North Texas

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

NTPCUG

PC NEWS

WORD97M/Melissa is Coming!

See Page 2

North Texas PC NEWS

Deadline:

All advertising and other material for publication in North Texas PC NEWS must be received by the NEWS staff by the 15th of the month prior to publication unless otherwise listed. See deadline information below.

Circulation:

North Texas PC NEWS circulation was 1,650 last month.

Member distribution was 1,400; remaining copies were distributed to PC user groups around the country, and to advertisers, prospective members and others with common interests.

The editors of North Texas PC NEWS use Microsoft Word for Windows 97. This issue of North Texas PC NEWS was composed using Corel Ventura 8.0, Corel Draw 8.0, Arts & Letters Express 6.01, Adobe Photoshop 4.01, Micrografx Picture Publisher 8, Microsoft Publisher 98 and HP Scanjet 6200Cse. Repro was printed on a HP LaserJet 4M. Principal typefaces include: Times, Palatino, Helvetica, A&L Cafe, French Vogue, and Lithos.

DEADLINE
Copy deadline for May
North Texas PC NEWS:
April 18, 1999

Meeting Dates:

April 17 – 3rd Saturday
May 15 – 3rd Saturday
June 19 – 3rd Saturday
SIGs To be Announced

NT PCUG
NORTH TEXAS PC USERS GROUP, INC

In This Issue...

Submit Newsletter articles to: **reagan.andrews@ntpcug.org**
Visit the North Texas PC Users Group web page:
http://www.ntpcug.org

North Texas PC News

Advertising Prices and Policies

Ad Size	1X	3X	6X	12X
2-Page Spread	$400	$325		
Full Page (7 x 9)	225	195	$165	$150
Half Page (7 x 4 1/2)	150	125	110	100
Qtr Page (3 1/4 x 4 1/2)	100	80	65	55
Business Card (2 x 3 1/4)	65	50	40	35
Business Card (Members)	35	25	20	20

Reduced rates for multiple insertions of same ad. Require prior commitment in writing and payment in advance (3 months minimum). Copy and mechanical changes requested between insertions will be billed accordingly.

Deadlines: All advertising copy must be received by the *PC News* staff no later than the 10th day of the month prior to the month of publication unless other arrangements are made with the Publisher. *NT PC News* publication date is 10 days before the monthly meeting of the North Texas PC Users Group.

Policies & Mechanicals:

● Commercial ads must be in repro form, in final size, ready for printing.

● Halftones must be furnished as final size, screened prints or negatives.

● Halftone screens cannot exceed 100 LPI maximum.

● No ads on front cover. Bleed pages and color must be discussed with Publisher before submission.

● Related ads only; suitability is at discretion of the Publisher and the North Texas PC Users Group Board of Directors.

Payment: Payment in advance of publication.
Make checks payable to: North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

SIG Meeting Site

We're still working on getting the meeting space at Big Town Mall under contract. The space contains about 7 class rooms, the largest of which can hold from 150 to 200 people depending on how friendly they are.

Harold (Spike) Smith has volunteered to manage the process of getting the certificate of occupancy once we have the contract. Other members have also offered their services to move things along. Thanks to you all.

Once we have the certificate of occupancy, we'll get the SIG leaders together and work out a schedule. Watch our Web site, *www.ntpcug.org*, for updates.

Oops!

We had a major SNAFU in the mailing of the March newsletters. Seems that somehow an out-of-date mailing list was used. As a result, membership renewals for the past several months were left off.

We apologize to all our members who did not receive a newsletter.

Prez Sez by Jim Hoisington

Business Meeting

The NTPCUG business meeting will be held at 12:30 at the DFW Xchange Vendor show on Saturday, April 17th. We will probably meet in the open area behind the Vendor show area with entrance on the South part of the hall. If space becomes available at a new SIG meeting site, this may change. Please stay tuned, as above.

Jim...

Sam's Club Benefit

I've had lots of questions about our Sam's Club membership benefit that **Lewis Graber** negotiated last year. Lewis recently reconfirmed with Sam's Club that NTPCUG members are eligible for membership in Sam's Club.

Here is a summary of his e-mail:

Members of the North Texas PC Users Group may apply for membership in Sam's Club at any of the 12 local stores. There are two classes of membership and you are eligible for either.

The first class of membership has no annual charge but imposes a 5% upcharge (e.g., increase in price) on all items that you purchase.

The second class of membership has a $35.00 annual fee but imposes no price increase on the items that you purchase at Sam's Club.

Once you have a membership, you can shop at any Sam's Club throughout the nation.

Happy shopping.

Jim...

E-Mail Virus Spreads on Internet,

Could Tie Up Traffic if Not Stopped

By MARK BOSLET
Dow Jones Newswires

[Editor's Note: The following article was taken from *The Wall Street Journal's* 'Technical Center' at the *WSJ* Web site. It is printed in entirety and is viewed as an important warning to NTPCUG members.]

PALO ALTO, Calif. -- A computer virus that spread quickly across the Internet on Friday afternoon shut down e-mail servers at some companies and overloaded others with infected e-mail, industry executives said.

Some executives fear the virus, which is dubbed Melissa and which preys on Microsoft Corp.'s Word 97 and Word 2000 software, could tie up traffic on the Internet on Monday if it is unstopped.

The virus enters a computer in an e-mail message labeled "Important Message From [name]," where the name is the apparent sender's name.

Melissa replicates itself when a computer user opens the e-mail and a Word-based attachment it contains. Once open and active, the virus sends infected e-mail to 50 new recipients it finds in the computer owner's address book.

The virus shut down e-mail servers at Microsoft late Friday and hampered operations at other companies, such as Lucent Technologies Inc. said Eric Allman, chief technology officer at Send Mail Inc. Send Mail makes e-mail routing software used widely on the Internet.

Representatives from Microsoft and Lucent couldn't be

A program to prevent the spread of the Melissa virus is available at *www.sendmail.com.*

Microsoft has a patch available at:

www.microsoft.com/security/bulletins/ms99-002.asp

CERT information about the virus is available on the Web at

www.cert.org/advisories/ CA-99-04-Melissa- Macro-Virus.html.

reached for comment.

The body of the infected e-mail document reads: "Here's the document you asked for. Don't show it to anyone else."

The Computer Emergency Response Team -- Carnegie Mellon's Department of Defense-funded computer security team -- first heard of the virus Friday afternoon and its members worked through the night to analyze the virus and develop a fix, CERT manager Katherine Fithen said.

"We're getting so many reports from across the world that we know this is going to be a huge problem come Monday," Ms. Fithen said.

Send Mail's Mr. Allman said Send Mail came up with a program to prevent the virus's spread. It simply identifies an e-mail with the label "Important Message From" and returns it to the sender. The program is available for download from the Send Mail web site.

"Monday could be seriously painful for the Internet" if lots of users open and read e-mail messages infected with Melissa, Mr. Allman said.

--The Associated Press contributed to this article.

Another Ed. Note:

After reading the WSJ article on the W97M /*Melissa* virus, I immediately clicked on the Microsoft URL provided in a side bar to download the Word97 file. It was very fast given the usual glut of MS users hitting Microsoft's Web site and the file downloaded easily. Installation of the file, WORD97SP.EXE, was smooth and even faster.

I also visited the Web sites of the two major anti-virus program vendors, Symantec (Norton AntiVirus) and NAI (McAfee VirusScan) for more details -- and to see if either or both had updated versions capable of removing the Melissa virus and preventing infection. Both McAfee and Symantec had updated program files to remove Melissa and each also had very clear and detailed explanations of the virus.

Users should check out both for more information.

Reagan Andrews

How to use NTPCUG "ListServers"

A ListServer is special e-mail software that manages mailing lists pertaining to one or more "topic groups". As an NTPCUG member, you may "join" any of the topic groups that interest you. Thereafter, any e-mail sent to those topic group(s) will automatically be forwarded to you, along with everyone else that has joined that group. Any replies sent to the group may *also* be forwarded to all members of that list.

As a means to dispense and exchange information about NTPCUG, especially in this time of change, we have created a list on our mail server called "members". To use the list, you must first Join the list by sending mail to the List Server. Thereafter, you send mail to the List itself.

To *join* this list, merely send an e-mail message to the ListServer. Note that your e-mail to join *must come* from the e-mail account that you will use when sending or receiving "members" e-mail. In other words, if you join the list from an AOL ac-

WWW.NTPCUG.ORG

LIST SERVER

count, you will only be able to send mail to the "members" list from the AOL account, and any mail echoed from the "members" list will go to your AOL account.

The format to join is as follows:

TO: *listserver@ntpcug.org*

Subject: N/A

Subscribe members <your name>

where <your name> is your name as you want to be known within the "members" list. When your request to join is processed, an automated response will be returned to you confirming that your e-mail address has been added.

Once you have joined, any mail sent to *"members@ntpcug.org"* by anyone that has joined will be re-mailed to everyone that has joined the "members" list.

REMINDER: Your mail to "members" must come from the e-mail address you used to join. If you use more than one e-mail address, you must either "join" the list from both accounts, or send your "members" list mail from only the one you used when joining.

A ListServer mailing list may be set up to "moderate", or control, those that can join. In such cases, the list administrator must approve each request to join the list. At least initially, the "**members**" list will **not** be moderated – anyone may join. However, we reserve the right to begin moderating requests to join this and any other lists as needed.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact *doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org*.

Thanks

Doug Gorrie
(972) 618-8002

NTPCUG Server - Using Internet E-Mail

NTPCUG has completed the conversion of its Internet e-mail interface from a BBS (Bulletin Board System) to one that is Windows NT Server-based. We now have true Internet e-mail, allowing members to send and receive e-mail throughout the world using standard TCP/IP software. The handling of "TO", "Subject", and attachment information no longer requires special handling. E-mail can be uploaded and downloaded between our server and any e-mail client on your hard drive. Alternately, e-mail can be viewed and generated through a frames-capable browser (Netscape, Internet Explorer) from any Internet connection in the world.

NTPCUG NOT AN ISP

Please note that NTPCUG is NOT planning to become a full-blown ISP (Internet Service Provider). While your NTPCUG membership allows you free access to Internet e-mail, and will shortly include our own newsgroups for information exchange among members, we cannot provide full World Wide Web access for "surfing the net". If you want/need WWW capabilities, you will still need an ISP or similar connection to the Internet. But if all you need is e-mail, NTPCUG membership is a bargain !!

WHERE TO START

There are several different scenarios for creating and connecting to your free NTPCUG e-mail account. Below, we will first cover the ones most likely to meet members needs, then work our way back to address the others in this or separate documents.

Because the Internet has become such a prevalent force, **the following assumes you already have an ISP account**, and probably an e-mail account through that same ISP. (Toward the end of this document are alternate procedures describing in general how to access our e-mail server using our dial-up access lines.)

CREATING YOUR E-MAIL ACCOUNT

To use NTPCUG e-mail, your e-mail account must first be created. There are *two* ways to do this. One is to call Doug Gorrie (972-618-8002) or e-mail *postmaster@ntpcug.org*, providing your name, NTPCUG member number, and the initial password you desire. Your account will be created shortly, usually in the form of "*firstname.lastname*".

Alternately, if you have access to a browser on the Internet, you can go to *http://mail.ntpcug.org/emurl*, where you can Sign On and specify your own name and password. Your account is created immediately. Thereafter, once created, you can access your new e-mail account either through an e-mail client running on your PC, *or* via the same "*emurl*" link (address) above.

Important: Your ID, as entered by us or by you in "*emurl*", **must** be recognizable when compared to NTPCUG's membership database, and **must contain no spaces**. One address is allowed per membership, but if desired, it can be in the format "*John&SueJones*", "*JohnAndSue.Jones*", "*Jo.hn_and_Sue_Jones*", or similar if you want a combined "family" account.

WWW.NTPCUG.ORG

MAIL SERVER

ACCESSING YOUR NEW E-MAIL ACCOUNT

An e-mail "client" is software that runs on your PC (the client). It receives incoming Internet e-mail from our "server", and sends any outgoing e-mail you create to our server for forwarding to the intended recipient via the Internet.

With an e-mail client, previously downloaded e-mail can be read when you are "offline" (no longer connected to the Internet), and can be created while offline for later transmission when you finally connect to the Internet.

To reach our e-mail server using an e-mail client, you can continue to dial in to your existing ISP as usual. But to get to your NTPCUG mail account, you need to (a) either add an account definition about our server within your **current** e-mail package, or (b) add a **different** e-mail package for use when accessing only the NTPCUG server.

Most browser software, such as the Netscape or Internet Explorer, has e-mail integrated into it which can be used. Other e-mail clients, such as Eudora,

are stand-alone. Either type can be used. If you want to keep NTPCUG e-mail entirely separate from other e-mail, you can usually add a second, different e-mail client, and set it up to process only NTPCUG e-mail. Or, you can handle multiple e-mail accounts from within a single e-mail client, probably the one already provided by your ISP.

Configuring Outlook Express

As an example, to set up an e-mail client such as Outlook Express (free with Internet Explorer 4.0) to access NTPCUG e-mail, start Outlook Express. Outlook Express may be in your Programs list if you use Internet Explorer, or you can find it under the "Go" menu option of Internet Explorer as a "mail" option. The route to Mail may vary depending on which version of browser software is on your PC.

Go to Tools, then Accounts, and choose Mail, Add, and Mail. Then just follow the directions to put in your screen name (i.e., John Smith), your e-mail address (*john.smith@ntpcug.org*), the names of your incoming and outgoing mail services (both are "*mail.ntpcug.org*") and your logon information. Your logon information is your e-mail name (i.e, *john.smith*, with a period between first and last) and your password. Your password may be the same one used on the old BBS, or another of your choosing as long as you specified it when creating your account.

For a "friendly name" for this account, I might suggest "NTPCUG". Any of these parameters can be changed later.

For the Connection Type, I suggest "Connect using my LAN" because you will be connecting to your ISP first, then will get NTPCUG e-mail **through** your ISP.

Now click Finish, and you will see a list of all the e-mail accounts configured in this e-mail client

WWW.NTPCUG.ORG

MAIL SERVER

(Outlook Express). If you have more than one account defined, select one to be your default mail account by clicking on its "friendly name", and clicking on "Set as default". Note that this default is where OUTGOING mail will be sent from. Keep this feature in mind if you will be sending mail from more than one account, as the default may need to be changed if you want to send your e-mail from different clients at different times. However, you can send mail from either account and it will reach its recipient(s).

The major concern with default accounts is that any replies to your message by the recipient will be returned to the account that was "default" when the original message was sent. However, if all your incoming mail from either account (NTPCUG and your ISP) is sent to the same Inbox, it makes little difference.

Using Your E-mail Account

Once set up as described above, you can send and receive e-mail whenever connected to the Internet. Keep in mind that you can always Compose new e-mail and reply to old e-mail even when NOT connected to the Internet. In such cases, "send" it as usual, even if offline - it will be saved in an Outbox and uploaded as soon as you connect to the Internet and start your e-mail client.

Other E-mail Clients

Setup in other e-mail packages is similar. In Outlook, for instance, go to Tools, then Services, and add "Internet e-mail". The remainder of setup should be about the same as described previously.

NOTE: If you are configuring your e-mail account into the Eudora Light e-mail client, where it asks for a "POP Account", your entry should be

firstname.lastname@mail.ntpcug.org. This field is actually combining your ID (*firstname.lastname*)with the name of the POP3 server (*mail.ntpcug.org*), although they are actually two different pieces of information.

To ensure that folks know your TRUE e-mail address, place it in the "Return Address" field in the "Getting Started" category (*firstname.lastname@ntpcug.org*).

Other Access Methods

If you do NOT already have an ISP, you will need to connect to our server via regular analog dial-up lines. In this case, we will need to set you up manually with a Windows NT account, after which you can dial in through a modem.

Thereafter, your use of an e-mail client will be similar to the above, but will require that you log in to the server with an ID and password before you can access e-mail. This process is identical to that used by any ISP. Call Doug Gorrie at 972-618-8002 if you need that done.

Once your NT account is in place, most members will use RAS (Remote Access Services) in Windows 95/98/NT or a similar tool to dial in, then will use their e-mail client software to do e-mail as usual.

The **current** phone number to dial in on is **214-741-7338**. An additional number will be installed soon.

Configuring RAS

Again, Win95/98/NT users without an ISP will access our server using RAS. Assuming RAS is already installed on your PC, configuration is fairly straightforward. If it is not installed, go to START, then HELP, and in the search block under Index, enter RAS. This will provide you with instructions for installing and using RAS.

To configure RAS, open you're My Computer icon on your Desktop, then double-click Dial-Up Networking. Depending on your operating system and whether you have used Dial-Up Networking before, installation may vary from here forward.

-You may see a Wizard to help you get set up, may need to double-click on New Connection, or may need to connect on "New" to establish a new

entry. Without going into great detail here, you want to specify the following items where required:

- ❖ For "Entry name", use "NTPCUG-Analog" or similar
- ❖ For Phone Number, enter "214-741-7338". (Dallas Metro area). Ft. Worth will be added soon.
- ❖ If your phone line has Call Waiting, preface the number above with "*70," if in SWBT, or "70#," if in GTE. This will prevent incoming calls from interrupting your session.
- ❖ The device to dial-in with is your modem, which hopefully is already configured. You should be able to select it from a list of configured devices/ports. Configure it to use a speed of 57,600 or 115,200, and to use Hardware Flow Control, Modem Error Control, and Modem Compression.
- ❖ Your Server Type is PPP/WinNT/Win95, and only TCP/IP is needed (un-check IPX/SPX and Net-BEUI if checked).
- ❖ For TCP/IP Settings, defaults may be adequate. But if a Server Assigned Name Server is required, you can specify 199.1.11.2.
- ❖ Click "Enable Software Compression" if available.
- ❖ If there is a Script tab, select None. We do not open any "terminal window" either before or after dialing in.
- ❖ For Security, "Accept any authentication including clear text". We do not use encryption.

Hopefully, this will result in a new Icon or table entry named NTPCUG-Analog. Select this entry whenever you are ready to dial in. Provide your ID (same as e-mail account) and password where requested, and Dial. It should work.

Please provide any feedback on what needs to be clarified in the above instructions. Responses can be left on our old BBS until it is disconnected, or sent to me at doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org. ew Icon

Thanks

Doug Gorrie
doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

Additional Outlook Express info at:
http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/ie40/oe/default.htm

Y2K

by Frank Tubbs & Bob Russell

The approach of the year 2000 has given rise to a whole new industry for the media. There is so much data available that it is difficult to sift the wheat from the chaff and figure out whether there is a real problem. In this issue we could deal with the basic information, and there is plenty more on the Web site (*http://www.microsoft.com/y2k/*) if you want to read more about it. The following is excerpted from the answers to Frequently Asked Questions on that site. If you're already saturated with data about the Y2K problem, I sympathize; on the other hand, some straight scoop should help to alleviate some of the media attempts to generate panic in the streets over the issue, and hopefully give guidance on taking care of the potential problems.

What is the Year 2000 problem?

Answer:

The Year 2000 issue is not difficult to understand from the technical point of view. It is the scope of affected systems and business processes that makes this problem so challenging. The problem stems from three main issues: two-digit date storage, leap year calculations, and special meanings for dates. The implications of these three issues need to be addressed by all organizations. Unfortunately, there will be no simple fix to the year 2000 issue, no "silver bullet," due to the fact that the use of dates for calculations is pervasive throughout software and that usage is not standardized.

Two-digit date storage

The most common and most damaging problem occurs when software has been written to store and/or manipulate dates using only two digits for the year. Calculations built upon these dates will not execute properly because they will not see dates in the 21st century as being larger numbers than those in the 20th century. Example: 2000 1998 = 2 but 00 98 = -98. (or 98 if the application does not allow negative numbers). The result of this might be that your accounting software sees all accounts receivable as overdue due to the fact that no customers have paid in 98 years.

The two-digit date convention assumes that the century is "19." This assumption was regarded as a necessity in the early days of commercial computing because of the high cost of computer storage and memory. Today, the usage of two-digit dates is perpetuated by the sociological context in which dates are referenced in our daily lives. Individuals choose to use two-digit dates due to the fact that the human mind handles dates contextually whereas the computer requires the explicit expression of dates.

Leap year calculations

Leap years are calculated by a simple set of rules. Unfortunately, there are systems and applications that do not recognize the year 2000 as a leap year. This will cause all dates following February 29, 2000 to be offset incorrectly by one day. The rules for leap year calculations are as follows. A year is a leap year if it is divisible by four, but if it is divisible by 100 it is NOT a leap year, but if it is divisible by 400 it IS a leap year. Thus, the Year 2000 is a special case leap year that happens once every 400 years.

Special meanings for dates

The third main Year 2000 problem is more commonly found in older code bases. In order to write more efficient code which allowed for the use of less memory, date fields were sometimes used to provide special functionality. The most common date used for this was 9/9/99. In some applications the use of the special date meant "save this data item forever" or "remove this data item automatically after 30 days," or "sort this data item to the top of the report." Within each organization, special date codes may have been used differently. This is one of the main reasons that no single tool can locate all uses and/or misuses of date data.

Technically, the problem is simple to understand. The solutions to the problem tend to be fairly simple as well. The scope of the problem, however, makes it difficult. Every piece of hardware, software, and embedded system must be taken into account. Everything from mission-critical central accounting systems to small convenience applications must be examined for date-handling and how those dates might affect the rest of the environment.

Why do we have this problem?

Answer:

Expensive memory costs. In the early days of Information Services, memory was very expensive. By asking the developers to conserve just two bytes per record in memory (the "19" of 1975, for example), organizations were able to realize millions of dollars in savings. In addition, older applications were not expected to be used 20-30 years into the future. Furthermore, the programming habits and processes put into place in the early 1970s still exist today. The use of the two-digit shortcut for efficiency is still utilized today.

Sociology. There is a sociological aspect to the problem as well. In our society, people automatically represent years in two digits. For example, when was the last time you wrote out all four digits of the century on a check? When was the last time you filled in your birth date on a form and used all four digits of the year?

Human nature plays a big part in why this problem exists. In the 1960s, programmers only used a single digit for the year. In 1968, they started to look at 1970 and wondered how they were going to deal with it. At the time, they knew that the year 2000 would be a problem, but it was so far in the future. Programmers never imagined that their applications would still be in use today and that they would therefore be susceptible to the Year 2000 problem.

What are some potential consequences of Year 2000 problems?

Answer:

The potential impact of the Year 2000 problem is difficult to quantify. There are two possible scenarios to be examined.

Complete system breakdown. The first form of failure is that of complete breakdown. It will be easy to identify this because a complete failure is obvious and, therefore, easy to detect. In the event of a complete failure, contingency plans can be implemented and immediate action can be taken. For most individuals working on the Year 2000, this is the preferred type of failure due to its conspicuous nature.

Examples of a complete breakdown:

An order entry application might not allow any orders to be entered after the year 2000 if the error handling written into the application is looking for 00 as an invalid number. In this situation, it would become immediately apparent that the application was broken due to the fact that business would be stalled.

An embedded system that has control of an obvious physical function such as an air conditioner control unit could fail if there was date handling built into the maintenance systems. If this device were to fail completely, it would be obvious due to the lack of cool air.

Partial breakdown. The second form of failure is that of partial breakdown. The partial breakdown is the more difficult problem to recognize and will have further-reaching consequences than that of complete failure. If a system only partially fails, it may not be obvious to the user of that system. In the case of financial transactions, a bad calculation may produce results that are assumed to be correct. The result of a partial failure will be the loss of trust in the computing environment's ability to deliver reliable, consistent information.

Examples of a partial breakdown:

An application designed to calculate mortgage payments might produce an incorrect result. If the application were to cease functioning it would be very obvious that there was a problem. But, if the application still produces a result, it becomes incumbent upon the operator of that application to recognize that there has been an error in the calculation.

A business phone system may experience partial failure in some subset of its features. In most cases, a dial tone will still be available and the phone may seem to function normally. The problem may occur with the reports that detail the duration of each phone call. For organizations that use this information for billing and/or tracking, the erroneous reports may not be immediately recognized and automated billing systems may generate faulty invoices.

What kinds of computer systems are affected by the Year 2000 problem?

Answer:

This problem exists in the mainframe, mini, Unix and PC environments. The mainframe has the

worst overall problem, but there are Year 2000 concerns on other platforms as well.

How can I get the Microsoft Year 2000 Product Guide?

Answer:

Browse *http://www.microsoft.com/year2000*. The Web site will provide an easy-to-use interface to navigate Microsoft's Year 2000 information. Beyond the Product Guide, the Microsoft Year 2000 Resource Center will provide additional information for organizations dealing with the Year 2000 problem.

Year 2000 Tools Reference Guide. There will be a section dedicated to tools vendors. The tool vendors section will be a directory of third-party tools vendors who are providing Year 2000 tools for the Microsoft platform and products. We will include information concerning vendors associated with the PC platform in general. The list of third-party tools vendors will be where organizations and individuals concerned with the Year 2000 issue and their desktop/PC Server environments will find the tools they need to be successful. Each vendor will include a paragraph on their products, contact information, and a technical summary of what they do. Microsoft will not evaluate the tools, nor will we make recommendations to our customers as to which vendors to choose.

Support channel. The final section of the site revolves around our strategic partners and our solution provider channel. The lack of human resources within the legacy environment is putting a huge strain on Year 2000 projects. Today, the labor pool of PC expertise has hardly been touched for Year 2000 work. Microsoft and its partners will be able to provide thousands of technically trained professionals to assist any organization with its Year 2000 concerns

What are the main points of exposure for the PC?

Answer:

Six layers. The PC has 6 main layers of exposure to Year 2000 problems.

1. Hardware
2. Operating System
3. Runtime Library
4. Applications
5. Custom Code
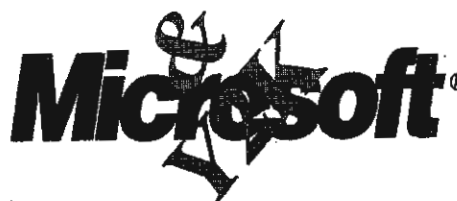
6. Data Interfaces

Hardware. The most common hardware problem is associated with the BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) of the PC. The BIOS is responsible for providing the basic information which the computer needs to boot. It also contains one of the critical clocks used by the PC.

The most common hardware problem presented by the Year 2000 has to do with the proper roll of the first two digits of the century portion of the date from "19" to "20." For a BIOS that is affected by this problem, it is possible to properly function once the date is properly set to 2000. The difficulty is in getting it there. The PC real-time clock keeps track of the time and date. The BIOS receives time/date information from the real-time clock in a two-digit century format. The BIOS then adds the necessary bits to store the date in four digits. When the date changes from "99" to "00" but the century bits do not change from "19" to "20," the operating system sees 1900 instead of 2000. Microsoft operating systems do not recognize 1900 and automatically reset the system clock to 1980, our base date. *The change of date suddenly to 1980 is one of the best ways to identify this iteration of the BIOS problem.* By understanding what the error result will be, organizations will be able to identify problem machines quickly. Once the broken machines are identified, repair of those systems can begin.

A BIOS fix has been inserted into the newer Microsoft Operating Systems to help alleviate this problem. Windows NT 3.51(sp5), Windows NT 4.0, Windows 98 and Windows NT 5.0 all have logic built into them that will recognize 1900 as an error case and will automatically compensate by setting the date to 2000. The Microsoft BIOS correction mechanism will only correct the most common BIOS issue described above.

There are other BIOS problems that we do not compensate for. For example, some BIOS's revert back to 1900 every time the system reboots. For all of the year 2000, the Microsoft fix will set the

clock to 2000 every boot. When that system reaches 2001 and it resets itself to 1901, Microsoft's fix will not recognize it as a Year 2000 problem and will revert back to the base date of 1980. Other BIOS's have error handling built into them that resets a 1900 date before our operating system begins to interact with the BIOS. If that date is a valid date, such as 1993, then the Microsoft operating system will assume that it is correct. Microsoft recommends that all BIOS platforms be identified and tested to ensure functionality beyond 2000. To see Microsoft's recommendations on how to address this issue, please see Question #15, titled "What are Microsoft's recommendations for working with the PC BIOS issue?".

Operating systems. It is important for the customer to identify all operating systems being used and obtain appropriate Year 2000 information. The Microsoft Product Guide discusses specific date handling for Microsoft operating systems.

Microsoft operating systems all store and manipulate dates in four-digit formats.

Additionally, the system clocks have been designed to recognize the year 2000 as a leap year. Within the operating system, the file systems have been designed to handle dates beyond the year 2000 as well. The File Allocation Table (FAT) 16bit and 32bit versions used by MS-DOS, Windows, Windows 95 and Windows NT recognizes dates up to 2108. The File Allocation Table for the Windows CE operating system recognizes dates up to 2999. The Windows NT File System (NTFS) recognizes dates to 29,601.

Applications. Some applications have internal calendars that could miscalculate the leap year; others may force a two-digit date, depending on the manufacturer of that particular application. Microsoft applications that store and manipulate dates do so in four digits. We calculate the year 2000 as a leap year. We do not use any special date codes.

Runtime Library. Runtime Libraries are files that provide functionality to applications. Users do not directly interact with runtime libraries; rather, it is the users actions with an application that utilize runtimes. There is interdependency between the runtime libraries and applications. By loading a Windows application you are using runtime libraries. It is possible, though, that you can be running an application such as Excel and then add a third-party product that provides yet another runtime library. If that is the case, the dependency roles are reversed. If a runtime library mishandles the date, it doesn't matter if the application, operating system or BIOS were designed properly. The environment is still not ready. Therefore, it is possible for a non-Microsoft runtime library to be used in conjunction with a Microsoft application and for it to break the Microsoft application.

Custom code. Custom code is the largest exposure to Year 2000 problems on any platform. Many organizations have in-house or contracted programmers developing custom applications that better meet business needs. Due to non-standard programming practices throughout the software development community, date handling is not consistent and will need to be examined on an application-by-application basis.

An example problem in custom code would be if someone placed a two-digit date in a text string and then based a calculation on that date. The application would have no way of interpreting those two digits as a date. As a result, the calculation could be wrong. If this were done in VBA to enhance an Office application it could lead to date handling problems. Even though the application (e.g.: Excel) is handling dates correctly, the VBA custom code could cause it to malfunction.

Data interfaces. An end-to-end view of the organization is the best way to deal with understanding problems with data interfaces. The PC platform in an organization may be just fine for the year 2000. Yet, if there is an interface from that PC to a legacy system that is not working properly with dates, the information placed into the PC environment can cause problems.

The PC is just one step of many in some organization's information processing. The interfaces between the PC and other platforms must be understood, inventoried, analyzed, fixed, and tested, just like any other portion of the Year 2000 project.

On Microsoft's Year 2000 Web site, there is a Tools Guide that will assist customers in finding resources to help with the problems mentioned
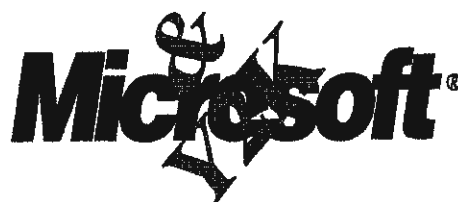
above. The information available for the listed tools outline what the tool does and how it can help an organization.

What are Microsoft's recommendations for working with the Year 2000 on a PC?

Answer:

End-to-end examination of computing environment. Microsoft recommends that every organization looking into the impact of the year 2000 take an end-to-end look at their environments. "End-to-end" means understanding how data enters an environment (user input, electronic transfer, etc.), how it is manipulated, stored, calculated, sorted, sequenced, etc. within the environment, what systems are involved with the handling of that data, and finally, how the data leaves that environment (user interface, printed hard copy, electronic data interface, etc.).

"End-to-end" encompasses both hardware and software. Microsoft technologies are just one piece of most environments.

Use a test-bed. We recommend that customers DO NOT test year 2000 issues on production PCs. There are many date-related functions on the average desktop of which people may not be aware. Arbitrarily setting the clock ahead can have some unforeseen results. For example, auto archiving on scheduling programs, automated backup systems, special licensing timeouts on vertical applications, and demonstration applications can all be adversely affected by the Year 2000 problem.

Use an MS-DOS boot disk to check the BIOS and system clock. Microsoft advocates the use of a MS-DOS boot disk to check the system for clock issues. This will separate the day-to-day functionality of the system from the date testing. After the user sets the clock ahead for testing, make sure to reboot the machine to the boot disk and set the clock back to the right time.

Inspect custom code. In any computing environment, custom code represents the largest exposure to year 2000 issues. We advocate that an experienced programmer evaluate any custom code in your information systems. To locate third-party products that can assist in the inspection of custom code, please see the Microsoft Year 2000 Resource Center Tools Guide at *http://www.microsoft.com/year2000*.

Use management tools where possible for inventory and distribution of fixes. If your PCs are on a

network and you have a network management tool such as Microsoft Systems Management Server, you can use the inventory and analysis features of the tool to understand what is in your environment.

Once you have this information, you can begin the process of organizing the work needing to be done. Many management tools also offer the capability of distributing software. This mechanism can be employed to distribute patches and fixes, as needed.

Frank Tubbs & Bob Russell

A Short Review of a Video Tutorial

Windows 3.1 - Getting Started by Vragrafix

This is a start-from-scratch lesson. The two instructors are clear and pleasant. They ask that you first watch the tape without fooling with the machine the first time. They start with how to turn it on and load the disk, mentioning what the mouse is, etc. They then show what every feature listed on the back of the video box is. A fair amount of time is spent on things like basic window manipulation. The later items on the list are located and their function is briefly demonstrated. Further explanation of these functions are promised in the Advanced Tape.

This tape's focus and use is to show you what is where and what you might do. However, the finer details are in the tape. But I know what items I want to learn about. You see, I'm one of those guys that is easily intimidated and frustrated by computers, and I am without a guru or kid to help with the rough spots. So this was a good start for me. I want to learn how to utilize the features that will take care of me! If you are familiar with the other Windows programs, go straight to the advanced tape. This is to clue in the clueless.

Joe Hopkins

Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community
Volunteers in Action   by Claude McClure

Thank You to the Dependable

We all appreciate the new meeting place, and the chance to look for merchandise at the DFW Xchange vendor show with friends we have made over the years at monthly meetings of the NTPCUG. A thousand of us are getting the feel of the new surroundings and realizing we can develop new ideas and conceive program solutions here where the newest electronic art and the vintage equipment converge. Like the Rhodes Giant, we are spanning the rather large step from this known shore to the obviously partially hidden technological future.

We will feel comfortable in the company of computer users we have traveled with so far. We will depend on the SIG leaders and program directors who have shared their knowledge with us. We will depend on many volunteers who man their stations and perform the many services a few thousand attendees need. We may be given floor maps, newsletters, free programs and membership help at the Information Booth by members like us, who volunteer their service, and never question their years of dependable support. The volunteer who distributes an informational flyer and the volunteer who sets up a dozen chairs for a classroom both make the NTPCUG a valuable experience for you and me. I know we could get by with fewer volunteers, and fewer benefits, but we have learned to depend on our volunteers.

Take a few minutes this next meeting to thank the dependable volunteer who helps you at the entrance door or PC Help SIG or one of the other many places volunteers serve. Please give special thanks to the Vendor area and Information Booth Volunteers whose names are listed below.

Big Town Liaison
Andy Reese
Robert Hilliard
Alex Lilley

Vendor Setup/Break-down
Anchors:
David Slavik
Kenneth Berg
Dick Abbott
Crew:
Dennis Brininger

Dan Guyer
James Guyer
Mark Guyer
James Hope (Double)
Fred Steadman
Daniel Thomas

Auditorium Presentations
Timothy Carmichael
Christopher Carmichael

Newsletter Labels
Charlie Fernandez

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

1. Via BBS: (972)387-2751, (972)387-2752 or (972)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........ (972) 661-4626 (w)

Information Booth and General Information

Claude McClure........... (972) 867-0978 (h)

COLOSSUS OF RHODES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

Information/Registration Booth
Statistician:
Connie Andrews
Ralph Beaver
(Assistant Scheduler:)
Bob Wuller
Anchors:
Roger Bopp
Vernon Cates
Martin Gluck
Cinda Lovil (Double)
David Martin
Bob McNeil
Raymond Reyes

Booth Crew:
Al Aston
Deborah Bean
Jim Boyce
Jo Francis Byrd
Roger Crenshaw
Randy Durham
Tim Foster (Double)
James Gorak
Neil Jochelson
John McNeil (Double)
Linda Moore
Thelda Opella
Ken Sauter
Oscar Tyler

Selected SIG Reports . . .

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups

(Material for this column should be sent NTPCUG BBS SIG Upload Area or to-Connie Andrews, Special Interest Group Editor, before the 10th of the month.)

Access SIG

Access Resources: While we wait for an announcement about resuming our meetings (it'll be here in the *News*), here's some information that may be useful:

On the Internet, the Access "meeting place" is the *comp.databases.ms-access* newsgroup. It's like an enormous SIG meeting every day for questions and answers. Just like our SIG, there's something for every level of Access user and very knowledgeable participants from all over the world. Some names you might recognize from books, articles, and conferences include Andy Baron, Allen Browne, Ken Getz, and Michael Kaplan, but there are a number of other regulars who donate a great deal of time to providing answers. Visit the newsgroup and you'll soon

learn who they are. If I sound a bit proprietary about the newsgroup, maybe it's because, representing a local BBS, I cast one of the affirmative votes for its founding in 1993 and have been there ever since it was established.

Strong Suggestion: Read before you post, and, especially, read the daily post with the subject line "!! New Users Look Here First FAQ and the date" – it tells you about the netiquette, purpose, and topicality of the newsgroup. Particularly don't post or respond to any employment solicitations – you'll hear about it if you do (possibly from Larry, honorary member of the *Post Police*). It also lists some Web sites that are chock-full of Access information. Just in case you don't get to participate in the newsgroup, here's that list:

FROM THE SIG COORDINATOR

The following are changes/additions/needs that the NTPCUG has made to the SIG's.

New SIG

— **Y2K (Year 2000) SIG** [Contact Gary Lenamond @ (972) 272-2098 h or garylena@gte.net]

Groups Looking for Help in Leading their SIGs:

— **MS Word for Windows** [Contact Jan Patton @ (903) 886-6249h or janpat@unicomp.net]

— **Spreadsheets SIG** [Contact Eb Foerster @ (214) 357-7602 h]

— **Dallas Corel** [Contact Marsha Drebelbis (214) 951-0266]

— **Hardware Solutions** [Contact Charles Miller (903) 938-4220 h]

The requirements for forming a SIG are:

Leadership — at least one individual willing to lead the SIG, and an assistant.

Membership — at least eight individuals willing to attend the SIG fairly consistently.

If you have a group that meets these qualifications or would like help in finding others who might share your interests, please contact me at (972) 517-7430 (H) or (972) 960-4276 (W).

SIG

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sites:

*http://home.att.net/~dashish_*

*http://www.hammerdata.com/Newsgrp_*

*http://www.channel1.com/users/rogue/Access/FAQ_*

*http://members.forfree.at/~larsm_*

*http://members.xoom.com/dashish_*

http://www.trevor.easynet.co.uk/AccFAQ/_

Other Sources:

*http://www.helptalk.com/access_*

*http://www.dejanews.com/home_ps.shtml_*

*http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/attac-cg/acgsoft.htm_*

http://support.microsoft.com/support/_

http://members.ricochet.net/~jfoster/

One Special Site:
http://www.wji.com is a site specializing in Access, and particularly in helping Access people find work and people who need Access help find employees or contractors. Many people who are prominent in the newsgroup have posted resumes and some have also posted examples of their work. A highlight is a "matching service application" to match employer's needs with registered Access people's skills. And, it's free to both employers and the potential employees or contractors.

Reviews of Selected Sites: Just as a sample, Larry re-visited a couple of the "other source" sites: *ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/attac-cg*, the Web site of ATTAC Computer Group has freeware files and code, including an article explaining a previously undocumented method to "make class modules in library databases visible to other databases". Steve Arbaugh of ATTAC is a frequent participant in the newsgroup. *members.ricochet.net/~jfoster* is the homepage of Joe Foster, who's answered just about as many questions in the newsgroup as anyone. There are sample databases and example code for a number of common, and some not-so-common, tasks that one might want to accomplish with Access. Drop in at home.att.net/~dashish, the "Grandfather of Access FAQ Sites" and you'll find, among many much more impressive entries, an article by Larry on using images in an Access database.

As a bonus, when you enter most any of these sites, you'll find a symbol for the *Access webring* – a webring is a group of sites linked together because of a common interest. You can move to the next site in the ring, skip a site or five, or move backward in the same way. Every site will be different, but all have a strong Access flavor. No, I can't tell you how many sites are in that ring, because it only takes a point-and-click to add another site

Can't Participate Because You Don't have an ISP? I can't give you a review, not yet, at least, but the price is right at *www.netzero.com*. All you need is a computer, a relatively fast modem, and a phone line. Their ISP service is free, supported by advertising, and they have a plethora of local access numbers in cities all over the US. If you can't arrange for one of your Web-enabled friends to visit the site, download the software, and

get you the access number, you can call them at (818) 879-7255. They have been mentioned in *Current Technology* magazine and are in *Computer Currents'* list of Internet Service Providers.

A Special Invitation: Come join us at the Access SIG for the continuing tutorial on VBA if you are interested in *any* of the many products, from Microsoft and other vendors, that use Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) as their macro or programming language. Don't expect us to know specifics about the "object model" of other products, but the VBA statements and the way objects, collections, containers, etc. are manipulated are consistent across the products.

At our next meeting **Larry Linson** will resume our *VBA Tutorial.* We'll talk about controlling the flow of execution in your application. Starting from simple one-after-another processing statements, we'll move on to a simple conditional construct: IF THEN . We'll extend that with an ELSE clause, and then consider several ways to repeat operations in a "loop" structure: FOR NEXT, FOR EACH NEXT, DO LOOP, and WHILE WEND. If there's any time left, we might digress to a brief discussion the · value of appropriate use of comments in VBA code. Almost all of the VBA we discuss also applies to Access Basic as used in Access 2.0 – ask about differences if you are still using Access 2.0.

Service Release 2 for Office 97: visit *www.microsoft.com/office/info/sr2/info.htm*

and information on how to order it on CD (the CD is free and so is the shipping and handling). SR-2 includes a fix for the widely publicized, but not-so-widely-encoun-

tered data corruption problem, and appears to contain the revised Jet 3.5 engine update (though that, too, is still available for download from *support.microsoft.com/download/support/mslfiles/jet35upd.exe*). And a final note on that data corruption problem: **Andy Baron,** Contributing Editor of *Access / Office / VBA Advisor* magazine and MVP on Microsoft's public Access newsgroup has published his own code workaround to avoid the problem on the Web site, www.advisor.com. Andy's fix applies to Access 2.0 and 7.0 (95), as well as to 8.0 (97).

We are looking forward to the advent of newsgroups or message conferences on our Web site. There's already free e-mail. Check the February issue for instructions or, if you have an ISP, go to http://mail.ntpcug.org/emurl. We bid a fond farewell to the NTPCUG BBS that has served us so well for so long.

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting – watch here and in the mail for an announcement of time and place

Larry Linson

Dallas Corel SIG

Dallas Corel SIG

Join us at Brookriver Center April 17

At the time of this writing deadline, the permanent SIG meeting site may not be ready in time for April's meeting. Our SIG decided to meet again in April in the atrium at Brookriver Center, which is the office building location of Marsha Drebelbis' Studio and Litigation Graphics. The coffee will be perking, so join us at our regular

SIG

Saturday meeting time, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Brookriver Center is located at 8150 Brookriver Drive, Dallas, TX 75247 (Mapsco 33Q). Park on the parking ramp's upper deck and use the building's rear entrance at the guard's desk. Check the Dallas Corel Web page for any last minute updates. We'll be expecting you!

Scan Your Way to Success

Dallas Corel SIG's April topic will cover scanning and the follow-up image editing steps in DRAW or PAINT required to achieve various desirable results. Bring your questions and your examples of success to share.

March in Review

Our SIG met with a healthy turnout at our March meeting at Brookriver Center's atrium. Attendees joined in a casual discussion group style with questions posed and answers offered with the usual fine support of our own SIG members' expertise. Areas covered included desktop printer output, CorelDRAW training opportuni-

ties, digital camera files, drop shadows, compatible graphics applications and more. What an asset to access a group of people with so much support for our graphics efforts. Member **Susan Biggs** won the top door prize, a handsome black canvas zippercase from PC Computing.

CorelDRAW 9 Announced

CorelDRAW® 9 Graphics Suite will include CorelDRAW 9, Corel PHOTO-PAINT® 9, Bitstream® Font Navigator, CorelTRACE, Corel Texture, Corel Capture and Canto® Cumulus® Desktop.

Scheduled for distribution in May 1999, CorelDRAW 9 Graphics Suite will include the award-winning vector illustration application along with award-winning PHOTO-PAINT 9. This will offer graphic designers an unsurpassed collection of tools for vector illustration and page layout, image composition and natural media painting, as well as industry-leading font and media management. Completing the suite is a collection of professional graphics and high

Dallas Corel Is A SIG Of North Texas PC Users Group

resolution photos for creating stunning content.

"With the recent celebration of 10 years of graphics excellence and 10 million copies of CorelDRAW sold worldwide, we are especially excited about the new CorelDRAW 9 Graphics Suite," said Dr. Michael Cowpland, president and chief executive officer at Corel Corporation. " We look forward to continuing to provide leading edge technology for graphics professionals and enthusiasts worldwide in the coming decade."

Development has focused on several core areas within CorelDRAW 9 and Corel PHOTO-PAINT 9, including color management and professional output. Previous versions included support for industry standard ICC profiles, but with CorelDRAW 9 and PHOTO-PAINT 9 users can now embed ICC profiles from images with embedded profiles that are opened or imported. This provides users with greater control over the entire color management process between applications.

CorelDRAW 9 and Corel PHOTO-PAINT 9 will also provide robust PDF support, allowing users to edit and output to PDF format while ensuring tight integration with any design and publishing , workflow. Several presets for PDF are included to allow electronic distribution of documents for different destinations: Web, press, or other media. Extensive customization of PDF output options gives users the freedom to tailor their output to suit their unique needs.

Recognizing that compatibility and integration between applications is crucial to any workflow, Corel has made exceptional efforts to ensure near seamless compatibility with industry standard file formats for press and Web output. Over 70 import filters and 40 export filters in CorelDRAW allow easy file exchange with most graphics and desktop publishing applications on

the market today. Enhancements were made to EPS export, Adobe Illustrator® (AI) support, and Adobe® Photoshop® multi-layered .PSD for compatibility between file formats. Corel PHOTO-PAINT can now also import MetaCreations Painter® files.

Support for QuickTime® 3.0 VR allows users to create, open, edit and save single or multiple node Quick-Time VR Panoramas and Objects. Low-resolution versions of the panorama nodes can be created, opened, edited and saved for optimized viewing over the Internet. Node comments can also be added and file compression defined on export.

Both CorelDRAW 9 and Corel PHOTO-PAINT 9 incorporate a plug-and-play ixla Digital Camera Interface for acquiring images from over 120 digital camera models, including Casio®, Epson®, Fujifilm,

---

IMPORTANT COREL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

**Corel Corporation
1600 Carling Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1Z 8R7**

❖Technical Support Representatives 800-818-1848

❖G1 Release, CD-Rom only(latest "fixes" and patches for Corel products)
.... 800-772-6735

❖Customer Service Representatives
.... 800-772-6735

❖IVAN (Interactive Voice Answering Network) 613-728-1990

❖24 Hour Automated Fax System 613-728-0826 Ext.3080

❖Technical Support hours are 4AM to 8PM (EST) excluding holidays

❖To obtain our catalogue please request document #2000

Hewlett-Packard®, Konica®, NEC®, Nikon, Olympus®, Panasonic®, Ricoh®, Sanyo and Sharp®. Images can be acquired directly from digital cameras, which eliminates the need for third-party interfaces to move images from cameras to computer before editing. In addition, edited image files can be sent back to digital cameras for storage, sharing and review.

Road Show in Dallas May 27

Corel invites you to join this exciting 34-city North American tour to launch WordPerfect Office 2000 and CorelDRAW 9 Graphics Suite. This event is open to anyone interested in learning more about Corel's products and the solutions they can offer your business. The event is free of charge, and all registered attendees will receive a free gift from Corel. To register, RSVP online now at *http://www.corel.com/roadshow/index.htm*. The location will be Dallas Sheraton Dallas Brookhollow, 1241 W. Mockingbird Lane, Dallas, TX 75247; 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 at I-35 and Mockingbird Lane. Free parking.

Corel brings Linux® to the desktop

Plans include an 'invisible' Linux Operating System and user-friendly Interface. Corel president and chief executive officer Dr. Michael Cowpland expects a November release date.
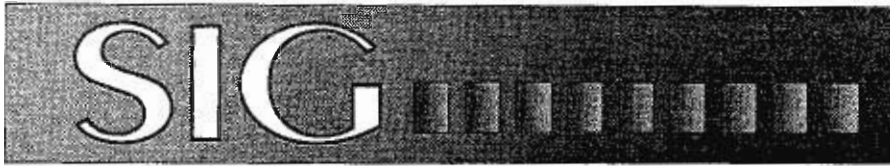
"We plan to simplify Linux by creating an easily accessible desktop environment," said Dr. Cowpland. "Linux will then be available to all computer users who wish to experience its benefits."

The emphasis of the new Corel version of Linux will be on simple installation and a graphical user interface (GUI) that sits on top of the

operating system, similar to those used on the Windows® or Macintosh® OS. Corel is also anticipating Linux versions of its WordPerfect® Office 2000 this year, and CorelDRAW® and Corel PHOTO-PAINT® for Linux in 2000.

"The difficult-to-use reputation of Linux will be left behind," said Dr. Cowpland. "Everyone will be able to experience the power and stability of Linux without learning complicated codes."

Corel Launches *designer.com*

This interactive site can be found at *www.designer.com* and is designed to cater specifically to the graphics community. It features a wide range of useful information for novice and expert graphic designers alike, making it a valuable resource within the design community.

Marsha Drebelbis

DOS/Operating Systems SIG

Yes, the DOS/Operating Systems SIG will meet again, possibly (a very long shot) in April. It's going to happen pretty quickly, so keep tuned to the NTPCUG Web site, *www.ntpcug.org* for late-breaking details.

I've been following the media closely and have decided to forego upgrading to an Intel *Pentium III*-

powered PC for the immediate future. Same applies to plans involving upgrade from Win95 OSR 2.1 to *Windows 98*. Both are based on privacy and security concerns detailed in recent articles which I find somewhat disturbing.

Besides, I have installed Win98 on one PC and found that I didn't like/appreciate some of the GUI changes that seem to waste a lot of space on my desktop. I may go back to WinNT 4.0 Workstation and possibly upgrade to a new AMD K6 2 400 CPU on my existing system if more CPU power is needed to satisfy NT.

Raises another question for users as well. Hard disk sizes are escalating to point that FAT-16 just isn't practical anymore. Users with "legacy" software that doesn't recognize FAT-32 and long file names (LFN's) may find themselves having to compromise. That is, choose between a "comfortable" program (one you've actually read the documentation supplied and learned) that has a lot of difficulty coexisting with FAT-32, and having to learn another program that may be clumsier, slower and not quite as adequate.

For example, my favorite file manager, Norton *Commander*, is much faster and more adroit than Windows Explorer, yet stumbles over LFN's. Same applies to the original Windows 3x *FileMan*, which has the LFN problem as well.

Time for other upgrades?

We've had a peer-to-peer LAN at home since *Windows 3.1 for Workgroups* was released back in '92. I

originally installed the network as a "learning experience" and to allow some printer and file sharing which was (relatively) easily accomplished. Since it was (then) a toy network, I figured that the cheapest way to get it done would be more than good enough.

I chose to adopt Ethernet and use thin coax with BNC connectors in a daisy-chain configuration between our three PC's. That's 10Base 2, and was not the fastest Ethernet setup even then. However, four-port hubs cost quite a bit (then) and 10Base T cable was much more expensive than RG-58 with BNC connectors. Also, I understood daisy-chains and termination after playing with SCSI and the pain of its foibles, but the world of hubs, routers and switches was still a mystery.

Worked pretty well over the years — except when the coax cable was bashed by an errant vacuum cleaner and became somewhat intermittent in terms of connection reliability.

Novice NIC configuration daunting

My first NIC, purchased from Lucky, cost $139. Instructions were for hooking-up to a NetWare (Novell) or Vines (Banyan) LAN and so were the drivers. I remember toiling over IRQ's, port addresses and termination concerns on the NIC (which cost more than 2 NIC's, a four-port hub and two 25' cables now) and came with instructions and drivers translated from the Taiwan version of Mandarin Chinese into Italian, then into Bulgarian and subsequently into almost-English. Deep in the bowels of the 16-page manual was a comment that it was a standard "NE2000" compatible NIC.

Eureka! I had seen something to that effect in the options offered by Windows 3.1 for Workgroups and when this choice was selected, the home LAN came to life. I experi-

enced the same pleasure after installing the first DOS "client" for the home LAN which was much easier as a result of the learning experienced in Win 3.1.

Win95 solved lots of problems

Win95 and modern motherboards made network installation even easier than 3.1, later 3.11, and was a snap. That is unless the user forgot to remove some of Microsoft's default associations, particularly TCP/IP if Winsock was installed to access the Internet.It was really nice if you had "Plug 'n Pray" network interface cards (NIC's) that Win95 "knew about."

Internet cause for upgrade.

We are considering/planning to switch to either ADSL or cable Internet access. Either one would not work with the present LAN configuration for two reasons, first of which is the BNC connector-equipped RG-58 coax and daisy chain connections. Second is need for a hub demanded by both ADSL and cable modems if more than one user will be connected simultaneously.

As a result I've been pricing hubs, NIC's and Cat. 5 cables to replace the existing system and have been quite surprised at how much costs have dropped since the original LAN was setup. Even Intel has some moderately priced (for Intel) small hubs and NIC's for 10Base-T /100. Several SOHO (small office/home office) kits are available now to connect two PC's to a LAN with capability to add two more PC's for the price of two additional NIC's and connecting cables. Cost of the two-PC kits is below $150 and two additional NIC's and cables would be in the $60 ranges.

Will I do it? Absolutely — as soon as ADSL or Cable Internet access becomes available in my area.

Reagan Andrews

MicroGrafx SIG

While most of the SIGS have been on hold the last few months, the Micrografx SIG (formerly the Graphics SIG) doesn't let a small thing like no place to meet interfere with our meeting. Of course, having Micrografx located in Richardson and having them offer us a place to meet does make things a bit easier for us.

Anyway, the SIG meets on the SECOND Saturday of the month at the Micrografx building in Richardson from 11 AM to 1 PM. The last two meetings have been a general free-for-all with topics ranging from Simply 3D to Designer to Picture Publisher.

For each of these topics we have had some of the best people at Micrografx give us their favorite tips and tricks as well as easier ways to do the "impossible" tasks. We have also received information on their new product line as well as overall direction of the company.

Topics April will probably include a "back to basics session" for image editing followed by an overview of the new products. There is also a possibility that we might get a sneak peek at some of the products still in beta.

For more information call ye old SIG leader Neal Berkowitz at 972.475.7463 or E-mail at *nberk@misresource.com*.

Neal Berkowitz

PC Help Center SIG

I'm not sure the PC Help Center is really a SIG, although lots of NTPCUG members stopped by at the March meeting in the Vendor show area just to say 'Hello' or

hang around and discuss various topics. I think this is more of a volunteer effort to give the NTPCUG visibility in an area where most of the people attending aren't aware of the NTPCUG or the help available from the various SIGs that will be meeting at Big Town shortly (I hope.)

The PC Help Center SIG again was a focal point at the March meeting in the vendor area, thanks to the efforts of **Timothy and Christopher Carmichael, Doug Gorrie, Bob Russell and Spike Smith** who lent their expertise to perplexed users who came by the PC Help Center room. PC Help Center signs produced by NTPCUG BOD member **Marsha Drebelbis** continued to attract the curious as they could be easily seen in the crowded vendor hall.

Doug and Timothy brought PC's again to illustrate solutions and assist in explaining operations in Win95, WinNT and DOS. Questions fielded by Help Center SIG volunteers ranged from very basic questions about using the PC and operating systems (including several new Linux users) to more challenging questions about multiple accounts in Windows 95/98 & NT RAS, PC BIOS configuration and re-partitioning a hard disk after the operating system and applications software had already been installed.

Purpose of the Help Center SIG

The Help Center SIG is an effort to reach out to users in the Vendor Area who are having problems with their PC's. It is based on the "Help Desk" model and aimed at answering basic PC-related questions — and then pointing the users to the appropriate NTPCUG or Apple Corps SIG's where further information and assistance will be

SIG

available to them. We hope it will generate both goodwill and user interest in joining our respective users groups in the process. We will welcome any NTPCUG or Apple Corps member who would like to volunteer in this effort.

Help Center SIG hours will be 8:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. unless Help Center volunteers decide to close early in order to attend the business meeting at 12:30.

Reagan Andrews

Microsoft
Visual C++/MFC SIG

Good news! It looks like we have found a place for the SIGs to meet. It is also within walking distance from the Vendor area. No predictions on when we'll be able to start meeting there, so we'll have to continue to use the Virtual SIG Meeting on the Web site. *http://web2.airmail.net/emmert*.

In the meantime, take a look at CryptoPad Step 3. In Step 3, we look at creating a custom "Save As..." dialog box. We don't build the dialog from scratch. Instead, we use the common dialog box and override it at the system level to add a few controls. When looking through the source, be sure to look at the dialog resource. We create a special dialog

resource with the controls we want and MFC takes care of pasting these controls onto the standard Save As dialog box.

Next month, we'll get into the heart of the project. We will discuss "serialization," MFC's fancy term for saving files. We'll discover that we can stream the file into an encryption/decryption class when saving/opening files. If you have any questions up to this point, please post them at the Virtual SIG meeting. I may not be able to respond immediately, but I promise to get to it.

Wade Emmert

Visual Basic SIG - Beginning

The schedule for any SIG meetings is uncertain at press time. There is a possibility that we will be able to meet on April 17, 1999 at facilities within Big Town Mall. Final approvals have not been obtained and it is unclear that the meeting rooms will be ready in time. Look for last minute announcements on the North Texas PC User Group Web site at *www.ntpcug.org*.

In the meantime, I have reviewed several books appropriate for beginners in Visual Basic 6.0 and have decided to go with *Visual Basic 6.0 from the Ground Up* by Gary

Cornell. The book is published by Osborne/McGraw-Hill and has an ISBN of 0-07-882508-3. Regular attendees at the Beginning Visual Basic SIG know that I do not systematically go through the text on a regular basis. I do, however, use the sample code within the text as an example when it is appropriate. This edition has picked up all the typographical errors from the previous edition that I knew about.

While we wait for our management team to finalize the details of our meeting site, be sure that you have ordered both Service Pack 1 and Service Pack 2 for Visual Basic 6 from Microsoft. It is very important that you install these Service Packs prior to creating install versions of your Visual Basic 6 programs.

If you have some experiences with Visual Basic that you would like to share with the SIG members, please contact me and I will make the necessary arrangements. Give me a call at (972) 235-5968 or you may e-mail me at *Jim.Carter@ntpcug.org* or *Jim_Carter@msn.com*.

Bring your questions on Beginning Visual Basic to our meeting on Saturday, April 17, 1999 at the Big Town Mall. Check the NTPCUG Web site for details on the SIG meetings.

Jim Carter
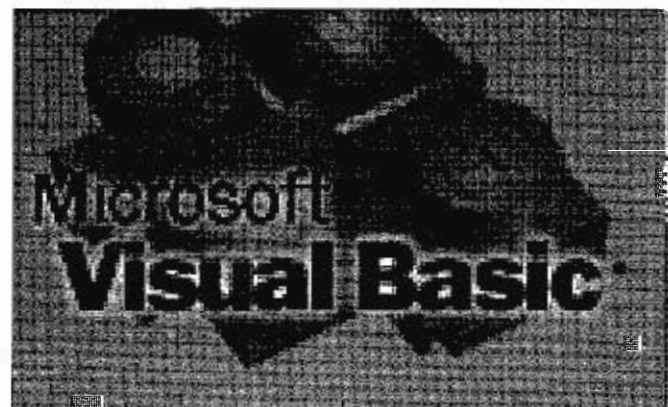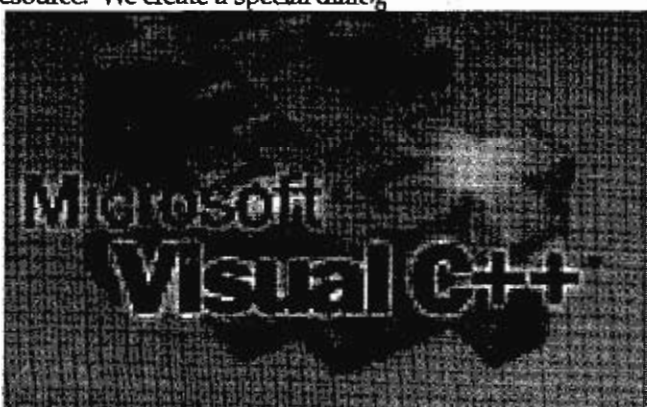
North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 703449, Dallas, TX 75370-3449
Phone (214) 746-4699 for recorded information about the North Texas PC Users Group and scheduled meeting date times and locations. Please leave a message if you would like specific information about the Group. Or, visit our Web Page at: **www.ntpcug.org**

The North Texas PC Users Group, Inc., is a non-profit, independent group, not associated with any corporation. Membership is open to owners and others interested in exchanging ideas, information, hardware, predictions, and other items related to personal and compatible computers. To join the Group, complete the application blank printed elsewhere in this newsletter, and send with $30 membership dues to the Membership Director — address shown below. Subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership.

The Group meets once each month, usually on the second or third Saturday. See inside front cover for date, time and place of the next North Texas PC Users Group meeting.

NORTH TEXAS PC USERS GROUP

NTPCUG Officers
And Volunteers
You Should Know
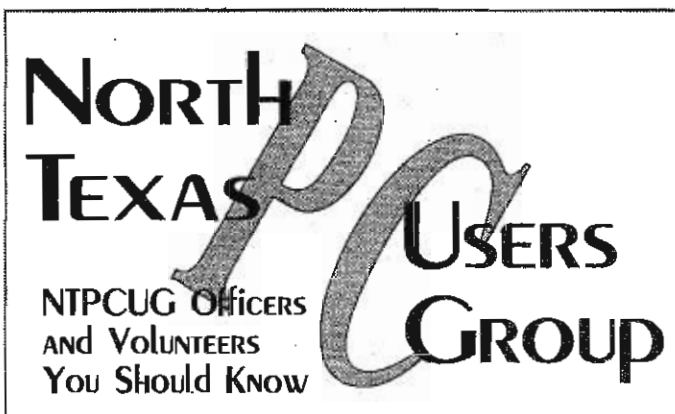
North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.
Board of Directors

Jim Hoisington *Chairman*
Marsha Drebelbis   Timothy Carmichael
Alex Lilley   Andy Oliver
Andy Reese

Password problems?
Call Doug Gorrie at............. (214) 464-4568

NTPCUG Officers

President	Jim Hoisington	(972) 416-3101 h
President-Elect	(Open)	
Program Chairman	Timothy Carmichael	(972) 566-4626 w
Treasurer	Eb Foerster	(214) 357-7602 h
Secretary	Wade Emmert	(214) 740-3164 w
Membership Dir.	Jim Hoisington	(972) 416-3101h
Advertising Dir. (Acting)	Connie Andrews	(214) 828-0699h
Publicity	Rob Alschbach	(214) 368-4979 b
Volunteer Coord.	Claude McClure	(972) 867-0978 h
DFW Xchange	Information	(214) 746-3365
	www.dfwxchange.com	

Members Emeritus

John Pribyl (1924 - 1993)
Phil Chamberlain   Jim Hoisington
David McGehee   Stuart Yarus
Tom Prickett   Connie Andrews
Kathryn Loafman   Reagan Andrews
Fred Williams   Timothy Carmichael
Andy Oliver   Mark Gruner

Address Changes, etc...
Payment of dues, address changes, and inquiries about membership should be directed to:

NTPCUG Membership Director
P.O. Box 703449
Dallas, Texas 75370-3449

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

North Texas PC Users Group
P.O. Box 703449
Dallas, Texas 75370-3449

Address Correction Requested

18.4

North Texas PC Users Group

Buckner Blvd.

N

30

Big Town Blvd.

30

Downtown
Dallas

Big Town

NTPCUG
AppleCorps
&
DFWXchange

Exhibition
Center

80

Samueli Blvd.
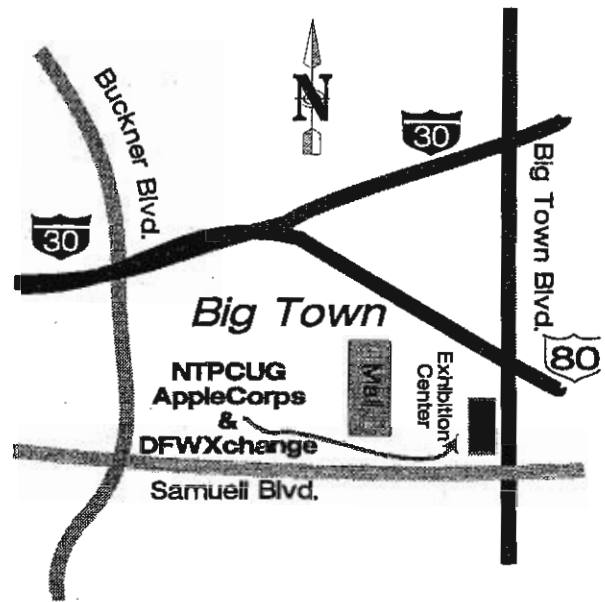
Next Meeting:

17 April 1999