the program include the following:

- System Information adds the processor type and clock speed, presence of math coprocessor, Windows version number and operating mode, video driver file name and description, video driver file date, video driver version, X- Width Aspect Ratio, Y-Width Aspect Ratio, height of the system font, and average character width of the system font.

- Tests now run for a minimum of five seconds, and report throughput, rather than elapsed time. There is no method to convert results from WINBENCH 1.1 into the format for the results used by WINBENCH 2.0.

- All tests display text centered in the benchmark window to identify the current test being run in a series of tests. Identifying the test when it is running improves human factors and helps to debug WINBENCH and Windows should WINBENCH terminate with an UAE.

- Many tests change the color being displayed to give a better visual indication that something is actually being done while the test runs.

- Where possible, throughput is either calculated or estimated as "pixels/sec". Results of text handling benchmarks are reported in "characters/sec". Results for some other tests are reported in "operations/sec".

- The Help dialogue box provides a complete description of all tests.

- The ASCII text report file now lines up data in vertical columns. The "1-2-3" format for a report file produces comma-separated data, and non-numeric literals are bounded by double quotes, e.g. "sample text". The Excel format produces tab-separated data.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 675AB. Show Partner Lite 3.7, 9/91 - Presentation Graphics, Brightbill-Roberts & Co., 421 University Building, 120 East Washington Street, Syracuse, NY 13202-4000. Registration Fee: \$79.00 + \$5.00 Shipping.

Show Partner Lite allows the user to capture screens, arrange them in a presentation, and then distribute the presentation to anyone with an IBM or compatible PC. The program includes all of the necessary features to prepare professional presentations for training classes and/or demonstrations.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible with 1.2 Meg of available disk space, 320K of RAM, and a CGA or better monitor.

Show Partner Lite consists of five basic programs - Capture, Grafix Editor, Slide Show Editor, Script Editor, and Show. The Capture program is a memory-resident program that saves screen images to disk and can be used to capture screen from programs such as Lotus 1-2-3, AutoCad, Word Perfect, PC Paintbrush. The image is captured in CGA through VGA resolution.

Grafix Editor can be used to change the resolution of the captured image as well as add boxes, lines, circles, free-hand drawings, and text to the captured image. Slide Show Editor and Script Editor are used to assemble the screens into desktop presentations. Both programs offer special effects, however, Script Editor offers better special effects than Slide Show Editor.

Show is the medium used to display your presentation. Show can be distributed without paying royalties to Brightbill-Roberts & Co.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 676. No-Can-See Scrambler 1.0, 7/91 - A File Protection Program by Ray Zimmerman, Computer Specialties, P.O. Box 5694, Lake Charles, LA 70606. Shareware Registration: \$25.00.

No-Can-See is designed to scramble files to prevent unintentional alteration and/or to protect the privacy of text files. It is easy to use and requires no installation. Optional use of a password can provide additional security.

No-Can-See can be run either from a floppy or a hard disk. For greatest security, run it from a floppy so that the program is not accessible to other users of the hardware.

Type GO runs the batch file GO.BAT, which brings up a menu screen. From this you can choose information about shareware, registration, the software itself, suggestions, and also run the program. The first time you run it, you are asked for your name. The name, as well as some coded files are written to the program disk (or directory) when you run the scrambler. There is also an option that lets you print various parts of the documentation. When scrambling a file, you are asked if you want to use a password and then prompted for one. The author recommends not using a password unless really necessary. If you forget the password there is no way even you can recover the file. There is a menu option for unscrambling a scrambled file, but it does require use of any existing password. If you enter the password wrong, the file is double scrambled, and will require both the right and wrong passwords to unscramble.

Once you know the procedures, you can type SCRAMBLE, to run the SCRAMBLE.EXE program which allows both scrambling and unscrambling without going through the first menu.

There are no special hardware requirements for using this software. When using it, you must have CapsLock on. The author offers 30 days free use before registering. Pay the fee and receive the first major revision free.

This disk was contributed by the publisher, Computer Specialties.

Review prepared by Virginia Salter, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 677. Ultra-Check 1.02, 11/90 - Easy to Use Financial Consultant, by Jon Kolstad, P.O. Box 372, Washougal, WA 98671. Shareware Fee: \$40.00.

Ultra-Check has the expected functions of entering checks and deposits, but includes the capability of categorizing each check or deposit for excellent reporting capabilities. This capability will help individuals to create or maintain a budget and is advantageous for small businesses. Another option when making entries is the ability to mark the transactions as having cleared the bank to help reconcile your checkbook. Ultra-Checks replaces Fred's Checkbook and sports a much nicer user interface with exploding and collapsing windows as well as good use of color.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM PC/XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible, DOS 2.1 or higher, and 256K memory. A hard disk is recommended but not required.

Ultra-Checks includes on-line help, printing checks on continuous forms, adding entries, standardized entries, categories to track expenses, searching, and excellent reporting features. You can also split entries into more than one category. There is even a shell to DOS and an automatic backup option when you exit the program.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 678. Zipkey 2.03e, 9/91 - Zip-code and area code finder by Eric Isaacson, Eric Isaacson Software, 416 E. University Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47401-4739. Registration Fee: \$30.00.

Zipkey is a zip-code and area code finder that can run as a stand alone program or memory resident. The user can give the program a zip-code and it will return the city and state as well as the area code. Or you can give the program a state and city and it will give you the zip-code(s) for that city. Some cities such as Dallas, Texas have many zip-codes. You can also give the program an area code and it will give you the state and selected cities in that area code.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM PC/XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with at least 256K in memory.

The program is very easy to use for simple queries. Significant documentation is available. The program interface is simple and uncluttered which is great for this type of program. All you want to do is to look up a location and get out.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 679. Revelation of Jesus Christ, 8/91 - The STUDY AID to the REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST, by H. Dally, P.O. Box 2098, Ridgecrest, CA 93556. Registration Fee: \$50.00.

The STUDY AID to the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST is a study guide to the King James version of Revelations. The program displays parallel scripture from the New Testament, or Old Testament. Alternatively, the program can display some comments from the author, your own comments that you enter, or references for the various chapters.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with hard disk, 1.5M of available disk space, and 256K of RAM.

This program is an excellent reference tool for the serious student of Revelations. The program does not require the user to jump through a lot of hoops. However, the program also does not hold the users hand in their study of Revelations.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 680. Baby4u, 9/91 - Describes prenatal development by Hal S. Kopeckin, Ph.D. & Ann Marie Kopeckin, R.N., M.A. Registration Fee: None Found.

Baby4u is a nice little program that generates reports describing prenatal development and the progress of a pregnancy on a particular date. According to the authors, the program incorporates the latest medical research. The program is very easy to use.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM PC/XT/AT or compatible with at least 128K of memory.

The program requires some preliminary information through the (Install main menu option. In this menu you will give your name and other data needed to determine the expected delivery date of your child. Once you complete this preliminary information, you are ready to view and/or print reports.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 681. Curses! 2.01, 8/91 - Insult and compliment generator by Rosemary Westa, R.K. West Consulting, P.O. Box 8059, Mission Hills, CA 91346. Registration Fee: \$10.00.

Curses! is a humorous and creative insult generator that at the flick of a key turns into a compliment generator. You can even add words to the vocabulary so that it can generate compliments or insults using words that you add to the various databases. As might be imagined, the insult databases are separate from the compliment databases.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with 512K of RAM and a hard disk.

The main menu consists of Generate Insults, Work with Vocabulary, Switch to Compliments, Utilities, and Exit to DOS. Generate Compliments creates a list of insults such as aggressively brutish pirate, sub-average recluse, brain-dead turnip, or wimpy has-been. Every screen generates a different list of insults. Work with Vocabulary is where you can add nouns, adjectives, or adverbs to the database.

Switch to Compliments actually changes the first menu item to Generate Compliments, and the third menu to Switch to Insults. This menu also activates the compliment database for the Work with Vocabulary menu option. Compliments such as head-turning cuties, thoughtful faith, melodious donor, and newsworthy heart might be generated.

This is a great diversionary program that is great to break up the day. Besides, you may need an insult or two in your back pocket for those occasion that require them. Then again, you may need to impress you boyfriend or girlfriend with a wonderful compliment to solidify the relationship or to make up after an argument or a mistake you made.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 682. VINO:File Cellar Master 2.15, 10/90 - Wine Cellar Mgmt System by Mark Christian, 737 Post Street, #1612, San Francisco, CA 94109. Registration Fee: \$25 + \$4 P/H.

VINO:File Cellar Master keeps track of the bottles of wine in your cellar and have instant access to your tasting notes. It also helps you analyze the geographical spread of your collection, maintain a list of wines that should be drunk or tasted soon, and identify future purchasing needs. You can also locate a particular bottle of wine by bin or box number - without hunting through the cellar or packing and unpacking valuable bottles.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with 256K of memory. The program takes up approximate 750K of disk space. ▶

While the program is rather simple to operate, browsing/reading through the manual is very helpful. The program is designed for someone with a real wine cellar, but it also is an excellent program to keep tasting notes for those who like to taste a variety of wines. The program maintains a database of wine in the cellar including all of the fields that you would want to include on your wine from the country, to the vintage year. Multiple databases are supported. Cross references of your wines are automatic making data entry an easy one-step process. Search and query of the database is also available and quite handy to check on whether the 1987 vintage was better than the 1998 vintage according to your notes.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 683. VPIC 4.6, 8/91 - Graphic file viewer/converter by Bob Montgomery, 543 Via Fontana #203, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Registration Fee: \$15 + \$5 P/S.

VPIC is a file viewer/converter for EGA, VGA and SuperVGA display adapters. It supports Ahead (A & B chips), ATI, Chips & Technology, Everex, Genoa, Headland (Video 7), Oak, Paradise, Trident (8800 BR & CS and 8900 chips), Tseng (ET-3000 & ET-4000 chips), Western Digital, Video 7, and Zymos VGA chips, and VESA standard boards, in all EGA/VGA graphics modes for each display card. It is configurable for your display card using a plain text configuration file and the accompanying CONFIG and CVPIC configuration programs. A comprehensive DOC file explains all features of VPIC. If your card supports VESA, VPIC will automatically detect and use the VESA modes; defeated with /v option.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: IBM XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with 512K of memory. An EGA or VGA is also required.

VPIC will display and convert to, the following graphics file formats:

- BIF Binary Image Format B&W image capture board files (display only).
- BMP Microsoft Bitmap files, normal and compressed; saves uncompressed.
- CUT Dr Halo machine independent format with a palette file.
- GIF viewing, normal and interlaced (Fractint FRA and GIF89a viewing too). (Saves in normal, interlaced, inverted, mirrored, rotated degrees.)
- LBM Deluxe Paint VGA format, regular and enhanced.
- MAC file (display only).
- PCX including the VGA version 1.61 of PC Paintbrush.
- PIC Pictor/PC Paint and ViewPoint (ViewSonic) files.
- SCx file formats for Colorix and EGA Paint.
- TGA Targa 8 through 32 bits/pixel normal and compressed file formats.

No GIF or other "pictures" are included on this disk for viewing.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

**** EDITOR'S NOTE: DOM DISKS 684 - 688 contain the programs presented in the "Utilities" section of PC Magazine, along with the source code. For instructions on how to use the programs, see the PC Magazine issue cited. These utilities are copyright to PC Magazine (upgrades can be found on the PCMagNet) and are made available by the NTPCUG as a service to our members.**

Disk 684. PC Magazine Utilities 1990 Jan-Feb - Executables & Source Code.

V9N01.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 1. Included are PCREMOTE.ASM, PCREMOTE.BAS, PCREMOTE.COM, PCREMOTE.DOC, CHECKCOM.BAT, ATDT.BAT, BB.BAT, XB.BAT, FOOTEND.WPM, TRYDIMUL.ASM, TRYDIDIV.ASM, INIT87.ASM, DIMUL87.ASM, and DIDIV87.ASM. This ARC file includes version 1.1 of PCRemote.

V9N02.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 2. Included are BATCHMAN.ASM, BATCHMAN.BAS, BATCHMAN.COM, BATCHMAN.DOC, SUBROUTN.BAT, QF.BAT, INFO.BAT, DRVINFO.BAT, ERRLEV.BAT, SYNONYMS.BAT, NOCASE.BAT, GETREPLY.BAT, RBMFRE.BAT, BATSONG.BAT, EGAHELP.BAT, FRIDAY13.BAT, COPIF.BAT, ANSWER.SCR, DUMMY.SCR, BU.BAT, and MYXCOPY.BAT.

V9N03.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 3. It contains the entire PCDATA toolkit as well as COUNTER.SCR, DOORBELL.BAT, ERRVAR.BAT, ERRVAR2.BAT, HERTZ.FNC, NOVIRUS.BAT, NOVIRUS.SCR, and PIANO.PAS.

This software was downloaded from Compuserve by Kenneth Loafman.

This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

Disk 685. PC Magazine Utilities 1990 Feb-Apr - Executables & Source Code

V9N04.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 4. Includes: VPOKER.ARC (contains VPOKER & all of the accompanying files), KEYTEST.C, PASSCOMM.FNC, HELLO.PAS, HELLO2.PAS, USEHELLO.PAS, HELP.PAS, HELP2.PAS, USEHELP.PAS, BANK.PAS, QUEUES.PAS, PRINTDC.ARC.

V9N05.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 5. Included are: FALOG.ASM, FTRIG.ASM, FTOA.ASM, ATOF.ASM, ANSHERE.ASM, ANSHERE.COM, NEEDANSI.BAT, ANSIX.SCR, and BP8.SCR.

V9N06.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 6. Includes: SCHEDULE.ASM, SCHEDULE.BAS, SCHEDULE.COM, and SCHEDULE.DOC. It also contains PRINTCAL.ARC, a second ARCHive that includes all of the PRINTCAL files.

V9N07.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 7. Includes: PCACCES2.BAS, PCACCES2.EXE, PCACCESS.DOC, B.DEF, HEAPBUG.PAS, HEAPTEST.PAS, NOPAUSE.SCR, COMINPUT.FNC, KILLER.BAS, KILLER2.BAS, and KILLER.BAT. ([NOTE: PCACCESS updated 11/18/90 to version 1.2.])

This software was downloaded from Compuserve by Kenneth Loafman.

This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman, edited by Kathryn Loafman (12/91).

RAM PAGEFRAME IPX MEMORY BIOS CACHE VGA MOUSE 386 BLUEMAX 486 HIGH DOS EGA INITIALIZE

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ISRS
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Only the most intelligent memory managers can pass this test.



There's no question if you want top performance from your 386 system, you need maximum memory management. And that takes intelligence. But whose intelligence would you rather use—yours or your memory manager's? Here's a little quiz to help you make the smart choice.

1 True or False: All memory managers are alike.
False. Most memory managers free up space for applications by moving TSRs and device drivers from conventional memory into high DOS memory. But they vary widely in how effectively they do it. Others require a lot of guesswork, and a lot of time. And you still won't get top performance. MAX, on the other hand, uses its intelligence to calculate automatically the thousands of possible ways these programs can be arranged in high DOS, and finds the best possible fit. First time, every time. Guaranteed.

2 Why do other memory managers leave some programs in conventional memory when there's still room for them in high DOS?
Many resident programs need much more space to load than they need to run. FlexFrame, a MAX exclusive, "borrows" up to 64K of high

DOS memory for loading, so it can pack more in. That frees even more memory for applications.

3 True or False: Using TSRs in Windows is a great way to crash your system.
With other memory managers, that's definitely true. But not with MAX. Thanks to another MAX exclusive called *TSR instancing*, you can use nearly any pop-up utility as many times as you want in Windows.

4 With DOS 5.0, there's no need for a memory manager—right or wrong?
Well, that depends. DOS 5 does free up some memory with its smaller program size. And it does let you place programs into high DOS manually. But for optimal memory management and guaranteed top performance, what you really need is MAX. It's the powerful, automated, full-service program that specializes in all facets of managing your memory. So while DOS 6 is good, DOS 5 with MAX is outstanding.

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RAM MEMORY BIOS CACHE VGA MOUSE 386 BLUEMAX 486 HIGH DOS EGA INITIALIZE

© 1991 Qualitas Qualitas, 7101 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1386, Bethesda, MD 20814. All company and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. System Requirements: Any 386 or 486 PC or PS/2, min. 256KB of extended memory, DOS 3.0 or higher, high density floppy disk or hard disk drive. † Offer valid in North America only.

QUALITAS

Disk 686. PC Magazine Utilities 1990 Apr-Sep - Executables & Source Code

V9N08.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 8. Includes: TYPEFAST.ARC (all of the TYPEFAST, TPFST-AT, and KBBUFFER files), EDITDEMO.C, SHOWEA.ARC (all of the SHOWEA files), PRINTCAL.C, and CS.SCR.

V9N09.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 9. Includes: PANDOR.ZIP, PAGEOFX.WPM, PECHA.WPM, WHEREIS.C, WHEREIS.MAK, WHEREIS.DEF, SETEA.C, SETEA.MAK, SETEA.DEF, GETPUTEA.C, POPPATH.BAT, POPP2.BAT, PUSHPATH.BAT, PUSH2.BAT, and SAMPAN.ZIP. [[NOTE: PANDOR updated 9-16-91.]]

V9N10.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 10. Includes: COMPUTE.ASM, COMPUTE.COM, COMPUTE.DOC (COMPUTE sidebars included) THREADS1.C, THREADS1.EXE, THREADS1.DEF, THREADS1.MAK, GETCOMND.BAT, and DEBUGBAT.BAT. [[NOTE: COMPUTE updated 8/16/90.]]

V9N11.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 11. Includes: MEMMAP.PAS, MEMMAP.BAS, MEMMAP.COM, MEMMAP.DOC, THREADS2.EXE, THREADS2.C, THREADS2.MAK, THREADS2.DEF, SE.BAT, SED.BAT, and SWAP.BAT.

V9N12.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 12. Includes: PRUNE.ARC (7/23/90 update; remember to un-arc this one as well), DBLOOK.EXE, SECURITY.PRG, THREADS3.EXE, THREADS3.C, THREADS3.MAK, THREADS3.DEF, D.BAT, D2.BAT, DIRANY.BAT, SETRETRN.BAT, and DORETURN.BAT.

V9N13.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 13. Includes PMVIEW.ARC (remember to un-arc this with ARCE.EXE), GLUE.WPM, WHATCPU.SCR, WIPEMEM.SCR, WHATCPU.COM, WIPEMEM.COM, YESNO.PRG, and ACTMENU.PRG.

This software was downloaded from Compuserve by Kenneth Loafman.

*This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman, edited by
Kathryn Loafman (12/91).*

Disk 687. PC Magazine Utilities 1990 Sep-Oct - Executables & Source Code

V9N14.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 14. Includes: BAT2EXEC.ZIP (remember to unzip this one as well!), CLICK.COM, CLICK.ASM, WC.EXE, WC.C, SETCOLUM.WK1, CONVERT.WQ1, BAR.WPM, WARMBOOT.COM, RECONFIG.BAT, and ZIPNGO.BAT. [[NOTE: BAT2EXEC v1.5 updated 8-9-91.]]

V9N15.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 15. Includes: CONCEAL.COM, .ASM, and .DOC, as well as the ONPATH batch files from User-to-User; also ALTP.WPM, MEDIAN.WK1 and the DEBUG script to read the partition table.

V9N16.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 16. Includes: CMDEDIT program and source, FOR-

MAT4.BAT, QUOTE.WPM, SYSLOCK.SCR, and SYSLOCK.COM; METAFILE files from the Environments section and NWORDS.PRG, BOXES.PST and LOGO.PST. [[NOTE: CMDEDIT updated 11-8-91 to version 2.8.]]

V9N17.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 17. Includes: the PCBOOK (v1.1) program along with source code and DOC file, TRUE.SCR and TRUE.COM, WHATNDP.SCR and WHATNDP.COM, SHFTLOCK.SCR and SHFTLOCK.COM, as well as the METACLIPC file from the Environments section and COUNT.WPM, CHKDSK.BAT. [[NOTE: PCBook updated 6/18/91.]]

V9N18.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 18. Includes: PMCARD program, source code, and DOC file, MV.BAS, DIRDEL.BAT, METARECT.C, ALT.L, DETECT1.PRG and DETECT2.PRG, as well as PREVENT.PRG.

This software was downloaded from Compuserve by Kenneth Loafman.

*This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman, edited by
Kathryn Loafman (12/91).*

Disk 688. PC Magazine Utilities 1990 Nov-Dec - Executables & Source Code

V9N19.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 19. Includes: WSMOOTH Windows utility, with source codes, and DOCUMENTATION file. It also contains ALTZ.WPM, SBOX, FIELDLEN.PRG and FIELD_LE.PRG, WKSPACE.SAV, and REPL.BAT.

V9N20.ZIP

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 20. Includes: PCSORT, various script files to automate downloading files from our Utilities Database with popular COMM programs, as well as ALT2.WPM, RGNAME.123, and DRVVDY.COM. [[NOTE: PCSORT updated 4/18/91.]]

V9N21.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 21. Includes: PRISM.EXE, its DOCUMENTATION file, and source code archive. Also included are BRIGHT.BAT, and ELKOD-SI.XLM.

V9N22.LZH

This ARCHive contains the files from PC Magazine Volume 9, Number 22. The lead utility is WINWHERE.EXE, a Windows 3.0 file finder (and its DOS equivalent MWHERE.EXE). Others include HIGHLITE.WPM and HIGHLIT2.WPM, ALTV.WPM, TODAY.BAT, DO.BAT and DO2.BAT, CTRTEXT.WK1, and BIOSDT.ARC.

This software was downloaded from Compuserve by Kenneth Loafman.

*This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman, edited by
Kathryn Loafman (12/91).*

*Order your disks using the order blank
on page 28.*

Colorix

A Review

by Neal Berkowitz

Deciding whether Colorix VGA Paint by RIX Softworks is a good program is difficult. At times its features make it one of the most powerful drawing packages around. At other times its complexity makes it almost too much trouble to bother with.

My love-hate relationship began the first time I saw Colorix. The back cover of the box suggests features not often found in drawing programs less than \$100. What was more intriguing was that the copy I had access to was not the current release. This was the first sign that there was going to be good and bad in my relationship with Colorix. While I planned to obtain a current release of the program, I was curious about its evolution. The older version was purchased, and I waited for the current version to arrive.

The new release visually was a bit of a letdown. RIX had gone from a hardcover three ring binder to cheaper softcover spiral bound documentation. Looking through the documentation, however revealed several new features. Unfortunately the first forty pages of the documentation were missing. It seemed quality control left something to be desired. More good-bad followed. The people at RIX were extremely helpful and offered to send a replacement copy of the documentation immediately. It arrived the next day by Federal Express. Unfortunately it was for the new RIX product WinRix, not Colorix. Another phone call and an apology from the RIX support staff. The correct documentation arrived the next day. It is unusual to find such helpful support staff; what is more remarkable is that I did not inform them that the software was for a review. It is apparent that they treat everyone with consideration.

Installation of Colorix is simple, the files only need to be copied from the source disks to a hard disk. A separate procedure needs to be executed to install the help files but this is as simple as executing the MAKEHELP program.

Colorix uses a different approach to handling commands than do most paint programs. There are no menus initially on the screen, instead the screen is used to display the complete picture. The initial menu is invoked by pressing the right button of a three button mouse or alternately pressing both buttons on a two button mouse. This is the second sign that Colorix is an unusual program, it uses all three mouse buttons. The left button serves as a switch to activate or deactivate the selected paint tool. The middle button provides the means to switch between two selected tools.

When the menu is displayed the two tools can be modified. Tool types that can be selected include brushes, erasers, smoothers, airbrushes, and smudge tools. The main menu is also used to enter text mode and fill mode. From the main menu, secondary menus permit further refinement of the tool functionality. These subsequent menus control aspects like line width, shape generation, color, and sensitivity levels.

Some of these control features are unique to Colorix. Colorix permits erasers to be color sensitive. Unlike other programs that substitute a single color for a second color, Colorix can be set to select a range of colors to be substituted. The consequence of this is that, for example, a range of red shades can be erased to a single selected color. The range can be set to three levels of sensitivity or reversed so that all but a single color is changed to the desired erased color.

Colorix excels in the manipulation of colors. The features common to other paint programs are present including the capability to modify individual colors in the palette and to perform global changes in the picture. But Colorix expands tremendously on this functionality. For starters, individual colors in the palette can be deleted. Pixels in the picture that are the deleted color are then reassigned to the color in the palette closest to the deleted color. This same procedure can be used to delete full columns of colors.

The cleared colors within the palette can be assigned to any new color. Alternately Colorix can be used to generate shades between two selected colors within the palette. This is definitely one of the best features of Colorix. Subtle shades can be constructed permitting a great deal of flexibility in drawing. The shades can then be used to build a gradation scale for fill patterns. Fill patterns are extremely flexible ranging from simple horizontal or vertical fills to complex circular fills based on points either within or outside the fill area.

Color palettes are the specialty of Colorix. When old pictures are loaded the user has the option of keeping the palette associate with the picture or keeping the palette currently in memory. This makes combining two pictures far easier than other paint programs.

Unfortunately many of the features in Colorix are less than intuitive. Building a color gradation scale requires numerous selections of both the left and middle buttons. To make matters worse, the selection process is not simplified by any helpful prompts on the screen. Having the manual at hand is all but necessary.

Many of the operations of the program have similar pitfalls. For example, to load an existing picture several options have to be selected. To set the options the main menu needs to be brought up using

the right button. The image option needs to be then selected bringing up the options submenu. The "Large" suboption then needs to be set to "ON" and the "XPal" option set to "SET". The first selection sets the load to full screen mode for pictures, the second allows the loaded picture to retain its original palette. The "XPal" option should not be set to either "ON" or "OFF" as these options respectively do no translation of the original palette and translate the new colors to the existing palette respectively. A bit confusing and not obvious unless the manual is read in detail.

To further illustrate the complexities of the program, Colorix does not have a single file format. Based on the picture resolution and number of colors, the Colorix file extension can be .SCE, .SCR, .SCT, or over

a dozen other .SCx extension names. While this makes it easy to determine the resolution of a picture, it presents a potential nightmare for support and exporting to other programs.

It is things like this that make Colorix more difficult than it should be. While it is an excellent program with many spectacular features and excellent support, unfortunately, it is not easy to use. For someone willing to spend the time and effort needed to figure out the nuances, the program is well worth it. For anyone who wants a good paint program, there are too many other easier to use choices on the market for Colorix to be recommended.

Neil

■

How does it work?

by Andy Baird

Briefly, Zero Surge employs a 100 microHenry current limiting inductor, followed by a voltage limiting bridge. The bridge contains several triggered energy absorbing stages that respond according to the slew rate and energy of the incoming surge and keep maximum let-through voltage under 250 volts (in UL 1449 tests at 6000 volts and 500 amps, let-through was 223 volts, or 42 volts above AC power line peak, the best ever tested by UL).

The unit contains three large electrolytic capacitors. One capacitor is charged to track the sine wave peak at all times; the other two are uncharged except during a surge, when they store the excess energy, which is then released slowly back into the neutral line through current-limiting resistors. The rated life of these capacitors, under 24-hour-a-day full load, is 11.5 years.

Regarding the claim of "zero response time," Laidley says, "The first component is an inductor, in series with the line, that responds instantly to the surge current. The output rise time of this inductor is far slower than the low nanosecond range response time of the bridge diodes. Zero Surge reduces surge rise time by approximately 40 times, thus reducing the disturbance below the threshold, to a point where no significant coupling can occur."

By the way, all the Zero Surge components are in full view when the box is opened; there are no "hidden parts," and none of the epoxy encapsulation so often found in other units.

I'll give the *LAN Times* the final say: "If it doesn't have UL or CSA certification as a transient voltage surge suppression device, don't buy it. Look for the UL 1449 clamping voltage in the product literature. If the device has UL certification as a temporary power tap, it means that UL has a high opinion of it as an extension cord, not as a surge protector!"

This is from an article on surge suppressors published in BECS, The newsletter of the Boeing Employees Computing Society, October, 1991.

Editor



Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community

Connie Andrews

I never cease to be amazed at our Users Group. We have grown to about 1,600 members. And everything that happens - the presentations in the Auditorium, the SIG meetings, the newsletter, the DOM disks, the BBS, the Information Booth services - all of it is still done by volunteers!

What most of our members see each month in the way of visible volunteer efforts is just the tip of the iceberg. Many, many hours are given but never seen. I'd like to tell you more about that in future issues.

In this issue we are acknowledging volunteers listed below who served for the month of NOVEMBER, with the exception of DOM folks, who are listed for OCTOBER and NOVEMBER. In addition to those listed below, our officers, directors, SIG coordinators and leaders, newsletter publisher, editor, staff and writers, newsletter exchange, and BBS SYSOP and staff are all volunteers; their names are listed in other sections of this newsletter.

PLEASE remember to say thanks to our volunteers!

INFOMART Liaison
Stuart Yarus

Vendor Setup/Breakdown
Mary Ganote
Denis King
Jeane King
Douglas Rudman
Pat Sims
Brenda Templet

Presentation/Equipment Setup and Breakdown
Timothy Carmichael
Chris Jung
Christopher Carmichael

Information/Registration Booth
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Harvey Andrews
Dianne Arnold (Anchor)
John Arnold (Anchor)
Ralph Beaver (Anchor)
Cliff Bishop
Randi Boucher
(Anchor/Scheduler)
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David Huckabee (Anchor)
Ed Keig
Pehl Lee
David Martin (extra duty)
Claude McClure (Anchor)
Ed Moreland
Raymond Reyes (Anchor)
Andrine Stricherz
(Anchor/extra duty)
Connie Testa (Statistician)
Fred Toulmin
Everett Turner (Anchor)
Peyton Weaver (Anchor)
Paul Williams (Anchor)
Bob Wuller (Anchor)

Disk of the Month (DOM):
OCTOBER and NOVEMBER:

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Richard Bauman
Roy Bales
Ralph Beaver
Robert Bender
Ken Branscome
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Charles Cashion
Don Chick
Paul Corbett
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Howard Hamilton
Kent Haven
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Jo Johnston
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Bob Post
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Oscar Tyler

With Special Thanks To:

Set-Up Crew:
Stan Berlin
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Bill Chambliss
Bill Drissel
Mark Gruner
Karen Harkness
Kent Haven
Pat Henley
Kathryn Loafman
Jerry Stone

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Gene Carleton
Don Chick
Judy Griffiths
Kent Haven (extra duty)
Pat Henley
Bob Karleback (extra duty)
Virginia Salter
Claude Walston

Inventory and Take-Down Crew:

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Charles Carter
Shawn Dunn
Jo Johnston
Kathryn Loafman
Kenneth Loafman

Desk Scheduler:

Bill Drissel

Disks-for-Review Manager:
Howard Hamilton

Reviewers:

Shawn Dunn
Mark Gruner (4 reviews)
Mitch Hoselton
Steven C. Hull
Kenneth Loafman (9 reviews)
Frank Miller (2 reviews)
John Puckette (2 reviews)
Virginia Salter (2 reviews)

Disk Production:

Kathryn Loafman
Kenneth Loafman

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

1. Via BBS: (214)387-2751, (214)387-2752 or (214)263-9036 (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	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)

ON COMPLEXITY _____ EPC _____
No. 59 in a Series

Mainframe Computers

by Jim Hoisington

I recently spent some time programming mainframe computers again. It was interesting to see the changes in the two years since I last worked in the mainframe environment. My task was to make certain routine tasks performed by a user department more "user friendly."

While it would not be correct to say that the mainframe people that I worked with are worried, I can say that they are anxious about their future. I never thought I would hear a mainframe type say "user friendly."

Since they knew I was a "PC person", they constantly recited a series of reasons in my presence why the mainframe could never be replaced by PC's. Two years ago, I agreed with

about half of their points; today I don't think any of them are valid. PC software and hardware has evolved to the point that they can replace almost all mainframe general purpose applications. (And I see trends that the special purpose applications like hotel reservation systems may not be all that safe.)

The whole thing reminded me of a city that I used to live near.

Back in the 1950's, the city fathers of this midwestern city saw the trend of the middle class moving to the suburbs. They vowed that it wouldn't happen to their town. To prevent the flight of their people (read tax base), they very carefully built all new streets on the edge of the city so that there were no through streets from the suburbs into the city. They reasoned that when people couldn't get into the city to shop or work, they'd move back.

Did it work? Of course not! In fact, it accelerated the development of shopping centers and office buildings in the suburbs to service all those people who now found it very inconvenient to drive downtown. Within a very few years, the stores and office buildings in the central business district closed. Homes inside the city quickly dropped in price because it was so difficult to drive to the suburbs.

By the time the city fathers realized what had happened and rebuilt a couple of thoroughfares to facilitate access to the central city, it was too late.

Like the city fathers, it is probably too late for the mainframe people to make their applications as accessible as PC applications. By making the mainframe difficult to use (can you code an inline Proc in MVS JCL without looking at a reference book?) and by not developing software tools to automate software development, they've got a real problem trying to get users back to the mainframe.

The next round of movement from the mainframe will be caused more by the need of increased access to the data and less for economic reasons.

Jim 

DOM Mail Order Form

Mail to: NTPCUG, DOM Mail Order
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Specify disk size:
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TOTAL DISKS _____ @ \$2.00 each \$ _____

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Meetings & Times



9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Personal Software Review
Parsons Technology

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Get a Jump on April 15 with the 1991 Personal Tax Edge and other Time-Saving Software
Parsons Technology

(See page 1 for description of programs.)

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

NTPCUG Business Meeting

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.

<p>9:00 - 9:55</p> <p>Assembler DOS General Genealogy Hardware Solutions Personal Users Quicken Software Review Windows Applications WordPerfect</p> <p>10:00 - 10:55</p> <p>Basic Programming - CAD dBase for TI Pro Fox Pro Database Local Area Networks PAF -Genealogy</p>	<p>10:00 - 10:55 cont</p> <p>Paradox Personal Users Unix/Xenix</p> <p>11:00 - 11:55</p> <p>Basic Programming Community Service Family Roots - Gnlgy. MS Works Roots III - Genealogy Spreadsheet Developers TI Pro General Mgt. Windows Developers</p> <p>11:30 - 11:55</p> <p>Orientation</p> <p>12:00 - 12:55</p> <p>C++/Advanced C</p>	<p>12:00 - 12:55 cont</p> <p>Communications Computer Law Investors OS/2 for End Users Personal Users R:Base</p> <p>1:00 - 1:55</p> <p>Beginners C Language Business Apps/DAC Easy LOTUS OS/2 Developers Personal Users TI Pro - New Users WORD</p> <p>2:00 - 2:55</p> <p>Advanced Programmers</p>
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Special Interest Groups

SIG Coordinator	K. B. Barton	(214)349-8690 h (214)747-0209 w
Assembler	David Thrash Frank Cavallito	(214)616-4130 (214)423-8221 h (214)317-0308 w (214)317-0125 h
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	Steve Dixon	(214)775-1503 (214)233-8353 w (214)343-3862 h (214)341-1890 w (214)618-8002 h (214)484-7942 w (817)731-1308 h (214)827-5751 h (214)361-8681 w (214)296-1799 w (214)635-9379 h (214)437-0322
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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.

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Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

Mark Gruner
Kathrine Loafman
Andy Oliver

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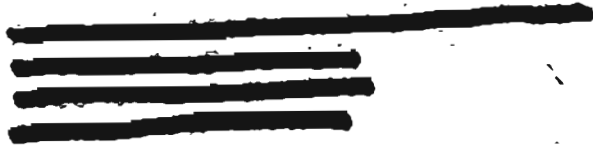


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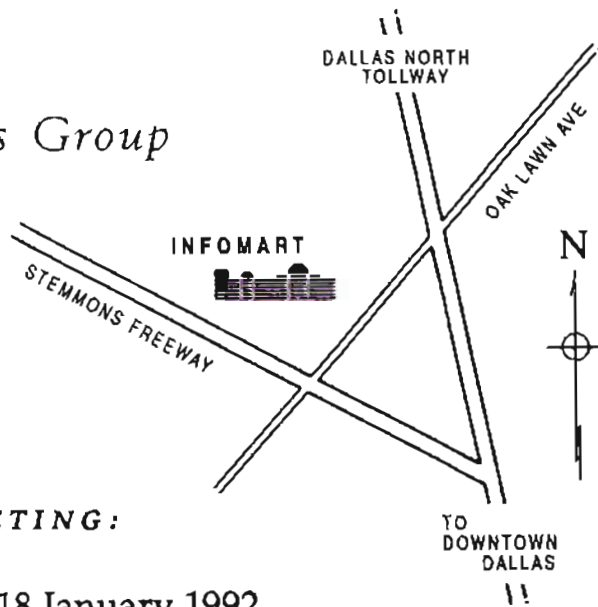
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